



Leading on Learning

A hands-on guide for
line managers

Welcome

to our 'Leading on Learning' guide, one of the many ways in which we at the Campaign for Learning are working to celebrate and promote the huge benefits of learning at work. We've developed this guide in response to requests from numerous supervisors and line managers we work with through the National Workplace Learning Network, National Learning at Work Day and our other workplace learning initiatives.

We recognise that as a manager you are the vitally important link between your most valuable resource, people, and your organisation's goals and objectives. How you enable your staff to develop and use their learning will affect how successful you and the organisation are in achieving your goals.

So we'd like to share with you some hints, tips and tools to help you help your staff be the best they can be.

We'll look at:

- **The ideal world** – How does a successful manager act? [PAGE 3](#)
- **Key steps to developing your staff** – Planning and evaluating [PAGE 5](#)
- **Skills you'll need** – Leadership, management and coaching skills [PAGE 7](#)
- **The essentials: Skills for Life** – Maths and English in the workplace [PAGE 9](#)
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Please dip in and out of this guide – some parts may be very familiar, but we hope that everyone will find something new to try or a different perspective on an issue they're tackling. We hope you find it useful.



Good luck!

Justine Ballard
Learning & Development Adviser
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The ideal world

How does a successful manager act?

The successful manager who facilitates learning is one who can see the potential in their staff; they will listen well, give clear direction and crucially will make personal development easier to achieve for both themselves and those who work with them.

Managers can:

- Enable learning
- Offer opportunities for personal development
- Maximise the talent in their team
- Help people to identify and achieve their own potential

The result of all of this is that staff:

- Gain confidence
- Perform better
- Challenge themselves more often without being prompted
- Are more interested in what is happening in the team and the organisation

The Campaign for Learning's research shows that managers often neglect their role in enabling learning and skills because of the high number of performance related targets that they have to deal with and the day-to-day challenges that occur within the workplace.

However, if your staff are continually learning and developing, you will reach those targets more easily – learning brings benefits in itself, but also a very effective means to an end.

Think back to one of your own great managers – someone who helped you to develop into your next role, someone who taught you something important about being a manager or someone who challenged you when necessary.

Think about the way they communicated, the way they showed their trust in you and the way they facilitated your learning.

What can you learn from them?

The ideal world
How does a successful manager act?

Where you come in...

Your role as manager can have a major impact on staff's willingness and ability to develop. You are able to influence through:

- Performance development reviews
- Induction activities
- Identifying skills needs
- Giving access to challenging work or job rotation
- Coaching and guidance
- Providing informal training activities
- Identifying external training programmes
- Encouraging staff's career development and promotion
- Ensuring knowledge sharing
- Holding 'lessons learnt' sessions
- Leading by example

LEARNING METHODS

Staff days
Staff days are great for team building and joint learning. Organising the Christmas staff day was great fun. It strengthened us as a team and increased my motivation as we had total autonomy. The day itself went very smoothly, with everyone taking part and those who normally sat quietly were leading sessions. The CEO even dressed as Rudolph!



FAST FACT

More than four in ten UK employees are considering quitting their job in the next year, according to research by YouGov for Investors in People.

A lack of motivation at work is cited as a major problem, with unreasonable workloads, staff feeling underpaid and a lack of career path being blamed.

Research was conducted in September and October 2007.

Key steps to developing your staff

Planning and evaluating

There are two key elements to ensure effective and productive learning in the workplace – planning and evaluation.

Planning

As a manager, you will have targets that are part of the organisational business plan. In order to meet these targets you and your staff will need skills and knowledge that you may or may not have. You will need to identify any gaps in skills and knowledge, and then plan to help you schedule the necessary learning over the year and across your team, within the limits imposed by your organisation's schedules.

You may not be solely responsible for the learning and development of your staff, as there may be departments in your organisation that deal with this. However, you will be key in identifying learning needs, communicating these to relevant departments and giving staff time and support for their development. If your team understand how their development fits with the delivery of the business plan they will feel more comfortable about attending relevant opportunities. This will help people see personal development as an expected part of performance management – and you will have a better idea of the budget needed.

