NCFE Level 2

Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

CUSTOMER SERVICE

MOTIVATION

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

LEADERSHIP ROLES

SUPPORT

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Workbook 1

How to use your learning materials

This course is delivered on a flexible learning basis. This means that most of your study will take place away from your Assessor/Tutor. It helps to carefully plan your studying so that you get the most out of your course. We have put together some handy tips for you below.

Study Guidance

- Try to plan an outline timetable of when and where you will study.
- Try to complete your work in a quiet environment where you are unlikely to be distracted.
- Set realistic goals and deadlines for the various elements of your course.
- Plan what you are going to study during each session, and try and achieve this each time.
- After each session, reflect on what you have achieved and plan what you hope to complete next time.
- Remember that not only do you have the support of your Assessor/Tutor, but it is likely that your family, friends and work colleagues will also be willing to help.

Assessor/Tutor Support

- Your Assessor/Tutor will be available to support and guide you through the programme. They are experts in your area of study and are experienced in helping many different types of learners.
- They can help you to improve the standard of work you submit and will give you useful feedback on areas in which you have excelled, as well as where you can improve.
- Remember to listen to, or read, their feedback carefully. Ask if you are unsure about any of the feedback you receive, as your Assessor/Tutor is there to help.
- Make note of any tips they give. Refer to the learning materials, as they contain the information you need to complete the end-of-unit assessments.
- Look out for areas in which you can improve, and set yourself an action plan to make sure you complete the required work.
- Take positive feedback on board; this demonstrates you are doing things right and have a good understanding of the subject area.
- Use the feedback to avoid repeating any mistakes you may have made.

Enjoy your studies!

NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

Workbook 1

Workbook Contents

In this workbook, we are going to look at the principles of team leading, business structures and environment, and communicating work-related information. We will cover different techniques for dealing with teams, organisational change, motivation, business planning, and verbal and written communication in the workplace.

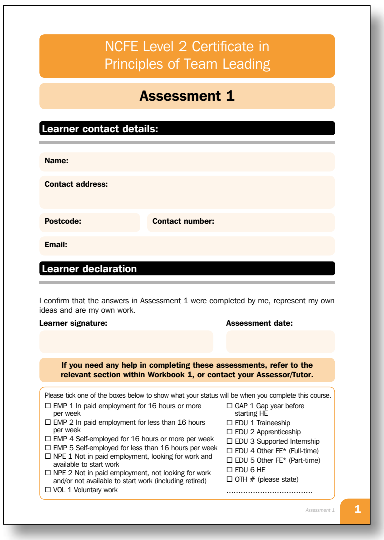
Within the workbook, there are several Knowledge Activities that help to focus on the various topics. These are informal activities that help to consolidate knowledge. In the last section, there are Extension Activities for learners who wish to develop their knowledge further.

Contents

Each section has a corresponding assessment that must be completed in order to achieve this part of the programme.

The assessments for this workbook can be found in:

Assessment 1


NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

Assessment 1

Learner contact details:

Name:

Contact address:

Postcode: Contact number:

Email:

Learner declaration

I confirm that the answers in Assessment 1 were completed by me, represent my own ideas and are my own work.

Learner signature: Assessment date:

If you need any help in completing these assessments, refer to the relevant section within Workbook 1, or contact your Assessor/Tutor.

Please tick one of the boxes below to show what your status will be when you complete this course.

- ☐ EMP 1 In paid employment for 16 hours or more per week
- ☐ EMP 2 In paid employment for less than 16 hours per week
- ☐ EMP 4 Self-employed for 16 hours or more per week
- ☐ EMP 5 Self-employed for less than 16 hours per week
- ☐ NPE 1 Not in paid employment, looking for work and available to start work
- ☐ NPE 2 Not in paid employment, not looking for work and/or not available to start work (including retired)
- ☐ VOL 1 Voluntary work
- ☐ GAP 1 Gap year before starting HE
- ☐ EDU 1 Traineeship
- ☐ EDU 2 Apprenticeship
- ☐ EDU 3 Supported Internship
- ☐ EDU 4 Other FE* (Full-time)
- ☐ EDU 5 Other FE* (Part-time)
- ☐ EDU 6 HE
- ☐ OTH # (please state) ....

Assessment 1 1

When you have completed this workbook, you should attempt the assessment. Your Assessor/Tutor will then give you detailed written feedback on your progress.

Remember that your assessment answers should be written in your own words. You should not copy answers directly from the workbooks.

Upon successful completion of this qualification, learners will be awarded the NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading (QRN: 603/3883/0). This qualification is certificated by the Awarding Organisation NCFE.

This section of the workbook deals with leadership styles in organisations. We will look at team dynamics, techniques used to manage the team's work, organisational change and team motivation.

Leadership styles

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 1, 2 and 3.

Leadership and management go hand in hand. Managers and team leaders need a balance of management and leadership skills. Some will be excellent managers, but they may not be very good leaders. Others will be inspirational leaders, but not very good at management functions.

Team leaders need a good balance so that they can cope with the various demands of the role and be effective members of their organisation.

What is management?

Dictionary definition of management:

The process of dealing with or controlling things or people

In simple terms, management is the achievement of an organisation's objectives through people and other resources. Managers use their own time, energy and expertise to achieve the best return from the organisation's resources – people, materials and a budget.

What is leadership?

Dictionary definition of leadership:

The action of leading a group of people or an organisation

Leadership is about influencing people. Leaders are innovative and they inspire others to give their help and support to accomplish common tasks.

Section 1: Principles of team leading

This section focuses on leadership, but we will be covering elements of management too.

Characteristics of effective leaders

Effective leaders have vision and an ability to influence people. People unite behind them, which makes them valuable to an organisation. A leader can be imaginative and creative, able to inspire change and development, and they work with others to manage the different systems and operations to make their vision a reality.

Skills and knowledge are needed when, for example:

- planning, organising and setting objectives
- controlling, allocating and monitoring physical and human resources
- communicating and coordinating with others inside or outside the organisation
- persuading, influencing or leading by example
- motivating, empowering, valuing and supporting others
- training, coaching and mentoring
- giving, receiving and using feedback
- learning, developing skills and following instructions
- managing conflicts
- dealing with problems

Effective leaders share many characteristics. For example, they are usually:

- self-confident
- adaptable and good at analysis
- proactive, decisive and willing to take the initiative
- ambitious and focused on achieving goals
- good under pressure
- honest and reliable
- energetic and enthusiastic
- inspirational and visionary
- good at influencing and motivating others

Effective leaders are good at persuading and inspiring others to give them the help and support they need to achieve their goals.

Leadership styles

There are many theories and discussions about leadership styles. One management theorist, Kurt Lewin, identified the following leadership styles:

- **autocratic**
- **democratic**
- **laissez-faire**

Autocratic

This style is also known as authoritarian leadership. These people expect others to do things their way only, and they insist on having their own way. They do not consult with others and they make decisions based on the needs of the task, not the people. They also impose penalties when rules are not followed.

This can be useful if there is a crisis or a situation that needs quick, assertive leadership – e.g. for inexperienced team members who need close supervision or in an emergency. However, the style can be very demotivating and frustrating to experienced and skilled staff.

Democratic

These leaders allow other people to be involved in the decision-making process. They are consultative and value the opinions of others, and they are influenced by what other people want. They are concerned with building relationships with their team members and are keen to encourage team members to discuss ideas and suggestions.

This can make for a very engaging and easy-going working environment, although it can be frustrating if the leader is timid about making final decisions.

Laissez-faire

These leaders trust their team members' capabilities and are willing to stand back and let the team get on with the tasks. They have minimal input and involvement. They let the team make the majority of the day-to-day decisions and implement the work processes.

This can be very motivating for team members, and the leader is able to step back and take an overview of the whole operation, moving in to take action only when required. This style works with experienced and well-motivated team members, but is not appropriate for unskilled or unmotivated staff.

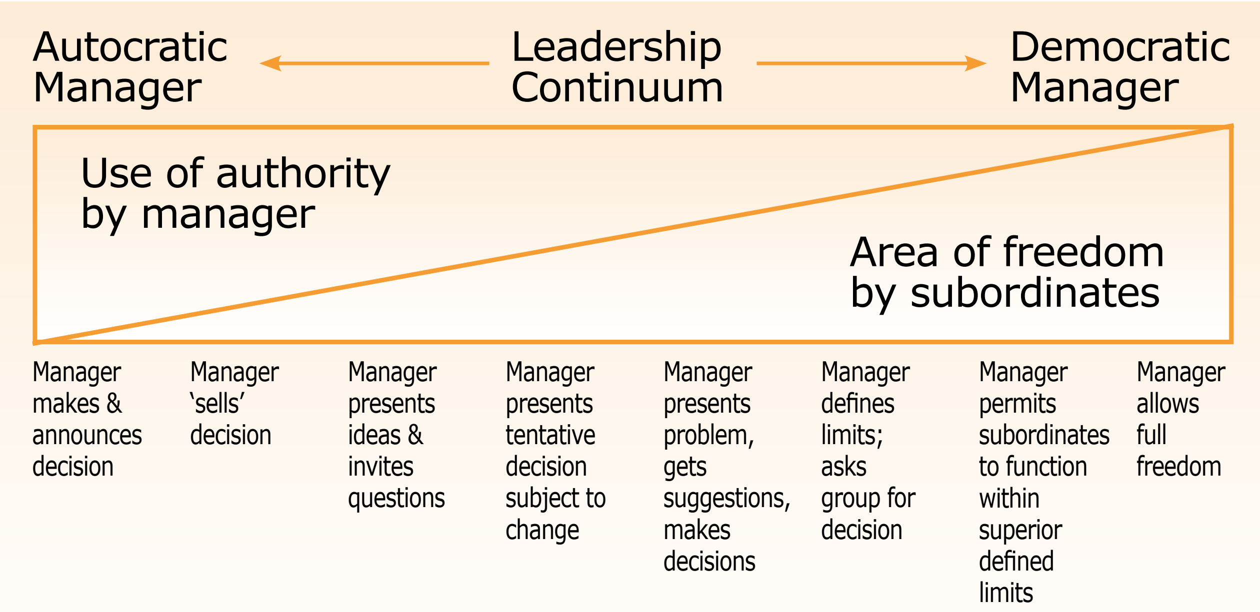
It helps team leaders to know their preferred leadership style so that they can adapt the style in certain situations. For example, if a team leader is usually laissez-faire, they will let their team get on with the tasks, knowing that the team members will ask for help or guidance if required. However, if there is an emergency in the workplace, such as a machine breaking down and becoming dangerous, they need to become autocratic so that they can call out instructions and take quick control of the situation.

The same team leader might be democratic in other situations. For example, in a team meeting, they might let the team members discuss and choose who will do which task, instead of allocating work and telling them what they are going to do. This democratic approach can increase the team members' confidence and involvement, but it can also diminish respect for the team leader if it happens too often.

The above leadership styles (autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire) were identified by **Kurt Lewin's theory** of leadership styles. However, there are many other leadership theories and models, and another one is by **Tannenbaum and Schmidt**.

Tannenbaum and Schmidt's Continuum of Leadership Behaviour was written in 1958, and updated in 1973. It is often referred to as 'Tells, Sells, Consults and Joins'. The four main leadership styles covered by the theory are:

- **tells** – the leader identifies a problem and makes decisions unilaterally without consulting anyone, and without giving much thought to their subordinates
- **sells** – the leader maintains control but they spend time persuading staff about the benefits of their decisions
- **consults** – the leader identifies the problem but does not make the final decision until the team members have suggested solutions
- **joins** – the leader defines the limits of the possible decisions that can be made by the team, then makes the final decisions along with the team members



Leadership Continuum – Tannenbaum, Schmidt

Paternalistic leadership

This type of leadership involves one authority figure who treats employees as members of a large family. In return for being part of the family, employees are expected to be loyal and trustworthy. They are also expected to do as the leader says on the basis that the leader knows what's best. The leader will seek input from employees but always makes the final decision.

The benefit of this type of leadership style is that the leader makes decisions based on what's in the best interests of the 'family'. As a result, employees often work harder to fulfil their goals and please their leader.

Did you know?

You can find out more about leadership theory on this website:

https://www.verywellmind.com/leadership-theories-2795323

Benefits of effective leadership

An effective leader will be able to do a variety of things that benefit their organisation, including, for example:

- setting, organising and achieving objectives
- motivating and empowering team members
- inspiring others to develop their skills and commitment
- finding and trying imaginative solutions to problems

The benefits of effective leadership for an organisation are considerable. Benefits can include, for example:

- a stable, well-motivated and engaged workforce
- teams that meet organisational needs and achieve objectives
- a good reputation for effective delivery of goods and services and excellent customer service
- reduced waste and increased productivity and profitability
- the ability to seek out new trends, ideas and business challenges
- effective and imaginative solutions to problems
- energy and enthusiasm
- a balanced and positive attitude to change
- clear focus on objectives

Knowledge Activity 1: Think about managers and leaders that you have met and seen in action. This can be at work, in a previous job, in a business that you know, or from a relevant TV programme or movie you have seen. Make a few notes about their leadership style and how you would feel (or do feel) working for them. Points to consider could include:

Your motivation

Your confidence

Your willingness to engage and contribute ideas and suggestions

Respect for the manager and confidence in their ability to lead

Team dynamics

In this section, we will consider team dynamics – the behaviour and relationships between members of a group of people who perform connected tasks within an organisation. We will look at different types of teams, team development and behaviour, roles within a team and how conflicts within a team can be managed.

Types of teams

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 4.

There are many ways of categorising types of teams. Types can include, for example:

- strategic
- management
- operational
- functional
- cross-functional
- temporary
- contract or project teams
- virtual
- matrix
- self-managed

Strategic

The leaders and managers from different departments work together to make strategic decisions for the whole organisation – e.g. long-term business development plans.

Management

These teams are responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of specific business processes or goals and managing individuals and other teams.

Operational

These teams perform ongoing activities to provide goods and services. They have well-defined roles and responsibilities – e.g. to provide a full call centre service to bank customers. Very often, the team members work in the same location, although they can be split into sub-teams if they work in several locations.

Functional

These people work together and carry out the same or similar functions. The structure is relatively rigid and some projects need to be passed from one functional team to another – e.g. the marketing team has an idea that it passes to the research and development team for design and trial manufacture.

Cross-functional

Workers from different functions or specialities work together. These teams can be put together to work on a task, problem or project that needs a mix of specialists from different functions.

Temporary teams

These are teams that are brought together for a specific task or project – e.g. for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in London in 2012. Temporary teams are also put together to cover a limited period of abnormal activity – e.g. by delivery companies to cover the Christmas rush only.

Contract or project teams

Contract teams can be brought in from outside the organisation to perform project work, and the responsibility lies with the project manager. Strong relationships between the contract team and the client are extremely important. These teams are becoming more common – e.g. specialist consultants working with a bank to update and review its IT systems.

Virtual

Virtual team members can do the same work but be separated by time – e.g. working different shifts or in different time zones. They can also be separated by distance – e.g. staff working at different regional centres for the same company. There can also be cultural differences that separate people even though they are united by who they work for – e.g. people from different countries working together by using interpreters.

Did you know?

Sir Alex Ferguson (ex-manager of Manchester United football club) often used this famous story about teamwork:

"I'm going to tell you the story about the geese which fly 5,000 miles from Canada to France. They fly in V-formation but the second ones don't fly. They're the subs for the first ones. And then the second ones take over – so it's teamwork."

Matrix team

Matrix structures are often found in project teams. Individual staff report to different managers for different aspects of their work – e.g. an events team leader reports to the customer service manager when dealing with the public at an event, and the marketing manager for issues concerning the sponsors. This can be confusing, and good communication is critical. The team leader needs to know which manager is their main line manager, dealing with appraisals, training, career development and routine tasks.

Self-managed teams

Members take collective responsibility for ensuring that the team operates effectively to meet targets. Once the levels of responsibility and limits of authority have been established, the team can decide how the work is to be done, discuss performance issues, solve problems etc.

Teams can be classified using more than one heading – e.g. a team can be a cross-functional, virtual, project team for the duration of a collaborative, international project.

Team development and behaviour

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 5.

A useful model to explain the processes of team development and behaviour was designed by Bruce Tuckman in 1965. It is often referred to as the **'forming-storming-norming-performing'** model and has formed the basis for subsequent theories.

Forming

Team members are dependent on the leader for direction. The individual roles are being formed but are not yet developed.

Typical behaviour includes: being positive, polite, anxious and excited to get on with the challenges of the task. Team members treat each other like strangers and begin to establish ground rules.

Storming

Team members compete against each other and their leader for positions.

Typical behaviour includes being frustrated with leaders and fellow team members. Team members start to communicate, but they do not consider themselves as part of a team. They resist control by team leaders and can be hostile.

Norming

Team members settle down, accept their roles and responsibilities and cooperate with each other.

Typical behaviour includes being respectful of the leaders' and colleagues' strengths and weaknesses. People feel part of a team and respect each other's viewpoints about how to work together.

Performing

The team functions well as a unit. Everyone knows their role and purpose, and the leader delegates and oversees tasks and activities.

Typical behaviour includes being productive, supportive and efficient. The team works well and relationships are open, trusting and flexible. The hierarchy or rank structure is of little importance.

Adjourning

One additional stage to Tuckman's theory is 'adjourning or transforming'. This is where the team breaks up and moves on to a new project.

Typical behaviour can be positive or negative; for example: being happy that the team is moving on to a new project together; being pleased with success and relieved that goals have been achieved; feeling sad about the team being broken up; feeling uncertain and worried about what will happen next. Team leaders and members need to conduct assessments and reviews about the previous project, recognise contributions and plan for new temporary or permanent roles.

Did you know?

This website has more about Tuckman's theory:

www.infed.org/mobi/bruce-w-tuckman-forming-storming-norming-and-performing-in-groups/

Team role theory

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 6 and 7.

Dr Meredith Belbin identified nine team roles that were based on the behaviours that individuals displayed in the workplace. According to this theory, teams need all of the roles if they are to achieve goals and perform well, and most people are comfortable performing more than one role.

The nine team roles according to Belbin are:

1. **Chair/coordinator** – able to get others working to a shared aim; confident, mature; good at making decisions and delegating.

   The coordinator clarifies group objectives, sets the agenda, establishes priorities, selects problems, sums up and is decisive, but does not dominate discussions.

2. **Shaper** – motivated, energetic, assertive and competitive; thrives under pressure; achievement-driven, keeping the team focused.

   The shaper gives shape and energy to the team effort. They can 'steamroller' the team, but can get results.

3. **Innovator/plant** – innovative, inventive, creative, original, imaginative, unorthodox.

   The innovator/plant is the source of original ideas, suggestions and proposals.

4. **Monitor evaluator** – serious, prudent, critical thinker, analytical, impartial and even-tempered.

   The monitor evaluator contributes a measured and dispassionate analysis and, through objectivity, stops the team committing itself to a misguided task.

5. **Implementer/company worker** – systematic, loyal, structured, reliable, dependable, practical, disciplined, efficient; uses common sense but can be inflexible about change.

   The implementer turns decisions and strategies into defined and manageable tasks, sorting out objectives and pursuing them logically.

6. **Resource investigator** – good communicator, enthusiastic, networker, outgoing, affable, seeks and finds options, negotiator.

   The resource investigator goes outside the team to bring back ideas, information and developments. This person is the team's salesperson, diplomat, liaison officer and explorer.

7. **Team worker** – supportive, sociable, flexible, adaptable, perceptive, listener, calming influence, mediator, dislikes confrontation, hard-working.

   The team worker operates against division and disruption in the team, maintaining harmony, particularly in times of stress and pressure.

8. **Completer finisher** – attention to detail, accurate, high standards, quality orientated; delivers to schedule and specification; good at finding errors.

   The completer finisher maintains a permanent sense of urgency with relentless follow-through and attention to detail.

9. **Specialist** – technical expert, highly focused capability and knowledge, driven by professional standards and dedication to personal subject area.

Knowledge Activity 2: Have a look at the team roles in the Belbin model.

Which one is closest to your role at work?

Which others also apply to you?

Did you know?

You can find out more about Belbin's team role theory on this website: **www.changingminds.org/explanations/preferences/belbin.htm**

How team role theory is used

Team leaders use team role theory to help create balanced teams. If team members have similar styles of behaviour, they can have similar weaknesses that weaken the team as a whole. If members have similar strengths, they are likely to compete rather than cooperate, unbalance the team and affect productivity.

Team leaders and managers use the principles when team-building and when developing and selecting their leadership techniques.

Team-building

The team role principles can be applied to, for example:

- the selection of team members to achieve a balance of attributes on the team
- encouraging individuals to recognise their own roles, strengths and weaknesses
- building team members' respect for each other's attributes and strengths
- encouraging members to cooperate, accept allowable weaknesses and help and support each other
- developing strategies for effective team-working

Leadership

The principles can be applied to, for example:

- the allocation of tasks to suit individual needs and strengths and minimise the impact of their weaknesses
- deciding on the allocation of members to different sub-teams
- how to motivate and support individual team members
- managing conflicts, tension and problems within the team
- planning the level of supervision and management required

Managing conflict within the team

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 8.

From time to time, there are conflicts within a team. They can be minor and easily sorted, or they can be complicated, requiring careful handling. Conflict in the workplace can be very damaging. Heated exchanges, isolation and failing to communicate can lead to a decrease in motivation, morale and productivity, changes in behaviour and an increase in sickness and absenteeism.

Sources of conflict

Sources of conflict need to be resolved as soon as possible so that they do not escalate and become more serious. According to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas), conflict falls into two broad categories:

- **conflict between individuals** – e.g. between colleagues or between team members and their team leader or manager
- **conflict between groups** – e.g. between teams or between large groups of employees and management

Examples of causes of conflict at work could include:

- **dissatisfaction with the workload or work slippages** – e.g. increased workloads or missed deadlines
- **lack of appreciation and perceived unfairness** – e.g. someone feeling that they have not received appropriate credit for their efforts
- **misunderstandings and poor sharing of information** – e.g. concerned discussions and arguments due to not knowing what is happening
- **external problems that affect the team or individuals** – e.g. a supply problem leading to the team's failure to finish on time and receive a bonus
- **differences of opinion** – e.g. between individuals, teams or organisations about working methods
- **people having different objectives** – e.g. some wanting to do overtime to finish the task on time, whilst others want to leave and get home on time
- **incompatible objectives and rivalry** – e.g. between different teams
- **bullying, harassment or personality clashes between individuals**

Managing conflicts within a team

When managing conflict within their teams, team leaders can try various approaches. These can include, for example:

- **negotiation** – e.g. negotiating an extension to a deadline for a task that the team cannot complete on time due to illness
- **open communication** – e.g. between different teams to find an acceptable compromise; between team members to discuss all options calmly
- **understanding the different personalities of people on the team** – e.g. to gain insight into the cause of conflict and the best way to handle each individual
- **setting non-conflicting goals** – e.g. splitting tasks so that people can finish at their own pace
- **clear explanations of policies and procedures** – e.g. making sure that everyone understands the objectives and instructions
- **being consistent** – e.g. expecting all team members to work to the same high standards
- **being fair** – e.g. giving credit to the people that deserve it
- **recognising and rewarding effort** – e.g. giving praise for tasks that have been done well
- **early intervention** – e.g. talking to team members as soon as a conflict arises or seems likely; acting before the problem escalates

There are established techniques that a team leader can use to minimise and resolve conflict at work. These are:

- **win-win or collaborating** – e.g. confronting and solving a problem by working with other people
- **forcing or competing** – e.g. the team leader forces their views on team members who are arguing, to get a quick resolution
- **smoothing or accommodating** – e.g. the team leader soothes everyone and accommodates their views when making their decision
- **compromising** – e.g. finding a solution that is acceptable to everyone
- **withdrawing or avoiding** – e.g. ignoring or stepping away from the conflict

Conflict can be managed within the organisation, following the policies and procedures, or by using outside agencies. Depending on the nature of the conflict, these could include:

- Acas
- Citizens Advice
- industry governing bodies or professional associations
- trade unions
- lawyers, accountants, consultants or counsellors
- the police or social services

Minimising and preventing conflict

To prevent or minimise the chances of conflict occurring in the workplace, team leaders can:

- put systems and procedures in place
- develop relationships
- get people working together

Team leaders might need to find extra opportunities for team members to develop working relationships if normal work activities do not provide many chances to promote communication. They could, for example:

- arrange social or team-building activities
- encourage interaction during training courses or sessions

- encourage input during team meetings and briefings
- delegate new tasks for team members to try together, under supervision to begin with

To keep progress on track, team leaders need to monitor problem areas closely and intervene if problems or tensions arise. A quiet word early on minimises the adverse effects of conflict and can bring problems to quick and simple resolutions.

Knowledge Activity 3: Imagine that you are the team leader in charge of front-of-house staff in a popular family restaurant. Halfway through a busy Friday evening session, the head chef shouts at you because he believes that your waiting staff are not taking the food out as soon as he rings for service, and he says that the food is being spoilt. You know that your team members will say that he rings for service too early and keeps them waiting, which stops them being able to attend to customers' requests for wine, coffee, bills, etc.

Which approaches to conflict resolution would you use, and why?

Did you know?

At the start of 2015, there were 5.4. million private sector businesses in the UK.

(Department of Business Innovation & Skills)

Knowledge Activity 4: Look at your own organisation's policies and procedures about conflict at work, and make some notes about the key points.

Setting targets

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 9.

When managing their team's work, team leaders need to set targets, monitor progress, identify and solve problems. These can be for individuals, the team as a whole or the organisation.

When setting targets, it is important to see how the efforts of the individual team member, team and organisation fit together to achieve overall objectives. Realistic targets need to be set, performance needs to be measured and the results need to be analysed, reviewed and amended if necessary.

Many organisations use SMART targets, as they provide a logical and simple template for how to set and monitor targets, objectives and activities. The targets need to be:

Specific – to identify the target and desired outcome clearly, and to show the actions and resources required.

Measurable – so that everyone can see the schedule of work, track progress and measure success.

Achievable – to make sure that the target is within the scope of the team's abilities and available resources.

Realistic – to make sure that everything is achievable with the time, working methods and resources that are available.

Time-bound – deadlines that are aligned with the organisational targets give a focus for individuals, the team and the organisation.

Individual targets

Targets set for individuals can include, for example:

- **Performance and output** – e.g. sales targets for the month that show how their individual work contributes to the goals of the team and organisation.
- **Quality** – e.g. in line with organisational expectations of quality standards.
- **Career development** – e.g. to improve skills and knowledge with courses and mentoring.
- **Attendance** – e.g. to minimise absenteeism that disrupts the whole team.

When setting individual targets, team leaders need to work with the team member and think about: the person's current skills, knowledge, experience and attributes; their ambitions and plans for career development; their team role; personal issues that might affect their desire and ability to achieve targets.

Team targets

Targets that are set for teams can include, for example:

- **Group performance and output** – e.g. sales or production targets for the whole team to achieve; targets to meet deadlines that affect other teams.
- **Quality** – e.g. to improve the average for the whole team.
- **Spreading the workload** – e.g. aiming for a fair distribution of tasks.
- **Improved skills, experience and knowledge** – e.g. training up certain team members to improve the overall dynamics of the team; giving certain members specialist training that they can share with the team.
- **Reducing waste** – e.g. using physical resources more efficiently; recycling, reconditioning or reusing equipment.

When setting team targets, factors to consider include: the current levels of experience, skills and knowledge that already exist on the team; previous and current levels of activity and workload; the team roles of different team members; developmental needs; staffing levels and expected holidays and other absences; team morale and motivation; how targets tie in with organisational targets and needs.

Organisational targets

Organisational targets could include, for example:

- increasing sales by 20% over two years
- reducing landfill waste by 40% over five years
- being the number one retailer in a specialist area – e.g. clothing, food or holidays
- having excellent customer feedback, with at least 95% positive feedback from satisfaction surveys
- introducing new technology and having it tested and fully up and running within three months
- expanding the business into another country
- restructuring the business to make it more efficient and profitable
- working towards bidding for a large government contract
- to recruit and retain the best staff in the industry

When setting organisational targets, factors to consider include: how business objectives have an impact on each other; business priorities; current and planned stocks of physical resources; current staffing levels and planned recruitment; staff morale and retention levels; financial resources and ability to raise funds; current and anticipated trends and fashions; technological developments; competitors' activities; new legislation and regulations.

Knowledge Activity 5: Think about your current or previous employer and make a few notes about the organisational targets that have involved your team.

Monitoring the flow of work

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 10.

Once the work is underway, problems and changes almost inevitably occur – e.g. problems with physical supplies; staff sickness or shortages; changes in a customer's order leading to amended objectives; changes in legislation; staff finding the allocated work too easy or too difficult. Team leaders need to monitor progress, and work with their managers to adjust plans and the allocation of work as required.

When monitoring the flow of work for a team, team leaders need to:

- have clear objectives and targets
- measure and assess progress against targets
- use the information to improve the quality and flow of work

Managers and team leaders need to align several elements when monitoring and controlling planned activities, such as, for example:

- **the agreed working standards** – everyone needs to be aware of the agreed standards so that results can be measured against them
- **performance indicators** – these are measures that show the achievement of objectives, sometimes called key performance indicators (KPIs) – e.g. the number of calls made, the value of sales made or the amount of waste generated in a month
- **work schedules** – to show the work hours that have been used when achieving the objectives, and any staff problems or changes
- **quality control checks** – e.g. benchmarking against successful projects; checking orders going out; checking the quality of items being produced; customer satisfaction surveys; physical checks of supplies and waste
- **budgets** – to see if the objectives are being met within the allocated budget

When measuring and assessing performance, team leaders and managers need to compare the projected levels of achievement against the reality of what has been achieved.

This can be done in several ways, for example:

- **using the agreed SMART targets** – e.g. to measure actual output against the projected output
- **using Gantt charts or other graphs** – e.g. to see the volume of work on an hourly, daily or weekly basis for each team function (see below)
- **visual inspections** – e.g. to see what has been done, and to what standard
- **analysing reports and data** – e.g. looking at printouts of daily activity reports; studying spreadsheets that log production data; computer-generated reports
- **discussions in progress review meetings** – e.g. for the team to discuss output, problems and the next stages of the objectives
- **formal one-to-one meetings** – e.g. to discuss individual performances

Gantt charts

Gantt charts are often used in project management to show activities against time. They can be useful to monitor the flow of work of a team, and to see how objectives tie in together for individuals and the organisation. Gantt charts can be paper-based or electronic, with different people having access so that they can update their own progress.

Each activity is represented by a bar, and its position and length illustrates the start and end dates. Gantt charts enable team leaders, managers and others to see:

- what the activities are
- when activities and whole projects begin and end
- how long each activity is scheduled to last
- where they overlap, and by how much

Task name	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	Jul 19
Planning		XXXXX	XXXXX					
Research			XXXXX	XX				
Design				XXXXX				
Implementation					XXXXX	XXXXX		
Follow-up review and action							X	XX

The charts can be larger and more complicated to show detail about a project. It is worth looking online to find examples of Gantt charts to see how complex they can be – using colours and graphics to denote different activities, and people's roles and tasks.

The value of monitoring

Having collected and analysed the data that measures progress, team leaders and managers need to provide effective support to the team to help them to achieve their objectives. This can be given to the whole team, small groups or to individuals on their own.

The main point is to have good communication so that team members can report and remedy problems as soon as possible, before progress is disrupted too much.

Identifying and solving problems

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 11.

Team leaders can use various techniques to identify and solve problems within their teams. Problems can arise for a variety of reasons, and it is important to identify them as quickly as possible so that remedies can be put in place. Sometimes teams are affected by forces outside the team, such as late deliveries, poor-quality materials or machinery breakdowns, and some problems occur within the team.

