

## Real-life training

Employing more than 6000 staff and serving around 40 million cups of coffee every year, The Coffee Club is Australia's largest 'home-grown' cafe group. As the co-owner/franchisee of five Coffee Club stores in North Brisbane, Craig Pratt is responsible for recruiting enthusiastic and talented young people who can uphold the high standards of the company.

### **Recruitment challenge: finding committed and enthusiastic staff**

Craig and his fellow franchisees were finding it increasingly difficult to find young people for their numerous entry level roles in the kitchen and front of house. The newspaper and online ads they placed were not attracting the right calibre of person. The recruitment process was costly and time consuming, and as Craig explains, "candidates weren't enthusiastic, had little interest in the hospitality industry and turnover was high".

### **An innovative recruitment solution – partner with TAFE Queensland**

Craig then thought of approaching TAFE Queensland, offering hospitality students the chance to undergo 'real life' work experience in one of his five stores. At the beginning of 2011, Craig took on a group of 11 students studying hospitality and kitchen operations. It was designed to be a win win for everyone. "The students would benefit from gaining real life as opposed to simulated training, TAFE would benefit by being able to offer a real workplace to train in, and we'd benefit by being able to train and 'trial' hospitality students, with the view to potentially recruiting some of them," said Craig.

### **Real life training**

Craig said the program has so far been a great success. "We've been able to structure their training around what they're learning at TAFE. We've also worked hard to promote the program by running barista competitions, and having presentation nights where we offered trophies to the most competent students in various categories."

The students have been able to experience what it's like in a 'real restaurant', an invaluable opportunity not only for the student, but also for Craig, who was able to identify which students showed the greatest skills, enthusiasm and commitment.

### **TAFE program results in time and cost savings**

"We've all been inspired and rewarded by this program," said Craig. "The biggest benefit of partnering with TAFE hospitality was that we were working with students who already had an obvious interest and commitment to the hospitality industry. Rather than cross our fingers that we'll find the right people from a newspaper ad, we've been able to go straight to a source of talented, enthusiastic hospitality students undergoing quality TAFE training."

Craig Pratt  
Co-owner/Franchisee, Strathpine CBR

### **The Coffee Club**

[www.coffeeclub.com.au](http://www.coffeeclub.com.au)