Top tips for planning learning and development

- Make sure you involve your staff in identifying and agreeing relevant training. This conversation is vital for buy-in.
- Use the appraisal system to conduct a Training Needs Analysis. This will show you what skills and knowledge your team already have against what is needed to achieve the next year's objectives. See **Useful Information**, page 19 for Training Needs Analysis tools.
- If you have learning champions, Union Learning Representatives or Learning and Development experts, work with them as they may have access to more resources and expertise.
- Be aware that people learn in different ways. For instance some people prefer to listen and learn, others prefer to learn by doing and some are more visual and like to read or see diagrams. The way a person prefers to learn may alter over time and depend on the particular context. This means that if someone hasn't succeeded in learning (in their schooldays or more recently) by one method, it doesn't mean they can't learn – trying a different method may change their experience completely. However, you should avoid labelling people by a learning style as this too can create a barrier to learning. For more information on learning styles, visit the Your Learning section on the Campaign for Learning's website www.campaignforlearning.org.uk
- Think about personality types and previous experiences when planning learning and development. Remember you are dealing with people who have feelings as well as skills and knowledge. The conversation with each individual is key to understanding what makes them tick and what their attitudes to learning are.

Evaluation

Once you've planned your team's development and have given them the resources to learn, it is extremely important to measure afterwards how useful the activity was. It's important that you understand what learning has taken place, how it will be used in the workplace and how much it cost, so you can plan for the future and make sure you get best value out of all your learning and development.

Essential steps for evaluation

- You identified individual and group training needs at the start: now consider to what extent the identified training needs were met by the activity.
- Discuss with your staff what they got out of the activities, and to what extent their objectives as individuals were achieved?
- Go on to discuss with staff how they will use what they've learnt to improve the way that they work. This is crucial to ensure continued buy-in and identify what sorts of training are most useful for your organisation.
- Measure the overall investment of time, money and resources that your staff put into learning and development.
- Remember that learning and development includes inductions, presentations, shadowing, reading etc. as well as training. There are at least 50 ways to learn other than training.
- Report your outcomes to your managers and celebrate successes. This is essential to gain support for future learning and development.
- Keeping records can help you find out which learning and development is effective and which isn't.

There are a number of models you can use to structure your evaluation e.g. the Kirkpatrick model looks at four levels of evaluation – reaction, learning, behaviour and results. To find out more see the **Useful Information** section on page 19.

Space to Reflect

Do you have an individual learning and development plan?

What learning and development have you taken part in over the last year?

Did you discuss how it related to your work before you took part in the learning and development activity?

Did you discuss the impact of this with your line manager after the activity?

How do you know that a development activity has an impact on how you perform your job?

Have you ever been rewarded for taking part in learning and development?

Think about the implications of your own learning experience for the learning and development of your team.

Do you have regular discussions with your staff about learning and development? Do you relate these to business activities and objectives?

Name one thing that you do to encourage staff to develop themselves. Think of one further thing you could also do in future to ensure learning and development are always on the agenda.

LEARNING TOOL

Maslow's hierarchy of needs can help identify people's motivations. This can be useful when looking at how to motivate your team. To find out more see '**Useful Information**' section on page 19.

Skills you'll need Leadership, management and coaching skills

The types of skills that you will need to develop your staff and promote learning in your team include leadership, management and coaching skills.

To develop your leadership and management abilities you need to think about:

- Communication skills – so you can communicate learning goals clearly
- Being authentic and building trust
- Understanding your staff and listening to them
- Thinking creatively and empowering people to develop

Using coaching skills to manage tends to promote more personal growth than more 'directive' styles of management.

This means:

- Using intentional listening – staying open to what's being said, not leaping to conclusions, being attentive and respectful
- Asking powerful questions that will encourage discovery and learning rather than giving the answer
- Always holding the 'bigger picture' for your member of staff – this means understanding what your member of staff can achieve and helping them to realise it. It's important to believe that a person is capable of growing otherwise you may limit them.

Examples of powerful questions when coaching as a manager

'And how might you do that in a way that **DOES** enable?'