Problems within the team

Problems that can occur within a team can be caused by, for example:

- loss of team members – e.g. popular members with valuable skills and experience
- new team members who upset the balance – e.g. an imbalance within the Belbin team roles; due to inexperience
- poor leadership – e.g. weak or authoritarian leadership styles
- poor planning – e.g. resources not being available when needed; targets being unrealistic
- reduced productivity – e.g. due to low morale or poor working practices
- signs of stress – e.g. increased rates of sickness and absenteeism
- missed deadlines – e.g. due to technical problems or poor team skills
- conflict between team members – e.g. about standards or levels of output
- lack of motivation, team spirit and direction – e.g. not engaging with shared objectives

Identifying problems

Team leaders can identify problems within their teams in several ways, including, for example:

- formal and informal observation – e.g. during normal shifts
- appraisals – e.g. during career development discussions with team members
- tracking against key performance indicators (KPIs) for the quality and quantity of output
- checking staff attendance records
- discussions during team meetings and briefings – e.g. to evaluate how a project is going or introduce new targets
- during one-to-one discussions – e.g. if clues indicate that team members may have underlying problems

Techniques used to solve problems

When problems arise within a team, it is very important to discuss the issues. People need to be able to air their views and concerns, sometimes in public and sometimes in private. Team leaders may need to facilitate:

- **one-to-one discussions** – so that members can be open and honest about confidential information and opinions
- **team review meetings and briefings** – for open discussions about options and exchanges of views
- **different opportunities for team members to pass on their views** – e.g. via email or suggestion boxes
- **meetings with managers and other team leaders** – e.g. to discuss problems that affect people outside the team

Once the suitable environment for discussion has been selected, team leaders need to think about what needs to be discussed to solve the problems. Techniques that can be used include, for example:

- **negotiation** – e.g. to solve disputes between team members about workload or working practices
- **mind-mapping or brainstorming** – e.g. involving team members in thinking about how to solve problems
- **succession planning** – e.g. working out how to replace team members and develop the skills and team roles to rebalance the team
- **reviewing, agreeing and setting targets** – e.g. to change deadlines or output levels to help the team cope with external changes

- **coaching and training sessions** – e.g. to develop individuals, maybe with close monitoring, shadowing or one-to-one mentoring sessions
- **rotating team members between different tasks** – e.g. to be as fair as possible and develop skills and experience
- **improving resource management** – e.g. ordering extra physical or human resources to support the team

The following table gives some examples of problems that can arise, plus some suggestions on how the problems can be dealt with:

Problems within a team	Suggested actions to overcome the problems
Staff sickness and absenteeism	Make sure that the team members are engaged, motivated and committed to the shared purpose Listen to staff members' comments and feedback about their workload, views on operational problems, suggestions and ideas Make sure that the workload is fair and manageable – rotate tasks to spread the load between different team members Support staff who are off work for genuine reasons and help them to return when appropriate Consider changing people's tasks or workloads, retraining them or giving extra advice and guidance
Team members are unable to maintain quality and output in the agreed standards	Review the agreed policies and procedures – to see if they are being followed correctly Check that specifications and working practices are realistic and workable – consult all concerned and amend as necessary Work alongside team members to identify the problems in detail – e.g. lack of time management skills, lack of motivation, team friction, low aptitude, lack of role clarity Listen to their feedback and suggestions and ideas about how to improve working methods Make sure that team members understand the objectives and have the right skills, knowledge, aptitude and capacity to do the tasks correctly Consider retraining some or all team members Consider rotating staff and having more experienced workers in key positions Increase close monitoring and support until problems are resolved or production quantity and quality improve to satisfactory levels

When tasks need to be done in order, the delay from one team member leads to delays for other members	When one task impacts another, this is a critical review point – make sure that everything is on track before the deadline or review point is reached Move physical and human resources to make sure that the task is done on time Make sure that people working on the next related tasks know about any possible or actual delays – so that they can replan their activities
Delays in one team's work affecting another team's work	Involve team members to make sure that they know how critical the timing is Encourage early intervention when problems and delays seem possible Move physical and human resources to make sure that the tasks are done on time Advise other teams and managers if delays are possible or inevitable
Outside causes such as bad weather	Have a bad weather plan about how to get staff in to work, how to get supplies and how to maintain production – e.g. hold enough extra stock to keep production going for a week; arrange for staff who live locally to come in and take key roles If bad weather is imminent, plan ahead – e.g. to shut down or reduce production for a day If the planned activities are weather-dependent, have a detailed bad-weather plan – e.g. have other work available to do; increase stock levels; have a flexible delivery schedule

Did you know?

In the winter of 2013/14, the wettest winter on record, 3,200 commercial properties were flooded in the UK.

(Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) – December 2014)

Organisational change

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 12, 13, 14 and 15.

Organisations need to change for a wide variety of reasons. Some of them are internal reasons – things going on within the organisation that need to be addressed. Some of them are external reasons – things happening out in the rest of the world that influence the organisation and prompt a need for change.

Some businesses only exist because they constantly strive to innovate and change; for example:

- manufacturers of mobile phones, tablets and electronic games
- television, theatre and film producers
- fashion clothing designers and manufacturers
- space and military engineering companies
- vehicle designers and manufacturers

Reasons for organisational change

Several things can prompt the need for organisational change, including:

- **changes in technology** – e.g. telecommunication companies adapting to new generation mobile phones, tablets and other new devices
- **competitors' activities** – e.g. airlines changing their routes, prices or level of service to be able to compete with each other successfully
- **changes in the marketplace** – e.g. customers moving away from the high street and making most of their purchases online or in out-of-town shopping centres
- **changing customer expectations** – e.g. hotel guests expecting a higher quality of accommodation at low cost
- **new legislation, regulations or standards** – e.g. scrap metal companies having new regulations about identifying their suppliers of metal (to reduce theft)
- **environmental factors** – e.g. new waste management procedures to reduce landfill and contamination of the environment
- **financial issues** – e.g. rising costs making current processes unsustainable
- **political factors** – e.g. changes in government funding in education

- **internal business factors** – e.g. following a change in senior managers and other decision-makers; as a business grows and increases its workload
- **external business factors** – e.g. fluctuations in currency exchange rates

Organisations can go through change at any stage of their development, for example:

- **when they first start to expand** – e.g. leading to changes in working processes, management structure and how they are financed
- **when they need to restructure after being in operation for a while** – e.g. following changes in technology, branding or competitors' activity
- **if they are taken over by another organisation** – e.g. leading to a merger of staff, resources, customers, working practices and so on
- **when they need to close** – e.g. after a major downturn that leads to redundancies or the actual winding up of a business

Accepting change positively

Change can be upsetting for some people and exciting for others. To manage change well, it helps to stand back and review the whole process logically, and to support everyone during and after a period of change. It can help to see the whole picture so that everyone understands the underlying reasons for certain activities.

Organisations need to react to change in a positive way and without too much delay. This can help them to, for example:

- review their operation
- identify the benefits of change
- understand new requirements
- deliver improved performance
- increase efficiency, productivity and profitability
- support team members and other stakeholders (people with an interest in the organisation)
- maintain a positive and optimistic outlook
- enhance career development opportunities for the staff

By embracing change and managing it in a positive way, organisations, teams and individuals can 'stay ahead of the game' and remain competitive and effective.

When an organisation decides to plan and implement changes, there are many different elements that need to come together. If people work together, the plans for change have a much better chance of success for individuals, work teams and the organisation itself.

Good communication and cooperation are needed between all stakeholders, who can include:

- employees
- contractors
- suppliers
- customers – previous, current and future users of products and services
- managers and directors
- shareholders and investors
- the organisation's bank, accountants and financial advisors
- official bodies – e.g. the local council
- local residents and businesses

Plans are often complicated and many decisions need input from many different people. If people work together, the benefits can include, for example:

- better communication and consultation between people and organisations
- personal support between individuals who share problems and concerns
- less stress – from knowing what is going on
- reassurance – that the change is beneficial and well-managed
- a higher chance of success of the plans for change – from improved momentum and focus
- better monitoring and feedback during the process – so that problems and queries can be addressed
- easier access to information

Negative responses to change

There can be many negative responses to change within a team; there can be resistance, reduced motivation, reduced productivity and a loss of team members.

If there are negative responses to change, the impacts on the team can include, for example:

- **increased stress** – e.g. from worrying about the future but refusing to take action to improve their own chances of success
- **feeling inadequate** – e.g. feeling unable to cope with new processes
- **reduced productivity and failure to achieve objectives** – e.g. from making mistakes in new processes
- **reduced pay** – e.g. a fall in productivity bonuses
- **reduced job satisfaction** – e.g. not enjoying work any longer due to everyone being worried
- **reduced opportunities for career development** – e.g. from refusing to consider the benefits of adopting new working practices and technology
- **lack of confidence in the team leaders and managers** – e.g. doubting their leadership skills to manage the proposed changes
- **conflict within the team** – e.g. due to stress or changes in workloads
- **the loss of key members of the team** – e.g. to other teams or employers
- **lack of job security** – e.g. due to the organisation's inability to meet customers' changing needs and expectations and outperform its competitors
- **loss of jobs and the closure of the whole organisation** – e.g. from losing income and customers to competitors that have implemented change successfully

Basic principles of change management

To help us to understand the basic principles of change management, it can be useful to think about three key questions that illustrate the process:

Where are we now?

Organisations need to evaluate their current position. They need to look at all aspects of the current operation and performance, including:

- identifying physical and human resources
- measuring production or sales

- evaluating feedback from stakeholders, such as employees, shareholders, financial backers and customers
- reviewing competitors' activities and achievements

This gives the organisation a base line from which to develop and change the way things are done.

Where do we need to be?

This is where the reasons for change come into focus and the need for innovation and change is identified. For example, an organisation may have decided that it needs to:

- have a fully integrated, new computer system
- have a new range of products and services to meet customers' new expectations
- change its processes to comply with new regulations
- have improved products and services that are better than those supplied by competitors

This sets the targets and objectives for individuals, teams and the organisation to aim for.

How do we get there?

The actual change processes start to become clear at this stage, as people see what they need to do to achieve the new objectives for the organisation. They need to create and follow action plans to show the resources, deadlines and critical review points. For example, they might:

- research and order a new IT system
- employ designers or managers to bring in new ideas and working practices
- invest in new machinery and equipment to cope with improved processes
- find ways to reduce costs to become more competitive

As change starts to take place, the organisation needs to measure progress, collect and evaluate feedback, then amend action plans and activities to make sure that they 'get there'.

These principles work when planning change for a team as well.

Preparing for change within a team

Team leaders need to work with their teams to assess their current position, where they need to be and how they plan to get there. To overcome resistance to change, team leaders need to, for example:

- inform, educate and communicate the benefits of change
- give clear and supportive leadership
- encourage team members to participate and get involved with the action plans
- negotiate and come to agreements that benefit the team members and the organisation
- introduce processes to generate ideas and suggestions from team members
- use good leadership and management skills

A strong sense of teamwork can be a factor when encouraging participation and involvement with action plans. Team members can have a great sense of pride from being associated with a successful and innovative team, and this might be enhanced by competitiveness between teams that inspires the individuals to try harder.

Teams can also unite if they have a strong sense of competition to outperform competitors and make sure that their organisation's changes and innovations are put to good use.

To help bind a team together, and make them strive for new ideas and opportunities, team leaders can encourage team members to have, for example:

- shared values and visions
- a shared commitment to quality and future developments
- clearly defined tasks or goals

Team members and others are more likely to participate and share their ideas if:

- they feel that they are being taken seriously
- credit is given to the appropriate individuals and teams
- ideas are praised, even if they are not fully used
- they are encouraged to think of even more ideas, and to keep an eye out for other opportunities for development and improvement

People need to feel confident that their ideas will be valued. They need to feel secure and know that their careers are not at risk if they voice concerns or come up with new and innovative ideas.

Implementing change within a team

When implementing change within a team, a useful theory to use is ADKAR. This process was developed in 1999 by Prosci in the United States. It is an outcome-orientated model and is based on:

Awareness – of the need for change

Individuals need to understand the need for change, and planned communication is vital.

Desire – to participate in the change

Once fully aware of the reasons behind the plans for change, individuals make a personal decision to support and participate. This is done using incentives and creating a desire to be part of the change.

Knowledge – about how to change

This is the stage that involves learning and development activities. These could be training courses, coaching sessions, mentoring, discussion forums or other learning methods. Individuals need to know about the transition into the new systems, and how to operate once the new systems have become established.

Ability – to implement change

Individuals put the theory into practice. They are supported with ongoing training, coaching and feedback sessions as they develop their new skills and behaviours.

Reinforcement – to sustain the change

This stage makes sure that individuals do not slip back into old ways, so that change can be sustained. This is achieved through giving positive feedback, rewards and incentives, measuring performance, and making adjustments to plans and procedures when necessary.

The ADKAR model focuses on the individual and outcomes, rather than the tasks being performed. It is flexible and can be used for big projects or individual development. It is considered better than some models because it addresses the sustainability and reinforcement of change, something that is neglected by many organisations that go on to fail to bring about change in the long term.

Scenario

A supermarket distribution centre has decided to change its packing procedures and use new barcode technology. The staff use large trolleys, cages and pallets. They fill them with the goods ordered by each store, and fill out a form to show the contents for each one and its destination. The company decides to introduce barcode technology to:

- track the products going into each trolley, cage or pallet, and at every stage of the distribution process
- show the destination of each trolley etc.
- make sure they go onto the correct lorries for transport
- put the trolleys in the correct order on the lorries, based on routes to stores
- monitor stock control at the distribution warehouse

The team members will perform similar tasks, but they need to know how to operate the barcode system and produce labels and reports. The team leaders could follow the ADKAR model when implementing the changes.

ADKAR	Possible actions
Awareness	• have team meetings to discuss why the new barcode system is needed and what it will do • encourage mind-mapping or brainstorming sessions to discuss ideas and concerns
Desire	• encourage team members to accept the new system and see its benefits • have incentive schemes to encourage a faster turnaround of goods for loading • show the figures for levels of output for the different shifts and teams – to encourage rivalry and a desire to be the best team
Knowledge	• go on training courses with the manufacturer of the barcode system • run training sessions for the whole team about the new barcode system before it goes live

Ability	• monitor team members closely when they start to use the system for real • provide ongoing training and coaching • give feedback about progress
Reinforcement	• have informal toolbox training sessions during the shift to answer any queries and develop knowledge • use positive feedback when things are going well • encourage and retrain when there are problems • continue with rewards and incentives • measure the success of the barcode system • make adjustments to the training and operation of the system as required • inform management of progress, successes and problems

Knowledge Activity 6: Think about a major change in your life that you knew was coming – maybe a change of employer, school or house.

How did you feel as soon as you knew about the impending change?

How did you plan for it?

How did others help you to plan for the change?

How did you feel a few weeks or months after the change, once you had settled down?

Did you know?

You can find out more about ADKAR on this website: **www.prosci.com/adkar/adkar-model**

Team motivation

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 16.

When motivating a team, team leaders need to be aware of the different factors that influence motivation, and techniques that can be used.

Definition of motivation

The term 'motivation' has two broad meanings:

1) It is the reason for acting or behaving in a particular way

It is a reason for doing something – e.g. a team member's motivation for doing overtime last night was the extra money for their holiday next month.

2) It is the desire, enthusiasm or willingness to do something

It is a feeling of enthusiasm or interest that makes us determined to do something – e.g. lively and engaging training sessions help to maintain the student's interest in the subject and their motivation to finish the course.

Motivation can be the **'thing'** that makes us want to do something, or it can be the **'feeling'** for wanting to do something.

In the workplace, one individual's motivation could be, for instance, their determination to finish a project, or their ambition to gain a promotion. Team leaders and managers need to:

- concentrate on the factors that will be seen as things that will motivate their team members
- work to inspire the individuals' own inner desires and feelings about wanting to do something

Did you know?

"The work of a team should always embrace a great player, but the great player must always work."

(Sir Alex Ferguson)

Motivational factors in the workplace

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 17.

Motivation can be **intrinsic** or **extrinsic**.

Intrinsic motivation comes from the individual's internal factors, the **feelings** that motivate them – e.g. a desire for career development; pleasure and personal satisfaction from simply performing the task.

Extrinsic motivation comes from external factors, the **things** that motivate people, and performing the task is just a means to an end – e.g. working for money; taking exams for a place on a better university course.

Important motivational factors include, for example:

- interesting, challenging and exciting work
- job security
- opportunities for promotion and growth
- coaching sessions
- appreciation of work done
- good communication
- control over the job
- good wages
- good working conditions
- fear
- bonuses

Interesting, challenging and exciting work – often seen as the top factor

People want to do jobs that engage them. Some team members will be happy to perform routine tasks that do not vary. Others need new challenges every day and enjoy striving to solve different problems as the main part of their job. Others need longer-term challenges and excitement, where they aim for goals that are set and achieved every few months or years.

Job security

This is particularly important when there is high unemployment and team members are motivated to do well and safeguard their jobs. However, when people feel confident about the job market, they are more likely to take risks about changing jobs and finding better opportunities and career development elsewhere.

Opportunities for promotion and growth

Many people want to develop their careers and they need to feel confident that their employer can offer them the support and opportunities that they need to improve and grow. Even when people do not want to go for promotion, knowing that they could if they wanted to can motivate them to work well for their employer and keep their skills up to date.

Coaching sessions

Employers can offer coaching – the art of improving the performance of others. It focuses on specific skills and goals, and enables people to become happier and more fulfilled at work. Coaching sessions can be good motivating factors, as they help people to discuss and plan their goals, progress and ideas about how they want to develop their careers.

Appreciation of work done

People need recognition and reward for their performance, which can be a simple thank you from a team leader or formal praise from the organisation. Knowing that their work has had an impact on the organisation, and being given credit for work that has been done, helps to motivate people at work.

Good communication

We all appreciate good communication at work. Everyone needs to be able to share information – e.g. about objectives, progress, achievements, plans or strategies. We also value good communication skills from team leaders, managers, colleagues and others. When people communicate well with each other, they feel valued and respected and that their opinions matter.

Control over the job

Delegation is a powerful and useful motivational tool. When team members are given responsibility and accountability for their tasks and area of expertise, they are more engaged and involved with the whole process, and feel valued and trusted.

Good wages

Wages go up and down. They can be affected by economic conditions and the supply of labour with the correct skills and experience. During a recession, or when there are many people available with the same qualifications and skills, wages can be lower or static. If the economy is strong and particular skills and experience are in short supply, wages will rise so that employers can attract and keep the people they need.

Good working conditions

People want to feel safe and secure at work, even if their jobs are inherently dangerous or uncomfortable. We all need to have the safety equipment necessary for our jobs and a comfortable and safe working environment. For example, if team members work outside in all weathers, they need the correct protective equipment and clothing as well as somewhere to go that is warm, dry and comfortable for their breaks.

The conditions in the actual workplace are important too. Factories, offices, hospitals, schools, call centres and so on all need to have adequate heating, lighting and air quality for the workforce to be able to do their tasks well.

Fear

Fear is seen as a short-term motivational factor that does not work for very long. It might spur people on to achieve things in the short term – e.g. if the workforce is worried about a competitor taking the business and their jobs, or if they are worried about adverse reactions from managers if they do not achieve their goals.

However, if people are fearful for too long, they will build a resistance to it and move on if they can no longer cope with it. If they are fearful of a strict, erratic and aggressive team leader or manager, they can become demoralised, which can affect their attendance and performance or even make them leave their job.

Bonuses

If people have a good salary package, bonuses have limited value. Employees value a good steady salary and see that as a reliable and motivational incentive to work hard and aim for promotion.

Bonuses are rarely under the personal control of team members or team leaders, so the element of risk can make them poor motivational strategies. The gambling element of bonuses can destabilise people and affect morale and commitment.

Motivational factors can be very personal, and each individual will have their own issues that affect their attitude and motivation at work. A shy, introverted team member who is reliable and has a great eye for quality and detail might be terrified by the prospect of having to develop their role or having to speed up to achieve a bonus. The level of quality of their work might drop as well as the level of job satisfaction.

Similarly, someone who loves to set up a project and get it working smoothly might be very bored and demotivated by repetitive work that has no scope for further improvement or innovation.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

When considering motivational factors and which techniques to use to motivate team members, a useful theory to look at is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. This gives a very clear indication about what motivates each one of us at different times of our lives.

In the 1940s and 1950s in America, Abraham Maslow developed a motivation model known as the Hierarchy of Needs. It has been developed over the years and is often used by team leaders, managers, teachers and trainers.

It is based on a pyramid of five stages of intrinsic needs. As the individual achieves the requirements of one level, they move onto the next. They cannot move up to the next stage until all of the needs have been met. People can also come down the pyramid if something happens, inside or outside the workplace.

- **Stage 1 – physical survival needs**

These are the basic, intrinsic survival needs – e.g. bodily functions and needs such as air, food, water, sleep and reproduction.

- **Stage 2 – safety and security**

Once humans know that they can rely on food, water and so on, they can concentrate on personal and financial security – e.g. physical safety of the body; security of employment, family members, health and property.

- **Stage 3 – love and belonging**

Once they feel secure about their job, health, home and so on, people can concentrate on feeling part of a group – e.g. a family, a sports or work team, a department or a group of friends.

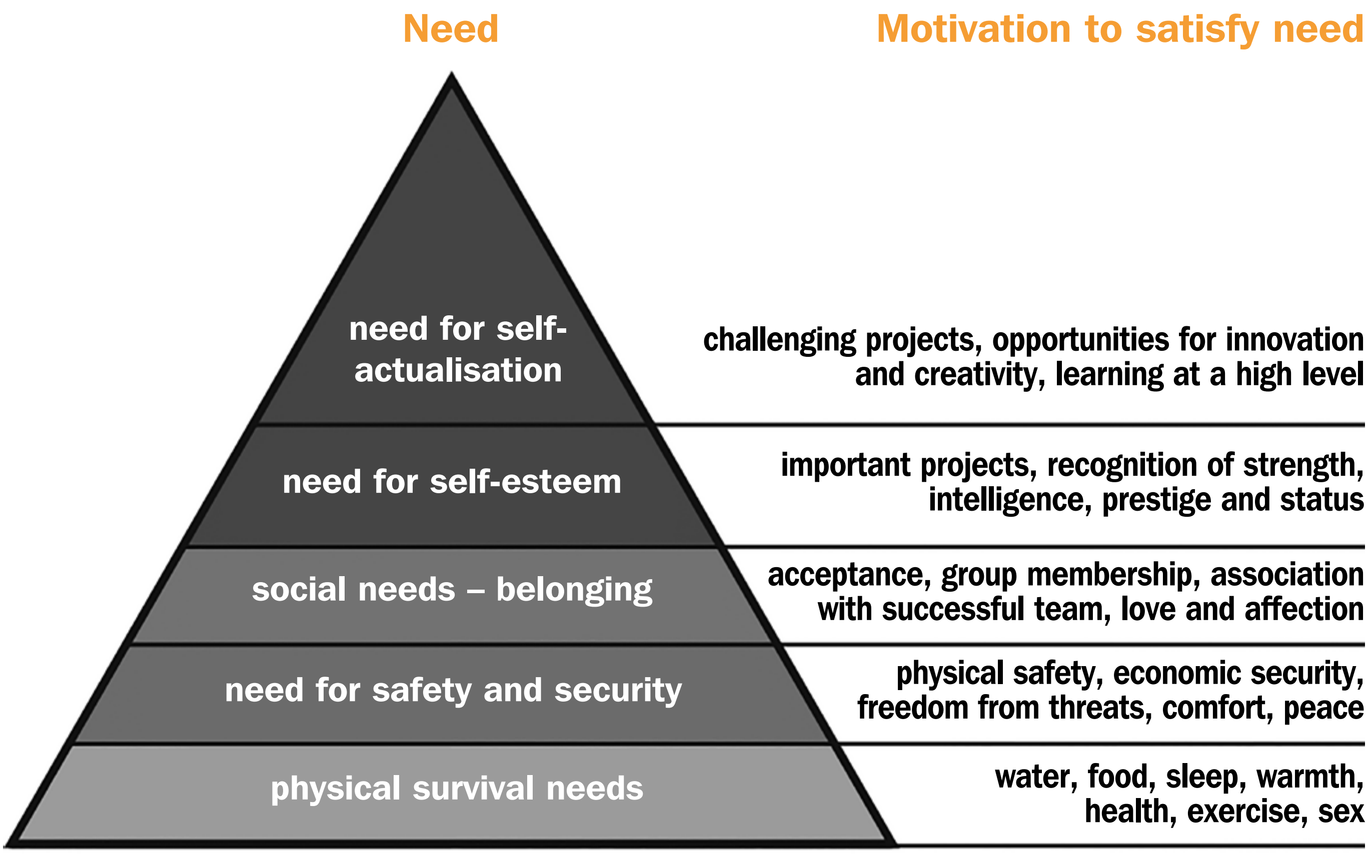
- **Stage 4 – esteem**

With physical needs, security and belonging sorted, humans move on to wanting feelings of esteem – e.g. self-esteem, confidence, a sense of achievement, respect for others or respect from others.

- **Stage 5 – self-actualisation**

The top level is where people truly become themselves and are totally fulfilled. They are confident in their own opinions and place in the world. Here they can experience morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem-solving, lack of prejudice and acceptance of facts.

It helps to think of these stages as a pyramid, so that it is easier to visualise the climb up and the slide down these levels of needs. It also helps to clarify the importance of the needs lower down the pyramid. Unless the lower needs are met, humans cannot move up to the next stage.



Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs has survived because it still applies in the 21st century. For example, if a well-respected person is at stage 4 at work (esteem) and they are suddenly faced with the threat of redundancy, they will slip down quickly. They will feel that they no longer belong to the work group, they will feel that their job security has vanished, their health will suffer, and they will probably have trouble with sleep, eating etc. They are back down to the bottom stage one in no time.

Some people often think that money is the only motivation to work, but this is clearly not the case. Looking at Maslow’s theory, money is at the second stage and supports the higher stages if it is sufficient to live on.

Knowledge Activity 7: Think about your own position at work (either your current role or a previous position).

Where are you on the pyramid?

What needs have to be addressed before you can move up?

What could happen to you to make you move down?

What motivates you to come to work on a 'bad' day?

What motivates you to develop your career?

Techniques to motivate team members

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 18 and 19.

One of the most important skills that a team leader or manager can have is the ability to motivate the team. They need to:

- identify the motivating factors for each team member
- structure their approach around each team member to ensure that they stay engaged, motivated and happy with their work

Employee engagement

When motivating team members, employee engagement is very important and helpful.

Employee engagement happens when employees feel physically, emotionally and mentally connected to their work, their employer and the organisational objectives. If people are engaged at work, they willingly contribute effort, have a positive experience and have meaningful working relationships with colleagues, customers and others.

The type and level of engagement will vary according to the person's job role and activities, but the ideas – that they will 'go the extra mile', feel valued and want to do their best at work – are the same. Engaged employees think hard about their jobs and how to do them better, feel positive about their jobs and take an active part in discussions about work.

Engaged, motivated, productive and content workers need to have:

- **effective leadership** – leaders with vision who value the contributions made by individuals
- **effective line managers and team leaders** – who empower them rather than control them
- **trust and integrity** – an organisation that follows its words through with actions encourages a sense of trust and integrity
- **open communication** – the chance to voice their views, ideas, concerns and suggestions

An engaged workforce thrives when team leaders and managers delegate, listen, empower and motivate their team members according to their individual needs and career development goals.

Once employees are engaged, they will be more motivated because they care about their organisation and their role within it. They see their own success as intertwined with the team's and organisation's success, and they share a common sense of purpose.

Motivation techniques

There are numerous motivation techniques that can be adapted to the team leader's particular team, organisation and environment. As we saw at the beginning of this workbook, when we examined leadership styles, motivation techniques can be based on, for example:

Sharing vision and values – making team members aware of the goals and values of the team and the organisation.

Techniques could include: running workshops, team meetings and social gatherings; using inspirational quotes and images during presentations; involving team members in the defining and agreeing of objectives.

Valuing people – developing relationships where individuals are genuinely appreciated.

Techniques could include: tailoring feedback and task allocation to suit team members' needs where possible; using questionnaires and feedback sessions to build relationships and learn about individuals; team-building games and activities; offering rewards and incentives to help the team to stay focused, especially when they are tired or have been dealing with problems.

Giving regular feedback – to praise and raise the self-esteem when there is success, and to catch problems early so that they can be solved.

Techniques could include: running regular review sessions at useful points before, during and after a project; giving feedback in the way that suits the person best; one-to-one appraisal meetings.

Stretching talent and ability – challenging more able team members to keep them engaged and feeling valued.

Techniques could include: allocating tasks that challenge individuals in ways that suit them best; encouraging and facilitating individuals who want to pursue career development goals; suggesting physical challenges so that people can experience success, such as fire-walking, outward-bound activities or charity fun runs.

Ongoing training – to support improvement and reassure team members that they are working well.

Techniques could include: coaching sessions and refresher training; supporting continuing professional development (CPD); mentoring and shadowing (working with more experienced colleagues); suggesting or facilitating training courses.

The effects on an organisation

If an organisation has good engagement with its employees, it is far more likely to do well. If it does not have good employee relations, the employer is likely to be faced with low morale, poor levels of motivation and major problems with staff recruitment, retention and absenteeism. This can have knock-on effects on customer service, sales, financial stability, future success, survival in the marketplace and so on.

Motivated staff want to take care of current activities and standards, and to make sure that the best possible products and services are being offered. They are also motivated to take care of future activities, so that they can benefit from the ongoing successes and strengths of their organisation.

To summarise, having motivated staff has several benefits for an organisation, for example:

- good productivity and business performance – from staff actively doing their best for the organisation
- excellent customer relations – with good levels of loyalty and retention

- an increased ability to attract new customers – from having a good reputation for customer service
- a good reputation as an employer – able to recruit and retain good-quality staff
- financial stability – based on a good reputation and solid performance
- confidence to plan ahead – knowing that they are supported by an excellent, well-motivated workforce

Knowledge Activity 8: Think about what motivates you, especially in the workplace.

Describe things that demotivate you.

Name the main strategies that managers have used, or could use, to motivate you effectively.

How do you feel when you are given feedback?

Summary

In this section, we have looked at the principles of team leading. We have considered many topics, including:

- effective leadership characteristics, styles and benefits
- different types of teams
- team role theory
- managing conflict within a team
- setting targets and monitoring the flow of work
- organisational change
- motivating the team

In this section, we will look briefly at many aspects of business. We will consider organisational structures, objectives and influences, the business environment, business and financial planning, business reporting and accountability.

Organisational structures

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 20.

There are many different types of organisation – e.g. retail outlets, doctors' surgeries and charity shops. Some of these are large companies; others are owned and run by individuals. Some are public services, and others are charities that rely on volunteers and donations. These different types of organisation have different structures, belong to different sectors and follow different legal guidelines.

Different sectors

Products are things that are manufactured or produced – such as food, cars, magazines or furniture. A service is the action of helping or doing work for someone.

Organisations are either in the commercial sector, the public sector or the third sector, and they may provide either products or services, or a mixture of both.

The private sector

This is often called the commercial sector. It includes organisations in all industries, such as retail, hospitality, transport, finance, technology, manufacturing and leisure – e.g. shops, pubs, hotels, gyms, private bus companies, financial and legal services, factories and workshops. Some of these industries make products – e.g. furniture or food – and some of them offer services – e.g. fitness training or legal advice. Many businesses offer products and services – e.g. food cooked and served in cafes by staff.

The organisations can be small businesses with only one or two people, or large multinational companies that employ many thousands of people. Profit is important to the commercial sector, as this provides the income for the business owners, so it is vital to attract new and old customers to generate the income needed.

The focus of customer service is on sales and aftersales service, supporting the customer before, during and after the purchase. For example, a small pub owned by a family provides products and service, and they take care of their customers:

- **before** – choosing the drinks and menus that their usual and new customers want; advertising and marketing the meals and drinks on offer in a way that pleases new and old customers; being polite on the telephone when taking bookings
- **during** – taking care of customers' expectations by providing excellent food, drink and service; dealing with any problems or complaints politely and effectively; making the customers feel welcome
- **after** – asking for feedback from the customers to make sure that they were satisfied with everything; taking the customers' comments seriously; passing on the information to the managers to make changes if necessary; leaving them with the impression that they were valued customers and that they will be welcome in the future

The public sector

This sector includes organisations such as the NHS, police, fire service, HM Revenue and Customs, the armed forces, local councils, schools and colleges. They provide a variety of services to the public – e.g. healthcare, security services, education classes, rubbish collection. They often have to generate income and handle budgets, but they are not necessarily profit-making.

The focus of customer service is on the quality and level of the service that is provided. As they are funded by the public, they constantly review their customer service to make sure that it satisfies the needs of the public:

- **before** – by planning the levels of services that are needed – e.g. the number of hospital beds or police officers needed for the size of the town
- **during** – by providing the actual services – e.g. collecting recycling weekly, dealing with housing benefit claims, collecting taxes
- **after** – by reviewing the service provided and making changes as necessary

The voluntary sector

This sector includes voluntary and not-for-profit organisations and is sometimes called the third sector. Third sector voluntary organisations can be known as social enterprises – e.g. charities, community groups, housing associations, trusts or cooperatives. They can provide products or services, and they are often involved with selling products to raise money – e.g. selling items in a charity shop to raise funds, then providing counselling services.

