



WAYS TO LEARN

Training courses

Training courses are sometimes seen as the only answer to an individual's development needs. Why not consider the other ways to learn' that are considered in this handout. This should help an individual receive:

- The development in the most appropriate form
- Cost effective development
- Development tailored for the way in which they prefer to learn

Training courses can be in house or external, can vary from 1 day to several years and may or may not result in a recognised qualification.

- Short courses - time limited to focus on specific objectives/areas
- Modular courses - short courses as part of an overall development plan
- Refresher courses - an overview - to keep up to date, learn new techniques
- Professional skills courses - e.g. Word processing
- Formal training courses as part of a qualification
- Part time courses - e.g. For 2-3 hours per week for a defined period of time.

Formal short training courses

To be fully effective, you must check out the formal objectives and content of the course; some courses will not meet your member of staff's learning styles. Help them to choose a course, discuss what your objectives are for them attending the course and set aside valuable time to review the course, learning points and agree action points immediately following the course.

Formal long term or qualification based courses

As with the short term course, you need to check that the institution is the right one for your individual as other people's experiences may not necessarily be recommendation enough. Agree objectives prior to each module or, if it is weekly course, each month and again, regularly review outcomes, content and action points. It can be motivating to the individual to have you attend a session which includes them making a presentation to their group. Always remember that just sending someone on a course is not the simple answer. Does the course meet the organisation/the individual's needs? What is expected of the course? How do you review the course content? What exactly is expected from the individual once they have completed the course? Too often courses are blamed as a 'waste of time' when in fact it is the method of development that is the problem.



OTHER WAYS TO LEARN

On the job - Activities which occur in the workplace as part of normal working.

Reality training - Returning to work at grass roots level/do someone else's job for the day
e.g. Accounts Manager working on reception

NVQ's - Training and assessing individuals in line with National Vocational Qualification guidelines
(good for individual who prefers to learn in a pragmatic not theoretical way)

Retraining - When job requirements/equipment changes.

Trial and error - Give people the chance to try new skills and learn from their mistakes.

Coaching - Managers can coach staff to develop the skills of their staff.
Peer coaching (often known as buddying or 'Sitting with Nellie') is where colleagues develop the skills of a fellow colleague/colleagues

Shadowing - Staff are attached to a manager or colleague for a period of time so that they can learn skills and/or knowledge from that person

Mentoring - Planning, setting objectives and reviewing learning is a large part of the process; often, the Mentor learns as much about themselves through the process, making it an enriching experience for both parties.

Research - Research into a work related topic

Computer Assisted Learning Packages - Interactive computer packages on a wide range of subjects where individuals work at their own pace

Personal Testing Programmes - Self analysis tools available in a number of formats
e.g. Books, computer packages, online tests

Open (Distance) Learning Materials/Courses - Available at Open University and other organisations, usually includes some tutorial and group learning situations.

Job Enlargement - Increase the role and enable a member of staff to develop new skills and knowledge

Delegation - Look at areas of your work. Are you keeping back some tasks or projects that your member of staff would learn a lot from? Try not to fall into the trap of only releasing the dull jobs; use delegation as a developmental tool.



GROUP/TEAM ACTIVITIES

We gain an enormous amount of our knowledge and skills from other people. Group activities are the core of components of many training courses. These activities do not have to be confined to courses but can be set up in the same ways.

Projects - Inter departmental or departmental groups of people brought together on a full time basis for a fixed period of time to carry out a defined project.

Working Parties - A group of people brought together to examine particular work

Quality Circles - A multi-level group who meet to discuss how to improve the service/product quality

Team Building Events - These can be internal or external events, indoor or outdoor, 1 hour to 5 days in duration. The key to the success of these events is the quality of the facilitator to explore and bring out issues/ideas and focus on actions

Problem Solving - A number of people come together to come up with a solution to a particular problem. Requires expert facilitation to ensure all members participate and that no one person dominates.

Brainstorming - This can be a structured or unstructured method of generating ideas

Workshops - The focus here is on the practical application of knowledge, skills or attitude

Network groups - Sharing information and knowledge in a defined work area

Support groups - Staff who get together for support and information

Learning Sets - People who support and help each other to enable them to find their own solutions to problems, maybe in a particular academic field

Action Learning Sets - People who meet as a group on a regular basis, usually 3 to 5 times per year to work on a particular organisation task or problem

Transfer - Permanent sideways move into vacant position at the same level

Temporary move - Opportunity to learn new skills/knowledge whilst covering for a colleague who is away from work (e.g. Long term sickness, maternity)

Acting up - (usually with pay) Temporary promotion to cover long absence

Secondment (internal) - This could be for 1 day to 1 year or more in duration to cover a colleague's job or as part of a job swap with a colleague to learn new skills/knowledge

Secondment (external) - This could be for 1 day to 1 year or more in duration as part of a job swap to learn new skills/knowledge

Secondment (abroad) - This could be for 1 day to 1 year or more in duration as part of a job swap to learn new skills/knowledge in an organisation abroad

Visual aids/video - Use of visual material to stimulate discussion and learning in whole staff group.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Visits - Talk with and observe other organisations such as clients, suppliers, competitors, any.

Conferences - Forum to hear about new ideas/research. Meet and discuss with colleagues from other parts of the country/other organisations

Seminars - Focused, short presentation/workshops followed by a discussion/application to own work

Networking - Individuals consciously building up a network of useful people - internal and/or external (ways to learn)