'How will you **KNOW** when you've achieved it?'

'What will **YOU** do differently next time?'

'What did you **LEARN** from the experience?'

Why?

Encouraging people to ask questions is a great way to promote learning and understanding. We were happy to ask as children – why did we stop asking?

LEARNING METHODS

Your leadership and management skills can be continually developed. You'll also need to stay up to date with business practices. Remember to discuss this with your own manager and plan your own learning and development for the year. (Seeing you learning yourself can be a powerful motivator for your team, as well as being invaluable to you!)

For more information on developing leadership and management skills, including coaching skills, see the **Useful Information** section, page 18.



Coaching

A good coach believes that you have all the answers within you and that through their intentional listening and powerful questioning they will enable you to find solutions and clarity.

'Coaching gave me the opportunity to reflect on my goals and how I was approaching them. I was then able through my coach's facilitation to produce an action plan to achieve my goals. Coaching has given me more clarity about my skills and how I can use them.'

LEARNING

LEARNING METHODS

The essentials: Skills for Life

Maths and English skills in the workplace

Skills for Life (also known as basic, core or essential skills) are functional English and maths up to Level 2 (equivalent to a GCSE grade A – C or NVQ Level 2). English and maths are the two basic skills that all of us use on a daily basis, and both affect our success in learning a variety of other new skills.

The Government's Skills Strategy, launched in 2003, identified ICT (Information & Communications Technology – using computers and other technological devices) as being another essential skill. Developing skills in ICT also enables development of the other Skills for Life.

Whilst there are many people who struggle with Skills for Life, very few adults have no reading, writing or spoken English skills. Most people have a 'spiky profile', with strong and weak areas, often as a result of their experience. A person may have limited literacy skills because they missed out at school but manage their money effectively, for example, or a graduate in a technological subject will have high technical skills but may struggle to spell words. We all have skills areas where we don't feel confident – it might be reading 24-hour timetables, spelling unusual words, using commas or speaking in public.

FAST FACT

In England 5.2 million adults struggle with functional literacy skills, while 6.8 million adults struggle with functional numeracy skills.

Managers may not be aware of Skills for Life support needs in their team, as most of us develop strategies for coping with areas where we are less confident. If your team do have Skills for Life needs they may not be comfortable discussing them. However, if these needs aren't addressed they can have a substantial impact on the business and the individual. As part of your planning for learning and development you will want to consider whether limited English and maths skills are having an impact on the performance of your team.

You may feel nervous about discussing Skills for Life needs, but the best approach is to have an open conversation. Discuss any needs as skills requirements rather than problems, in just the same way as you might discuss the skills needed to operate a new piece of equipment or use a piece of computer software. Stress that everyone needs to update and 'brush up' skills on a regular basis – particularly skills that may be needed nowadays at work which we may not have used much previously (e.g. writing skills for sending emails.)



You may notice signs that suggest that members of your team would benefit from Skills for Life support.

These may include:

- Being unsure about answering questions about time (e.g. How long ago? For how long?) or weights & measures
- A limited range of punctuation when writing
- Getting confused between the past and present tense
- Giving out the wrong change
- Reluctance to take on any responsibility with money e.g. petty cash, operating a till
- Struggling with using a calculator or spreadsheet
- Struggling with putting items in ranked order e.g. from the biggest to the smallest
- Wrong spelling of simple words
- Reluctance to take on tasks involving writing things down (e.g. taking telephone messages) or calculations
- Inconsistent use of upper and lower case letters, particularly in the middle of words
- Poor handwriting
- Extremely well developed memory, which may be the flip side of not writing things down

Remember not to jump to conclusions. There may be other reasons for these characteristics. The key is to open up conversation with staff, to treat Skills for Life in just the same way as any other skills and to be seen to be constantly learning and updating your skills yourself.

There are many tools available, such as the Move On Up Mini Test www.move-on.org.uk/testyourskills.asp which may help you and your team assess your skills and plan to improve them if necessary.

Once you are aware of the Skills for Life needs of your team you will need to incorporate these into your team's learning and development plan.