The focus of customer service can be split between raising funds – e.g. taking care of customers who buy from a charity shop – and providing services – e.g. supporting individuals and groups who need support or assistance.

An example would be a charity that runs hospices for the terminally ill. It will raise money through donations, selling donated and purchased items in its charity shops, fundraising activities and funds from the NHS and local councils. It will support people in need and provide a well-equipped building and offer healthcare, nursing and specialist support, counselling for the patients and families, bereavement counselling and support. It will work closely with the NHS, especially the GP surgeries, to coordinate care and support.

Knowledge Activity 9: Think of two organisations you know in each of the three sectors – commercial, public and third. Make a short list of their products and/or services. What is the main focus of their customer service?

Organisation's name	Products/services offered	Main focus of their customer service
Commercial organisations a) b)	 a) b)	 a) b)
Public sector c) d)	 c) d)	 c) d)
Third sector e) f)	 e) f)	 e) f)

Business structures

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 21.

Organisations can be classified in many ways, and their legal entity can be important when considering how they are run, and how they have to comply with different legislation. Legal entities can include, for example:

Sole trader

A business can be owned and run by a sole trader, sometimes referred to as a proprietor or freelancer. A sole trader has full responsibility for the business – e.g. income tax, national insurance contributions, VAT, payroll, welfare, health and safety.

Examples of sole traders could be: a florist who owns and runs a small flower shop that employs three part-time staff; a journalist who works for themselves and submits work on a freelance basis.

The person can work alone or can employ many people. The business owner takes all of the risk and receives all of the profits or suffers all of the losses. They are personally liable for any business debts and liabilities. In a small business, the sole trader is likely to make all of the important decisions, although they may employ managers to run elements of their business.

When businesses and their turnover grow, the owners often form a limited company or maybe a partnership.

Partnership

Partnerships are formed when two or more people join their business activities, assets and liabilities together.

They are jointly and severally liable for any debts and liabilities. This means that all of the partners are jointly responsible for any or all of the partnership's liabilities, even if one individual acts alone on behalf of the partnership. For example, if one partner takes out a car loan on behalf of the partnership for their own car, all partners are responsible for the debt. The same applies to tax liabilities and so on.

The organisation's structure will depend on the number of partners and the percentage of their share. For example, in a firm of solicitors with five partners, the two senior partners have 26% each, and the three junior partners each have 16%. They will usually receive their percentage share of annual profits (or losses) and have voting rights that match their share.

Some organisations are traditionally run as partnerships rather than limited companies – e.g. GP joint practices, solicitors or accountants. This can be a legal requirement because they are personally responsible for their business.

Partnerships can employ managers and employees, but the final responsibility rests with the partners who are legally responsible.

Limited partnership

The liability for debts that cannot be paid in a limited partnership is split among partners. Partners' responsibilities differ as 'general' partners can be personally liable for all the partnership's debts, whereas 'limited' partners are only liable up to the amount they initially invest in the business. General partners are also responsible for managing the business.

Limited liability partnership

The partners in a limited liability partnership (LLP) are not personally liable for debts the business cannot pay, and their liability is limited to the amount of money they invest in the business. Partners' responsibilities and share of the profits are set out in an LLP agreement. 'Designated members' have extra responsibilities.

Private limited company

A limited company is a legal entity in its own right. The finances, assets, liabilities and debts of a company are separate to those of the people who own and run it.

Many small, medium and large businesses are run as limited companies. If they are 'private companies', it means that the shares in the company are not available for public purchase.

A limited company will have shareholders who own the shares – e.g. a husband and wife have one share each in their company; a family business has one hundred shares that are held by five different members. The shareholders can receive dividends per share if there are profits to be shared out.

A limited company will also have at least one director. Directors take responsibility for running the company and they have to satisfy legal requirements. They do not have to be shareholders, although many do own shares that they have purchased or been given as part of their remuneration package.

Salaries and benefits for directors and employees are paid via the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) tax system.

Most limited companies are 'limited by shares'. This means that the shareholders' responsibilities for the company's financial liabilities are limited to the value of the shares that they own but have not paid for. Company directors are not responsible for the debts of the business if things go wrong, so long as they have not broken the law.

A company can be 'limited by guarantee'. The directors or shareholders give financial backing to the organisations up to a specific amount, if things go wrong.

Public limited company (PLC)

When a company is large and well-established, it can be 'floated on the stock exchange' and its shares can be offered to the general public. There are very strict rules that need to be followed before a company can be floated and become a PLC.

The structure is similar to a limited company, in that there are directors who are responsible for running the company and shareholders who own it.

Public sector organisation

The focus is to provide a good quality and level of service, and they are funded by the public.

Even though there are no company directors or shareholders, public sector organisations usually have a sophisticated structure, and they are answerable to the public – e.g. via a board of trustees, directly to a central government department, or to a commissioner who acts on behalf of the public.

Third (voluntary) sector organisation

This sector includes voluntary and not-for-profit organisations. They can be known as social enterprises and could be charities, community groups, trusts or cooperatives. They can provide products or services, and they are often involved with selling products to raise money – e.g. parents and others in the community raising money to fund a local youth band or orchestra.

The focus is usually on supporting individuals and groups.

Charities that are registered with the Charity Commission need to have an annual income of more than £5,000 (although smaller charities can apply for voluntary registration). The Commission has strict rules about registration, to make sure that people can feel confident about making donations to registered charities.

The organisational structure can be similar to the public sector. For example, a third sector organisation can be:

- **An unincorporated association**

This is an organisation set up through an agreement between a group of people who come together for a reason other than to make a profit – e.g. a voluntary group or a sports club. Individual members are personally responsible for any debts and contractual obligations.

- **A charitable incorporated organisation (CIO)**

This is registered and regulated by the Charity Commission. It produces annual accounts and a trustees report.

- **A charitable company**

This is a limited company with charitable aims. Run like a normal limited company, it will have to abide by strict rules to qualify for registration with the Charity Commission.

- **A charitable trust**

Voluntary organisations can also be charitable trusts run by a small group of people who are trustees and do not receive any personal benefit from the activities.

Third sector organisations are usually held to account by an independent body – e.g. a board of trustees or the Charity Commission for registered charities.

Knowledge Activity 10: Make a few notes about your organisation's legal status – e.g. limited company, public sector organisation or charitable trust. This can be for your current employer, previous employer, training provider or an organisation you know well.

Vision, mission, strategy and objectives

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 22.

Organisations need to balance their operations to pursue their vision, mission, strategy and objectives.

Vision

The vision of the organisation will be the final goal or objective – e.g. to be the best and most successful college in the region within three years.

An organisation will often create a vision statement, which is usually expressed in a single sentence or a short paragraph. It is a useful tool to use when developing the organisation, as it states the primary goals in a very simple, clear way. This is designed to inspire and give direction to the stakeholders.

A vision statement is focused on the future of the organisation.

Mission

Some organisations use mission statements as well. A mission statement is focused on the present activities, values and beliefs, and it conveys a sense of why the organisation exists – e.g. a college's mission is to provide quality education and training to inspire people to fulfil their potential.

Strategy

Having declared their vision or mission for the future, organisations develop strategies about how they plan to achieve the goals. Strategies are ideas and plans that focus on the unifying vision statement – e.g. how to develop the human and physical resources at a college to become the best and most successful in the region in three years' time.

Strategies also need to stay true to the mission – e.g. to make sure that future developments still ensure that all students get the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Objectives

The organisation's objectives are detailed goals that need to be achieved as part of the strategy. They focus on the vision for the future and the present – e.g. to recruit additional, high-quality staff; to improve IT systems; to upgrade sports facilities in the college; to review the courses on offer to make sure that they are relevant for students and employers; to continue to help all students achieve their potential.

The objectives also need to take the organisation's mission into account – e.g. to review their courses and facilities to make sure that all students get the opportunity to develop their skills and talents.

In summary, there is a relationship between an organisation's vision, mission, strategy and objectives:

- **the vision states the future goals** – what the organisation wants to achieve in the future
- **the mission is based on the present values and beliefs** – why the organisation exists
- **the strategy is the idea or plan about how to achieve the goals set out in the vision** – whilst not losing sight of the promises stated in the mission
- **the objectives are the detailed goals and targets within the strategy** – about how to achieve the primary goals set out in the vision whilst following the values expressed in the mission statement

Did you know?

The overall business population includes three main legal forms: 3.3 million sole proprietorships (62% of the total), 1.6 million companies (30%), and 436,000 ordinary partnerships (8%).

(Department of Business Innovation and Skills – December 2015)

Influences on a business

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 23.

Organisations can be influenced by factors that are within their control – internal influences – and factors that are outside their control – external influences. These factors have an impact on how the organisation operates and how it delivers its products and services. Organisations need to observe and measure the impact of relevant influences so that they can prepare for changes, and take action to put things right when necessary.

Internal influences

There are many internal factors that can influence how an organisation runs its operations. These are influences that are within the organisation's control. For example:

Policies and procedures

Organisations develop and follow their own policies and procedures. These will cover all aspects of the ways in which the organisation and its staff operate; for example:

- ethical policies – e.g. how to source goods and services
- complaints procedures – e.g. how to deal with customers when there are difficulties
- operational procedures – e.g. how to make a product, opening times or cleaning routines

If the policies and procedures are effective and up to date, they will support the workforce and enable them to deliver good-quality products and services. They will also make sure that the organisation can comply with relevant regulations and legislation.

If the policies and procedures are out of date, inappropriate or too difficult to apply, they can adversely affect the way the organisation operates and can lead to good staff leaving to work elsewhere. Failure to have and follow effective policies can lead to poor-quality products and services, complaints or even legal action.

Planning and strategy

Organisations often develop strategies and plans to make sure that they are sustainable – able to grow, meet challenges and changing expectations, and to keep ahead of competitors. Setting and pursuing organisational objectives keeps everyone focused on shared goals, for example:

- an advertising campaign to launch a new service
- a marketing campaign to attract new customers or service users
- developing relationships with suppliers with a view to increasing the size of the business
- plans to open new offices over the next few years

If an organisation has effective plans and strategies, it will be more likely to succeed and be competitive in the short and long term.

If plans and strategies are missing, inadequate or inappropriate, an organisation can suffer failure. It can get left behind if it does not make sure that its objectives are realistic and achievable.

Management and recruitment of staff

An organisation's ability to manage its staff well, and recruit the right people, is extremely important and it will have a major influence on how it operates. Good management skills are needed to ensure that there are enough well-trained, experienced and well-motivated staff members to deliver the products and services on offer – in the short and long term.

If an organisation is good at managing and recruiting good staff, it will be in a strong position and able to achieve its organisational objectives.

If it fails to recruit the right people and look after its staff, an organisation will be unable to deliver and maintain a high standard of products and services. After a while, its customers and service users will probably want to go elsewhere and the organisation will fail if it does not address any HR problems quickly.

Communication

An organisation needs to be good at communicating with all of its stakeholders (anyone connected with it) in order to operate smoothly and deliver excellent goods and services. It needs to have good channels of communication so that important information can be given and received, working relationships can be developed and confusion can be minimised. For example, an organisation might communicate using:

- regular updates in emails or newsletters for staff
- advertisements and marketing – to tell customers about new products and services
- websites, forums and reviews – to monitor and respond to feedback
- staff meetings and training sessions
- telephone call centres – e.g. helplines for customers or staff

If communication is of a poor standard, confusion and dissatisfaction can easily lead to problems for the organisation – e.g. a dissatisfied and under-motivated workforce; difficulties with suppliers; unhappy customers who do not feel valued.

Reputation, image and brand promise

An organisation has quite a lot of control over its image and reputation, although external influences may apply from time to time. It needs to do all that it can to gain and maintain a good image and reputation so that stakeholders feel confident about what to expect. It can do this by, for example:

- making sure that promises are kept
- consistently meeting and exceeding expectations
- using media and marketing to let people know about successes and developments
- keeping up with changes in trends, fashion and competitors' activities
- dealing with problems and complaints quickly and effectively

As we have seen before, a poor image and reputation can do a great deal of harm to an organisation, and it may not recover if it does not deal with issues promptly and comprehensively.

External influences

An organisation can also be influenced by external forces – things that happen outside its control. There are many external factors that can have an impact, for example:

World prices of raw materials and labour

Organisations can be affected by changes in world prices, up and down. World prices can affect the cost of, for example:

- raw materials – e.g. oil, copper or wheat
- processed materials – e.g. components that are used in manufacturing
- labour – e.g. people who make clothes and shoes for export
- transport costs – e.g. for shipping in bulk by sea, or for delivery by container lorry or van

Changes in prices have a knock-on effect on production costs, which affect the final cost of the product or service.

For example, a drop in oil prices may be beneficial to consumers who want to fill up their cars with fuel, but companies and countries who depend on income from supplying oil can lose a considerable amount of their revenue.

Another example is the high price of copper, steel and other metals when large countries (such as China) go through a phase of major development and building. Those supplying the metal (including from scrap metal) receive better prices. However, manufacturing businesses that needed to obtain metals find supplies low and prices high, which affects their operations and profits.

Changes in technology

Most organisations are impacted by changes in technology. The changes can be relatively minor or involve a complete transformation of processes, policies and procedures.

Examples of how new technology has impacted organisations include, for instance:

- widespread Internet shopping replacing high-street shopping
- mobile telephones making staff easier to access
- barcodes simplifying functions such as stocktaking and sales analysis
- post offices closing, as many of the functions they offered became computerised and available online
- widespread use of CCTV improving security and surveillance tasks

- advances in surgery and medical procedures
- medical technology transforming the treatment of patients
- more efficient engines making travel cheaper, quieter and more environmentally friendly

Competitors' activities

If competitors take action to develop and improve their products and services, this can have an impact on other organisations. They need to review their own products, services and procedures to see if they should, for example:

- develop their products and services in the same way – e.g. offering similar price cuts or levels of service
- offer something even better than their competitors – e.g. to be the only one to offer faster and more efficient computer systems
- consider adapting to appeal to a slightly different market – e.g. companies expanding to sell in different countries
- add value in a different way – e.g. offering excellent customer service and inspiring loyalty from customers and service users

Changing expectations

The Internet has increased access to information, making it much easier to research trends and opinions. There are forum and review websites for so many products and services, and customers' and service users' expectations continue to change. These changing expectations can impact an organisation quickly and dramatically, so it is important to respond to changes or risk losing out to competitors.

Bad service and poor-quality products are challenged more than ever, and customers expect higher quality and better value for money.

New legislation, regulations or standards

Changes in legislation, regulations, standards or government policy can influence organisations.

Sometimes the changes will be seen as a burden – e.g. changes in employment law that may affect the shift patterns, hours of working, or annual leave entitlement; health and safety regulations may be increased to deal with new technology and processes.

Sometimes the changes provide new opportunities – e.g. government grants being made available for home insulation for some people; changes in funding for adult education leading to more training courses.

Using a SWOT analysis

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 24.

Organisations need to measure and analyse possible impacts on their operations and their ability to deliver excellent products, services and customer service. This helps them to review their performance and strategies in detail and consider a wide variety of internal and external influences.

There are two models that are frequently used to measure and analyse performance – SWOT analysis and PESTLE analysis.

SWOT analysis

An organisation can use a SWOT analysis when reviewing its business plans, analysing a situation and working out its plans and strategies for development. A SWOT analysis looks at:

S **Strengths** – what the organisation is good at – e.g. its best products and services; what is going well; features of its successful brands

W **Weaknesses** – areas that need to improve – e.g. obsolete products and services; poor staff recruitment and retention; high numbers of complaints; legal action taken by staff, customers, suppliers or others

O **Opportunities for improvement** – opportunities to maintain or improve performance – e.g. new markets to approach; new customers; new technology to improve production and communication; redesigning and relaunching products and services; new processes, policies and procedures

T **Threats to such progress** – things that may stop progress – e.g. problems with suppliers; competitors' activities; changes in legislation and regulations; insufficient time or money to develop and improve operations

When we analyse our own skills, we can do a SWOT analysis, and an organisation will have similar questions:

S	Strengths	What are my strengths? What am I good at already? What qualifications do I have? What have I achieved already? What do people praise? When do I get positive feedback?
W	Weaknesses	What areas of weakness do I have? What mistakes did I make, or nearly make? What are the gaps in my skills, knowledge, understanding and experience?
O	Opportunities for improvement	How can I improve? What training can I do to improve? What support do I need? Which work opportunities can I find that will help me to develop?
T	Threats to such progress	What might stop me? Finance? Time? Support from others? Lack of information? What can I do to minimise these potential problems?

A SWOT analysis is very flexible and simple to use – to focus on small, individual or personal projects, or on the important elements when reviewing any performance or organisational environment. It helps organisations to think clearly about where they are, where they need to be, how they need to get there, and which problems they need to consider that may prevent them from reaching their goals.

Knowledge Activity 11: Prepare a SWOT analysis about your own work performance as a team leader.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Opportunities for improvement**	**Threats to such progress**

PESTLE analysis

When evaluating and analysing the impact of external and internal factors, it can be useful to prepare a PESTLE analysis. This stands for:

- **P** **Political** – e.g. planning regulations; waste management strategy, government schemes to assist people who want to buy their own home
- **E** **Economic** – e.g. increased costs of materials, wages and other costs; fears about recession and unemployment generally make people spend less; confidence in growth and having more disposable income can increase spending levels
- **S** **Social** – e.g. more people driving to work; effects of lifestyles on health and fitness; dealing with an ageing population and gearing up services and products to satisfy demand
- **T** **Technological** – e.g. more Internet shopping than before; more services and forms done online; faster computers with more capacity to do more complex tasks
- **L** **Legal** – e.g. to cover collection, use, storage and destruction of personal and confidential data, i.e. the GDPR Regulation; to protect customers, staff and others from harm from the incorrect storage and preparation of food; to ensure that consumers are treated fairly and that their rights are observed
- **E** **Environmental** – e.g. affecting the disposal of items such as fridges and cars; recycling targets; regulations to reduce packaging

Collecting data in a logical fashion enables organisations to review the influences and make decisions about what they need to do to adapt to changes. Some aspects will be small and can be changed easily following consultation with the relevant decision-makers. Other aspects will be large-scale and out of the organisation's control, in which case managers will analyse and plan for possible knock-on effects of any changes.

If an organisation does not react to the external and internal influences on its operation, it may affect its ability to survive and thrive.

Knowledge Activity 12: Do an informal PESTLE analysis of your favourite restaurant or fast-food outlet and make a few notes about the influences on the business:

P

E

S

T

L

E

Change in a business environment

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 25.

Organisations need to change for a wide variety of reasons. Some of them are **internal** reasons – things going on within the organisation that need to be addressed. Some of them are **external** reasons – things happening out in the rest of the world that influence the organisation and prompt a need for change.

Several things can prompt the need for organisational change, including:

- **changes in technology** – e.g. telecommunication companies adapting to new generation mobile phones, tablets and other new devices
- **competitors' activities** – e.g. airlines changing their routes, prices or level of service to be able to compete with each other successfully
- **changes in the marketplace** – e.g. customers moving away from the high street and making most of their purchases online or in out-of-town shopping centres
- **changing customer expectations** – e.g. hotel guests expecting a higher quality of accommodation at low cost
- **new legislation, regulations or standards** – e.g. consumer-related legislation that affects customers' rights, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR); changes in employment and pension contribution rights
- **environmental factors** – e.g. new waste management procedures to reduce landfill and contamination of the environment
- **financial issues** – e.g. rising costs making current processes unsustainable
- **political factors** – e.g. changes in government funding for apprenticeships
- **internal business factors** – e.g. following a change in senior managers and other decision-makers
- **external business factors** – e.g. fluctuations in currency exchange rates that affect holiday prices for customers

Organisations can go through change at any stage of their development, for example:

- **when they first start to expand** – e.g. leading to changes in staffing levels
- **when they need to restructure after being in operation for a while** – e.g. following changes in technology or competitors' activities
- **if they are taken over by another organisation** – e.g. leading to a merger of staff, resources, customers, working practices and so on
- **when they need to close** – e.g. after a major downturn that leads to redundancies or the actual winding up of a business

Organisations need to react to change in a positive way and without too much delay. This can help them to review their operation and deliver improved performance, increased efficiency, productivity and profitability. By embracing change and managing it in a positive way, organisations, teams and individuals can 'stay ahead of the game' and remain competitive and effective.

Change can be beneficial to business organisations in several ways. It can help them to, for example:

- **keep up with and outperform competitors** – e.g. by improving products, services and customer service
- **adapt to market changes and take advantage of new opportunities** – e.g. delivering new services that will appeal to current customers and attract new ones
- **comply with new regulations and legislation** – e.g. by reducing waste to comply with environmental rules
- **keep up with changes in technology** – e.g. by investing in updated computer systems that improve efficiency and effectiveness
- **keep up with changes in demand** – e.g. recruiting extra staff, reviewing production techniques or moving to larger premises
- **improve procedures** – e.g. to perform operations more efficiently
- **save costs and increase profits** – e.g. from adopting new technology or working practices
- **develop their workforce's skills** – e.g. through training and new procedures
- **gain flexibility** – e.g. from training team members to perform new tasks so that they can be moved around and cover for each other

Measuring business performance

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 26.

There are several ways of measuring business performance. Different methods can be used to measure many areas of business, for example:

- productivity – e.g. to measure the quality and quantity of output
- profit – e.g. net profit or gross profit for a department, project or whole financial year
- sales – e.g. previous, current and future orders
- the return on capital employed (ROCE)
- customer behaviour – e.g. buying patterns that show the frequency of purchases, repeat business and average spend
- customer satisfaction
- staff performance and career development

Methods of measuring performance

When measuring business performance, the data needs to be reliable and relevant to be of use. We need to consider what we want to know and what we want to measure to be able to identify what data we need and how we will collect it. Methods to measure business performance include, for example:

- SWOT analysis (see pages 64-65)
- data analysis
- key performance indicators (KPIs)
- benchmarking

Data analysis

We can analyse data collected in the workplace by, for example:

- **using the agreed SMART targets as performance indicators** – e.g. to measure actual results against the projected results
- **using Gantt charts or other graphs** – e.g. to see the volume of work on an hourly, daily or weekly basis for each team function

- **quality control checks, checklists and inspections** – e.g. to make sure that the agreed standards are being followed
- **analysing reports and data** – e.g. looking at work schedules or daily activity reports to check the figures and compare them from before and after changes, to measure the impact of decisions

KPIs

When measuring progress against key performance indicators, organisations assess areas such as:

- **quality** – e.g. against set standards laid down in policies, procedures and training materials
- **quantity** – e.g. keeping a log of output, sales, commission or services provided over a long period of time, and analysing trends
- **timeliness** – e.g. checking to see how many services and products are delivered on time; checking for delays within the internal production processes; response times
- **cost-effectiveness** – e.g. looking at new and old systems and measuring actual cost differences; measuring actual costs against forecasts
- **absenteeism** – e.g. to find patterns of absenteeism, analyse the causes and look for solutions

Performance can be measured against objectives or reports, and needs to take into account things that may affect performance – e.g. critical incidents, such as accidents, emergencies or bad weather; downtime from broken machinery

Benchmarking

This is the practice of comparing one organisation's processes and performance against the best standards in the industry or best practices of other organisations. Benchmarks are usually used to measure quality, time and cost, and can be used as a one-off measurement or a continuous process.

There are four key steps:

- understand the existing business processes
- analyse the best business processes of others
- compare the two and find gaps
- implement steps to close the gaps

Management information and reports

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 27.

When we measure business performance, we evaluate it in different ways and prepare reports so that others can see the outcomes. We look at the aims and objectives, then see how the business measures up to expectations.

Management information and reports can be used to, for example:

- **compare the outcomes with the original objectives** – to see if the business has achieved its intended aims and the correct quality standards
- **understand how the business achieves its purpose, or why it fails**
- **identify how the business uses human resources** – e.g. to analyse the skills used and developed and to identify career development opportunities
- **identify how efficiently the business uses physical resources** – e.g. comparing budget forecasts with actual costs; reviewing the levels of waste
- **plan operations** – e.g. to schedule staffing levels and the supply of materials
- **prepare forecasts and monitor trends** – e.g. to anticipate future staffing levels and resources required
- **identify problems and potential improvements**
- **advise stakeholders and decision-makers** – e.g. about how to repeat, develop or improve actions and plans for future projects

Reports are used to make sure that:

- projects and objectives are planned appropriately
- people understand what is expected
- sufficient resources are put in place
- sufficient budgets are put in place
- stakeholders' expectations are met

How personal and team data is used to inform management reports

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 28.

Performance data needs to be collected from everyone within an organisation to get a true and accurate picture. Each individual's performance affects their team. Each team's performance affects the organisation.

The personal and team data collected can be used for a variety of reasons, for example:

- to see if individual and team targets have been met
- to measure the planned outcomes against the actual results
- to calculate performance-related bonuses
- to measure quality and output against benchmarks and KPIs
- as a basis for staff appraisals
- to help select people for promotion
- as evidence of underperformance – e.g. to be used in staff appraisals or disciplinary action

The data informs management reports by providing information that is used, for example:

- **to identify areas that require action** – e.g. showing weak areas and failures; giving details of activities that need more resources or time
- **to produce health and safety risk assessments** – e.g. based on data collected about accidents at work; identifying hazards that need further attention
- **for business risk analysis** – e.g. from analysis about how the team and individuals have coped with unexpected changes
- **to show where resources need to be allocated** – e.g. from details of staffing levels needed for tasks; from details of the team's overall levels of skills and experience; from reports about physical resources needed for tasks
- **to show training needs and career development opportunities** – e.g. after identifying needs for extra skills; opportunities for staff who meet targets and work to an excellent standard
- **for business planning** – e.g. having identified needs for staff with particular skills; previous output showing what materials will be needed in the future; production reports that identify the need for new equipment, machinery and vehicles; reports of overcrowded work areas showing the need to upgrade or change premises

A team leader's responsibility for reporting to internal stakeholders

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 29.

Team leaders and managers often have to make reports to internal stakeholders – other people who work for the organisation. These can be informal or formal and on a wide range of subjects, as shown in the examples in the following table:

Internal stakeholders	Examples of information to be reported
Owners or shareholders	• profits/losses of the team, department or the whole organisation • forecasts – e.g. for sales or output • progress – e.g. for tasks or projects • problems – e.g. operational difficulties • opportunities – e.g. suggestions about how to improve or develop operational activities
Senior managers	• progress they and their team have made with delegated tasks • problems they have encountered • opportunities for further development – e.g. new selling opportunities that have come to light • suggestions for improvements – e.g. how to improve production techniques • feedback about staff – e.g. how they have performed; individuals who are excellent and good candidates for career development
Other managers	• plans to coordinate activities done by different teams – e.g. how to spread tasks between teams; how one team's efforts impact on another team's tasks; how they can help each other if things go wrong or get delayed • shared learning resources – e.g. working together to provide internal training courses • shared physical resources – e.g. shared quality control monitoring equipment • problems that have come to light; solutions that worked well and not so well

Team members	• feedback from other stakeholders – e.g. about how the coordination of work between teams has worked • feedback about progress, strengths and weaknesses – e.g. individual formal and informal comments about performance • appraisal information – e.g. figures about output, working practices, accuracy, complaints or positive comments • career development opportunities – e.g. promotion within the organisation; suggested courses or ways to gain experience

Any information that is shared with others must be within the guidelines on confidentiality. Team leaders and managers need to make sure that reports only contain information that the recipient is authorised to receive.

On rare occasions, it is necessary for team leaders and managers to pass on reports that can be seen as 'whistleblowing'. These are alerts to illegal or unauthorised activities – e.g. reporting individuals who frequently disregard health and safety procedures that could lead to the harm of employees, customers or others.

In line with employees' responsibilities for health and safety legislation and regulations, each person has a responsibility to follow policies and procedures and report any issues or problems that are outside their own limits of authority.

Managers are responsible for reporting to internal stakeholders, in line with the organisation's policies and procedures. Keeping stakeholders well informed helps to maintain trust in the organisation and its managers, and it keeps relationships positive. This reduces the chances of more serious problems, complaints and dissatisfaction.

If information is sensitive or confidential, it is best to communicate in ways that cannot be seen or read by the wrong people – e.g. in a private meeting; in a personally addressed, sealed letter or report; or during a personal telephone call.

If information is general and applicable to many people, communication can be more open – e.g. an open meeting for managers; on a noticeboard at work; on the organisation's website; in a team progress meeting.

Summary

In this section, we have looked at many elements of business. We have considered:

- the different sectors
- different business structures
- an organisation's vision, mission, strategy and objectives
- internal and external influences on a business
- SWOT and PESTLE analyses
- the benefits of change
- measuring and reporting performance

Section 3: Understand how to communicate work-related information

Communication skills are an important and essential part of working life. Clear and effective communication can help an organisation to achieve its objectives and avoid costly mistakes. People need to be able to send and receive messages, share information with each other, and to make sure that everyone understands what is expected.

In this section, we are going to look the principles and techniques of work-related communication, and how to prepare for meetings. We will look at verbal and written communication, the quality and confidentiality of the information that is shared, and the advantages and disadvantages of different methods. We will also look at the structure and purpose of meetings.

Communication techniques to gain and maintain interest

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 30.

At work, we sometimes have to communicate with 'an audience', which is just a group of people who have come together to listen and watch. In a business environment, an audience might be:

- **internal** – e.g. team members, colleagues from other departments, managers or owners
- **external** – e.g. customers, people from other companies, suppliers or local residents

Presentations and group discussions can be given by one person or by a group of people, depending on the amount of information and the specialist knowledge needed. If the subject will take several hours to present, it can help everyone if there are several presenters – to keep the audience engaged and to give the presenters a break.

Section 3: Understand how to communicate work-related information

Organisations use presentations and group discussion for a range of reasons, including, for example:

- training purposes
- to give an update on progress and objectives
- to sell products and services
- to inform stakeholders about different aspects of the operation
- as part of an application for finance – e.g. showing banks the current performance and future plans and projections

To gain and maintain the audience's interest, there are several things to take into account, particularly the content and delivery methods and techniques.

Content

The content of a verbal or written presentation needs to be effective. It needs to have, for example:

- **an effective introduction** – to introduce the speakers and the topic
- **an outline of what will be covered** – and why it is important for the audience
- **structure** – e.g. introduction, main content in logical order, then a conclusion and summary
- **content and language to suit the audience** – e.g. technical language at a level that they can understand
- **visual aids** – e.g. pictures, graphs or maps to illustrate the points being made
- **examples and interesting, relevant stories**
- **an effective ending** – e.g. a summary that brings all of the subjects and reasons for the presentation together
- **supporting information** – e.g. handouts, reports or brochures for people to take away

When giving a verbal presentation, we need to cover 'housekeeping' topics first, especially if there are people who do not know the building – e.g. what to do if the fire alarm goes off, and the location of fire exits and toilets.

The visual aids and supporting information need to be relevant and brief. Simply having a printout of the PowerPoint presentation the audience has just seen is rarely useful.

Delivery of verbal presentations and discussions

It is important to maintain the audience's interest and attention throughout the session. Techniques we can use to help keep people engaged include, for example:

- **greeting and welcoming the audience**
- **being courteous and polite**
- **letting them know how long the presentation will last** – so that they can pace themselves
- **inviting them to save their questions until the end** – to save time and irritation from too many interruptions
- **making sure that the presentation is relevant to them**
- **following a structure** – e.g. telling them what we are going to talk about, going through the presentation, then summarising what we have just talked about
- **moving around, smiling, using good eye contact and open body language**
- **asking open questions** – to involve audience members at key points and at the end
- **speaking clearly and steadily** – we can all speed up if we are nervous, so it is important to speak calmly, clearly and slightly more slowly than normal, and to moderate strong regional accents
- **using the right level of language for the audience and subject** – e.g. not too technical for them to understand; not too simple so that they feel insulted and bored
- **giving out supporting information at the right times** – e.g. quizzes or notes during or after the presentation

Delivery of written presentations and reports

Some of the techniques used for verbal communication also refer to written presentations and reports, for example:

- **following a structure** – e.g. an introduction, main contents and conclusion
- **using the right level of language for the audience and subject**
- **making sure that the presentation or report is relevant and to the point**
- **providing relevant and useful supporting information** – e.g. graphics, website addresses or recommendations for further reading

Effective business writing

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 31.

