

25. How to Identify Training Needs

1 OVERVIEW

It is a good idea to encourage continuous learning throughout your business. This helps to ensure that all employees have the necessary knowledge, skills and qualifications to deliver the required job. This can be done in a number of ways:

- Assess the performance of employees and provide regular feedback.
- Identify the mandatory and legal training requirements of the business.
- Support employees with learning and development opportunities in order to keep their knowledge and skills up to date.
- Provide one to one instruction.
- Encourage employees to reflect on their learning.

2 CONDUCTING THE MEETING

A discussion with your employee to identify training needs should be collaborative in style and may involve supporting the individual to make informed decisions. It involves using questioning, and listening skills to enable the individual to contribute fully to the conversation.

- Find a mutually convenient time and a place to have a private conversation.
- Gather relevant information, such as a job description and targets and objectives.
- Confirm details of the meeting and its purpose with the individual in advance.

These are some key steps to include:

- Help the individual to feel at ease and able to contribute fully.
- Clarify the focus of the discussion - essentially is it to identify learning for their current role or a future role or a mix of these areas.
- Encourage the individual to identify the key aspects of their current role and the knowledge, skills and behavior required to be effective - draw upon the information gathered before the session. Are there any aspects of their current work not reflected in their job description? Are there any new responsibilities that they may need to take on in the future?
- Encourage the individual to review their current performance - what are their strengths that they can build on? Are there any areas in their performance that it would be helpful to work on? If the individual is looking for a promotion or a sideways move, what transferrable skills, knowledge, experience and behaviors do they have? Where are the gaps?
- Support the individual in identifying their key learning needs and in prioritising these. Which are the most important? What order would it make sense to tackle them in? It is important to be realistic about what can be achieved.
- Identify if there are any particular factors that need to be considered in deciding on how to meet these learning needs - this could include practical considerations of cost, time, availability for travel, IT skills, literacy, fitting in with other priorities, what sorts of learning are available and personal learning preferences.
- Identify a range of options to meet these learning needs. It is worth thinking more broadly than training courses and considering options such as job shadowing, coaching and online learning. Give them the opportunity to practice new skills and feedback.

3 CREATING A SKILLS MATRIX

A Skills Matrix is often used as part of a process of identifying learning needs and managing these needs. The following steps are involved in creating a skills matrix:

- Identify the purpose of the matrix - clarify who it is to cover and what its purpose is.
- Identify what the different categories of 'skill' are and how to define them. Each 'skill' area will need to be defined so that it is understood what is meant by each one.
- Decide how to rate the skills. You may need to identify which 'skill' is needed for which role, as well as the rating system for individuals in relation to that skill.
- Decide how to rate the individual against the 'skills' identified in the matrix.
- Communicate this process to your employees and your reasons for implementing a skills matrix.
- Make sure that the information contained in the matrix is regularly reviewed and updated.

4 NEXT STEPS

- Use the template documents available, such as, the training needs analysis form and skills matrix.
- Make sure that identifying training needs is built into your performance management process.
- Be open and transparent with employees about why you are implementing a process to identify training needs.
- Evaluate any training employees have received to see if they have listened, learnt and implemented the new skills they have acquired.

5 FACTSHEETS & TEMPLATES TO HELP

- How to Conduct a Performance Appraisal
- How to Create an Action Plan for Employees
- Guidance on Communication and Employee Performance for Managers
- Skills Matrix
- Pre Appraisal Form
- Appraisal Form
- Training Needs Analysis Form
- Employee Action Plan
- Team Action Plan

6 FOR MORE ADVICE AND INFORMATION

ACAS - (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law. www.acas.org.uk

Achieve in Bath & North East Somerset - free recruitment support, advice and help. Matching job seekers, employers and course providers to help employers recruit, train and retain employees. www.achieveinbathnes.co.uk

Future Bright - free help & support for businesses and employees to realise their full potential. Provide access to training and development, workshops and networking. HR support to promote career progression and best practice to attract and retain staff. www.futurebright.org.uk

***Bibliography** - this fact sheet was produced by Rathbone HR Solutions in association with Cool Ventures Ltd in December 2018 with content sourced from; HR Inform (www.hr-inform.co.uk), ACAS (www.acas.org.uk), CIPD (www.cipd.co.uk), the pensions regulator (www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/employers), HMRC (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs), the Information Commissioner's Officer website (www.ico.org.uk)*



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