For those that struggle with poor maths or English skills, it can be a huge hurdle to overcome just to admit that you have problems in literacy and numeracy. Therefore it may be something that a person may want to deal with outside of the working environment. For those people you may want to refer them to the **National Careers Service**, which they can access by searching online for National Careers Service or calling **0800 100 900**.

To find out more about the support that is available for Skills for Life see the **Useful Information** section, page 18.

E-learning

Learning via a computer is a great way for staff to learn at their own convenience and in their own time. The down side is that they can be interrupted by their colleagues and can't always ask questions. Make sure they focus on learning for a set time, and colleagues are aware of this.

LEARNING METHODS

Mentors

Don't struggle alone – learn from someone else's experience and knowledge. Mentors are people who have had experience in your field. They can tell you how they overcame obstacles, developed their own career and what they've learned. You can use them as a sounding board and advisor.

LEARNING METHODS

If you don't have a mentoring scheme where you work, identify someone whose work, values and experience you admire and relate to, and ask them if they would be happy to be your mentor.

LEARNING METHODS

Overcoming obstacles

How to build a learning culture

The challenges of the 21st century global economy requires a workforce who are continually curious and keen to develop and learn. Some employees will be more motivated than others to meet this challenge. Often it comes down to team culture and the manager creating an environment where learning and development is respected, supported and expected, and where the benefits to the individual are spelled out.

'When you notice how someone has improved as a result of a specific development opportunity – tell him or her, and make it explicit how the improvement links back to the learning.'



Through strong leadership and small changes you can overcome obstacles and build a learning culture: here are some ways to start.

Talk about people's development – often

Open communication between manager and staff is the key to a productive working relationship. This includes discussing skills, knowledge and areas for further development. Have a conversation with staff before and after development activities. Make sure you always present any sort of development in a positive light, as an opportunity for the individual and the team, rather than as something to remedy a problem or something imposed by senior management.

Recognise and validate staff's Learning and Development

Positive behaviour (in this case, continuous learning) is strengthened through acknowledgement and praise. When you notice how someone has improved as a result of a specific development opportunity – tell him or her, and make it explicit how the improvement links back to the learning.

Walk the talk

Consider your own development needs and take action. When people see that personal development is important to all levels and job roles they will be more likely to engage in it themselves (see section on **Skills You'll Need** on page 7).

Nominate a champion

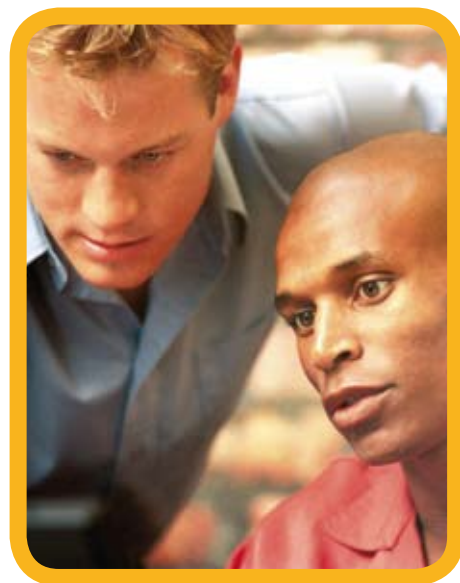
Learning champions are people in the workplace who will promote learning and development to their peers. If your workplace is unionised you may already have Union Learning Representatives, who will act as learning champions. If not, ask a member of staff who is interested in Learning and Development or has benefited from it recently – there is always at least one! Communicating the benefits of learning through word of mouth and personal experience is very powerful.

Build a common language

Have a clear understanding of the difference between learning and training. Your team need to know that training is one of the many ways to learn and that learning is taking place every day in all sorts of formal and informal ways.

Explain why

If you ask your team members to attend training, they need to understand why they need to learn that particular skill/knowledge and how it will benefit them. After they have done the training, they need early opportunities to put it into practice or many of the benefits may be lost.



Tasters

If you have reluctant learners think about using fun and bite size learning that is not related to work (e.g. holiday Spanish) to get them engaged. Research shows that a positive learning experience is a key motivator to continue learning.