Good written communication skills are essential to make sure that:

- errors and misunderstandings are kept to a minimum
- the right level of detail can be provided
- the organisation's positive and professional image is maintained
- the communication method follows good business practice and is in line with the organisation's policies and procedures
- confidentiality and security are protected, when appropriate – e.g. by marking the communication 'Restricted' or 'Private and confidential'; by selecting recipients carefully

Some workplace written communication requires a **formal** approach, usually when information is important, sensitive or confidential – e.g. financial reports about the organisation or its customers; legal letters; formal letters to customers or colleagues; evidence to support a complaint or investigation.

Some workplace communication requires an **informal** approach, usually when information is not confidential and when it can be shared with people that we know – e.g. a quick question for a colleague or regular customer; sharing information and instructions; during a handover between shifts; announcements that can be made openly; reminders for colleagues or customers.

Principles of effective business writing

The principles we need to follow to make our business writing effective include:

Make sure the communication has a clear purpose

To be effective, written communication needs to be read and understood easily. It needs to be worthwhile so that the reader does not feel that they are wasting their time. We need to:

- make sure that the purpose of the document is clear and relevant
- plan what needs to be written – e.g. use mind mapping, lists or spidergrams to make sure that all points are made; make a draft to put points in the right order

Keep the communication short, clear and simple

People have busy lives so it is important to focus on the purpose of the communication and keep the message clear and simple. We need to:

- give the communication a good structure – with a clear beginning, middle and end
- use the correct level of detail for the task – e.g. avoiding unnecessary details that do not support the purpose; including sufficient information, research, graphs, images, references or data when required
- use good grammar and punctuation – to help the reader to understand the messages and to give a good impression
- check carefully before sending or printing – e.g. we can ask an experienced colleague or proofreader to look over the document

Make sure that the information is accurate and up to date

The purpose of the written communication needs to be supported by accurate and current data. We need to, for example:

- research the subject carefully
- check for changes and plans that may affect any facts and figures

Be aware of the audience

To maximise the chances of successful understanding of the communication, we need to, for example:

- think about the reader's physical requirements – e.g. they may need glasses or large text to be able to read the communication
- think about their cultural and educational requirements – e.g. avoid idioms and slang that may be confusing and offensive to people from a different region, country or background
- be aware of their level of knowledge about the subject
- explain acronyms and abbreviations that the reader may not know – e.g. E&D (Equality and Diversity), HSE (Health and Safety Executive)
- send a copy to relevant people – e.g. to a line manager or colleague who needs to monitor the project or task

Use an appropriate tone

It is essential to use the correct tone for each written communication. The reader will often have an emotional reaction to the tone of a piece of writing, and we need to be aware of the effect of our words. A big sign that 'shouts and nags' people to drive slowly through a village may remind them to slow down, but it is likely to make them feel angry, resentful and less cooperative. A polite reminder might be more effective. When considering tone, we need to, for example:

- use the right tone for the intended audience and the subject – e.g. a funeral director will use a quiet and respectful tone in their literature; a pop music promoter may use an excited tone in their promotional posters and leaflets
- use the right level of vocabulary – e.g. avoid excessive jargon if the reader is unlikely to understand technical terms; avoid talking down to people who already have an in-depth knowledge of the subject
- be respectful, polite and courteous at all times – avoiding rude, abrupt messages when possible

Choose the right method for the task

When choosing the right communication method, we need to consider:

- the type of information being sent
- the people who are going to read or hear it
- the security and confidentiality of the information
- how it will be circulated and shared

Communication methods in the workplace

Methods of written communication in the workplace include, for example:

Emails

Emails can be formal or informal and are often used in the workplace to, for example:

- send information to one person – e.g. to answer a colleague's question
- send information to many thousands of people – e.g. to let all customers on the database know about a new product. Under the GDPR, everyone included in an email database must have opted in. i.e. agreed to receive emails. Additionally, by 25 May 2018, all organisations had to receive explicit permission from every individual in their existing databases to continue sending them emails. If permission was not received by that date, the email address had to be removed from the list.

- deal with customers' queries, complaints and comments
- arrange a meeting and report the outcomes
- send informal or formal reports to colleagues
- make or confirm purchases and orders

When used informally, emails are rather like postcards, memos or short notes. When used formally, emails need to be similar to formal letters. Organisations usually have their own styles, policies and procedures about how to write emails for different situations.

When we want to send a copy of the email to someone else, we put their email address in the 'CC' box – carbon copy. If we want to send a copy without the main recipient knowing, we can put the second email address in the 'BCC' box – blind carbon copy.

Texts and instant messaging

These are very common for sending brief information to people – e.g. telling customers that the delivery driver is on their way; to remind colleagues about a meeting; to send safety or weather alerts.

Notes and memos

Notes and memos in the workplace can be very quick and useful. They are generally informal and can be used to, for example:

- leave notes in the work diary for the next shift – e.g. to report problems or make requests for them to finish a task
- share information with colleagues and other stakeholders – e.g. to ask a colleague a question
- pass on a telephone message – e.g. to give a supplier's name, phone number and message to a colleague who was away from their desk
- remind people about something – e.g. the date, time and location of a meeting or training course

Notes can be addressed personally or left for everyone to see, depending on who needs to see the contents.

Formal letters

These will be on headed notepaper and will be used in formal situations, especially if a permanent record is needed. They are particularly useful when information is confidential and sensitive and needs to be kept private, for example:

- during disciplinary procedures
- when making a job offer
- when writing to customers, staff or other stakeholders about serious, confidential or sensitive matters

Formal letters reflect the organisation at its most professional and serious, so good grammar, vocabulary and presentation are essential.

Reports

Reports can be formal or informal. An informal report can be, for instance, a completed paper or electronic form that is used for:

- giving daily figures for sales or production
- reporting costs and other measurable statistics
- handover notes

Formal reports can be printed or sent electronically and will cover subjects such as, for example:

- annual accounts and accountants' reports
- research and development – e.g. test results for new equipment; detailed comparison between two production methods
- feedback and analysis prepared after an event or project – e.g. to show achievements, problems and opportunities for improvement
- staff appraisals

Spreadsheets and databases

Spreadsheets are used to bring numerical data together – e.g. to analyse expense claims for all employees under different headings, such as travel, subsistence, mileage and hotels.

Drawings, graphs and designs

Drawings and designs are used when information needs to be presented in a visual format – e.g. an architect's drawings; a graphic designer's brochure design; a fashion designer's sketches.

Graphs are used when presenting data in a visual and mathematical format – e.g. pie charts to show details of a company's expenditure.

Forms

Most organisations design and use their own forms. The idea is to simplify the process of sharing information so that the person completing the form can do so as easily as possible.

Forms can be used for many functions, including, for example:

- time sheets, mileage and expenses claims from staff
- requests – e.g. budgets, maintenance work, for leave and other time off, or new resources
- surveys and feedback comments from customers
- job applications
- ideas and suggestions from staff
- orders and sales
- finance applications – e.g. when asking for a loan or mortgage

Information signs, pictures, symbols and notices

Information signs need to be clear and very easy to understand. The language used needs to be straightforward and clearly written to maximise the chances of the message being understood, for example:

- directions to different departments
- instructions about how to operate machinery – e.g. how to use the photocopier
- instructions about what to wear or how to behave – e.g. 'Please be quiet, exam in progress'
- information for visitors – e.g. expected waiting times for their appointments
- car park signs
- prices and special offers in retail outlets

Pictures and symbols can be really useful when the information is important, especially if language is an issue. We see them used on information signs all around us at work and in public places, for example:

- health and safety information in green to imply safety – e.g. emergency exit signs and first-aid signs
- warning signs in yellow to show danger – e.g. yellow trip hazard signs
- fire information in red – e.g. about fire extinguishers and fire alarms
- mandatory (compulsory) information on blue signs – e.g. about hand-washing or instructions to wear personal protective equipment

Chemicals will also have symbols on the packaging to back up the information about the product.

Websites

Most organisations have their own websites, and they are a useful way of communicating with an infinite number of people. They use language, pictures, symbols, graphs and other visual elements.

Websites can carry a vast amount of information, including, for example:

- detailed information about products and services
- background information about the organisation and its structure
- policies and procedures
- photographs and other graphics to give visual examples of the organisation's products and services
- legal information
- testimonials and other feedback from customers and others
- links to related pages, websites or other information connected with the organisation
- availability and booking systems
- payment systems
- specifications and instruction manuals – e.g. for staff or customers to use

Websites need to be well-presented and kept up to date. They can reach a wide number of people so they need to give a good, professional impression of the organisation and its workforce.

Social media

A great deal of sales and marketing material is shared using social media. Many organisations now have a team of people whose job is to monitor and manage social media communications, so that an instant response can be given if necessary.

Social media can be used to, for example:

- monitor and react to complaints – e.g. by train companies if their customers are complaining about a problem
- let followers and customers know the latest news – e.g. announcing a new participant at an air show or music festival
- offer promotions and special offers
- encourage followers and customers to engage with the organisation – e.g. to send their views to a live TV or radio programme, which shows advertisers the level of interest from different people in the audience

Leaflets, newsletters and brochures

Leaflets, newsletters and brochures are generally quite formal and need to be factually correct. They can be illustrated and include graphs and technical information and have many uses – e.g. to give instructions and extra information about products and services; to promote the organisation's image using glossy pictures, background information, logos and news; to keep employees up to date.

Effective verbal business communication

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 32.

We need a variety of techniques to use when communicating verbally in a business environment. We may need to inform, guide, advise, instruct, welcome, persuade or warn others, and we need to consider many things when deciding on the best communication techniques and methods.

When planning verbal communication, we need to take into account, for example:

- **the audience** – e.g. knowledgeable colleagues who understand the format; new customers or trainees who do not know what to expect
- **the needs of others** – e.g. possible hearing impairment; language difficulties; their level of understanding of the subject
- **what needs to be said, heard and understood** – e.g. complicated information about a new product or service; a simple report about recent activities; confidential information and evidence for a disciplinary hearing
- **the time and the place** – e.g. a public reception area where everyone can overhear; a private office with the door closed; a stage in a large conference hall; a boardroom that seats 20 people

Verbal communication

Verbal communication methods include:

- speech
- full conversations
- making noises

When using verbal communication at work, messages need to be:

- as short as possible, without being rude
- to the point and accurate – e.g. giving the correct facts about the subject or instructions
- in simple, clear English – avoiding slang, swearing and jargon
- delivered in a way that is appropriate for the situation and the other person – e.g. using clear and slow speech, especially for people with language or hearing problems

Section 3: Understand how to communicate work-related information

Good speaking skills are important in face-to-face communication. They are even more important when speaking on the telephone, as there are no visual clues to help if people have problems with understanding the messages

There are several things to bear in mind when using verbal communication:

Vocabulary

The choice of words that we use is very important. We need to use simple, straightforward words if possible. People may not understand us, and they may be too shy to ask for an explanation. This can happen, for example: if we use long, complicated and specialist words; if we use local sayings and slang, especially with a strong accent; if English is not their first language; if they have hearing problems and cannot follow us.

Tone of voice

The tone of voice is an important part of verbal communication, as it shows the emotion behind the words. If we use a harsh or sharp tone of voice, it shows that we are annoyed, angry or stressed. If our tone of voice is soft and gentle, we show sensitivity and understanding. If we use a confident and energetic tone of voice, we show authority and enthusiasm.

Pitch of voice

Using a high or low voice also gives extra information to the listener. Some people cannot hear high-pitched sounds, but some will respond better to a high voice.

Volume

People are sensitive to volume. Some need a high volume, and some find noise painful and irritating. The volume needs to be adapted according to the individual's needs and wishes, and to the situation and location.

The main thing is to be clear. We need to speak clearly and not too quickly, and we need to use simple words. If someone cannot hear and understand us and needs us to repeat information, we need to face them, speak slowly and clearly, and use straightforward language. If they still do not understand and need us to repeat, we need to try different words rather than shouting the original words.

Good speaking skills

Good speaking skills are essential. When speaking to people, it is important to get the message across in the clearest and most polite way.

Some helpful hints include:

- **Always be polite and calm** – even if the person is a little aggressive and upset, which can happen if they are nervous about speaking.
- **If possible, plan what is going to be said** – and make a few notes to help.
- **Use a clear, strong voice** – there may be background noise, or some people may have hearing difficulties.
- **Speak slowly** – most people speed up when speaking to a group due to nerves, so speech needs to be slower than normal.
- **Use simple language** – good English is not difficult English. Speakers need to use simple words whenever possible, and avoid slang and local sayings. Many people have English as their second language, so simple language is very important for effective communication.
- **Face people and let them read the face and lips** – this helps everyone, especially those with hearing problems and language issues.
- **Find a different way of saying something if someone asks for a repeat** – just saying the same thing repeatedly does not usually help, and the communication and confidence will fail – use a different phrase, speak even more slowly and clearly, draw a quick picture or point to something.
- **Always check for understanding** – ask open questions to make sure that the messages have been received.
- **Be aware of the tone of the voice** – a sharp tone will indicate anger, whereas a gentle tone will indicate sensitivity and understanding.
- **Summarise what has been said and agreed** – to reinforce the content of the communication.
- **Agree the next steps** – to make sure that all parties agree about what should happen next.

Listening skills

It is important to listen to the customer, and understand what they are saying. By using 'active listening skills', we can show that the customer's issues are understood and being taken seriously.

Active listening skills include:

- **using eye contact**
- **nodding the head in agreement**
- **actively focusing on what is being said**
- **using open body language to show that we are receptive to what is being said**
- **taking notes if the matter is complicated**
- **repeating back key information in a summary of what has been said**

Good listening skills enhance the verbal communication and help us to make sure that we have understood the customers' comments and requests. It also helps to reinforce the message that the customer and their views are valued.

Knowledge Activity 13: Imagine that you are talking to a customer face-to-face about the features and benefits of a product. They cannot understand everything you are saying and it turns out that they have a hearing impairment and need to be able to read your lips when you speak.

How would you handle the situation?

What could you do about your body language to help?

How would you adapt the way that you speak?

Body language

Verbal communication is often supported by body language – especially when the audience can see the speaker. A huge number of messages are sent non-verbally and these can be transmitted through, for example:

- posture and body language
- gestures and touching
- fidgeting
- physical appearance

How people stand, how close they are 'in someone's space', eye contact, fidgeting and hand movements all add to the oral messages.

A person who frowns, looks at the floor and sits with their arms folded gives out very negative messages. A person who sits or stands upright, and who smiles and uses good eye contact, is far more approachable and less threatening.

Examples of good and useful body language include:

- having an open and relaxed posture
- facing the person but not standing too close – about an arm's length away is comfortable for most people
- smiling when appropriate – although it is important to be friendly, we need to show that comments are taken seriously
- using facial expressions to show sympathy or reassurance
- using eye contact – although we need to be aware that some people (and cultures) find too much eye contact inappropriate and threatening
- being sensitive to the other person's own body language
- being flexible about our own body language and gestures – so that we do not appear threatening or unapproachable

All gestures and body language support what we are saying and how we are listening. If we say positive things but use negative body language, people will not believe or trust us. They will think that the good things we are saying are untrue.

Knowledge Activity 14: Imagine you are a customer in a small shop, waiting to be served. The two staff at the counter are talking to each other, chewing gum and ignoring you. One of them turns towards you eventually. They do not look at you, they slouch and look completely uncaring and disinterested. They start to scan your items without even saying hello or acknowledging you.

How does this make you feel?

How do you feel about the customer service in the shop?

If you have a query, how do you think these staff members will handle your request for information?

How do you feel about returning there in the future?

Did you know?

Words (the literal meaning) account for 7% of the overall message.

Tone of voice accounts for 38% of the overall message.

Body language accounts for 55% of the overall message.

(Albert Mehrabian – 1971)

Accuracy and currency of information

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 33.

Anything that is produced and sent out by the organisation says a great deal about it. Letters, emails, reports, presentations and so on can all be kept as permanent records, so it is vital to take care when producing them. Verbal communications can also be contractual – e.g. promising certain actions or discounts to a customer; or verbally agreeing deadlines with suppliers.

All information released on behalf of the organisation needs to:

- **be accurate and factually correct** – e.g. using figures that balance and add up correctly
- **be current** – e.g. as up to date as possible
- **be legible** – e.g. using a large enough font; using suitable colours that everyone can see
- **have a good standard of English** – e.g. with correct grammar and spelling
- **use language that is appropriate for the intended audience** – e.g. avoiding jargon that is difficult to understand
- **be balanced and well-presented** – e.g. letters and reports with headings and indents in the right places; presentations that are engaging and informative

Producing information that is consistently accurate and current helps to:

- **avoid operating errors** – e.g. as a result of poor communication
- **save time** – e.g. from having to redo work and send it out again
- **avoid complaints and legal action** – e.g. from misrepresentation or ignoring customers' rights
- **maintain a professional and positive image of the individual, team and organisation**

To achieve this, information needs to be checked thoroughly. There are several ways of doing this, including, for example:

To check the accuracy and currency of contents:

- checking facts and figures – e.g. against operations manuals and data
- asking colleagues and subject specialists for up-to-date information
- checking the Internet for changes – e.g. in legislation or competitors' products and services

- checking manufacturers' instructions and updates – e.g. looking at their websites for changes and updated information

To check accuracy of typing, spelling and grammar:

- using the spellcheck facility – e.g. set to show UK English for 'colour' rather than US English which would show 'color'
- asking a colleague to check – e.g. to pick up errors missed by spellcheck such as: to/too/two; there/their/they're; own/won; an/and; practice/practise
- proofreading work after a break – e.g. looking at our own work again with a 'fresh eye' to spot errors

Explaining the level of confidence about information to others

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 34.

When communicating to others, it is important to explain the level of confidence that can be placed on the information. People need to know how reliable the information is, so that they can make their own judgements about how much they can trust it.

If someone is buying a second-hand car, they need to work out how much they can trust the information about it, based on, for example:

- **the accuracy and currency of the information** – e.g. how accurate the description is and how old the photograph is
- **the reliability of the source** – e.g. whether the car is being sold by an unknown private seller or a well-known dealer with a good reputation
- **whether important facts or extra information are missing** – e.g. the full service history of the car, or details of previous owners
- **the viewpoint or the bias of the information** – e.g. the lack of impartiality of the seller, who wants to get rid of the car quickly
- **the clarity and relevance of the information** – e.g. how easy it is to follow the information, and how relevant it is to the purchase decision
- **risk factors** – e.g. the age and mileage of the vehicle
- **the level of detail provided** – e.g. the details that have been included or left out on purpose

These points to check also apply to business information when checking the level of confidence that can be placed on it.

It is important to understand the level of confidence so that people can, for example:

- **identify the risks associated with the information** – e.g. the high risks of buying an old car from a stranger who has provided little information; the low risks of buying a well-maintained car from a reputable dealer who supplies a free warranty for a year
- **identify the consequences of acting on the information provided** – e.g. losing money; having no legal rights to return the vehicle; causing an accident that could cause injury or fatality; spending more money to have the peace of mind from buying from a dealer, and having a more reliable car

In the workplace, people who might receive information and be affected by it might include, for example:

- **team members** – e.g. who need accurate and current information about how to operate new equipment and machinery
- **other team leaders and colleagues** – e.g. who need clear and relevant information about problems and solutions to operating problems
- **managers, senior managers and directors** – e.g. who want to know the risk factors so that they can develop plans and strategies
- **internal and external customers** – e.g. who want a high level of detail about products and services before they make their decisions to order and buy
- **external stakeholders** – e.g. bankers who take into account the organisation's viewpoint and bias in its reports when making decisions about funding

By receiving accurate, current and transparent information, stakeholders can increase their level of confidence in the information, and make informed decisions about the risks and consequences involved. This builds trust in the organisation and enhances its reputation for being reliable, open and honest.

Knowledge Activity 15: Think of a time when you have made a decision and found that the information you were given was false or misleading – e.g. when buying a car, or ordering gadgets or products over the Internet.

How did you feel about being misled?

What were the consequences?

What did you do to rectify the situation?

What information would you ask for or find out for yourself next time?

Advantages and disadvantages of different methods of communication

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 35.

We need to use different methods of communication for different purposes at work. Factors we need to consider when making our choices include, for example:

- **the purpose of the communication** – e.g. to make plans, sell products or train staff
- **the audience or intended recipients** – e.g. new external customers, colleagues or the general public
- **whether we need to build and develop relationships** – e.g. with customers or team members
- **the time and place** – e.g. the suitability of the location for a quiet one-to-one meeting or a presentation to hundreds of people
- **the level of confidentiality required** – e.g. the personal or sensitive nature of the information to be discussed

Advantages and disadvantages of written communication

This table has some notes about some of the advantages and disadvantages of written methods of communication.

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Emails	• Quick and simple • Can be formal or informal • Easy to keep a copy and track the messages coming in and going out • Provides a clear record of what has been discussed	• Cannot always get instant feedback or an answer from the other person – some people do not deal with emails every day; need to check this if the matter is urgent • People often get too many emails, so it is hard to make important ones stand out

Texts and instant messaging	• Can be sent to one or many • Simple format • Instant, but can be left for someone to read when they are ready – e.g. after a meeting or shift • Inexpensive or free to use	• Can be impersonal • Can fail to go through • Might not be seen for a while – especially if the person is driving or has too many to check
Notes in the team diary	• Useful central place for handover notes for the next shift • Can leave notes for many to see – e.g. managers, team leaders or team members • Good way to flag up important dates, times and deadlines • Good way to leave reminders – for self or others	• Quite public • Not suitable for confidential or awkward subjects and details
Drawings, graphs and designs	• Strong visual impact • Can explain plans, results, achievements very quickly when data presented correctly • Help people to imagine a three-dimensional plan or design	• Often time-consuming to prepare • Data and parameters can be hard to understand if people are not familiar with the format
Forms	• Easy to complete • Logical • Designed for a specific purpose	• Cannot always have room for additional information • Questions and boxes might not be entirely suited to the nature of the answers needed
Personal notes	• Can give specific information or requests • Person has a written record	• Might be missed if left in wrong place • Need to be aware of possible literacy or language issues
Formal letters	• Suitable where very personal approach needed – e.g. with a job application • Formal permanent record	• Usually take longer to prepare, check and send

Information signs and notices	- Can pass information to wide range of people – e.g. in the staffroom, customer waiting area, entrance to the building - Symbols and colour-coding make them easy to understand - Good for general information or announcements	- Not suitable for personal or confidential information - Some symbols can be harder to understand if they are unfamiliar
Websites	- Can be tailor-made for the organisation or department - Relatively cheap and easy to use to reach a very wide audience - Can hold a vast amount of data, pictures and information - Can link to other pages, information and websites	- The internal search engine within the website can be inadequate and make it hard to navigate - Information can be irrelevant if not kept up to date - Website can be hard to find on search engines – e.g. Google
Social media	- Quick, easy and inexpensive to operate - Can reach extremely large numbers of followers instantly - Good for short messages	- Needs to be monitored and updated all of the time – especially for customer comments that might need a response - Bad news can travel fast – e.g. negative customer feedback or complaints
Leaflets, newsletters and brochures	- Can be formal or informal - Good for sending information in a permanent form to a large number of people - Can be left for people to help themselves – e.g. in a doctor's surgery waiting area	- Can go out of date quite quickly - Often discarded unread, or hardly read, which is a waste of resources - Expensive to produce and store

Advantages and disadvantages of verbal communication

This table has some notes about some of the advantages and disadvantages of verbal methods of communication.

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Face-to-face conversations with colleagues, customers, public	• Instant response • Formal or informal • Can be confidential if in private • Can give a good impression of self and organisation • Focus on the information tends to be good • People feel valued and respected when their views are taken seriously	• Not always possible to be in private • Timing can be tricky to arrange for formal meetings • Can be time-consuming • Limit to the number of people who can join in
Telephone conversations	• Can discuss, make decisions and arrangements in 'real time' • People can be accessible – especially using mobiles	• Not always possible to get through to speak to the person needed • Leaving messages is not always effective
Structured formal meetings	• Predictable structure with agenda and minutes • Formal records are kept and circulated • Useful for legal and compliance reasons	• Format can seem quite laboured and 'stuffy', using complicated language and procedures • People will not always understand what is happening if the language and format are too difficult

Training sessions and lectures	- Sessions can be lively and engaging for learners and tutors - Instant response to queries and feedback - Can be adapted to any subject, any learner and any situation - Demonstrations help people to learn physical skills - Mentoring and shadowing are personal and show current skills	- Some people will not understand if the language or delivery are not clear and easy to follow - People learn at different paces – some will find sessions too quick, others too slow - Limits to the numbers that can be trained in each session - Training DVDs and videos can leave learners uninterested and unable to engage
Using the Internet	- Relatively inexpensive to run once set up - Can have international access - Instant, real-time communication - Staff can have their own mobile devices – e.g. phones or tablets	- Staff can feel as though they are never off duty - Some areas around the country do not have good mobile coverage - Signals can be disrupted or disconnected at times
Presentations	- Can be lively and engaging - Formal or informal - Can use pictures and other graphics to deliver messages - Can be adapted to any topic, audience or situation - Can be delivered with or without electronic support	- Can be time-consuming to prepare, deliver and attend - Not always relevant to people invited to attend - Pace and level of information can be hard to judge – flexible approach needed

Knowledge Activity 16: Make a few notes about which type of communication you would use to:

Tell a visitor how to find the office they need to go to for a meeting

Give directions to a customer who does not speak English very well and who seems to be confused and anxious

Tell colleagues about a big party for the whole workforce

Book annual leave

Structure, purpose and how to prepare for different meetings

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 36 and 37.

Meetings are an important part of business life. They provide important opportunities to share information, build relationships, discuss problems, make decisions and gain commitment to objectives.

Many different types of meetings take place in a business environment. They can be formal or informal, regular or ad hoc, and they take place between many different people – e.g. colleagues, managers, customers, suppliers, shareholders, directors, government representatives, sales representatives, volunteers or members of the general public.

Some typical meetings include:

Team meetings – where team members, team leaders and managers get together to discuss how things are going for the team

Team meetings can be held regularly or be arranged only when they are needed. Many topics can be covered – e.g. progress with tasks; targets for the future; operational problems and solutions; training and information for new equipment and procedures; general queries and observations that affect the team.

To prepare for team meetings you should:

- have a good understanding of what the meeting is for and what you want to achieve
- invite people in good time
- ask invitees for any issues they want to talk about ahead of time
- create an agenda so the meeting has structure
- know who's attending
- make sure you have the information you need prepared before the meeting

Management meetings – where team leaders and managers discuss plans, problems and progress

Management meetings are often held regularly – e.g. daily, weekly or monthly. The team leaders and managers can discuss the progress of their staff, problems and solutions, plans and objectives.

The steps to prepare for management meetings are very similar to preparing for team meetings. Because management meetings happen on a regular basis, they will probably follow a similar agenda each time. You should make sure you have all of the information you need to make a positive contribution to the meeting.

Training meetings – sessions that are devoted to training

Training meetings enable several people to cover topics together in a meeting room or training room, rather than 'on-the-job' in the work area. Courses can be:

- regular meetings – e.g. weekly training sessions or day release
- intensive, formal courses – e.g. a week of training sessions to achieve a formal qualification
- one-off sessions – e.g. when a new service or product is introduced
- 'toolbox' sessions – e.g. refresher training on one or two aspects of the job

To prepare for training meetings, you should:

- set clear training goals
- create a session plan which can be used as a guide
- create training materials that support those goals
- ensure you have the correct equipment - and that it works
- ensure you have support materials for all attendees
- ensure attendees know the details of the training, e.g. the date, time and location

Appraisal meetings – usually one-to-one in private

These are meetings between the employee and their manager to discuss job performance and plans. They can be regular meetings, maybe on an annual basis, or when requested by the employee or manager. Topics may include:

- a review of progress since the last appraisal
- current skills, experience and knowledge
- setting and agreeing objectives, targets and goals
- problems and solutions
- personal issues
- career development and potential for promotion

To prepare for an appraisal meeting, you should look at each of the bullets above and make notes for each. For example, you may want to improve a specific skill, so could suggest a training programme, or you might like to be promoted in the next year. You can discuss both of these in your meeting, and writing them down will help you to stay focused on what you want to achieve. If you have any questions or concerns, you should also write them down.

Videoconferences – between people who are not usually in the same building

Videoconferences, or web meetings, are very useful when people are based in different parts of the country or the world. Cameras and microphones send images and sound via computers, and all delegates can share documents, graphics, pictures and so on.

They can be beneficial as they minimise the need for travel – saving time, money and vehicle and aircraft emissions. On the downside, people do miss out on the personal contact and body language, and delegates can be in different time zones, making them inconvenient.

You should prepare for a videoconference the same way you would prepare for any other type of meeting:

- set clear objectives
- stay on task
- prepare notes or any files that you want to share ahead of time
- create and share an agenda

Sales meetings – between sales staff

Sales staff get together regularly to review objectives, for example:

- confirmed sales
- orders that are ‘in the pipeline’
- progress against set targets
- new targets
- the level of repeat business
- referrals from customers

To prepare for sales meetings, you should:

- create an agenda
- set clear objectives
- have a good understanding of any pipeline orders, repeat business and referrals
- have current sales numbers
- have access to and an understanding of sales targets and how you are faring
- be prepared to discuss any issues or concerns you have

During these meetings, sales staff swap ideas and hints about how to generate new business, and they motivate each other to maintain energy and enthusiasm for their tasks.

Meetings with customers – with current and potential customers

Many organisations will hold meetings and presentations to showcase their services and products to current and potential customers. These can be held, for example:

- on the organisation's own premises
- on the customer's premises
- at a hotel or conference centre

To prepare for meetings with customers, you should:

- research the individual or company if they are potential customers, and refresh your memory on important details if they are existing customers
- meet in a professional environment, e.g. in a conference or meeting room
- create any sales materials you want to take, such as presentations or graphics
- set clear objectives or goals
- practise your 'pitch' so you appear calm and professional in the meeting
- know what you can offer, e.g. prices and discounts

Colleagues who deal with the sales of services and products often present 'pitches' to current and potential customers to let them know what is on offer, and to encourage sales. There may be several meetings that follow, when everyone discusses the details and progress.

Meetings with suppliers and other stakeholders

Organisations will have meetings with current suppliers from time to time to discuss how things are going and to make future orders. They will also meet new and potential suppliers to see if their products and services will be of use – e.g. new phone system suppliers or Internet providers.

There can also be meetings with other people who are connected with the business – e.g. HM Revenue and Customs; bank managers; inspections by representatives from governing bodies.

To prepare for stakeholder/supplier meetings, you should:

- review your current agreement with them or work out what agreement you want to have with them
- research the market to understand the wider picture, e.g. pricing, availability, timescales
- know your company's position, e.g. budget, product demand

Meetings of directors, trustees or shareholders

The board of directors will meet from time to time to discuss the business in detail – e.g. to talk about progress, strategies and objectives.

If the organisation is a charity, there can also be a board of trustees made up of people who are independent from the directors. They will meet from time to time to discuss the business and the charity – e.g. levels of income; the work of the charity; how to allocate funds for charitable projects.

Shareholders are people who have bought a share of the organisation, usually of a company. There can be one or two for a small company, or there can be many thousands for a large company. They are invited to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and there may be other meetings when required. They need to discuss and sometimes vote on aspects of the business – e.g. to accept the financial accounts; to select and appoint people to act on their behalf.

In addition to making sure you have booked an adequate meeting space, to prepare for this type of meeting you should:

- create an agenda
- set clear goals and/or objectives
- invite attendees in good time
- gather all relevant information and present it in an easy-to-read format
- create any presentations or graphics that will be used
- have a method of recording the details of the meeting, e.g. with audio or someone taking minutes

The importance of having a meeting agenda which addresses objectives

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 38.

Meetings are used to share information, often in a formal session. They can be between two people, or attended by hundreds or thousands of people.

When organising a meeting, the person leading it will often generate and circulate an agenda in advance. This is a list of points that they are expecting to cover, in order, within the time allocated to the meeting.

