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CASE STUDY: Café Kino

Date	05 January 2010
Location	Bristol
Sector	Hospitality
No. of Employees	12
Key Benefits	In any business, people need to feel they are developing. The Skills Pledge is a way of showing you want that to happen.



Introduction

Bristol's Café Kino is a popular eaterie and arts venue in the heart of the cities Stokes Croft cultural quarter.

The business is run by a not for profit workers' co-operative with a largely vegan menu using organic, fair-trade and locally produced ingredients.

A basement performance space is home to live music, workshops and regular meetings of groups such as Trans Bristol and the Bristol Feminist Network.

Café Kino was opened in 2006 by four friends who wanted to create an ethical, community based business and a lively cultural and musical space.

Founder member Rosie Hadrill, (pictured right) who works as a cook and finance director, says: "We all had an arts or music background and we wanted somewhere to put on events as part of a sustainable business that was not detrimental to the environment. We couldn't find anywhere already doing that in our community so we decided to do it ourselves as a co-operative."

The decision paid off. Café Kino has grown and now has 12 staff, each working part time, plus ten volunteers.

Drivers for Commitment

It has steadily built up a commitment to staff development and volunteer training, making the Skills Pledge in September 2009.

A recent training day hosted by the Avon Co-operative Development Agency provided staff and volunteers with practical advice and information on working together as a co-operative. Key to this is respecting democracy and consensus.

"It's the kind of thing that everyone should be aiming for. In any business, people need to feel they are developing. The Skills Pledge is a way of showing you want that to happen."

Rosie Hadrill, Finance Director



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While all major decisions are still made collectively, individuals can be responsible for specific activities such as front of house, kitchen, finance, supplier management, events and health and safety.

As a result, advice on managing a group of people was an important aspect of the training.

“The co-operative principle is fundamental for us,” says Rosie. “We want to run the business together with everyone equally involved. It is really important that each of us has a thorough understanding of how to run the business and that includes managing staff and handling any disputes.”

Impacts and Benefits

Company secretary Dawn Skinner, (**pictured left**) who works on front of house, says: “The training has showed us more effective ways to hold meetings and oversee our policies and procedures. In my role as company secretary I have to make sure that we abide by the rules on the meetings process such as giving people invites with enough notice and filing the minutes and finance reports on time, so the training was a great help to me. It was also really interesting as we looked at the whole concept of what it means to be a co-operative.”

Café Kino is now looking to develop its training with regular updates in particular work areas and more general confidence coaching for staff and volunteers.

Rosie says she would encourage all employers to make the Skills Pledge. “It’s the kind of thing that everyone should be aiming for. In any business, people need to feel they are developing. The Skills Pledge is a way of showing you want that to happen. At Café Kino everyone runs and owns the business. We are not driven by profit but by what we want to do ethically and culturally. It is fundamental that all of us should feel valued and the Skills Pledge is a statement of that commitment by the co-operative.”