Dealing with time and money

Time and money are often in limited supply, on top of which there are also deadlines to meet. The good news is that some types of learning are offered free e.g. most Skills for Life learning and courses that give people a first Level 2 qualification (see **Useful Information** section on page 18). Learning can also be delivered in different ways, such as online and in the workplace, which can reduce the amount of time that people spend away from their tasks.

Use what you do already

You can also enable learning that doesn't rely on time and money by using what you do currently on a day-to-day basis to create a learning environment

- Use team meetings and away days for brainstorming, creative thinking or team quizzes
- Use one to one meetings to discuss what staff might have learned from the previous week's work
- Always use appraisal meetings to discuss learning and development planning.

Build on relationships

Once a month invite one of your partners or stakeholders in to give a presentation and question and answer session. You may only need to spend the cost of tea and coffee.

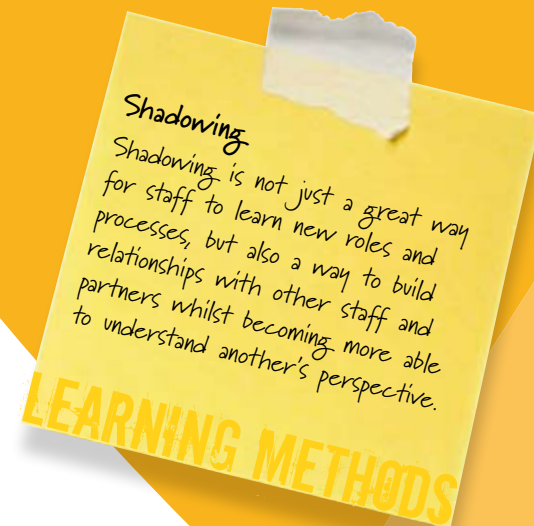
Set up shadowing partnerships where staff can learn from each other This can lead to better understanding of what other employees do and result in more productive joint working.

Ask people from different departments to offer quick learning sessions. For example your IT support can offer top tips for using PowerPoint or Word, and your HR manager can hold short sessions to answer questions on performance management.

Encourage staff input

Following development opportunities ask staff to write a short paragraph listing the best thing about the course, the most important thing that they've learnt and whether they would recommend it to others.

Ask people to share the key things they have learned at team meetings.



Space to Reflect

- What activities and events already exist that you can use more productively?
- Identify some of your key partners/external relationships that you could approach to share learning.
- Identify current areas of good practice that you can build on.

It's basically all about getting people engaged and enthused

A learning culture doesn't happen overnight, but your actions and attitude will make a huge difference to how learning and development is perceived within your team.

To engage with your staff really effectively, remember to:

Give people choice

People have different learning styles, rates of learning and areas of interest. Why restrict people's Learning and Development to their job skills? Help them learn and develop in areas that they will find interesting and they will quite naturally become more positive, productive and valuable to your organisation. Offer relevant learning in as many ways as you can.

Focus on learning, not training

Talk about learning rather than courses. People respond to appropriate learning because:

- It benefits and interests them
- It helps them to grow and to develop their natural abilities
- Helps them to make a difference
- Helps them to feel good about themselves and their work

Learning describes a person growing, whereas 'training' describes and commonly represents a transfer of knowledge or skill for organisational gain. Point out how learning takes place naturally as part of people working together – e.g. someone showing a colleague a shortcut on the computer or a quicker way to complete a process.

Learning and development is key to effective and motivated staff. It's also key to you as a manager being effective and motivated. Learning should be fun, fulfilling and shared.

Building a Learning Culture 'To Do' list

- Ask your learning and development (L&D) manager to run L&D drop in sessions
- Run regular presentations and coffee mornings
- Organise staff days including L&D sessions
- Use existing meetings, one to ones, appraisals, team meetings etc. for learning and sharing
- Use your stakeholders and partners for quick presentation and question & answer sessions
- Ask your line managers to publicise their own learning/courses that they do
- Ask staff to share their learning
- Be really clear about what learning is/means and includes
- Develop a learning champions network
- Publicise and promote development opportunities in a regular and consistent format
- Create an environment of trust – people are rewarded for trying
- Promote knowledge sharing as an expectation not a bonus

Enjoy your continued development!