The agenda is based on the organisational objectives that the people attending need to discuss, for example:

- data to measure and evaluate progress so far in achieving objectives
- issues and problems
- possible solutions
- forecasts, plans and targets about how to achieve the next set of objectives

For example, a quarterly meeting between department managers and team leaders to review activities could result in these items being on the agenda:

1. Welcome and introduction – from the senior manager holding the meeting
2. Minutes from the last meeting – to be agreed and signed off as being accurate
3. Apologies – from people who cannot attend the meeting
4. Production output for the last two quarters – to compare and analyse
5. Problems arising – e.g. delays, staffing issues or problems with suppliers
6. Forecasts and targets for the next quarter
7. Anticipated resources needed and potential problems
8. Review draft targets for the following year
9. Recruitment plans for the following year
10. Training courses planned for the following year
11. Any other business (AOB) – for people to add things that need to be discussed

It is important to have a meeting agenda that addresses the objectives of the organisation so that, for example:

- **the meeting is focused, structured and has direction** – to keep things moving, as people can see how much business needs to be covered and in what order; to avoid people spending valuable time talking about issues that are nothing to do with the objectives; to keep the meeting on time
- **people can see what needs to be prepared before the meeting** – e.g. reports and figures that are going to be discussed
- **participants can anticipate questions they may want to ask** – e.g. by having advance warning that they will discuss specific problems with other managers

Having an agenda shows that the meeting is serious and will be run well. Everyone's time is precious and it is important to use the time wisely and efficiently, making the most of the opportunity to share information, review objectives and agree the ways forward.

During formal meetings, someone will usually **take the minutes**. These are detailed notes that are written up after the meeting as a true representation of what was discussed and agreed. They are often sent out soon after the meeting, so that everyone can see the points that have been agreed. The minutes are checked and agreed at the next meeting to make sure that they are accurate. They can also be used when writing the agenda for the next meeting, to check that actions have been completed, and to show which subjects and objectives need to be reviewed again.

The importance of confirming objectives to be achieved during the meeting with the relevant people

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 39.

By sending out the agenda in advance, people have the chance to raise issues and request changes to the agenda before the meeting – e.g. to include extra topics that they believe are important and ready for the group to discuss. This helps to confirm the objectives to be achieved during the meeting, as everyone can see what is going to be covered.

Having an agenda also helps the relevant people to see that they need to be prepared if the meeting is going to achieve its objectives. If their department, team or tasks are under review, they need to have reports and data ready for analysis and discussion.

For example, if one of the objectives of a meeting between the directors and senior managers is to evaluate the performance of the sales team members, the sales manager needs to have details ready, such as:

- reports of sales made by every individual
- reports to summarise the performance of the team as a whole
- reasons for delays, problems or performance issues
- projections for future sales performance
- plans and strategies to develop performance and face new challenges

Each organisation will have its own way of confirming the objectives with the relevant people before the meeting. In this example, the managing director who writes the agenda might telephone or email the sales manager to give clear instructions about the meeting objectives, and what information they want to see. By confirming the objectives they want to achieve during the meeting, the managing director makes sure that:

- everyone knows what they need to do and can be prepared
- when they check the agenda, people can ask for extra topics to be discussed or prepare questions
- people have the information and documents they need in time
- the best use is made of the time available for the meeting
- decisions can be made during the meeting based on the reports and data (and not delayed due to lack of information)

Another example could be a training meeting between a team leader and a team member. The team leader needs to tell the team member the objectives for the meeting so that they can, for example:

- prepare themselves for the training topic that will be covered
- make sure that they have the correct materials and equipment – e.g. a sample of their work so far
- bring their training notes on the subject – e.g. to revise what they have learned before and to see notes about questions they need to ask the team leader
- bring their personal development plan – e.g. to be reviewed and signed once training is completed successfully

Your responsibilities when leading or chairing a meeting

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 40.

The person who is in charge of a meeting is known as the ‘chair’. The chair’s responsibilities include:

- outlining the purpose of the meeting and the objectives or goals set out in the agenda
- helping attendees to reach agreement on each objective or goal
- helping to keep the meeting productive and moving forward
- making a decision about when an agenda point has been closed and helping attendees to move on to the next point
- ensuring attendees don’t interrupt each other
- ensuring the meeting runs on time
- providing a summary of what has been achieved at the end of the meeting and highlighting any actions attendees have to complete
- setting the date and time for the next meeting

Summary

In this section, we have looked at communicating work-related information, in particular:

- techniques to gain and maintain the interest and attention of an audience
- effective written communication
- effective verbal communication
- accuracy, currency and reliability of information
- advantages and disadvantages of different communication methods
- different types of meetings
- preparing for different types of meetings
- addressing objectives
- responsibilities when leading or chairing a meeting

Further your knowledge and understanding of the topics in this workbook by completing the following extension activities.

Principles of team leading

Extension Activity 1: We have briefly covered two theories about leadership styles, Kurt Lewin and Tannenbaum and Schmidt. Find some more leadership theories online by entering 'leadership theories' in a search engine.

Make some notes about their main points.

Which theory appeals to you most, and why?

Extension Activity 2: Look on the Acas website – www.acas.org.uk – and research their guidance on conflict management. Make some notes about:

Negotiation skills

Mediation

Bullying and harassment

Extension Activity 3: Prepare a set of SMART targets for yourself to show how you want your career to progress in the next five years.

Extension Activity 4: Find some theories online about how to motivate your team. Make some notes about the main points covered by a theory that you believe to be useful and relevant to you. Enter the term 'motivation theories' into a search engine.

Understand business

Extension Activity 5: Imagine that you are setting up a business to produce and/or sell products or services that really interest you – e.g. music, art, cars, dog walking, fitness, gym, sports equipment, clothing or beauty treatments. Prepare a basic business plan based on the template shown on the Prince's Trust website: **www.princes-trust.org.uk**

The following link should take you to the right area of the website, but just use the search facility if necessary: **https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people/tools-resources/business-tools/business-plans**

Extension Activity 6: Search online for Henri Fayol and make some brief notes about two of his management theories:

6 Primary Functions of Management

14 Principles of Management

Understand how to communicate work-related information

Extension Activity 7: Imagine that you are going to brief your team on how to use a new piece of equipment in a team briefing next week. The manufacturer has given you full operating instructions, pictures and a short demonstration DVD. Devise an agenda about what you will cover in your meeting, and list which documents and presentation resources you will need.

Extension Activity 8: Describe the communication methods you prefer to use at work, and explain why – e.g. when giving progress reports, communicating with customers, or introducing new working practices or equipment.

Well done!

You have now completed Workbook 1 and should attempt the assessment. If you require any help or guidance, please contact your Assessor/Tutor.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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NCFE Level 2

Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

CUSTOMER SERVICE

MOTIVATION

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

LEADERSHIP ROLES

SUPPORT

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Workbook 6

Understand how to deliver customer service and resolve problems

How to use your learning materials

This course is delivered on a flexible learning basis. This means that most of your study will take place away from your Assessor/Tutor. It helps to carefully plan your studying so that you get the most out of your course. We have put together some handy tips for you below.

Study Guidance

- Try to plan an outline timetable of when and where you will study.
- Try to complete your work in a quiet environment where you are unlikely to be distracted.
- Set realistic goals and deadlines for the various elements of your course.
- Plan what you are going to study during each session, and try and achieve this each time.
- After each session, reflect on what you have achieved and plan what you hope to complete next time.
- Remember that not only do you have the support of your Assessor/Tutor, but it is likely that your family, friends and work colleagues will also be willing to help.

Assessor/Tutor Support

- Your Assessor/Tutor will be available to support and guide you through the programme. They are experts in your area of study and are experienced in helping many different types of learners.
- They can help you to improve the standard of work you submit and will give you useful feedback on areas in which you have excelled, as well as where you can improve.
- Remember to listen to, or read, their feedback carefully. Ask if you are unsure about any of the feedback you receive, as your Assessor/Tutor is there to help.
- Make note of any tips they give. Refer to the learning materials, as they contain the information you need to complete the end-of-unit assessments.
- Look out for areas in which you can improve, and set yourself an action plan to make sure you complete the required work.
- Take positive feedback on board; this demonstrates you are doing things right and have a good understanding of the subject area.
- Use the feedback to avoid repeating any mistakes you may have made.

Enjoy your studies!

NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

Workbook 6

Understand how to deliver customer service and resolve problems

Workbook Contents

In this workbook, we are going to look at how to deliver customer service and resolve problems. We will consider how organisations work to satisfy their individual customers' needs and expectations with their products, services, customer service and brands. We will also look at how organisations resolve customer service problems and make use of feedback.

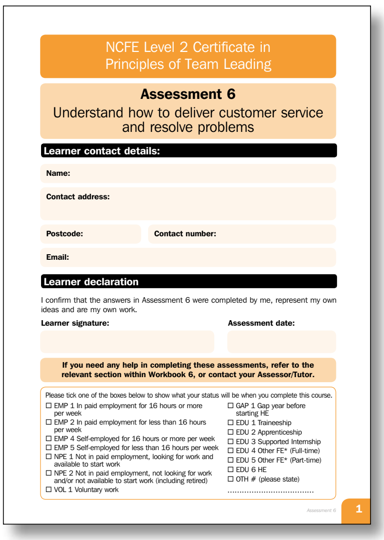
Contents

This workbook contains four sections:

Each section has a corresponding assessment that must be completed in order to achieve this part of the programme.

The assessments for this workbook can be found in:

Assessment 6


NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

Assessment 6

Understand how to deliver customer service and resolve problems

Learner contact details:

Name:

Contact address:

Postcode: Contact number:

Email:

Learner declaration

I confirm that the answers in Assessment 6 were completed by me, represent my own ideas and are my own work.

Learner signature: Assessment date:

If you need any help in completing these assessments, refer to the relevant section within Workbook 6, or contact your Assessor/Tutor.

When you have completed this workbook, you should attempt the assessment. Your Assessor/Tutor will then give you detailed written feedback on your progress.

Remember that your assessment answers should be written in your own words. You should not copy answers directly from the workbooks.

Customers' wants, needs, expectations and satisfaction

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 1.

Customers have expectations and generally want:

- **efficient and polite service** – before, during and after buying or using a product or service
- **good-quality products and services** – in line with the standards promised in catalogues, brochures, websites, customer charters, company policies etc.
- **complaints and problems to be dealt with properly** – politely and quickly, with an effective outcome
- **their opinion to matter** – when dealing with staff, when giving feedback or when discussing a problem

'Customer needs' are what the customer is looking for a product or service to do. Customer needs drive customer expectations, i.e. the customer will expect a certain level of service or quality of a product or service based on past experience or feedback from other customers. If a customer's needs and expectations are met, they will be satisfied; if they aren't, the customer will be dissatisfied.

There can be subtle differences between customers' wants, needs and expectations. These are illustrated below with some comments about what a customer may want, need and expect when buying a new vacuum cleaner for their home:

	General description	Example of customer buying a new vacuum cleaner
Customer wants	What the customer sees as their idealistic view of which type of product or service will meet their needs	A perfect, low-cost cleaning machine that is lightweight and can clean their house with very little effort
Customer needs	What the customer requires the product or service to do – looking at the benefits and features that the customer needs	Individual features that are needed: • must be able to deal with dog and cat hair • must be lightweight • must have tools and a long hose • prefer a long electrical lead • prefer a quiet, low-wattage motor • must be under £250 • prefer to buy from retail outlet • prefer a three-year warranty or guarantee

Customer expectations	What the customer expects the product or service to do to meet their needs – these can be realistic or unrealistic	The chosen vacuum cleaner should: • do everything that was promised • be reliable • be easily available, preferably in stock to take away that day • come with good customer service and guarantees Staff should: • be polite, friendly and knowledgeable • be able to answer queries • make the transaction easy and straightforward • make the customer feel valued and respected The retail outlet should: • be easy to get to, with free parking outside • be clean, tidy, well lit and well ventilated • be well laid out with logical sections • have enough knowledgeable staff on duty • have plenty of stock and choice

Even in this simple example, we can see differences between wants, needs and expectations. A customer's wants can be very general and idealistic, and their wants do not necessarily give enough information about their needs. Their needs are the focus of the negotiations and transaction. If the needs cannot be satisfied, the expectations cannot be met.

Using good questioning techniques can encourage customers to give useful answers that can help us to identify their needs and expectations; for example:

- open questions to get the customer to talk – e.g. "What are your top three priorities?"
- closed questions for a quick response – e.g. any question that can be answered "yes" or "no"
- probing questions for more details – e.g. "So, tell me more about..."

By looking at their needs in detail, it is possible to match the service offer and meet or exceed their expectations. Each customer will have a 'wish list' of features and benefits that they need from the product or service – some of these features will be 'must haves' and others will be 'prefer or would like to have' features that are optional.

Effective customer service skills can result in a match by, for example:

- asking relevant questions to assess needs accurately – especially if the customer is not sure about what they want or need initially
- using good listening and questioning skills to encourage useful answers
- clearly explaining the features and benefits of relevant products and services
- dealing with objections with respect and an open mind
- offering and suggesting alternatives and compromises
- remaining focused on the customer's needs

Customer satisfaction is a measurement of how well the products or services provided meet or exceed customers' expectations. It is an abstract concept and can be very subjective, with customers having their own individual views, standards and concerns.

Organisations use several ways to try to quantify their customers' reactions and levels of satisfaction and they can measure several things, such as, for example:

- the level of sales
- the amount of repeat business that is generated
- the level of complaints, negative feedback and product returns

- comments and scores in satisfaction surveys
- key performance indicators (KPIs) that assess the performance and key features of the product or service

Reviews on websites and forums are often used as an indication of customer satisfaction – e.g. comments and star ratings on websites that deal with restaurants, hotels and travel. Although the reviews are usually left by legitimate customers who leave impartial and independent comments and ratings, a significant number can be false. Fake reviews can influence potential customers who want extra information before they decide to buy or reject a product or service, so care needs to be taken when using these to measure customer satisfaction. Surveys can also be inaccurate, and they need to be thorough and well run to give an accurate picture.

If an organisation can identify customers' needs, then meet or exceed their expectations, the level of customer satisfaction should be high. This helps them to build relationships with customers and develop repeat business and recommendations.

Treating customers as individuals

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 2.

It is important to treat customers as individuals so that staff can do their best to meet or exceed each customer's particular needs and expectations. Some parts of the service offer will appeal to some people and not others, so team members need to be able to target their approach in line with the individual's requirements.

Another important reason is that organisations need to comply with anti-discrimination legislation, particularly the Equality Act 2010. This Act addresses unfair discrimination against people:

- in the workplace – during recruitment and employment – e.g. in care homes, offices, retail, voluntary workplaces
- in education – e.g. schools, colleges, training companies
- as consumers – e.g. in shops, on the Internet, in cafes and restaurants, when buying or renting property
- when using public services – e.g. healthcare, libraries, transport, councils, civil service
- in clubs with more than 25 members

The Equality Act 2010 means that all people are now protected from discrimination due to their:

- **age** – young (but over 18) and old are protected at work and in work training
- **disability or impairment** – organisations must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate staff, customers and visitors with disabilities
- **gender** – equal pay, training and opportunity for males and females
- **gender reassignment** – people changing from male to female, or female to male
- **marriage or civil partnership** – preventing discrimination on the grounds of being married or in a civil partnership at work or in work training
- **pregnancy or maternity (including breastfeeding)** – only reasons of safety are not covered – e.g. equality may not be possible for pregnant women in some circumstances if the activity could harm them or the baby
- **race** – wherever they were born, their parents' and their own race, colour and ethnicity are protected
- **religion or beliefs** – any religion, lack of religion or personal beliefs are protected
- **sexual orientation** – heterosexual, gay, lesbian and bisexual people are covered

Under the Act, these are called **protected characteristics**. These characteristics are protected in most circumstances, and organisations need to have sound operational reasons for discrimination.

Organisations must make sure that discrimination is not tolerated – in the workplace, in shops, in healthcare etc. They have to train and monitor their workforce, and put in place policies and procedures for dealing with problems and complaints. They need to make sure that all employees, customers and others know where to find the information.

The Equality Act covers the main sources of potential discrimination, but customers will also have other characteristics, tastes, standards and life choices that make them individual. Although not specifically covered by law, customer service staff also need to be tolerant, respectful and accepting of other differences.

For example, customers may also have individual requirements relating to:

- **where they live** – e.g. influencing where they choose to use a service
- **their transport arrangements** – e.g. having no car and being unable to get to an appointment for a service
- **their general health** – e.g. causing difficulty with mobility when planning how to access products and services

- **their income** – e.g. influencing their choices of products, financial arrangements and payment terms
- **their childcare and other family commitments** – e.g. families wanting holidays during the school breaks only
- **who lives in their household** – e.g. wanting products that are suitable for a large family
- **whether they own or rent their home** – e.g. influencing permanent fixtures such as replacement windows
- **personal tastes, likes and dislikes** – e.g. preferring certain colours and styles of products
- **how they dress and present themselves** – e.g. expressing individual choices about clothes, jewellery, tattoos or piercings

The main objective is to treat everyone as an individual, with respect and patience, whatever their background or culture, and whatever their differences.

We can never assume facts about our customers until we get to know them, and it is vital to remain open-minded when finding out about their needs and expectations. Just because customers are dressed in scruffy clothes and turn up in a muddy car, it does not mean that they cannot want, need or afford the full range of services and products on offer. If we work in a building supplies company or a garden centre, we would expect people to turn up in work clothes if they are working on a project.

Similarly, we cannot assume that a well-dressed customer who wears expensive jewellery can afford everything on offer. Their circumstances might have changed since they bought the high-end items, and we must not make assumptions about their income and spending patterns.

By treating customers as individuals, customer service can be enhanced and more effective. Benefits can include, for example:

- more accurate identification of customers' needs and expectations
- increased customer satisfaction
- improved customer relationships and loyalty
- compliance with legislation
- a good reputation for the organisation

Knowledge Activity 1: Imagine that you are wearing scruffy clothes because you have been helping to clear out and clean a friend's house. You go to the local shop for some food and the shop staff look at you and judge you by your appearance. They are rude and disrespectful, making unpleasant jokes to each other about how you look. They take a long time to serve you and are not helpful when you need help to find something.

How do you feel about their reaction to you?

How do you feel about going to that shop again for something else?

If you were their manager, how would you advise those staff members to treat all customers, and why?

Features and benefits of products and services

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 3.

Organisations can be in different sectors:

- **the commercial sector** – e.g. manufacturers, businesses, supermarkets, hotels, landlords, financial services providers, or transport providers
- **the public sector providing public services** – e.g. the NHS, libraries, schools and colleges, local councils, armed forces, police, fire or ambulance service
- **the third sector** – e.g. voluntary and not-for-profit groups, such as charities

The products and services offered by each organisation will have a range of features and benefits, and these will vary according to the type of organisation.

Features are the distinguishing characteristics of a particular product or service. The features will deliver the benefits to the customer.

Benefits are the positive effects enjoyed by the customer if they buy or use the product or service. The benefits meet the customer's needs.

Features and benefits can include, for example:

Features of the product or service	Benefits to the customer
Charging consistently low prices – e.g. large supermarkets offering deals and value for money; budget airlines and train companies offering some tickets very cheaply	Lower costs Able to budget and plan expenditure
Offering a wide range of goods and services – e.g. an online art materials supplier offering a wide range of products from many different manufacturers; insurance comparison sites offering products from the majority of insurance providers	More choice Greater chance of being able to satisfy needs and expectations
Fast service and response times – e.g. in fast-food outlets; promised by broadband suppliers; telephone call-back service from doctors in a GP surgery; ambulance, police and fire service emergency response	Saving time Convenience Actions can potentially saves lives and reduce suffering
Personal service and aftercare – e.g. from a hospital or healthcare professional	A feeling of well-being Feeling valued and safe Greater chance of being able to satisfy needs and expectations
Fast and reliable delivery of goods – e.g. courier companies and Royal Mail	Convenience Saving time Able to plan the rest of the day Able to rely on times that may have a critical effect on a business or personal task
Excellent data security – e.g. from banks; from online payment systems; for personal health records	Personal and financial security and safety Trust and a good working relationship
Good guarantees and warranties – e.g. department stores with a good reputation for 'no quibble' guarantees; car manufacturers offering free or low-cost extended warranties	Peace of mind Confidence that help will be available if needed Less likely to lose money if something goes wrong

Commercial sector

Organisations in the commercial sector offer goods and services for which they are paid. The features and benefits of their products and services need to be cost-effective to maximise profit. Profit is important for their survival and development, so it is crucial for them to retain old customers and attract new customers. Their commitment to customers is based on sales and after-sales service; for example:

- **giving efficient and polite service** – before, during and after buying or using a product or service
- **supplying good-quality products and services** – in line with the standards promised in catalogues, brochures, websites, customer charters, company policies etc.
- **dealing with complaints and problems properly** – politely and quickly, with an effective outcome
- **treating their customers with respect and taking their opinions and needs seriously** – at all stages of the transaction, and when dealing with feedback, complaints or problems

Giving good customer service before, during and after transactions is based on, for example:

- **before** – analysing what the customers want, developing products and services to suit the customers, training staff to deliver these
- **during** – well-informed staff delivering good-quality products and services in a way that suits the customers
- **after** – dealing with complaints, collecting and using feedback, developing the products and services to keep up with the changes in standards and expectations

Public sector

In the public sector, organisations offer services to the public on a not-for-profit basis. They are funded by taxes, national insurance contributions, VAT, council tax and fees that are charged for some services. This funding is decided on and controlled by central government, local councils and government agencies.

The features and benefits offered to customers are based on the quality and level of service that is provided. Although profits are not made, the organisations usually have budgets that they must manage and balance. They aim to satisfy customer expectations by planning the best use of the resources, and by training and supporting their customer service staff.

Features and benefits for customers can be based on many things; for example:

- **waiting times** – e.g. for healthcare, emergency services or for a response from a government department
- **value for money** – e.g. to provide the widest range of services they can for the customers' council tax contributions
- **excellence of service and delivery** – e.g. promising to deliver education or housing of the highest standard possible for the budget
- **fairness** – e.g. committing to give all customers equal opportunity of access to services

Third sector

Organisations in the third sector offer products and services. Sometimes they are sold, such as items in a charity shop, and sometimes they are given for free, such as counselling services. They have to balance their operation between raising funds and giving services and support to customers.

The features and benefits for customers can also be split. The customers who use the services, such as free counselling from a charity, will benefit from the organisation's commitment to funding and providing good-quality care and support services. The customers in the charity's shops, on the other hand, will benefit from the same commitment as the commercial sector, with the added bonus of knowing that they and the volunteers are involved in supporting a wider cause.

Knowledge Activity 2: Make a few notes about the features and benefits of one of your electronic devices – e.g. mobile phone, tablet or laptop.

Features:

Benefits:

Balancing promises to customers with organisational needs

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 4.

There will always be a balance between the customers' needs and expectations, and the products and services that an organisation offers. The balance is not static, as there are so many variables. Every customer is different, and products and services can vary.

When organisations produce their service offer and make promises to customers, they need to make sure that their own needs are also met. An organisation has many functions and requirements, and it needs to achieve its own objectives to survive and thrive. Organisational needs include, for example:

- **having a robust and sustainable supply chain** – e.g. a supermarket making sure that its suppliers produce and deliver high-quality goods at the right time
- **matching the supply of goods and services with the demands of its customers** – e.g. a supermarket making sure that they order the right amount of Christmas goods, at the right time, to cope with customers' needs
- **managing human and physical resources** – e.g. a supermarket having the right number of staff on duty and convenient opening times
- **managing budgets** – e.g. making sure that products and services are financially viable and able to make a profit
- **developing products and services** – e.g. looking for new trends and technological improvements that can become part of the service offer
- **compliance with legislation** – e.g. satisfying health and safety rules as well as consumer-based legislation
- **following its own policies and procedures** – e.g. a supermarket following ethical policies about how it treats its suppliers
- **maintaining a good reputation for quality and reliability**

Organisations need to balance their needs with what they offer and promise to customers. For example, if a supermarket promises its customers very cheap milk, it has to consider whether it can:

- make a profit from the low price
- get hold of enough milk to satisfy customers' demands
- safely store and display all of the milk at the right temperature in the warehouses and stores
- abide by its own ethical policy about how to treat its suppliers
- maintain a good reputation if promises to customers and suppliers cannot be met

Organisations constantly review all aspects of their operations to balance their needs against their customer offer. They make changes and adjustments to ensure that their customer offer is realistic, attractive, achievable and sustainable.

There are times when staff working in the customer service role need to tell customers that their organisation cannot meet expectations. This can be due to delays or problems, or it can happen because the organisation simply does not offer that particular product or service.

However, the main rule is that staff should only promise what can be delivered. False promises lead to disappointment for the customer or serious consequences for the organisation. We need to escalate problems to our line manager in line with our organisation's procedures – e.g. when we are not sure about something, or if a decision is outside the limits of our authority.

Knowledge Activity 3: Imagine you are working in a toy shop in December. Having checked with your manager, you have promised several customers that the shop will have a delivery of the new 'must-have' toy today, but the company has been unable to get hold of the stock after all. Head office cannot say when the toys will be delivered to your shop, if at all.

How do you feel having to explain the problem to several angry and disappointed customers?

How do you think the customers will feel about you, your manager and the toy shop company?

Did you know?

A 10% increase in customer retention levels results in a 30% increase in the value of the company.

(Bain and Company)

Escalating problems

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 5.

When delivering customer service and working to balance the customers' expectations with the organisation's needs, it is important to know when to ask for help and escalate a problem up to the next level in the line management structure, or to a specialist who can help with a particular problem.

The job titles can vary, but employment contracts, job descriptions and training materials should show the chain of command for the organisation. For example:

- team members will usually escalate problems to their team leader or supervisor
- team leaders and supervisors might refer a problem to their shift manager or a specialist from another department – e.g. quality control team leader for help with product testing
- managers will escalate to more senior managers or subject specialists

Everyone needs to work within their limits of authority. This helps to make sure that people do not promise or do things that could cause problems for the customer, staff member, team, organisation or others. Even if the intentions are good, inappropriate promises or actions could be illegal, impossible to achieve, unfair, too expensive etc.

The organisation's procedures will show when staff need to escalate a problem. For example:

- when a decision is needed that is outside their limits of authority
- when a customer requests something that is outside the limits of their responsibility
- when dealing with complaints or problems that are outside the limits of authority
- when they do not have enough knowledge, experience or skill to be able to deal with something on their own

The procedures will also show to whom the staff members should escalate their problems. For example:

- team leader or supervisor
- a more experienced team member
- someone from a different team who understands the issue
- managers
- a staff helpline or help desk

To provide consistent standards of products, services and customer service, the organisation needs all of its staff members to work to the same goals. The operating procedures show the details about how to achieve these goals, and what to do when there is a problem.

Team leaders and managers need to know if there are problems so that they can take steps to put things right and improve the service offer for everyone. If staff members do not escalate their problems, queries, issues, concerns or suggestions, the management team will not have the information they need to:

- understand new problems experienced during customer service delivery
- offer consistent standards of products and services
- keep customer complaints to a minimum
- support their staff and identify training and career development needs
- comply with regulations and legislation
- improve and maintain standards for the organisation as a whole

Knowledge Activity 4: Imagine that a member of your team is dealing with a customer who is complaining about the service they have received in the restaurant where you work. They have followed your employer's procedures but the customer is not satisfied. Explain why it is important for the team member to escalate the problem to you.

Measuring effectiveness

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 6.

As we have seen, measuring customer satisfaction can be difficult, especially as many aspects of customer service can be abstract, personal and subjective. However, it is important to evaluate customer satisfaction to identify areas that need to be improved and developed.

It is also important to measure the effectiveness of the organisation's delivery of customer service. An organisation can measure effectiveness by analysing:

- **sales figures** – e.g. to see if the number and value of transactions have increased or decreased
- **levels of repeat business and retention of customers** – e.g. supermarket loyalty cards track purchase patterns; customer records for leisure centres or banks show how often services are used; Internet-based purchases can be tracked electronically to see spending patterns
- **website and social media activity** – e.g. hits on a website that are converted to sales; likes on Facebook or hits on YouTube to show interest in products
- **media comments** – e.g. comments about the organisation sent by customers; news reports and investigations about the organisation's customer service
- **analysing competitors' activities and sales** – e.g. to see where the customers have gone, or might go, and why
- **complaint levels** – e.g. tracking the volume and types of complaints, and how they were dealt with; monitoring changes since improvements were introduced; analysing different levels following staff changes or the introduction of new products or services
- **feedback during the appraisal process** – e.g. when discussing career development with team members formally or informally

Individuals can measure their own effectiveness using similar methods; for example:

- **listening to feedback from colleagues** – e.g. praise, advice or constructive criticism during a shift
- **gaining feedback from their line manager** – e.g. formally during an appraisal session or informally at the end of a shift
- **reviewing sales targets and analysing results** – e.g. measuring sales made over a month and identifying reasons for changes in success rates
- **reading customer complaints** – e.g. reading feedback cards from their customers or reviewing comments online
- **listening to customer feedback** – e.g. positive and negative comments given during customer service delivery

Knowledge Activity 5: Imagine that you are preparing to have an appraisal interview with your line manager about your effectiveness in customer service delivery. Make a few notes about:

Your strengths and successes

Areas where you could improve

Examples of how you identified your strengths and weaknesses – e.g. feedback from customers, team members and other colleagues

Relationship between customer service and a brand

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Branding is everywhere and we are used to seeing different brands on show. Our supermarkets, fast-food restaurants and high-street shops, for example, all have their own ways of telling us who they are – often without using words.

The importance of a brand to an organisation

Organisations work extremely hard to promote and protect their brands. They go to great lengths to make sure that previous, current and potential customers can recognise their brands, and understand what they offer.

A brand can be identified by, for example:

- logos – e.g. the McDonald's golden arches 'M', or different badges used by car manufacturers
- brand names on labels, packaging and signage
- colours on packaging and signage – e.g. orange for Sainsbury's, green for Asda and blue for Tesco
- sponsorship relationships – e.g. companies sponsoring the football leagues and tournaments
- trademarks or copyright

A brand is important to an organisation because the brand image reflects their image. It is a major part of an organisation's identity. Our impression of a brand goes a long way to establishing our expectations of the products and services offered.

For example, when we see a sign for Burger King, we know that we can go into any of their restaurants anywhere in the country and get the same product and service. The same is true for chains of hotels, restaurants, shops and other businesses – we know what to expect. Even if there are local differences, the core values of the service offer are the same.

This is vital for organisations because they know how to manage their customers' needs and expectations, based on the brand promise that they make and deliver. Having a brand enables an organisation to position itself in the market, promote and protect itself. It does this by, for example:

- **establishing legal protection of unique product features** – e.g. registering a brand name or logo so that competitors cannot use the same one
- **giving customers a specific perception of the organisation** – e.g. Rolls Royce establishing itself as a supplier of prestige cars
- **establishing its place in the marketplace** – e.g. designer clothes shops aiming at one part of the market, and low-cost clothing shops aiming at another
- **displaying how it is different to competitors** – e.g. gaining a reputation for their brand being the most reliable on the market
- **encouraging customer loyalty** – e.g. from customers being pleased and proud to be identified as supporters of their brand

How a brand affects the service offer

How people perceive a brand can have a big influence on the service offer. If a brand is seen as a prestige, high-end, expensive brand, the organisation will have to make sure that its service offer supports this if it wishes to attract the same types of customer. Similarly, if a brand appeals to families, the organisation needs to make sure that the service offer is aimed at what families want.

Example A – a company that deals with designer watches

A company that makes and sells high-end watches that sell for thousands of pounds each will make sure that their brand is associated with successful businesses, high-end goods, and expensive pastimes and interests. They will sponsor and support events such as polo matches, aviation displays, skiing competitions or international equestrian events, as these are the types of events that their current and potential customers attend. They will make sure that their brand is seen by the 'right' people in the 'right' places.

The company will also run corporate events and offer bespoke, personal customer service to look after their customers and encourage them to think of themselves as part of an exclusive club.

The products will be of the highest quality, so that the brand has and maintains a reputation for excellence.

The advertising and sales process will be discreet to maintain the prestige and excellent image of the brand.

The aftercare service, warranties, guarantees and maintenance will also be excellent, so that customers know that they are valued and will be looked after.

Example B – a company that runs a chain of family pubs/restaurants

A company that owns and runs a chain of hundreds of family pubs/restaurants will target their brand at families to attract previous, current and potential customers.

The selling point of their brand is that people will get the same great prices, quality and choice in every restaurant. This gives their customers reassurance and confidence that they know what to expect from the brand, even if they go to one of their restaurants in a different town.

The company will place their outlets in similar locations in each town – near to areas where young families live, but on the edge of a development so that they can offer plenty of free parking. The buildings will usually have standard facilities, furniture, layout, music, art and lighting, so that the atmosphere is similar in each restaurant.

The products on the menus will be the same in every restaurant throughout the country, using the same ingredients, preparation and presentation, so that the food choices are always the same.

The staff will be trained in the same way to deliver the same level of customer service in each outlet. They will have the same uniforms, name badges and minimum grooming standards.

Aftercare service, complaints processes and ways of collecting feedback will also be standardised throughout the chain.

