

## **Makro Cash and Carry: Continuous development for a modern trade company**

### **What does this case study demonstrate?**

MARKO is a company with a strong customer orientation which can differentiate itself from competitors, offering a different experience and added value. MAKRO Cash and Carry offers support to employees in implementing this customer centric approach and aligns the company's processes to drive customers' engagement.

*Workplace Innovation elements: Facilitating learning and development, enhancing shared knowledge and experience, fairness and equality*

### **Context**

[MAKRO Cash and Carry](#) is one of the largest wholesale companies and has operated in Greece since 1992 as a subsidiary of the METRO Group. Its main objective is to serve and work with professionals throughout Greece. The aim of introducing every new product or group of products in stores is to offer better customer service. Strategic commitment of the company is to offer its customers a variety of options, quality products, solutions and services they can use in their work.

In the last years, the company decided to apply workplace innovation practices to respond to the needs that came up as a result of the economic crisis. These initiatives are considered as radical by the company's top management team and utilize human potential, creativity and active participation to the highest degree.

*"In order to meet the complex requirements that customers place on modern trade companies we continuously develop ourselves further".* Head of HR

### **Acting on results**

The company considers its annually conducted employee survey as a key driver in achieving high organisational performance in which managers and their teams work together to define concrete actions which can be taken in order to further improve future cooperation and performance. All staff representatives are involved in the process which measures satisfaction and priorities for the improvement in communication, management behaviours, human resources management and development, teamwork, staff relations and work facilities and service delivery.

Great importance is given in ensuring that employees understand the meaning of each question and are able to answer it. The answers are seriously considered by the top management before deciding to implement a practice. Top managers as well as middle management, based on employees suggestions and through several discussions, evaluate how these could bring positive results to the employees as well as the internal and external clients and adapt current practices that will provide the basis for further performance improvement. For this reason, they develop a group of specific goals and measure the achievements and time frames for the accomplishment of these goals.

### **An ambitious internship program for recruiting new talents**

Since late 2010, MAKRO Cash & Carry Greece has been offering young university students and college graduates well managed, high-quality internships that benefit both the company and the interns. The interns develop professional skills by undertaking work of value and enhance their future employability.

In addition, the company uses internship programmes to directly identify and recruit motivated and capable individuals.

For recruiting interns the Human Resources Department has set up a national network and partnerships with a number of educational institutions including universities and vocational training schools, making the internship placements more widely accessible and at the same time Makro benefits from a greater exposure to a larger pool of talent.

The company offers a large and varied number of positions in all of its departments as well as continuous development opportunities as the interns take over responsibility early in a dynamic and innovative working environment. It also provides the interns with a genuine opportunity to acquire skills and experience relevant to a professional career. The HR department agree on the skills and personal attributes that the intern needs to demonstrate and ensure that they have the capacity to accommodate the intern and to provide the necessary level of support.

Interns are given the opportunity to actively use their academic knowledge in exciting projects, independently tackle interesting tasks and familiarise themselves with the Group's corporate and management culture.

Every intern has supervisors or mentors who provide ongoing specific feedback and support to appraise their performance and competencies on their tasks as well as general feedback on their professional behaviour and diligence – such as interpersonal skills. They also conduct regular performance reviews, based on the intern's learning objectives and agree with the intern, and revise, the learning objectives for the internship. Additionally, they evaluate the success of the intern's time with the organisation and act as a first point of contact for any queries or concerns the intern may have, creating a strong working relationship between the mentor and the intern.

*"I was over the moon when I learned that I would be joining the METRO family,".... "Working in this company and with this team of experienced mentors was a really important step for me."* A 30-year-old employee that joined MAKRO Cash & Carry Greece as an intern in April 2011 and ended up with a full time job.

During the six-month internship, all interns are evaluated using the criteria set from the company, to determine whether they meet the criteria for getting a full-time job contract with the company. In this way, potential employees can be identified right on the job and new talented individuals can be selected for the company.

The company is determined to help as many young people as possible to gain work experience in this challenging job market and launch their professional careers.

The expressed interest from interns can be depicted in the following figures. For 2010: 8 trainees, 2011: 66 trainees, 2012: 108 trainees, 2013: 117 trainees.

In recognition of its commitment, the company was presented with the Employability Award 2012 by the Mediterranean College in Greece and was named as Agent of Employability for 2012 for contributing in the introduction of new students and graduates in the business environment through internships.

## **So who benefits?**

The initiative of offering work experience to young graduates was introduced by the company's headquarters but it was adapted to the Greek needs and offered many more possibilities to the students that decided to have an internship at Makro Cash and Carry Greece. Their knowledge was enhanced and their experienced was enriched. Today, about 11 percent of employees of MAKRO Cash & Carry Greece began their careers as interns.

*“Unemployment has hit record levels and job opportunities are a particularly scarce commodity for young people. As a result, initiatives that help them enter the world of work take on much more importance – initiatives like the internship program”.* Head of HR

*“A path of finding new talents is created, which is utilized in accordance with the needs and capabilities of MAKRO Cash & Carry”.* Employee focus group

## **Prognosis**

The company constantly refines its concepts and formats to meet the needs of customers and markets and enhance its ability to remain competitive and responsive. In this way, workplace innovation practices make the employees real contributors to the company’s goals, offering them support and keeping them committed.