Take part

National Learning at Work Day

Learning at Work Day is an annual awareness campaign promoting and supporting workplace learning events across England. The Learning at Work Day website www.learningatworkday.com will tell you how you can take part in the biggest national celebration of workplace learning. It offers planning materials and downloadable/online activities.

Learning at Work Day is the perfect opportunity to get employees motivated about learning. Remember to use the momentum gathered from the day to signpost participants to:

- Other training and development opportunities you offer
- The National Careers Service for information on careers, skills development and training - by searching online for National Careers Service or calling 0800 100 900
- The National Careers Service for Skills for Life support (numeracy, literacy, language and ICT)
- Learning opportunities in the local area offered by the council or colleges
- Training or courses relevant to individuals' roles such as those required by professional bodies e.g. the Chartered Institute of Marketing
- Other informal learning such as information about the local library, museums and leisure centres

Useful information

Support for skills development, Skills for Life and workplace learning

The Campaign for Learning

The Campaign for Learning runs National Learning at Work Day.

National Learning at Work Day is the largest annual celebration of workplace learning and skills and encourages organisations all over the country to run activities that engage employees in learning. Free advice and practical materials for running events is offered.

www.learningatworkday.com

The National Careers Service

The National Careers Service aims to help people make informed decisions about careers, skills and training.

The service is free and confidential and available by searching online for National Careers Service or calling 0800 100 900

nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

The Lifelong Learning Account

A Lifelong Learning Account is a free online service available from the National Careers Service. A Lifelong Learning Account brings together all the information, support and services an individual should need in order to make informed choices about their learning and working life.

direct.gov.uk/lifelonglearningaccount

Skills for Life

Skills for Life qualifications are for individuals who want to improve their reading, writing, numeracy or information and communication technology skills, or want to show the skills they already have. For more information see the National Careers Service (see left).

The Move On website also has information on Skills for Life including online mini-tests for literacy and numeracy.

www.move-on.org.uk

Websites to visit

Investors in People has information on best practice standards for managers and staff. Literacy, language and numeracy learning is an implicit part of the Investors in People standard.

www.investorsinpeople.co.uk

Unionlearn helps unions spread the lifelong learning message to its members.

www.unionlearn.org.uk

The Chartered Management Institute is dedicated to management and leadership and provides a wide range of management courses and free resources.

www.managers.org.uk

For more information on useful websites including where to get free templates and tools for a range of business areas, visit the Workplace Learning section at

www.campaignforlearning.org.uk

Tools you can use

Training Needs Analysis

The Chartered Management Institute has a range of free comprehensive management guides on its website www.managers.org.uk/howdoyou including this downloadable guide to Training Needs Analysis:

www.campaignforlearning.org.uk/cfl/assets/documents/Activitiesandworksheets/tna.pdf

For more information about Learning Needs Analysis, evaluation approaches and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, visit the Workplace Learning section on the Campaign for Learning's website www.campaignforlearning.org.uk

Books you might be interested in

For information on a range of books you may find useful, visit the Workplace Learning section on the Campaign for Learning's website www.campaignforlearning.org.uk

These cover the following areas:

- Personal development
- Leadership and management
- Coaching for managers
- Building a learning culture

Ever wondered how to make learning and development an integral part of your team's daily business?

The 'Leading on Learning' guide will show you how to build a learning culture without the need for a huge investment in money and time. It looks at the ideal manager in terms of developing staff and gives you practical suggestions for planning, evaluating, promoting Skills for Life and overcoming some of the obstacles for learning. This useful guide also includes 'fast facts', 'space to reflect' and 'to do' lists to help you build a positive learning culture.



This handbook has been produced by the Campaign for Learning. The Campaign for Learning is an independent charity which aims to stimulate a love of learning for life that leads to positive change. For more information on our work visit: www.campaignforlearning.org.uk