As we can see from these two examples, the service offer needs to support the brand to maintain the image of the organisation. This can be positive or negative.

On the **positive** side, if previous, current and potential customers are happy to identify with the brand, they will be happy to accept the service offer, as this is seen as part of the brand. They will feel comfortable about what the brand gives them and, usually, their expectations will be met.

This can work to the organisation's advantage because it can attract more customers who are happy to either return to them or aspire to buy their products and services. The organisation knows that the brand and the brand image are attracting the customers that are needed for success and sustainable growth.

On the **negative** side, a brand can be a problem when trying to deliver the customer service offer. If people perceive an organisation as being too upmarket, exclusive or expensive, potential customers may avoid it if they think that they will not fit in or be able to afford the services and products.

Conversely, if an organisation's brand seems to be too downmarket, people might refuse to buy there because they do not want to be associated with an 'inferior' brand.

Both of these attitudes can cause problems for an organisation that needs to broaden its appeal and attract new customers. They do not want to alienate their core of loyal and established customers by changing the brand and brand image too drastically, but they do need to change the customer offer to attract newcomers.

For example, if the watch company needs to increase the number of customers, it cannot afford to alienate its core of customers who value the prestige and exclusive nature of the brand. They need to launch a similar brand that is similar to the original, but not as expensive or exclusive – an entry-level range for people who aspire to buy the exclusive range but cannot afford it at the moment.

There has been an interesting shift in the customers who use cheaper supermarkets, such as Lidl and Aldi. The supermarkets have amended their service offer to attract new customers, with clever marketing to show that their quality and choice of products are attractive to a wide range of people. Winning prizes from independent reviewers has broken down barriers by showing that the quality of the products and customer service is high and sustainable.

Customer service language to support a brand promise

The language that staff use when delivering customer service is part of establishing and maintaining a brand image. It supports a brand promise, which is the organisation's commitment to its service offer, and is sometimes called a mission statement.

To support the brand promise, customer service staff will need a range of phrases that they can use when communicating with customers – face-to-face, on the telephone or when writing to them. Customers might have seen advertisements or logos, but contact with staff will have a major effect on their impression of the brand and how they perceive the brand promise. It can help to cement a good impression, help customers to develop a good impression of the brand, or leave them disappointed and sceptical about the brand promise.

Section 2: Understand the relationship between customer service and a brand

To create a positive impression, key words about the brand, products or services need to be part of the staff members' everyday language, to make sure that the key features and benefits of the brand promise are highlighted. A brand promise for a product might state that it is, for example:

- the most advanced product of its kind in Europe
- cheaper than all competitors' similar products
- reliable and safe
- of good and affordable quality
- long-lasting and durable
- made using the very latest technology
- faster than other products

An organisation will usually have a selection of key phrases for its staff to use in their customer service language to support the brand promise. By having established phrases, an organisation can make sure that the descriptions given out by their staff:

- are accurate and truthful
- are compliant – e.g. with consumer-related legislation
- give the right impression of the brand
- are kept up to date to tie in with current marketing and advertising campaigns

In addition to key phrases that describe the features and benefits of the brand, some organisations have set customer service phrases that they like their staff to use for certain situations. These could be, for example:

- "Have a nice day"
- "Is everything all right with your meal?"
- "No problem"
- "You're welcome"
- "My pleasure"

The customer service language needs to support the brand, so careful thought needs to be given to make sure that the tone and words are appropriate. For example, staff working for a funeral director should avoid "Have a nice day" when talking to grieving family members. Similarly, waiting staff working in a four-star restaurant will use more complicated language than those working in a family pub/restaurant, as they will need to discuss and explain their products and services in more detail.

Did you know?

The red and white Coca-Cola logo is recognised by 94% of the world's population.

(**Buzzfeed.com** – quoting from Steel Media in the USA)

Staff also need a range of customer service language phrases that they can use in potentially awkward situations, so that they can maintain a positive impression of the brand and the organisation. For example:

Phrases to avoid	Alternative phrases that could be used
I don't know	I just need to check that for you; let me call you back in a few minutes I'll find out for you…
Who is this?	May I have your name, please?
You didn't fill out the form properly	I would be happy to help you fill out the form
She is not taking any calls	She is not at her desk at the moment; may I take a message?
He's not in	He's away from his desk just now. May I take a message and get him to call you back?
I can't help you	Let me see what I can do for you…
You owe us money	Our records show that there is a balance of…
You need to…	We usually find it works best if… I suggest…
What do you want?	How can I help you? Are you ready to order, or shall I come back in a few minutes?

Standard phrases, such as "Have a nice day", are not always welcomed in the UK as we sometimes consider the comments to be insincere and impersonal. However, it is important for staff in a customer service role to use phrases that are positive, helpful and professional. A positive attitude expressed in positive and helpful language helps to support and sell the brand image.

Section 2: Understand the relationship between customer service and a brand

Using the right customer service language is important as it helps to:

- reassure and put customers at their ease
- confirm or exceed their expectations
- build a relationship with the customer
- support the identity of the brand
- confirm the link between the customer, the brand and the organisation
- focus staff members on the expected service standards and brand promise

Everyone who works for an organisation needs to use language that supports the brand promise so that they give out a consistent message about the brand to, for example, customers, suppliers, media contacts or others connected with the organisation.

Knowledge Activity 6: Have a look on the Internet and find some brand promises or mission statements from some brands that you know. For each one, make a few notes about:

The wording of the brand promise

Whether you think it fits your image of the brand

Delivering a brand promise

Staff working in a customer service role need to bring several elements together when ensuring that a brand promise is delivered. Team leaders need to work with their team members to make sure that they, for example:

- are clear about what the brand promise is
- understand what the brand means to the organisation
- follow the organisation's procedures about how to deliver the brand promise
- have thorough and up-to-date knowledge about the brand and all of the related products and services
- treat each customer as an individual
- use appropriate customer service language
- remember to take appropriate follow-up actions and keep promises
- escalate any problems or issues as soon as possible, so that the brand is not compromised

Complaints procedures to resolve customer service problems

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 11 and 12.

It is important for organisations to resolve customer service problems effectively so that they can meet or exceed their customers' needs and expectations, develop and maintain a good reputation, and survive in the marketplace. Although complaints can be difficult to handle, if the organisation is told about issues, it does have the opportunity to put things right, improve its service offer and avoid future complaints.

To provide consistently high-quality customer service, organisations set up and follow customer service and complaints procedures to show their staff how to deal with customers and different types of problems.

Customer service procedures

Organisations need to give their staff guidelines about how to communicate with customers in all aspects of customer service. Customer service procedures cover many tasks and functions, for example:

- quality, image and presentation of products and services
- quality, image and presentation of staff
- promotion of services
- contact and communication with customers
- the delivery of products to customers
- monitoring and improving products and service
- finance
- compliance with legislation and regulations

Communication with customers is extremely important before, during and after a transaction, and the standards and procedures will show how staff need to be able to, for example:

Before the transaction:

- understand different customers
- identify different needs and expectations
- check the customer environment – e.g. is the waiting area clean and tidy?
- check that high-quality products and services are ready and available

During the transaction:

- welcome and greet the customer
- engage with the customer and take genuine interest
- give accurate, up-to-date and relevant information
- make sure that the customer's environment is prepared and comfortable
- use the best communication methods and techniques for the customer and the situation
- deal with queries, comments and complaints
- ensure that the customer's legal rights are respected and protected
- end the transaction with positive comments and body language

After the transaction:

- give aftercare service
- respect and protect legal rights
- provide ongoing maintenance
- ask for feedback from customers
- deal with complaints and feedback effectively

Effective customer complaints procedures

Part of excellent customer service delivery is having robust and effective complaints procedures. Some large organisations have a customer service department and the staff there will deal with complaints. Others have special complaints teams that focus purely on handling issues raised by customers. Smaller organisations and businesses will rely on their staff and managers to handle complaints themselves.

Whatever the size of the organisation, complaints need to be handled in a consistent way throughout. Features of complaints procedures could include standardised processes about, for example:

- who deals with complaints
- what each staff member is allowed to say and agree
- timescales for resolution
- how to deal with each situation and which solutions can be offered

- when to escalate the problem up the management line
- what happens if the organisation cannot agree on a satisfactory outcome with the customer – e.g. the customer's rights under consumer legislation
- customers' statutory rights

The complaints procedures will give details about how staff members should deal with each complaint, instructing them to, for example:

- **listen to or read the details of the complaint** – maybe making notes about the details
- **apologise to the customer** – and show that they understand and sympathise with the customer
- **explain the background to the problem or issue** – or offer to investigate if the cause of the problem is not obvious
- **outline solutions and keep the customer informed at all stages of the process** – even if it takes many weeks to resolve the problem
- **apologise again, reassure and thank the customer for their patience and custom**

They may be advised to use the **HEAT** method when applicable:

- **Hear** – listening to the customer's complaint properly
- **Empathise** – showing that they understand the customer's position, frustration etc.
- **Apologise** – saying sorry is incredibly important
- **Take ownership** – taking the problem seriously, seeing it through to a satisfactory end, keeping the customer informed, passing on feedback to the organisation

Complaints need to be dealt with quickly and effectively to defuse the anxiety and stop the complaint becoming more serious. It may be that staff need to defuse the situation before they pass on the complaint to a manager, the customer service team or the complaints team. If they are the first point of contact with the complaining customer, their role is vital to keep everything calm and polite, even if they cannot solve the problem.

In all customer service situations, staff need to bear in mind any possible communication problems. The customer may be nervous and a little aggressive due to nerves about making the complaint. They may also have visual, speech, reading, writing or hearing problems, or not have English as their first language. Staff need to take these factors into account when responding, to keep the anxiety levels as low as possible.

Knowledge Activity 7: You need to describe your own organisation's customer service and complaints procedures to answer the assessment question. To prepare for this, ask your employer (or an organisation that you know well) for a copy of their complaints procedure, or look up a company online and find theirs. Make a few notes to outline their procedures for handling complaints.

Customer service problems and their causes

Complaints can arise for a variety of reasons, including:

- **faulty goods or missing parts**
- **poor-quality products or services**
- **incorrect or incomplete delivery of items**
- **bad customer service** – e.g. from rude or unhelpful staff
- **the service or product not matching the description** – not meeting the customer's expectations
- **delays and missed deadlines** – maybe leading to fines and interest charges
- **lack of information** – e.g. when transport is delayed
- **inefficient systems** – e.g. call centres passing customers from one advisor to another when they call for help; long queues that are badly managed
- **unfair treatment** – e.g. for receiving a parking ticket when the signs were unclear or absent
- **impact on the environment** – e.g. the location of wind turbines; noise from neighbours or traffic; dealing with waste inefficiently
- **negative consequences of someone's actions** – e.g. medical problems missed during an examination that lead to serious health issues; someone slipping on a wet floor in a hotel when the cleaner had forgotten to put out a warning sign

The problems and causes can be identified by tracking information from, for example:

- customer feedback and complaints
- feedback from staff who encounter the problems or deal with customers' comments
- returned and rejected goods
- internal audit and monitoring records
- external reports – e.g. from governing bodies
- legal action
- customer surveys, reviews and forum comments

Did you know?

Thousands of Amazon managers have attended two days of call-centre training – even the CEO – in order to help them understand the customer service process.

(**www.salesforce.com** – quoting Jeff Bezos, CEO of **Amazon.com**)

Dealing with angry or agitated customers

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 13 and 14.

There are a range of techniques that can be used when dealing with angry or agitated customers, which include:

- welcome and greet the customer
- introduce yourself
- offer to move or change the environment
- speak clearly and ask open questions
- use active listening skills
- use open and relaxed body language
- show empathy and give the customer your full attention
- focus on the desired outcome
- explore and agree a solution
- agree and take follow-up action

When dealing with angry or agitated customers, the first thing to do is to make sure that the angry customer does not pose a threat to the personal safety of the staff member, their colleagues, customers or other people. If there is no immediate threat, staff should deal with the angry customer by following the general techniques.

It can be very important to offer to move to somewhere quiet, as this can help to defuse the situation because:

- the customer can discuss their details in private
- they can be removed from the source of their anxiety – e.g. a fight in a pub or street; a crowd of people who are reacting emotionally or erratically
- other customers may get upset or distracted by angry outbursts

When customers are angry, they usually 'run out of steam' quite quickly if people just listen to them using good active listening skills. Arguing with them just gives them an excuse to carry on 'ranting' and is like throwing petrol on a fire. Listening and apologising are the best ways to defuse anger.

Staff dealing with angry customers need to be very aware that anger can quickly lead to violence. If there is a possible threat to personal safety, during a heated argument between customers in a bar for instance, it is usually best to let specially trained security staff handle the situation. Experienced staff may be able to offer advice, but fights can flare up extremely quickly and it is not worth getting too close.

Other conflict resolution techniques

There are many theories about conflict resolution, and these techniques may also help when dealing with angry or agitated customers:

Conflict resolution technique	Details
Win-win or collaborating	The organisation and customer confront and solve a problem by working together
Forcing or competing	The organisation or customer firmly pursue their own concerns
Smoothing or accommodating	The organisation soothes the customer and accommodates their views
Compromising	The organisation and customer look for a mutually acceptable solution that satisfies all parties
Withdrawing or avoiding	The organisation and/or the customer ignore or step away from the conflict

Section 3: Understand the resolution of customer service problems

When dealing with any customer complaint about the organisation's products or services, it is important to:

- **listen to or read the details of the complaint**
- **apologise to the customer**
- **explain the organisation's reasons for the problem or issue**
- **outline solutions and keep the customer informed at all stages of the process**
- **apologise again, reassure and thank the customer for their patience and custom**

This system is useful for all customers, as it makes them feel valued and respected and shows that their concerns are being taken seriously. A sincere apology can defuse anger very quickly, especially if the customer is emotional because they are nervous and tense about having to speak up for themselves.

Keeping people informed when there is a problem, delay or complaint reduces anxiety and gives them the opportunity to adapt to the changes in the plans. Sometimes customers can reduce the impact on themselves by making alternative arrangements. Sometimes they will just feel reassured that something will happen, that their opinion and input matter and that the organisation cares about them as an individual.

Limits of authority when resolving problems

As we have seen before, working within the limits of authority is important. This applies to resolving customers' problems as well, and staff members need to make sure that they are authorised to make promises.

The limits of authority, and how to escalate a problem that is outside those limits, will be set out in, for example:

- the employment contract
- the job description
- organisational policies, procedures or standards
- training materials

Working within the limits protects:

- the individual staff member – by making sure that they act legally and are fully supported in their decisions and promises if they have worked in line with the organisational procedures
- the customer – by making sure that their legal rights have been observed and respected
- the organisation – helping it to maintain a good reputation for being fair and consistent

If staff members fail to operate within the limits of their authority, they can find that they have maybe:

- acted illegally – e.g. by promising something that does not support the customer's consumer rights
- offered something that is impossible to deliver – e.g. due to cost or lack of available resources
- caused a health, safety or security problem – e.g. trying to mend an electrical appliance when they are not qualified to do so
- put themselves at risk – e.g. trying to hold down a violent customer instead of calling properly trained security staff to deal with them

Knowledge Activity 8: You need to explain the limits of your own authority for resolving customers' problems and making promises, to answer the assessment question. To prepare for this, find documents that show the limits of your authority in this area and make a few notes:

Customer feedback

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 15 and 16.

The value of feedback from customers

Organisations need to collect positive and negative feedback from their previous, current and potential customers so that they can review their products and services and make sure that they are satisfying customers' expectations. They need to review the feedback to evaluate the customer service and:

- **see what changes are needed** – to adapt to changes in trends, expectations, technology etc.
- **find out what is working** – so that they can develop and support the strong areas within the operation
- **find out what is not working** – so that they can rectify issues and catch major problems early, and make any necessary changes as soon as possible
- **find the most effective and successful ways of handling queries and complaints**
- **make sure that customers feel valued** – to build customer loyalty
- **make sure that they are complying with relevant legislation and regulations**

If the feedback is good and customers are generally satisfied, organisations need to, for example:

- give praise and credit to the staff
- reassure everyone that they are doing well
- maintain good standards and procedures
- monitor the service offer to make sure that high standards are maintained
- check external forces and trends to make sure that success is sustainable
- continue with research and development to make sure that future products, services and customer service are up to date and relevant

Methods for collecting customers' feedback

We all like to feel valued and that our opinions matter. Customers cannot be forced to provide feedback. However, there are many things that organisations can do to encourage people to give the useful feedback they need when reviewing their operations.

Staff who deal with customers have many opportunities to make them feel included and important, and the organisation might have standards and guidelines about how to do this by, for example:

- engaging in small talk whilst serving someone face-to-face, online or on the telephone
- using active listening skills when dealing with feedback from a customer
- reassuring them, if they are making a complaint, that their views are being taken seriously
- asking for feedback and reacting to it in a genuine way

The organisation can add to this with comments about how they value their customers in letters, advertising, brochures, websites etc.

Various methods can be used to collect the feedback from customers. These include, for example:

- **questionnaires and surveys** – in person, online or by telephone
- **comment or suggestion cards** – e.g. at reception or in hotel rooms
- **feedback forms** – e.g. after a training course
- **focus groups** – as part of a market research initiative
- **unsolicited letters and emails from customers**
- **online forums and social media** – where people leave honest comments about their experiences
- **via the media** – e.g. letters to a local newspaper about the organisation
- **informally gathered chance remarks to staff or other customers**

The information gathered from monitoring complaints can be used in the planning process to improve customer service throughout the whole organisation. Many organisations have teams of customer service staff who monitor social media and other communication methods to capture and react to feedback comments.

Organisations can benefit from handling feedback correctly. Customers nearly always have choice. By taking customers' views and ideas seriously, organisations can improve their products and customer service and encourage customer loyalty. This helps to ensure the long-term success of the organisation and its staff by keeping up with customers' expectations.

Further information about consumer rights, and other legal matters, can be found on the Citizens Advice website: **www.citizensadvice.org.uk**

The Financial Conduct Authority also has information and advice for consumers: **www.fca.org.uk**

For more information about confidentiality and data protection, a useful website is the Information Commissioner's Office website: **www.ico.org.uk**

Knowledge Activity 9: Imagine that you own a small cafe. You have received some positive feedback about the coffees that you provide, but some very poor feedback and complaints about the teas on offer.

How would you use the positive feedback about the coffees?

How would you use the negative feedback about the teas?

Summary

In this workbook, you have learned about:

- customer service delivery
- the relationship between customer service and a brand
- the resolution of customer service problems

Section 4: Extension activity

Extension Activity: Describe what your wants, needs and expectations are for the following products:

- a new car
- a shirt for work
- a haircut

Well done!

You have now completed Workbook 6 and should attempt the assessment. If you require any help or guidance, please contact your Assessor/Tutor.

Please use this page for additional notes

Please use this page for additional notes

Please use this page for additional notes

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained within this learning material is accurate and reflects current best practice. All information provided should be used as guidance only, and adapted to reflect local practices and individual working environment protocols.

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NCFE Level 2

Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

CUSTOMER SERVICE

MOTIVATION

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

LEADERSHIP ROLES

SUPPORT

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Workbook 8

Understand how to develop working relationships with colleagues

How to use your learning materials

This course is delivered on a flexible learning basis. This means that most of your study will take place away from your Assessor/Tutor. It helps to carefully plan your studying so that you get the most out of your course. We have put together some handy tips for you below.

Study Guidance

- Try to plan an outline timetable of when and where you will study.
- Try to complete your work in a quiet environment where you are unlikely to be distracted.
- Set realistic goals and deadlines for the various elements of your course.
- Plan what you are going to study during each session, and try and achieve this each time.
- After each session, reflect on what you have achieved and plan what you hope to complete next time.
- Remember that not only do you have the support of your Assessor/Tutor, but it is likely that your family, friends and work colleagues will also be willing to help.

Assessor/Tutor Support

- Your Assessor/Tutor will be available to support and guide you through the programme. They are experts in your area of study and are experienced in helping many different types of learners.
- They can help you to improve the standard of work you submit and will give you useful feedback on areas in which you have excelled, as well as where you can improve.
- Remember to listen to, or read, their feedback carefully. Ask if you are unsure about any of the feedback you receive, as your Assessor/Tutor is there to help.
- Make note of any tips they give. Refer to the learning materials, as they contain the information you need to complete the end-of-unit assessments.
- Look out for areas in which you can improve, and set yourself an action plan to make sure you complete the required work.
- Take positive feedback on board; this demonstrates you are doing things right and have a good understanding of the subject area.
- Use the feedback to avoid repeating any mistakes you may have made.

Enjoy your studies!

NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

Workbook 8

Understand how to develop working relationships with colleagues

Workbook Contents

In this workbook, we are going to consider the principles of effective team working. We will look at roles within a team, the benefits of effective team working, feedback in the workplace, resolving team conflicts and discussions in the workplace about progress, issues, problems and changes.

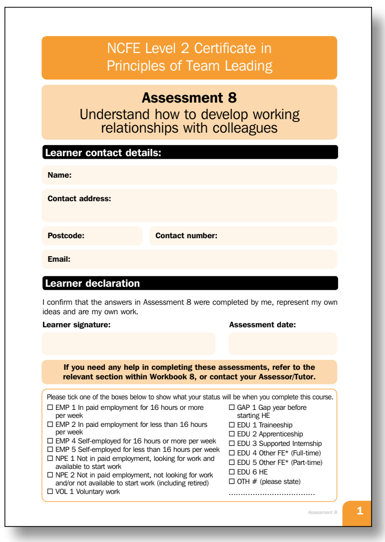
Contents

This workbook contains three sections:

Each section has a corresponding assessment that must be completed in order to achieve this part of the programme.

The assessments for this workbook can be found in:

Assessment 8


NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

Assessment 8
Understand how to develop working relationships with colleagues

Learner contact details:

Name:

Contact address:

Postcode: **Contact number:**

Email:

Learner declaration

I confirm that the answers in Assessment 8 were completed by me, represent my own ideas and are my own work.

Learner signature: **Assessment date:**

If you need any help in completing these assessments, refer to the relevant section within Workbook 8, or contact your Assessor/Tutor.

Please tick one of the boxes below to show what your status will be when you complete this course.

- ☐ EMP 1 In paid employment for 16 hours or more per week
- ☐ EMP 2 In paid employment for less than 16 hours per week
- ☐ EMP 4 Self-employed for 16 hours or more per week
- ☐ EMP 5 Self-employed for less than 16 hours per week
- ☐ NPE 1 Not in paid employment, looking for work and available to start work
- ☐ NPE 2 Not in paid employment, not looking for work and/or not available to start work (including retired)
- ☐ VOL 1 Voluntary work
- ☐ GAP 1 Gap year before starting HE
- ☐ EDU 1 Traineeship
- ☐ EDU 2 Apprenticeship
- ☐ EDU 3 Supported Internship
- ☐ EDU 4 Other FE* (Full-time)
- ☐ EDU 5 Other FE* (Part-time)
- ☐ EDU 6 HE
- ☐ OTH # (please state) ....

Assessment 8 1

When you have completed this workbook, you should attempt the assessment. Your Assessor/Tutor will then give you detailed written feedback on your progress.

Remember that your assessment answers should be written in your own words. You should not copy answers directly from the workbooks.

Effective team working

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 1.

For a team to work effectively, they have to develop productive and positive working relationships that are based on:

- clear lines of communication – so that people know where to go to ask questions, or report and discuss issues
- openness – giving and receiving correct and appropriate information
- mutual trust and respect – where everyone listens to each other, and acknowledges feelings and opinions

Roles within a team

People play different roles within a team, and an effective team will have people with very different skills and attributes. People cannot all be the same, so it is important to have a variety in an effective and balanced team.

In the 1970s, Dr Meredith Belbin identified the types of role that members of a team take on when working together. During this research, Belbin discovered that a team's success was not dependent on factors such as the intelligence of its members, but more on their behaviour and how they related to each other in working towards a common goal, purpose and/or objective.

Belbin identified nine team roles that people play:

1. Chair/coordinator
2. Shaper
3. Innovator/plant
4. Monitor evaluator
5. Implementer/company worker
6. Resource investigator
7. Team worker
8. Completer finisher
9. Specialist

Belbin discovered that a team without all of the nine roles would struggle to complete its task. For example, a team without an innovator/plant would find it difficult to come up with ideas, and if they didn't have a shaper they would lose direction and focus.

A balanced team has all of the nine roles within it and is, therefore, more likely to succeed. A team leader should be aware of the requirements for a balanced and effective team.

Benefits of effective team working

When people work together well as a team, there can be benefits for the individual team members, the team and the organisation. A group of people working together can achieve things that the individuals cannot achieve on their own. Team sports show this all of the time – we just need to think about how a football, rugby or netball team works together to meet their joint objectives and achieve goals. Single team members all have a valuable part to play, and they could not win the match on their own.

Effective team working brings a variety of benefits:

- for individual team members
- for teams
- for the organisation

For individual team members

Individuals can benefit from, for example:

- **feeling proud to be associated with a successful and effective team** – e.g. a sense of belonging and job satisfaction
- **feeling supported when tackling tasks or learning new skills** – e.g. being able to develop their skills and stretch their talents with the help of others
- **feeling secure and confident** – e.g. from knowing that they are delivering high-quality goods and services
- **other team members' knowledge, skills and experience** – e.g. making the whole team more successful
- **opportunities for creativity and career development** – e.g. from team members supporting each other and being innovative
- **increased motivation** – e.g. to stay on a good team and help it to succeed by doing their best
- **feeling valued** – e.g. knowing that their input is important and that their opinions matter

For teams

Teams can benefit from, for example:

- **working towards shared objectives** – e.g. working together effectively towards agreed, shared goals
- **team members who are flexible and able to do several tasks** – e.g. multi-skilled team members who can be moved around between tasks or cover for each other's holidays, sickness etc.
- **a balanced and supported environment** – e.g. from being a happy team where the members support each other and tackle objectives and problems together
- **bringing together expertise of team members for the benefit of the whole team** – e.g. having people with different strengths and attributes

For the organisation

The benefits of effective team working can be considerable for an organisation; for example:

- **successful achievement of organisational objectives** – e.g. to meet or exceed sales or production targets
- **access to a wide range of talents and strengths within the workforce** – e.g. pooling different talents that work together well to achieve major goals

- **good internal communications** – e.g. where team members and different teams communicate well with each other to improve operational productivity
- **increased efficiency and less duplication of work** – e.g. where teams understand each other's tasks and needs, then work together to streamline their operations
- **a more flexible workforce** – e.g. where team members can cover for each other and perform a variety of tasks to maintain consistency and continuity
- **better relationships with customers** – e.g. from offering consistently high-quality customer service
- **better relationships with others connected to the organisation** – e.g. from having a reputation for being a reliable, consistent and smooth-running operation

Feedback in the workplace

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 2.

We all need feedback to find out how well we are doing, and this is an important part of effective team working. When feedback is good, it gives us positive reinforcement and gives us the confidence to carry on and develop our strengths further. The negative aspects of feedback are useful too because they show us where we need to make changes.

Feedback can be formal or informal. Formal feedback will usually be documented and more detailed, and be given in meetings or on forms. Informal feedback is often unplanned and can be a brief message or comment, verbal or written.

If we do not give and receive feedback, we have no way of knowing how we are doing from an objective point of view. Our efforts need to be measured against outside standards and opinions to reflect a realistic, three-dimensional picture of our performance in the workplace.

Giving constructive feedback

It is important to give feedback that is constructive. If someone just gives an emotional response and says that they do not like something, their feedback is not constructive because we cannot learn from it. Just knowing that someone is unhappy, disappointed or angry about something that we have said or done is not enough. We need to know the details about what went wrong and how we could have done better.

When giving constructive and useful feedback, it is important to consider the person receiving the feedback. If the feedback is positive, it is a good opportunity to give praise and encouragement. This empowers and motivates the individual or team to continue doing well and not lose focus. They feel valued and respected and will benefit from feeling appreciated and recognised.

If some of the feedback is negative, this needs to be delivered carefully and objectively. The best way can be to use a ‘sandwich’ technique, where negative news is put between two bits of positive news; for example:

- praise the individual or team for a good aspect of their performance
- mention and explain areas that need to be improved, and give guidance and support about how to improve
- finish on a high note about positive aspects, plans and hopes for future developments and improvements

When we are asked to give feedback about someone else, it can be a good idea to only say things that we would say to that person’s face. This helps us to keep our comments objective, fair, valid and useful. When delivered tactfully, constructive criticism and genuine praise are both valuable and welcome.

To give useful and constructive feedback, we need to, for example:

- have a clear purpose for giving the feedback – e.g. being very clear on why we are giving feedback and what we need to achieve as a result
- respect the need for privacy and sensitivity – e.g. having a chat about problems in private rather than in a big team meeting
- be specific – e.g. about what went well, what needs improvement and what needs to be done in the future
- use good questioning techniques – e.g. open, closed and probing questions
- focus on the issue or behaviour rather than the person – e.g. concentrate on the facts rather than the emotional reaction to events
- check that the feedback has been understood – e.g. by asking questions or inviting comments
- have a balance between positive and negative feedback – e.g. using the ‘sandwich’ technique
- offer support – e.g. retraining or shadowing for an individual who needs to develop their skills following negative feedback

Knowledge Activity 1: Think of two occasions when you received feedback at work. How did you feel? How did you react? What happened next?
Write a few lines about what happened when:

You received negative feedback

You received positive feedback

If this hasn't happened to you yet, just imagine how you would feel and react.

Resolving team conflicts

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 3.

Conflict is an emotive word and its meaning can vary. Dictionary definitions include:

- a serious disagreement or argument, typically a protracted one
- a serious incompatibility between two or more opinions, principles or interests
- to be incompatible or at variance with something or someone

According to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas), conflict falls into two broad categories:

- **conflict between individuals** – e.g. between colleagues or between team members and their team leader or manager
- **conflict between groups** – e.g. between teams or between large groups of employees and management

Examples of causes of conflict at work could include:

- dissatisfaction with the workload or work slippages – e.g. increased workloads or missed deadlines
- lack of appreciation and perceived unfairness – e.g. someone feeling that they have not received appropriate credit for their efforts
- misunderstandings and poor sharing of information – e.g. concerned discussions and arguments due to not knowing what is happening
- external problems that affect the team or individuals – e.g. a supply problem leading to the team's failure to finish on time and receive a bonus
- differences of opinion – e.g. between individuals, teams or organisations about working methods
- people having different objectives – e.g. some wanting to do overtime to finish the task on time, whilst others want to leave and get home on time
- incompatible objectives and rivalry – e.g. between different teams
- bullying, harassment or personality clashes between individuals

Conflict management techniques

There are several techniques that can be used to minimise and resolve conflict at work. For example:

- **win-win or collaborating** – confronting and solving a problem by working with the other parties
- **forcing or competing** – when individuals only consider their own concerns and force their views on others
- **smoothing or accommodating** – when individuals smooth things over and accommodate other people's views, needs, demands and requests
- **compromising** – when people look for a mutually acceptable solution that satisfies everyone
- **withdrawing or avoiding** – when people ignore the problem and step away from the conflict

The following table explains when the different techniques may be useful, as well as the different strengths and weaknesses:

Way to manage or resolve conflict	Strengths	Weaknesses
Win-win or collaborating Confronting and solving a problem by working with the other parties. Useful when: • the long-term relationship is important • consensus and commitment of others is important • the environment is collaborative • addressing the interests of many different people • there is a high level of trust	• solves the actual problem • leads to a win-win situation with mutually beneficial results • reinforces positive relationships and mutual trust, and is a basis for future collaboration • responsibility is shared • less stressful • there is more respect for someone who is a good negotiator	• requires commitment from all parties and trust cannot be lost • may take more effort and time • a win-win solution might not exist, or it may not be easy to find
Forcing or competing The individual firmly pursues their own concerns. Useful when the person resolving the conflict: • finds that less forceful methods do not work, and this is the last resort • needs to resist aggression and pressure • needs a quick resolution	• quick resolution • can increase self-esteem • can gain respect for being able to deal with hostility and aggression	• can have a negative effect on relationships • can cause the opponent to react in the same way • cannot compromise and accept the good points made by the opponent • the approach requires a lot of energy and courage; can be exhausting to some

Smoothing or accommodating The individual soothes others and accommodates their views. Useful when the person resolving the conflict: • wants to put other people's concerns first • is in the wrong • needs temporary relief whilst finding long-term solutions • has no choice and continued competition would be damaging	• can protect more important interests while giving up on smaller issues • gives opportunity to reassess from a different angle	• can be abused, as the opponent can try to take advantage • can affect confidence about dealing with aggressive situations • difficult to move to the win-win situation • supporters may consider the negotiator as weak
Compromising Looking for a mutually acceptable solution that satisfies all parties. Useful when: • goals are only moderately important • a temporary or fast settlement is needed for complex issues • it is used as a first step • collaboration or forcing do not work	• faster resolution of issues • can provide a temporary solution • reduces stress and tension	• parties might all be dissatisfied with the outcome • does not contribute to trust in the long term • might need close control and monitoring to see it through

Withdrawing or avoiding Ignoring or stepping away from the conflict. Useful when the person resolving the conflict: • believes the issue is trivial and not worth the time or effort • considers other priorities more important • needs more time to consider solutions • thinks the time and place are inappropriate • does not want to deal with hostility • cannot deal with hostility due to personal issues • passes the problem on to someone else for action	• can withdraw until the time and place are more appropriate • can take time to gather information, evidence etc. • can concentrate on more important priorities first	• can lead to losing or weakening the position • where multiple parties are involved, can affect relationship with parties who expect action

Everyone needs to make sure that they work within the limits of their authority at work, including when resolving conflicts. If we find that we do not have the authority, experience, skills or knowledge to resolve an issue, we need to make sure that we refer the matter to our line manager or a senior member of staff.

