



Blog: What Celebrity Bake Off demonstrates about disability

Posted by Sandra Beale in [Strategies](#), [Recruitment](#), [Managing people](#), [Employment law](#) on Mon, 28/01/2013 - 09:06



In aid of Comic Relief last week the BBC aired Celebrity Bake Off where each day four celebrities showed off their baking skills with one celebrity being judged the winner.

It has been a highly entertaining programme watching the celebrities struggling with the requirements of delivering signature bakes, a technical challenge and show stopper cakes to be scrutinised by judges Mary Berry and Paul Hollywood.

On Tuesday the line up of celebrities included Warwick Davis who began his career in Star Wars. He suffers from spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia congenita that causes his dwarfism.

Warwick cooked delicately iced biscuits, a delicious bakewell tart and a wonderful three layered gateau and to ice the gateau he had to use a ladder. However, his baking was demonstrably a cut above the rest including the very competitive Duncan Banatyne and quite rightly he won the competition.

On Wednesday Ellie Simmonds of Team GB fame who won four gold medals in the Paralympics swimming appeared. She has dwarfism. She made flavoursome chocolate and orange scones, chocolate eclairs and a gateau. She regularly bakes at home and for her team mates and again produced some outstanding baking that won her the competition.

This programme was great to watch as it focused on everyone's baking abilities and was level playing field in that respect. The two shorter celebrities had to have raised staging to accommodate their shortened height but that was the only reasonable adjustment made.

To a certain extent programme follows on from the outstanding achievements shown by the disabled athletes who took part in the 2012 Paralympics showing how anyone can excel at what they do and shine in their abilities given the chance.

<http://www.hrzone.co.uk/topic/strategies/blog-what-celebrity-bake-demonstrates-about-disability/126981>

Employers should take more note of what disabled people can do rather than focusing on what they can't do. It is a shameful statistic that only one in ten disabled people are in work according to a report commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2012.

One in six people who become disabled lose their job within the first year and that figure doubles after two years. This is a real shame as the talent pool could be widened if employers could only overcome the barriers to providing support and their prejudice. Legislation only goes some of the way in helping the situation.

Most disabled people do not want to be singled out for special treatment and many prefer to keep quiet about their condition.

This is sometimes possible with disabilities that are not visible such as dyslexia and epilepsy, but it is not possible with an obvious physical disability. Therefore, the mindset of UK employers needs to be changed. This can be done by having more disabled people demonstrating their talents in the spotlight as we have witnessed this week.