The organisation’s procedures should show when to escalate a problem, but if we are in any doubt, we should ask for advice and assistance.

Knowledge Activity 2: Think about a time when you witnessed or experienced conflict – maybe at work, in school or in your private life. Make a few notes about:

What caused the conflict

How you felt at the time

How it was resolved

Whether it could have been dealt with differently

Discussions in the workplace

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 4 and 5.

Communication is vital for effective teamwork. All team members need to be able to let the right people know what is going on and keep them up to date. By discussing progress, issues, problems and changes, the relevant people will be able to react and make decisions that are right for the team as a whole.

Discussing work progress and issues

Information needs to flow in many directions, and team members need to be able to inform their colleagues, team leaders and managers about their work progress and issues that arise at work when performing their tasks. For example, when discussing progress and issues, team members can:

- **discuss their progress and compare it to work schedules** – e.g. to see if they are behind or ahead of schedule with each task
- **check that they are working to agreed standards** – e.g. reporting issues that may affect quality or output
- **help to avoid misunderstandings** – e.g. making sure that everyone understands any problems they are facing
- **identify and discuss any problems** – e.g. discuss issues to see if others have experienced the same things
- **agree actions that are needed** – e.g. find solutions and corrective actions that work for everyone
- **develop their skills** – e.g. by practising negotiation and conflict resolution techniques
- **develop working relationships** – e.g. building trust and awareness that encourage team building, motivation and loyalty
- **provide information to help managers with planning** – e.g. a team member who is ahead can be allocated to help a team member who is behind schedule due to illness

Discussions about work progress and issues can be part of a team's day-to-day activities. They might have team meetings or briefings so that everyone can report their own progress and issues in an open group, enabling everyone to discuss everything and find solutions. Meetings might take place at the beginning or end of each shift, for example, or when a product, service or procedure is being introduced or changed.

Team members also need the opportunity to be able to discuss work progress and issues in private, maybe with a supervisor or manager. This is particularly important if there are personal issues that might be affecting their work performance – e.g. illness or serious family problems. Organisations need to make sure that team members know how to ask for a private discussion – maybe asking for a one-to-one meeting with their line manager, or sending a confidential email to human resources (HR).

Team members also need the opportunity to discuss progress and issues as part of their career development. This can be during formal, quarterly appraisals, for example, or during informal, unplanned discussions. We all need the chance to give and receive feedback about work progress, with constructive comments and plans about how to develop our skills, knowledge and experience to enhance our career opportunities.

Warning colleagues about problems and changes

When discussing progress and issues arising at work, problems can come to light that might affect other people. These problems need to be communicated to the right people so that relevant colleagues at all levels can be warned.

For example, if a team member who works on a food production line finds that a machine is working more slowly than usual, this might indicate that there is a major fault within the machine. Colleagues need to be warned because, for example:

- parts of the machine might have ended up in the food, so the production line needs to be stopped and checked immediately
- colleagues using similar machines might have the same problem
- the machines might cause injury to team members

If it turns out that there is a serious problem with the machine, this would affect several other teams within the food production factory. For example:

- the maintenance team needs to be called
- the quality assurance team needs to be warned that there may be contamination in a batch of food
- the packaging team needs to know that there will be a delay in producing finished products for them to pack
- the delivery drivers need to know that there may be delayed or cancelled products that will not be available in time for delivery slots
- managers need to know about delays and problems so that they can make decisions and reschedule where possible

As we can see in this example, some problems can lead to changes that affect colleagues. They need to be aware of these so that they can adapt their tasks and procedures.

For example, the breakdown of the food production machine may lead to changes that colleagues need to know about, such as:

- rescheduled production rotas for the next shift – e.g. closing the affected production line and increasing output for the other lines to compensate
- changes in inspection procedures for all machinery
- changes in the way food items are inspected for contamination – e.g. extra X-ray machines to check for metal parts
- changes in the quality control checks – e.g. extra visits or tests
- changes in orders from the supermarkets that can no longer have the cancelled product

If team members warn their colleagues about problems or changes that may affect them, colleagues can work together as an effective team and, for example:

- **anticipate work problems and changes** – e.g. from having as much notice as possible
- **avoid problems or stop them before they become serious** – e.g. taking early action to prevent something happening
- **share accurate information** – e.g. about causes of problems or the correct actions to be taken
- **prepare for changes** – e.g. by giving them the time and information needed to plan and adapt to changes
- **keep the delivery of products and services on track** – e.g. by pulling together as a team and working to catch up and bring output up to a reasonable level
- **share and build trust between individuals and teams** – e.g. by being honest about the knock-on effect of a problem or change for other individuals or teams
- **make sure they understand the changes** – e.g. by ensuring that important messages have been received, understood and actioned
- **give and receive support** – e.g. by being ready to assist colleagues to adapt to changes

Developing working relationships with other teams

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 6 and 7.

A working relationship is a relationship that you develop with a colleague, manager or client that enables you to work well together.

Why is it important to develop working relationships with other teams?

For an organisation to run smoothly and successfully achieve goals, people from different departments and teams have to be able to work well with each other. For example, to launch a new marketing campaign, colleagues from the marketing team may have to work with members of the sales team to create a pitch that appeals to the right customer base.

Successful working relationships involve good communication, respect and trust and they can make members of a team more productive.

What are the benefits of developing working relationships with other teams?

When teams have good working relationships, there are many benefits for individual team members, the team as a whole and the organisation. The benefits include:

- Better communication skills: developing working relationships with colleagues from different teams can improve communication skills because it requires understanding how the other colleagues process information and respond to different situations.
- High levels of trust: trust between members of different teams allows colleagues to speak openly and honestly with each other and share information freely, all of which increase productivity.
- Better employee morale: building working relationships can increase employees' feelings of belonging and make them feel happier.
- Improved productivity: happy, connected employees are more likely to work harder and be more productive.
- Lower staff turnover: happy employees who feel they are part of a larger 'family' are more likely to stay with an organisation for longer periods of time.

Did you know?

Relationships at work can have an impact on job satisfaction, learning, using skills, staff turnover, morale, taking time off and even quality of life.

[Source: **https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/why-good-working-relationships-are-important-your-mental-health**]

Ways to develop working relationships with other teams and departments

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 8.

Relationships with other teams and departments can be developed in a range of ways. Read the information in the following table to learn more.

Way of developing trust	Explanation
Showing respect	Colleagues are hired because of their particular skills, knowledge or experience. While team members may not always agree with each other, it is important that they all show each other respect. This means actively listening when a colleague speaks, not telling them their approach is wrong and not trying to force your own point of view onto them.
Offering praise	Acknowledging when a member of a team or another department makes a good point or a valuable contribution shows that you are invested in the success of the team as a whole, not just in your own success.
Being reliable and accountable	Trust is an important part of developing working relationships, so it is essential that you turn up to meetings on time, meet deadlines and take responsibility for things that have gone well and things that haven't gone so well. By doing this, colleagues from other teams and departments will see you as trustworthy, which will make working with them much easier.
Being flexible	A project may not go smoothly, but being able to adapt to change and help other team members when they need it will really help to build strong working relationships.

Using good communication – verbal and non-verbal	As you've already learned, different teams have a range of skills and may communicate in a way that is unfamiliar to you. If you ask questions and practise active listening to make sure you really understand ideas or processes, then this will help you to work better with other teams and departments. You should also make sure you use open body language.

The potential impact of ineffective working relationships with other teams and departments

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 9.

Effective working relationships ultimately make an organisation more successful; employees who feel connected and supported are happier, tend to be more productive and stay in their jobs longer. But what happens when working relationships with other teams and departments are poor? The potential impact can be devastating for both employees and the organisation. For example:

- Team members may feel underappreciated and undervalued: this can lead to poor productivity and can have a negative impact on staff morale.
- There may be conflict: when members of different teams and departments don't work well together, tempers may flare; there can be arguments and differences of opinion that make it hard for the rest of the team to work well together.
- Team members may leave: if an employee is unhappy, they will probably look for a new job.
- There is no trust: poor working relationships don't involve trust, which is essential to a productive working relationship. Without trust, information won't be shared, there won't be a collaborative spirit and goals may not be achieved.
- Poor morale: if even two employees from different teams don't have a good working relationship, it can affect the morale of the whole office. Low morale has a huge impact on productivity.
- Goals won't be met: working well with other teams is essential to ensuring that goals and targets are achieved. Ineffective working relationships can prevent goals and targets from being met.

Knowledge Activity 3: Name three types of negative non-verbal communication and three types of positive non-verbal communication that can impact your ability to develop positive working relationships.

Summary

In this workbook, you have learned about:

- the principles of effective team working
- how to develop working relationships with other teams and departments

Section 3: Extension activity

Extension Activity: Look back at the conflict resolution techniques on pages 11-13. Which technique do you think you use (or would use) the most? Explain the reasons for your choice.

Well done!

You have now completed Workbook 8 and should attempt the assessment. If you require any help or guidance, please contact your Assessor/Tutor.

Please use this page for additional notes

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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NCFE Level 2

Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

CUSTOMER SERVICE

MOTIVATION

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

LEADERSHIP ROLES

SUPPORT

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Workbook 11

Introduction to coaching

How to use your learning materials

This course is delivered on a flexible learning basis. This means that most of your study will take place away from your Assessor/Tutor. It helps to carefully plan your studying so that you get the most out of your course. We have put together some handy tips for you below.

Study Guidance

- Try to plan an outline timetable of when and where you will study.
- Try to complete your work in a quiet environment where you are unlikely to be distracted.
- Set realistic goals and deadlines for the various elements of your course.
- Plan what you are going to study during each session, and try and achieve this each time.
- After each session, reflect on what you have achieved and plan what you hope to complete next time.
- Remember that not only do you have the support of your Assessor/Tutor, but it is likely that your family, friends and work colleagues will also be willing to help.

Assessor/Tutor Support

- Your Assessor/Tutor will be available to support and guide you through the programme. They are experts in your area of study and are experienced in helping many different types of learners.
- They can help you to improve the standard of work you submit and will give you useful feedback on areas in which you have excelled, as well as where you can improve.
- Remember to listen to, or read, their feedback carefully. Ask if you are unsure about any of the feedback you receive, as your Assessor/Tutor is there to help.
- Make note of any tips they give. Refer to the learning materials, as they contain the information you need to complete the end-of-unit assessments.
- Look out for areas in which you can improve, and set yourself an action plan to make sure you complete the required work.
- Take positive feedback on board; this demonstrates you are doing things right and have a good understanding of the subject area.
- Use the feedback to avoid repeating any mistakes you may have made.

Enjoy your studies!

NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

Workbook 11
Introduction to coaching

Workbook Contents

In this workbook, you will learn about coaching, including its benefits and uses in the workplace. You will explore coaching models and the role that learning styles play in the process, and you will also understand why it is important to set goals and targets and provide constructive feedback.

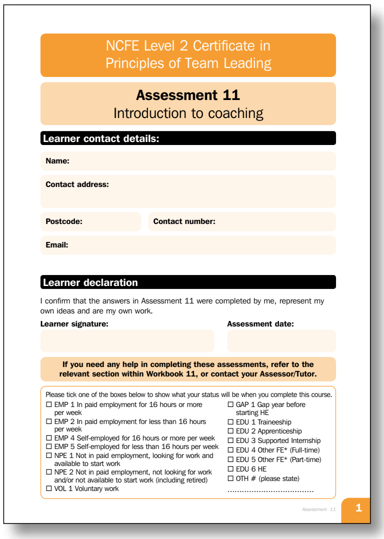
Contents

This workbook contains three sections:

Each section has a corresponding assessment that must be completed in order to achieve this part of the programme.

The assessments for this workbook can be found in:

Assessment 11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Assessment 11
Introduction to coaching

Learner contact details:

Name:

Contact address:

Postcode: **Contact number:**

Email:

Learner declaration

I confirm that the answers in Assessment 11 were completed by me, represent my own ideas and are my own work.

Learner signature: **Assessment date:**

If you need any help in completing these assessments, refer to the relevant section within Workbook 11, or contact your Assessor/Tutor.

Please tick one of the boxes below to show what your status will be when you complete this course.

- ☐ EMP 1 In paid employment for 16 hours or more per week
- ☐ EMP 2 In paid employment for less than 16 hours per week
- ☐ EMP 4 Self-employed for 16 hours or more per week
- ☐ EMP 5 Self-employed for less than 16 hours per week
- ☐ NPE 1 Not in paid employment, looking for work and available to start work
- ☐ NPE 2 Not in paid employment, not looking for work and/or not available to start work (including retired)
- ☐ VOL 1 Voluntary work
- ☐ GAP 1 Gap year before starting HE
- ☐ EDU 1 Traineeship
- ☐ EDU 2 Apprenticeship
- ☐ EDU 3 Supported Internship
- ☐ EDU 4 Other FE* (Full-time)
- ☐ EDU 5 Other FE* (Part-time)
- ☐ EDU 6 HE
- ☐ OTH # (please state) ....

Assessment 11 1

When you have completed this workbook, you should attempt the assessment. Your Assessor/Tutor will then give you detailed written feedback on your progress.

Remember that your assessment answers should be written in your own words. You should not copy answers directly from the workbooks.

Upon successful completion of this qualification, learners will be awarded the NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading (QRN: 603/3883/0). This qualification is certificated by the Awarding Organisation NCFE.

This section introduces you to the benefits that can come from coaching in the workplace.

What is coaching?

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 1 and 2.

Coaching involves providing an individual with support to help them improve an aspect of their personal or professional life. Coaching is often associated with sports, where a player is given guidance and support by experts to help them be the best they can be.

Coaching focuses on the individual's present situation or the very near future and helps them learn how to improve specific performance issues and maximise their abilities. It isn't the same as teaching; instead of telling people what to do, coaching helps people to learn how to make change themselves. A fundamental premise of coaching is that the individual already has the answers to their problems but needs help and support to find them. A coaching relationship will usually last for a set amount of time.

'Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.' John Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance*

Coaching shouldn't be confused with mentoring or counselling, which help people in different ways:

- Mentoring involves a more experienced colleague acting as a role model for a less experienced employee. They will focus on career development and on the future. The mentor will mainly give professional advice, but will offer personal advice as well if it is required.
- Counselling provides advice and guidance to someone who is unhappy or dissatisfied with their life. Counselling sessions will focus on a particular problem and help the person to find a way of coping with it.

Coaching asks: '**How** will you achieve your goals?'

Mentoring asks: '**What** do you want to achieve?

Counselling asks: '**Why** do you feel the way you do?'

Did you know?

Approximately 40% of Fortune 500 companies use business coaches.

[Source: https://www.businesscoachspecialist.co.uk/6-key-facts-about-business-coaching/]

Coaching in the workplace

Coaching is a useful tool that can be used to improve individual and team performance. A coach will work with an individual or team in the workplace to figure out a plan to improve their performance or reach a goal. They will also guide their clients through the change process. They do this by:

- focusing on an individual or team's performance to identify how to make improvements based on key performance indicators, which are assigned to every role or team
- clarifying needs, values and goals
- giving people the knowledge, tools and opportunities they need to achieve their goals
- helping people understand how to deal with continuous change to keep the organisation as effective and successful as possible
- helping people to develop skills and knowledge
- enhancing creativity
- taking away blocks to creativity and progress

The benefits of coaching

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 3.

Coaching focuses on supporting teams and individuals to find solutions to their own questions or problems, which makes it a useful tool that can have benefits for the organisation, managers and employees.

Recipient	Benefits
Organisation	• reduces staff turnover: staff who feel that they are working toward their goals and that they are supported will stay with an organisation • improves productivity • increases staff motivation
Manager	• helps to build high-performing teams • can be carried out on the job • flexibility: coaching sessions can fit around employees' schedules
Team	• improves performance • helps build relationships • reduces dependency on other team members
Individual	• helps develop confidence • improves performance • develops skills

Did you know?

According to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas), it costs more than £30,000 to replace one member of staff, including 28 weeks' pay for a new recruit to get up to speed, advertising costs and HR time.

[Source: http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=4857]

Knowledge Activity 1: Think of an area you would like to receive coaching in, and describe it in the space below.

Section 2: Understand how to coach individuals in the team

In this section, you will explore the different coaching models that are currently used in the workplace. You will learn about barriers to coaching and the impact learning styles have on the process. Additionally, you will understand the importance of setting goals and targets, providing feedback and maintaining records.

Coaching models

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 4.

A range of coaching models exist that can be used to support effective coaching in the workplace. In this section, you will explore three of the most popular models: GROW, OSCAR and CLEAR. You will also learn about organisational models.

The GROW model

Created by Sir John Whitmore in the 1980s, the GROW model of coaching uses conversations to set goals and solve problems. The process is known to 'maximise and sustain personal achievement and productivity'.

GROW stands for:

G: **Goal**: i.e. what the individual/team wants to accomplish; goals should be clear and achievable

R: **Reality**: i.e. where the individual/team is at the current point in time; the individual/team should be able to explain how far away they are from their goal

O: **Options**: i.e. what things (obstacles) stand in the way of the individual/team achieving their goal? Once the obstacles have been identified, how can they be overcome (options)?

W: **Will**: i.e. how to change the options into actions that will allow the individual/team to achieve their goals

The GROW model is flexible, which means that the goal can be reviewed and changed at any point in the process and the sequence can be worked through in any order, as long as it makes sense to the person being coached. It is believed that this model promotes self-motivation and responsibility, which in turn results in increased productivity and satisfaction.

The OSCAR model

Developed by Andrew Gilbert and Karen Whittleworth in 2002, the OSCAR model is an expansion of the GROW model that is used by managers to develop individual and team skills and knowledge. This model allows managers to coach employees while the employees take personal responsibility for their own action plans. OSCAR stands for:

O: **Outcome**: i.e. what the individual/team wants to achieve

S: **Situation**: i.e. where the individual/team is at the current point in time

C: **Choices and consequences**: i.e. the individual/team will think about the different choices they have and the consequences of each

A: **Actions**: i.e. what the individual/team needs to do next to take responsibility for their choices

R: **Review**: i.e. where the individual/team engages in an ongoing process of reviewing and evaluating where they are and that they are staying on course

The CLEAR model

Developed in the 1980s by Peter Hawkins, the CLEAR model is similar to the GROW model, but includes additional elements. CLEAR stands for:

C: **Contracting**: i.e. where the coach and individual/team work out their desired goals or outcomes, decide how they want to work together and set any ground rules

L: **Listening**: i.e. where the coach actively listens to the individual/team to understand their situation

E: **Exploring**: i.e. where the individual/team understands how their current situation is affecting them and works out any possible solutions

A: **Action**: i.e. where the individual/team will decide what to do to achieve their goals/outcomes

R: **Review**: i.e. where the coach reviews what has happened during the session and asks the individual/team for feedback

Organisational models

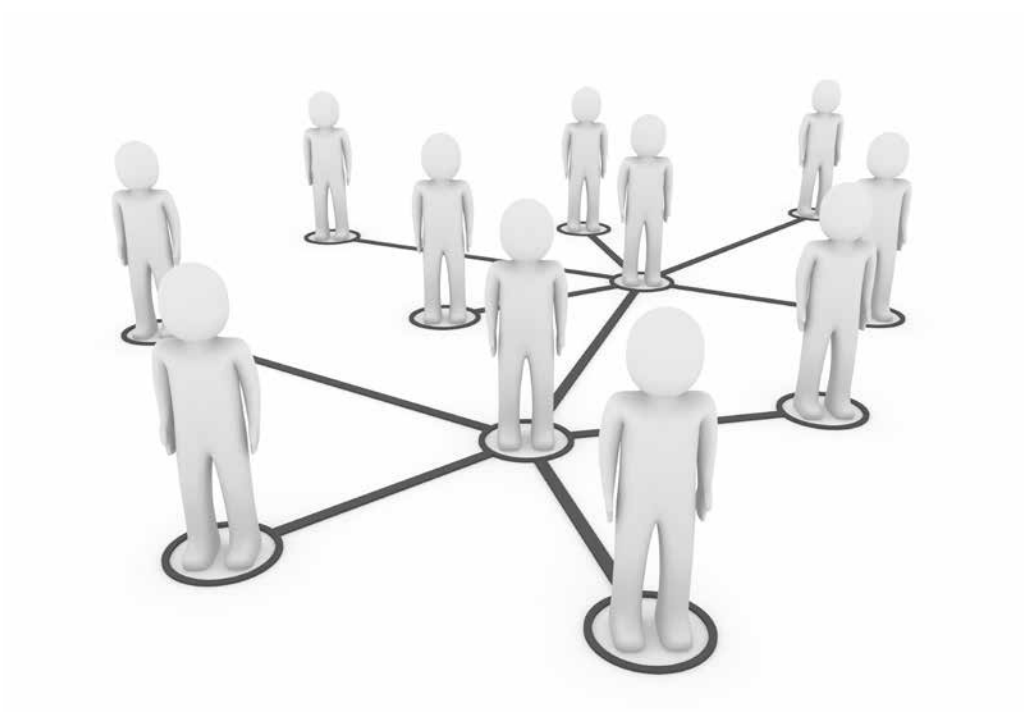
Organisational models treat an organisation as a whole and are used to look at all aspects of the business in a detached, non-judgemental way. In this model, a coaching framework is then created to help everyone within the organisation to work towards the same outcomes or goals.

Organisational models can use a range of different coaching models to help meet the organisation's needs, which means they are flexible and able to use processes that best match the existing skills and desired goals.

An organisational coaching framework is built around four key principles, which are that the organisation has:

- a vision and strategy that all employees know, understand and support
- operational planning, i.e. the organisation's efficiency and productivity have been improved based on the strategies
- performance benchmarks, i.e. what each employee is expected to achieve
- a framework which shows everyone what they are responsible for, including key performance indicators and organisation-wide goals

[Source: **http://effectchange.com.au/what-is-organisational-coaching**]



Barriers to coaching in the workplace

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 5.

Despite the fact that coaching can have many benefits for an organisation, there are things that can prevent coaching in the workplace. Read the information in the following table to learn more about the types of barriers that might exist in the workplace.

Type of barrier	Explanation	How to overcome
Environment	For coaching to be successful, the organisational environment (culture) must be one that supports employees' long-term development and encourages employees' independence and taking responsibility for their own success. Coaching requires independent thinking and a degree of freedom, so companies in which employees are told exactly what to do, and those which are constrained by governing rules, will probably not accept coaching as a valuable form of support.	The company would have to learn how to embrace coaching for its benefits and the value it can add, e.g. the organisation could put aside the existing way of thinking to explore how coaching works.
Lack of time	In busy workplaces and workplaces that operate to production schedules, finding time for coaching sessions may be difficult. Managers may also feel that the value added by coaching is not enough to replace the money lost during the sessions.	Coaching could be done in a videoconference or broken down into 30 minute sessions once or twice a week. An analysis of the value added by coaching could also be given to the company to reassure them that it is worth the investment.
Lack of understanding: coach	While coaches don't have to be experts in the industry they are coaching in, there are some times when not being an expert will prevent them from being able to coach clients effectively. For example, they may not understand how a process works, and the solutions they suggest simply won't work.	The coach could be given a 'crash course' on the industry, or a new coach with more industry knowledge could be found.

Lack of understanding of purpose: client	Some managers do not understand what coaching can do for their employees or their company. It can be seen as 'time-wasting' and offering no real benefits and as a result, they won't want to spend money on coaching sessions.	The coach could provide evidence of the benefits of coaching, e.g. financial benefits, morale benefits. Asking other organisations to give testimonials could also help.
Lack of skills	If coaching is not seen as a core leadership skill, then managers won't be given appropriate training and won't have the knowledge or ability needed to provide coaching.	Provide managers with coaching training.
Work pressures	Coaching requires the coach and the client to take time out of their day to focus only on the area they need coaching in. This can be very difficult to do if an employee is under a lot of pressure to complete work. If the phone is constantly ringing, emails are popping up and colleagues are asking for support, focusing on coaching will be the last thing on the coach or client's mind.	Breaking coaching down into manageable chunks may help reduce the pressure.
Personality clashes	Coaching also requires that the coach and client are able to build a relationship based on trust and good communication. The coach has to ask difficult, often probing questions, and this can be very difficult, or even impossible, if the coach and client don't get on very well.	If the coach and client can't find common ground, then the solution is most likely to change the coach.

Using learning styles in coaching

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 6.

Everyone has their own learning style, which means they learn and process information differently. For coaching to be successful, it can be helpful for the coach to take into account how their client learns, as it can help them to communicate successfully and deliver information in a way that is better understood and remembered.

However, research has also shown that there are disadvantages to focusing only on learning styles in coaching. For example, an individual's learning styles can change over time and one person can use a range of different styles. As a result, it is recommended that coaches be aware of learning styles but use a range of styles to support and challenge clients by taking them out of their comfort zone.

Honey and Mumford's learning styles

Honey and Mumford (1992) believed that there are four learning styles and that everyone leans towards one style, although they can fall into more than one category. These learning styles include:

- **Activist**: activists are keen to give everything a go; they are open-minded and flexible and not scared of making a mistake. They are excited at the prospect of doing something new.
- **Reflector**: reflectors are the opposite to activists: they are careful and methodical and won't make quick decisions. Reflectors are often good at listening and providing insight.
- **Theorist**: theorists are logical and rational and are able to see themselves objectively, i.e. without emotion. They are able to ask good, thoughtful questions.
- **Pragmatist**: pragmatists are practical, down to earth and like to plan things. They like to figure out how things work and apply things they learn to their job.

Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic (VAK) learning styles

According to psychologists in the 1920s, people learn in one of three ways: visual, auditory or kinesthetic (although it is believed that most people use a mix of these styles):

- **Visual**: visual learners learn better when information is presented in images, charts, diagrams and pictures.
- **Auditory**: auditory learners learn better when they listen to information, e.g. during a lecture. Being involved in group discussions can also help.
- **Kinesthetic**: this type of learner prefers learning by physical experiencing, or touching a prop associated with the subject they are learning about.

Coaching plans

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 7.

A coaching plan is created when the coach and client work together to set out the client's goals and define their responsibilities. Goals can be created by the coach asking open-ended, deep questions that encourage the client to discuss what they think and feel and the reasons why.

The coaching plan may be based on a model, such as GROW or OSCAR, and in general should include the following:

- Areas of development that have been identified: i.e. goals or desired outcomes. It is recommended that a plan shouldn't contain more than four areas of development at a time. It can be useful to prioritise the areas so the client knows which to focus on first.
- SMART targets: you learned about SMART targets in Workbook 1. To recap: any goals included in the coaching plan should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely.
- What the client needs to do to achieve their goals/outcomes: such as specific tasks or strategies they will use.
- Support needed to achieve targets: i.e. from a manager or training programme.
- Frequent reviews: this helps the client to stay on track. It can be useful to set benchmarks as a way of measuring progress and success, e.g. 'By June I will have achieved 50% of my goal'.

Section 2: Understand how to coach individuals in the team

Below is a sample coaching plan.

Coaching visit details	
Name of staff member:	
Department/team:	
Coach's name:	
Date of visit:	
Total number of CPD hrs:	
Content of visit (areas covered)	
Next steps – staff member	
Next steps – coach (plan for next support visit)	

The importance of setting goals and targets

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 8.

A goal is something that an individual/team/company wants to achieve, and it is usually set alongside a deadline. Targets are smaller goals, like stepping stones, the achievement of which moves the company closer to the goal.

Goals and targets are essential in coaching because they are the result of in-depth questioning and thought and have been created specifically to get an individual/team/company to a certain outcome. They provide a clear purpose for the coaching process and a means of measuring the individual/team/company's success in achieving the targets and goals they set out. Setting targets and reviewing their progress can also allow the individual etc. to make any corrections, such as changing a goal or the next target based on new information.

Setting goals also provides a long-term plan that can be worked towards, but because targets are smaller and can be achieved more frequently, they motivate people in the short term. Targets are essential to the success of goals.

Constructive feedback in the coaching relationship

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 9.

An essential part of the coaching relationship is giving and receiving feedback, i.e. the coach telling – and the client hearing – which outcomes have gone well and which have not gone so well.

Constructive feedback is not the same as giving praise or criticism; it is based on observations, focuses on specific goals or targets, and provides information. Praise and criticism, on the other hand, come from personal judgement, which has no place in the coaching environment. Constructive feedback can be positive or negative, but always focuses on outcomes that have gone well or not so well.

Example

Criticism: 'Your attitude reaching this milestone was terrible. No one wants to work with you.'

Negative feedback: 'Some concerns have come up about your attitude during this phase of the project. We laid out your milestones clearly before the project started, and you agreed that they were appropriate and achievable. However, when work started you regularly complained about the work you had to do, and on more than one occasion asked a co-worker to do the work for you. As a result, the project didn't meet its deadline and everyone will have to pull together to make sure we meet the next one.'

Praise: 'I think you've done a brilliant job reaching that milestone, well done!'

Positive feedback: 'You put in a lot of effort to reach that milestone. You worked really well with other team members and were an excellent liaison with other departments. Your positivity really helped motivate the rest of the team and the accuracy of your work and dedication to meeting deadlines were very impressive.'

As you can see, the feedback focuses on specific areas of performance or issues and doesn't come across as judgemental.

Constructive feedback should start a discussion between the coach and client that helps them to understand the situation and make changes to their goals, targets and coaching plan.

Records of coaching

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 10.

Keeping records of coaching helps the coach and the client to remember the process they have gone through and also helps them to track their progress and plan next steps. Records may include a coaching plan, plans for individual sessions, coaching reviews and evaluations.

Section 2: Understand how to coach individuals in the team

Below is an example evaluation form, so you can see the types of areas that are evaluated.

Name:	
Date:	

After the session, how would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the induction process for new staff members?

Before	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
After	low	1	2	3	4	5	high

How would you rate your knowledge and understanding of the training required during the induction period?

Before	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
After	low	1	2	3	4	5	high

How would you rate your confidence and ability use to guide a new staff member through the induction process?

Before	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
After	low	1	2	3	4	5	high

How would you rate your understanding of the administrative process to sign off an induction?

Before	low	1	2	3	4	5	high
After	low	1	2	3	4	5	high

What have you learned during this coaching or training session?

How will this impact on your practice?

We would value your feedback on today's session if you felt it was effective/not effective and suggestions as to how this could be improved

Positives from today's session

Any areas for improvement

Knowledge Activity 2: Choose the GROW, CLEAR or OSCAR model and in the space below, work through the process to set a professional goal for yourself.

Summary

In this workbook, you have learned about:

- coaching in the workplace
- how to coach individuals in a team

Section 3: Extension activity

Extension Activity: Find out if your organisation uses a coaching model and describe it in the space below. It your company doesn't have a coaching model, which do you think would work best?

Well done!

You have now completed Workbook 11 and should attempt the assessments. If you require any help or guidance, please contact your Assessor/Tutor.

Please use this page for additional notes

Please use this page for additional notes

Please use this page for additional notes

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Disclaimer

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LCG-PTL March 2019
Version 1 (603/3883/0)

PC1A

NCFE Level 2

Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

CUSTOMER SERVICE

MOTIVATION

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

LEADERSHIP ROLES

SUPPORT

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Workbook 12

Introduction to mentoring

How to use your learning materials

This course is delivered on a flexible learning basis. This means that most of your study will take place away from your Assessor/Tutor. It helps to carefully plan your studying so that you get the most out of your course. We have put together some handy tips for you below.

Study Guidance

- Try to plan an outline timetable of when and where you will study.
- Try to complete your work in a quiet environment where you are unlikely to be distracted.
- Set realistic goals and deadlines for the various elements of your course.
- Plan what you are going to study during each session, and try and achieve this each time.
- After each session, reflect on what you have achieved and plan what you hope to complete next time.
- Remember that not only do you have the support of your Assessor/Tutor, but it is likely that your family, friends and work colleagues will also be willing to help.

Assessor/Tutor Support

- Your Assessor/Tutor will be available to support and guide you through the programme. They are experts in your area of study and are experienced in helping many different types of learners.
- They can help you to improve the standard of work you submit and will give you useful feedback on areas in which you have excelled, as well as where you can improve.
- Remember to listen to, or read, their feedback carefully. Ask if you are unsure about any of the feedback you receive, as your Assessor/Tutor is there to help.
- Make note of any tips they give. Refer to the learning materials, as they contain the information you need to complete the end-of-unit assessments.
- Look out for areas in which you can improve, and set yourself an action plan to make sure you complete the required work.
- Take positive feedback on board; this demonstrates you are doing things right and have a good understanding of the subject area.
- Use the feedback to avoid repeating any mistakes you may have made.

Enjoy your studies!

NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

Workbook 12
Introduction to mentoring

Workbook Contents

This workbook introduces you to mentoring, including what it is and its uses. In addition to exploring the benefits of mentoring and learning what a mentoring agreement is, you will also learn about the skills a mentor should have.

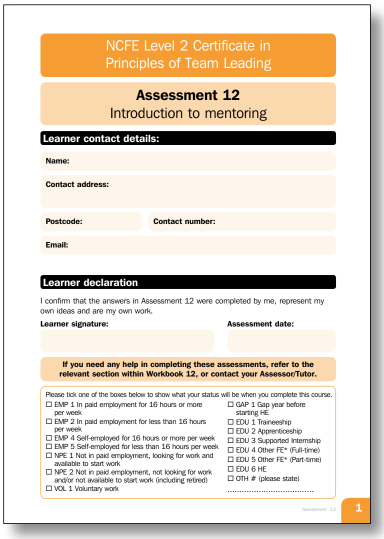
Contents

This workbook contains four sections:

Each section has a corresponding assessment that must be completed in order to achieve this part of the programme.

The assessments for this workbook can be found in:

Assessment 12


NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

Assessment 12
Introduction to mentoring

Learner contact details:
Name:
Contact address:
Postcode: Contact number:
Email:

Learner declaration
I confirm that the answers in Assessment 12 were completed by me, represent my own ideas and are my own work.
Learner signature: Assessment date:

If you need any help in completing these assessments, refer to the relevant section within Workbook 12, or contact your Assessor/Tutor.

When you have completed this workbook, you should attempt the assessment. Your Assessor/Tutor will then give you detailed written feedback on your progress.

Remember that your assessment answers should be written in your own words. You should not copy answers directly from the workbooks.

Upon successful completion of this qualification, learners will be awarded the NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading (QRN: 603/3883/0). This qualification is certificated by the Awarding Organisation NCFE.

Section 1: Understand the purpose and benefits of mentoring

This section will help you to understand what mentoring is, including the different types that exist, where it can be used and the associated benefits.

What is mentoring?

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 1 and 2.

Mentoring is a process in which an experienced individual – the mentor – shares their skills, knowledge and experience to help a less experienced person – the mentee – to progress professionally.

Mentoring usually involves developing a long-term relationship between the mentor and mentee, but the mentor doesn't provide advice on activities that are part of the mentee's everyday role. Instead they focus on the mentee's overall growth and development at a high level, and change happens over time. Traditionally, mentoring was a one-way process, but today it is believed that mentoring relationships can have personal and professional benefits for both the mentor and the mentee.

Mentoring is not the same as coaching or counselling:

- Coaching involves helping an individual to analyse their current situation and work out a plan to improve performance and maximise their abilities. The coaching relationship usually happens within a set time frame.
- Counselling provides advice and guidance to someone who is unhappy or dissatisfied with their life. Counselling sessions will focus on a particular problem and help the person to find a way of coping with it.

A mentor doesn't tell the mentee what to do; rather, they support the mentee to identify their own goals and help to figure out how to achieve them. Mentoring is a flexible process that is unique to each individual; the process involves the mentor working out how the mentee works and learns and tailoring their methods of communication to help them to the best of their ability.

The role of a mentor involves:

- Providing support and guidance: this can be personal or professional.
- Being a role model: i.e. showing the behaviours the mentee is hoping to develop.
- Providing information: a mentor will provide the mentee with industry-specific information to expand their understanding of their role and support their professional growth.

- Sharing knowledge: experience is priceless; by sharing their own experience, the mentor can help a mentee to have an advanced knowledge of and insight into their profession.
- Being a critical friend: because mentor-mentee relationships are long term many turn into friendships, but the aim is still professional and/or personal growth. A critical friend will help the mentee to see situations clearly and help them to find solutions themselves.

Types of mentoring

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 3 and 4.

Because mentoring doesn't require the mentor to oversee the mentee's everyday job performance, the process can take place in a variety of ways, including one-on-one, in a group and remotely.

One-to-one

One-to-one mentoring requires the mentor and mentee to meet face-to-face for each session.

Group mentoring

This type of mentoring involves a number of mentees and mentors meeting at the same time. Each mentor will have a small number of mentees in their group that they support.

Remote mentoring

Remote mentoring is necessary when the mentor or mentee don't work in the same building or when they both have to travel. These sessions rely on videoconferencing, phone calls and email.

Reverse mentoring

In this type of mentoring, a younger, less experienced employee will provide support to an experienced member of staff, usually to help them navigate learning a new skill.

Section 1: Understand the purpose and benefits of mentoring

Where mentoring is used

Mentoring uses one person's experience, knowledge and skills to support someone without as much experience, which means it can be used in almost all workplaces. The process is particularly useful to support a new employee or someone new to a particular role, e.g. following a promotion.

For example, teachers are often given mentors throughout their training and during their first year of teaching to help them deal with and understand how to be the best they can be. The mentor will help their mentee to navigate difficult situations and help them understand how to deal with parents, colleagues and students. In return, the mentee can provide their mentor with insight that can help their personal and professional lives.

In a professional environment, a senior manager may become a mentor for a junior employee who has just been promoted to a team manager position. In this situation, the mentor would provide the mentee with support as they get used to their new role. The mentee will be able to ask their mentor questions when they need help or go to them to help them work through a new or tricky situation.

The benefits of mentoring

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 5.

Mentoring has benefits for the organisation, mentor and mentee. Read the information in the following table to learn about the benefits for each group.

	Benefits
Organisation	• Staff retention: mentoring helps high-quality employees to feel happy and valued, which means they will stay with the company • Improved productivity: happy, fulfilled employees are likely to be more productive • Increased staff motivation: staff who feel supported are more motivated to do a good job
Mentor	• Increased confidence: mentoring requires a specific set of skills, and using them can help the mentor to feel more confident about their abilities outside of mentoring • Increased motivation: supporting another person can make the mentor feel excited about what they're doing, which in turn bolsters their motivation • Develops communication skills: as you've learned, communication is key in mentoring, and working with different mentees can really help develop communication skills

Mentee	• Develops confidence: mentoring can help the mentee to feel more confident in their abilities and in their thoughts • Provides support: many new employees cite a lack of support when they start a new job as a reason for leaving soon after. Mentoring helps reduce that issue • Helps to identify areas of development: mentoring is a thorough process that focuses on setting clear goals and identifying ways to achieve them

Knowledge Activity 1: What type of mentoring do you think would suit you best? Explain why.

Section 2: Understand how a mentoring agreement works

Part of the mentoring process is creating an agreement between the mentor and mentee. In this section, you will explore the importance of creating an agreement and the difference between informal and formal agreements. You will also learn about trust and respect and when agreements should come to an end.

What is a mentoring agreement and what should it cover?

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 6 and 7.

Mentoring is a long-term process involving two people, so it is important that the mentor and mentee both understand what they expect from the process and how they think it will go. A mentoring agreement is created by the mentor and mentee as a framework for the mentoring relationship. In the agreement, the mentor and mentee clarify their goals and expectations ahead of time and agree their roles and responsibilities and their commitment to the process.

The mentoring agreement is kept and updated throughout the process so that both the mentor and mentee can keep track of the process and their progress and success.

An agreement should include:

- a statement created jointly, which shows what both the mentor and mentee want to get from the relationship and that they are committed to the process
- how long the relationship will last
- how often meetings will happen, how long they will last and where the mentor and mentee will meet
- how much contact is allowed between meetings, i.e. once a week or twice a month
- the mentor's learning objectives/goals, i.e. what the mentor expects to get from the relationship
- the mentee's learning objectives/goals, i.e. what the mentee expects to get from the relationship
- what role the mentor will play in the process
- what role the mentee will play in the process
- a review schedule
- mentor and mentee signatures

An example mentoring agreement is shown below.

Mentoring Agreement

We are both voluntarily entering into this partnership. We are committed to developing a professional, honest, confidential and productive relationship that supports professional development and learning. We both agree to provide constructive feedback to each other.

Duration	The mentoring relationship will last for X months/years.
Meeting frequency/ location	Meetings will be held on XX of each week/month face-to-face/remotely via videoconferencing and should last approximately X minutes/hours. Meetings shouldn't be cancelled unless it is unavoidable.
Contact between meetings	It is acceptable to have email or phone contact X between meetings.
Mentee: learning objectives	• to gain knowledge and skills to move into upper management
Mentor: learning objectives	• to learn how best to communicate with mentee • to learn how best to support mentee to reach their goals
Mentee: role	• to provide insight • to see the value in mentor's knowledge and skills • to work towards clear goals
Mentor: role	• to provide insight, knowledge and guidance • to provide support and access to appropriate people and resources
Confidentiality	The information discussed and disclosed during the mentoring relationship will be kept confidential at all times.
Mentee signature:	
Mentor signature:	

Formal and informal mentoring agreements

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 8, 9 and 10.

Mentoring agreements can be formal or informal, depending on the mentor and mentee. A formal agreement is one that has set parameters, roles, boundaries and specific, measurable goals. It will be written down and signed by both parties and will be reviewed on a specific schedule. It will also likely have a set timeframe.

An informal agreement, on the other hand, may not be written down and may not have any set goals or objectives. Mentoring sessions may also take place on an ad-hoc basis.

Organisations that have an official mentoring programme are more likely to have formal agreements in place that both the mentor and mentee have to sign before embarking on the process.

Formal agreements

Advantages:

- are created for a set time, so the mentor and mentee both know how much time they have to achieve goals
- lay out clear objectives, targets and goals so that they have a clear idea of what they want to achieve
- have measurable outcomes, so progress and success can be seen
- are regularly reviewed, which allows issues to be found and appropriate changes to be made

Disadvantages:

- don't allow for creativity or changes in direction
- mentors are assigned to mentees as a result of a process, not because they share mutual likes and respect

Informal agreements

Advantages:

- allow the mentor and mentee to create an organic relationship based on shared interests or mutual respect
- can last for years and result in strong friendships

Disadvantages

- have no set objectives, targets or goals, so may not follow a logical or useful path
- have no set timeframe, so may not motivate to achieve goals within a reasonable timeframe
- have no measurable outcomes, making it impossible to know if the process has been successful or not
- aren't reviewed on a regular basis, so issues can't be identified and changes made
- there is no physical agreement

The importance of making an agreement

Mentoring agreements are important because they set out each person's roles and responsibilities and make the purpose of the relationship for both parties very clear. Boundaries are also set, which help to keep the relationship on track.

By formalising what the mentor and mentee expect the relationship to look like and what they each want to get from the relationship, the tone of the mentoring process is set and there is a defined path that they will follow. This will allow them to achieve their goals as efficiently as possible.

Finally, a mentoring agreement is a way of both people showing they are committed to the process.

Did you know?

Informal mentoring has been found to be more beneficial than formal mentoring.

[Source: https://journals.aom.org/doi/abs/10.5465/1556344]

Setting goals for the mentee

A mentor's role in the mentoring relationship is to help the mentee realise their own potential and find solutions to their problems or goals. A good way of doing this is by setting goals for the mentee.

Goals provide mentees with something clear to aim for and focus on; goals are measurable and progress toward them can be monitored, which can help keep the mentee motivated and committed to the process. A realistic timeframe can also be created for each goal that gives the mentee the best chance of success.

Mutual trust and respect

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 11.

Mentoring relationships are often long term and result in friendships. The mentor and mentee will share private details about their personal and professional lives, and they will provide support (possibly to each other) during difficult or challenging times.

As a result, it is very important that the mentor and mentee respect and trust each other as colleagues and friends, which includes maintaining anything they learn in the strictest of confidence.

Trust and respect make the mentoring process more effective and ultimately more successful.

On the other hand, if either the mentor or mentee doesn't respect or trust the other, it will make developing a meaningful mentoring relationship impossible and the process will be unsuccessful.

When should a mentoring agreement come to an end?

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 12.

Mentoring relationships don't last forever, and there are a number of reasons why an agreement should come to an end, including:

- the timeframe of the agreement has come to an end
- the relationship has fulfilled its purpose, i.e. the goals have been achieved
- priorities have changed for the mentor or mentee
- the relationship isn't leading to the expected outcomes
- the mentor or mentee have changed roles or left the organisation
- the mentor and mentee don't have mutual respect and trust and don't get on

Knowledge Activity 2: Would you prefer a formal or informal mentoring agreement? Give three reasons for your answer.

Section 3: Understand the skills and tools required by a mentor

Being a mentor requires a specific set of skills and in this section, you will explore which skills and tools a mentor needs to have to be successful. You will explore how to give feedback, the importance of reflection throughout the mentoring process and how to help mentees take responsibility for their own development once the mentoring process has finished.

Good communication and the role of a mentor

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 13 and 14.

Communication is at the heart of the mentor's job; building a rapport with their mentee requires saying the right things in the right way and being perceived as being open and approachable. By doing this, the mentee will feel safe, trust the mentor and be more likely to engage in the process.

Tone of voice

The mentor should understand that tone of voice and body language are highly important when communicating verbally because they help to convey the meaning of what they are saying.

Emotion is very easily shown in the mentor's voice, and they should always try to be aware of their tone of voice as it can have a big impact on the mentee's behaviour and reaction to what the mentor is saying.

Body language

Body language is non-verbal, but it plays a very important role in the mentor's verbal communications, and it should match their tone of voice. Body language covers everything from how you stand to the facial expressions you make. The mentor's body language can change the tone of verbal communication positively or negatively, so it is important that they make appropriate eye contact, smile and don't fold their arms defensively.

Section 3: Understand the skills and tools required by a mentor

Listening skills

Mentors will ask a lot of questions, but they also have to listen to their mentee's answers as well as any other information they give them. To help the mentee gain clarity and set out appropriate goals, the mentor must have good listening skills. Good listening skills will allow the mentor to really understand what the mentee is telling them, analyse the information and provide a good, constructive response.

Reflection is an important listening skill because it requires the mentor to really listen to what the mentee has said and then paraphrase it back to them to show their understanding.

For example, during a mentoring session a mentee says that they have a lot of work at the moment but don't feel they can get it all done because colleagues often stop by their desk to ask them questions. The mentor could respond in the following way:

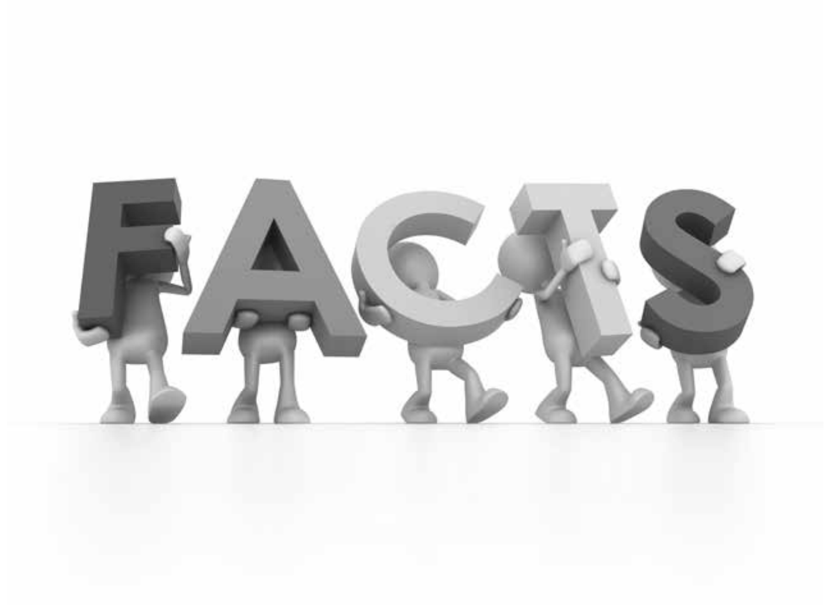
'So, your colleagues' reliance on your experience and knowledge is having a negative impact on your ability to complete your own work, is that correct?'

By paraphrasing, the mentor is also helping the mentee to clarify the real issue in their mind.

Did you know?

According to Professor Albert Mehrabian, when you interact with someone:

- talking accounts for 7% of the person's message
- tone of voice accounts for 38% of a person's message
- facial expression accounts for 55% of the person's message



Types of questions used in the mentoring process

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 15.

Questions are an integral part of the mentoring process; they help the mentor and mentee get to know each other and help to clearly identify goals and objectives and set out the mentoring agreement.

Mentors can ask questions that are open, closed or hypothetical, and in most cases will use all three types during the relationship to help the mentee to think about their goals at different levels.

1. Closed questions

Closed questions can be answered with either a single word or a short phrase. They are used to get quick facts and are used by the mentor to gather specific information. Closed questions are often followed up with an open question (see below). Closed questions may start with: 'would you', 'are you' or 'is that'.

For example: 'Are you enjoying the mentoring process?' or 'Would you like to change anything about the process?'

Closed questions are a good way of starting a conversation because they help the mentee to get warmed up without feeling overwhelmed.

2. Open questions

Open questions are designed to get the mentee to give a long answer that requires some thought. Open questions might be asked after a closed question to get the mentee to provide more information or think more deeply about something. They may start with: 'describe', 'how', 'what' or 'why'.

For example: 'What are you hoping to achieve from these sessions?' or 'Why did you sign up for the mentoring programme?'

Answers to open questions require mentees to:

- take control of the conversation
- reflect
- give their opinions
- give their feelings

3. Hypothetical questions

Hypothetical questions are based on imaginary, 'what if' situations and encourage the mentee to explore situations that may occur if they follow a specific path or course of action. They allow the mentee to think about possibilities.

For example: 'If time wasn't an issue, how would you solve this problem?'

4. Challenging questions

In the course of the mentoring relationship, it can be helpful to try and get the mentee to see and explore different points of view. This can be done by asking challenging questions which push the mentee to think more deeply about an answer they have given.

For example: 'What led you to that conclusion?' or 'Can you tell me why you said that?'

Providing feedback

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 16.

Giving feedback is an important aspect of a mentor's job; it is how the mentee receives information and finds out how they are doing in the process. Not all feedback is positive, so the mentor must understand how to give feedback in a way that is constructive, i.e. it doesn't feel like a personal attack to the mentee.

Informal feedback

Informal feedback is provided throughout the mentoring process and allows the mentee to have a real-time view of their performance. Informal feedback should be given regularly and should focus on how the mentee can reach their goals more efficiently. As part of the feedback, the mentor should help the mentee to identify specific tasks they need to complete.

Formal feedback

Formal feedback is given to mentees as part of a planned process. Feedback sessions are often included as part of the mentoring agreement, so the mentor and mentee both know when they will happen. In this situation, feedback will be recorded, and specific tasks will be identified and a new timeline assigned.

Feedback models

Models have been designed to deliver feedback in a productive, useful way. For example:

- The IDEA model: Identify (a specific thing that you want changed), Describe (how to change the thing), Encourage (the mentee to make the change), Action (put targets and steps in place to make the change).
- The CEDAR model: Context (check the mentee understands the value of feedback), Examples (the mentee identifies examples of what didn't go well), Diagnosis (the mentee explores for him/herself what happened), Action (what the mentee can do to prevent the same thing happening again), Review (the mentor checks if the mentee understands the feedback and actions).

Constructive feedback

Constructive feedback is the best way of giving feedback to someone because it focuses on an issue, uses specific information – i.e. doesn't use personal observations, which can seem judgemental and critical – and uses observations, so you are saying "I saw…" rather than "I think…".

When giving constructive criticism, the mentor should:

- Do it in person – e.g. face-to-face or over the phone. Never send feedback via email, because it is difficult to understand tone in an email, which can lead to misunderstandings and cause upset.
- Be sincere – e.g. mean what you say, and say it with respect.
- Show appreciation – e.g. say something positive and use an example to back it up. For example, "Dan, you managed your time really well when that extra project came in at the last minute. You took over some of Angela's responsibilities so she could help the IT department, which was great teamwork."
- Talk about observations, not personal interpretations – e.g. an observation is what you see; a personal interpretation is what you think happened.

Section 3: Understand the skills and tools required by a mentor

The mentor can follow these steps to give constructive feedback:

- Identify the issue the feedback is about straight away and provide specific information – e.g. use language such as “I’ve noticed” or “I’ve seen”.
- Use open body language – e.g. if sitting down, uncross your legs and arms. Place your hands in your lap. If standing, face the person and don’t cross your arms. Make sure your facial expression is neutral and make eye contact.
- Give feedback often – for both positive and negative events.
- Give the mentee a chance to respond and talk about the feedback and any issues or concerns they have.
- Give suggestions – e.g. practical ways of improving a situation or of maintaining good performance. Give targets and timelines for any changes or improvements.
- Rreview the points you’ve discussed, including the mentee’s response.
- State your support – e.g. state that you are confident in the mentee’s ability; this allows you to end on a positive note.

The goal of giving feedback and constructive criticism is to improve behaviour or actions without using blame or personal attacks. To do this, the mentor should:

- Use appropriate language – e.g. language that is acceptable to the person receiving the feedback.
- Not use hostile language – e.g. “You didn’t do so and so”.
- Put themselves in the shoes of the person receiving the feedback – e.g. how would they feel receiving the feedback you need to give? How could they approach it differently to lessen the negative impact?
- Use the sandwich method – e.g. begin with a positive, strength or something the individual did that the mentor likes; describe the thing that needs to be changed or improved (remember to use appropriate language); restate the positive you started with and talk about the positives that can come if the appropriate changes are made.

Facilitating mentees' access to the resources required for their development

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 17, 18 and 19.

The mentoring process encourages mentees to think for themselves and find solutions to their own problems. Part of the support provided by the mentor is to make sure that the mentee has access to everything they need for their development, including information, people and resources.

By facilitating a mentee's access to information, people and resources, the mentor is giving the mentee the best opportunity to succeed.

Reflection during the mentoring process

When you reflect on something, you consider it deeply. Reflection is an important aspect of the mentoring relationship for both the mentor and mentee because it allows them to take stock of the process.

Reflection allows the mentor and mentee to think about the process as a whole; how it is going, what's going well and what could be going better. They can also consider whether they are on the right track or if something needs to be changed.

Additionally, reflection can help the mentor and mentee come up with new questions about, or insights into, their situation, which can make the process more meaningful and successful. It provides an opportunity to achieve clarity and learn more about themselves as well as each other.

A mentor may choose to ask their mentee to reflect on each goal they meet. For example:

'Now that you've achieved one of your goals, I'd like you to spend some time thinking about how you feel the process went. What do you think went well and what could have gone better? Did anything happen that was out of your control? If so, do you feel that your reaction to it was appropriate? What questions do you still have? How do you feel about your performance? What have you learned that you can apply to achieving your next goal?'

After mentoring: how to help individuals take responsibility for their own development

Once the mentoring process has come to an end, the mentor should try and make sure that the mentee will take responsibility for their own development in the future. They can do this by helping the mentee throughout the process to develop the skills they need for their development and also by providing them with access to the necessary resources, such as professional contacts.

For example:

'You now have a really clear idea of what you would like to achieve. It's up to you to find the right support to help you meet your goals. For instance, you have the contact details of the company's training coordinator; you can ask them to help you find an appropriate professional development course, or you can find one yourself and ask them if it is suitable and if the company will fund it. It's important that you keep on top of industry news so that you can make sure your skills are up to date. If you have any issues or feel that you aren't progressing as fast as you would like, you must seek out your manager for support.'

Knowledge Activity 3: Think of a time when you have received poor service, perhaps at a shop or in a restaurant. Write down how you would have delivered your feedback about your experience in a positive way.

Summary

In this workbook, you have learned about:

- the purpose and benefits of mentoring
- how a mentoring agreement works
- the skills and tools required by a mentor

Section 4: Extension activity

Extension Activity: Think of an area you would like to be mentored in and describe it in the space below. Include any goals you can think of that you would like to achieve. Then think of someone you either work with or know of in your industry who you would like to mentor you, and explain what skills and experience they have that would enable them to help you to achieve your goals.

Well done!

You have now completed Workbook 12 and should attempt the assessments. If you require any help or guidance, please contact your Assessor/Tutor.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained within this learning material is accurate and reflects current best practice. All information provided should be used as guidance only, and adapted to reflect local practices and individual working environment protocols.

All legislation is correct at the time of printing, but is liable to change (please ensure when referencing legislation that you are working from the most recent edition/amendment).

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LCG-PTL March 2019
Version 1 (603/3883/0)

NCFE Level 2

Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

CUSTOMER SERVICE

MOTIVATION

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

LEADERSHIP ROLES

SUPPORT

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Workbook 13

Understand personal development

How to use your learning materials

This course is delivered on a flexible learning basis. This means that most of your study will take place away from your Assessor/Tutor. It helps to carefully plan your studying so that you get the most out of your course. We have put together some handy tips for you below.

Study Guidance

- Try to plan an outline timetable of when and where you will study.
- Try to complete your work in a quiet environment where you are unlikely to be distracted.
- Set realistic goals and deadlines for the various elements of your course.
- Plan what you are going to study during each session, and try and achieve this each time.
- After each session, reflect on what you have achieved and plan what you hope to complete next time.
- Remember that not only do you have the support of your Assessor/Tutor, but it is likely that your family, friends and work colleagues will also be willing to help.

Assessor/Tutor Support

- Your Assessor/Tutor will be available to support and guide you through the programme. They are experts in your area of study and are experienced in helping many different types of learners.
- They can help you to improve the standard of work you submit and will give you useful feedback on areas in which you have excelled, as well as where you can improve.
- Remember to listen to, or read, their feedback carefully. Ask if you are unsure about any of the feedback you receive, as your Assessor/Tutor is there to help.
- Make note of any tips they give. Refer to the learning materials, as they contain the information you need to complete the end-of-unit assessments.
- Look out for areas in which you can improve, and set yourself an action plan to make sure you complete the required work.
- Take positive feedback on board; this demonstrates you are doing things right and have a good understanding of the subject area.
- Use the feedback to avoid repeating any mistakes you may have made.

Enjoy your studies!

NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

Workbook 13
Understand personal development

Workbook Contents

Successfully leading a team requires certain skills, including the ability to communicate and listen. In this workbook, you will explore these skills and how they apply to the team leader role. You will also learn how to create a personal development plan.

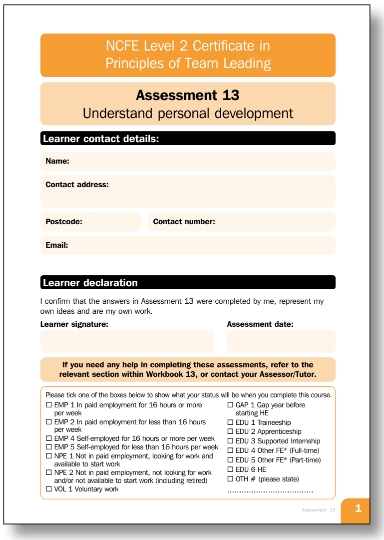
Contents

This workbook contains three sections:

Each section has a corresponding assessment that must be completed in order to achieve this part of the programme.

The assessments for this workbook can be found in:

Assessment 13


NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading

Assessment 13
Understand personal development

Learner contact details:

Name:

Contact address:

Postcode: **Contact number:**

Email:

Learner declaration

I confirm that the answers in Assessment 13 were completed by me, represent my own ideas and are my own work.

Learner signature: **Assessment date:**

If you need any help in completing these assessments, refer to the relevant section within Workbook 13, or contact your Assessor/Tutor.

Please tick one of the boxes below to show what your status will be when you complete this course.

☐ EMP 1 In paid employment for 16 hours or more per week
☐ EMP 2 In paid employment for less than 16 hours per week
☐ EMP 4 Self-employed for 16 hours or more per week
☐ EMP 5 Self-employed for less than 16 hours per week
☐ NPE 1 Not in paid employment, looking for work and available to start work
☐ NPE 2 Not in paid employment, not looking for work and/or not available to start work (including retired)
☐ VOL 1 Voluntary work
☐ GAP 1 Gap year before starting HE
☐ EDU 1 Traineeship
☐ EDU 2 Apprenticeship
☐ EDU 3 Supported Internship
☐ EDU 4 Other FE* (Full-time)
☐ EDU 5 Other FE* (Part-time)
☐ EDU 6 HE
☐ OTH # (please state) ....

Assessment 13 1

When you have completed this workbook, you should attempt the assessment. Your Assessor/Tutor will then give you detailed written feedback on your progress.

Remember that your assessment answers should be written in your own words. You should not copy answers directly from the workbooks.

Upon successful completion of this qualification, learners will be awarded the NCFE Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Team Leading (QRN: 603/3883/0). This qualification is certificated by the Awarding Organisation, NCFE.

Section 1: Understand the role of a team leader

Team leaders play an important role in an organisation's success. In this section, you will learn what a team leader does, the skills and knowledge they need and the difference between authority and accountability.

What is a team leader?

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 1 and 2.

Being part of a team is an important aspect of many professional roles, and teams are usually made up of people who have different skills, knowledge and experience, all of which are necessary to successfully complete work tasks.

A team leader is the person responsible for providing the team with support and guidance to enable them to work effectively. The team leader's role involves:

- Providing team members with clear goals and objectives: this enables each individual to know exactly what they have to do and what's expected of them.
- Motivating staff: this can be done in a range of ways, such as setting achievable targets, providing constructive criticism and celebrating successes.
- Providing direction: i.e. making sure team members know what they are working towards and how they are going to get there.
- Achieving goals: a team's success is measured by whether or not they achieve targets or goals set for them. It is the team leader's responsibility to ensure the team achieves their goals – this includes providing regular updates on how the team is progressing.
- Providing guidance and support: a team leader will have to deal with personal and professional issues and will provide support for both. They will be good listeners and good communicators.

A team leader's knowledge and skills

Team leaders have to be good listeners and excellent communicators and be able to develop strong, respectful relationships with team members. They also have to understand that each team member is unique and has their own strengths and areas in which they will need support and guidance. Being well organised is also an important skill for a team leader because they will be supporting multiple people and working towards multiple goals at once. To be an effective leader, they have to know what's happening in the team at all times.

In addition to these skills and knowledge, team leaders should also have strong technical knowledge of the product or service their team works on. This will help them to give appropriate support when it's needed.

Authority and accountability

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 3.

Authority refers to the power that comes with a certain job to make decisions, create and enforce rules and ensure team members are complying with company policies and procedures. A team leader usually has authority over the rest of the team. Authority is a long-term responsibility.

Accountability means taking responsibility for completing a certain task that is assigned by the person with authority. Accountability lasts for as long as a task or project lasts.

Knowledge Activity 1: What do you think makes a good manager? What kind of manager would you be happiest working for?

Section 2: Understand how to produce a personal development plan

Personal development plans can help you to focus on what you want to achieve and are used to map out how to succeed. In this section, you will look at how to identify your existing skills and any gaps in your knowledge or skills. You will also learn about producing a personal development plan and reviewing progress against objectives.

Using a skills audit to identify areas for development

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 4 and 5.

A skills audit is the first step in creating a personal development plan. It helps you to identify any gaps in knowledge or skills required for the desired role or goal. You can then move on to explore what actions you can take to reach your goal.

Step 1

Setting a goal – to start the process of self-development, you must have a goal in mind; for example, to become a social worker, or to take part in a triathlon. If you aren't sure what you would like to do, you can ask yourself questions, such as:

- Where do I want to go?
- What am I interested in?
- Where do I see myself in five years?
- What do I need to learn to get to where I want to be?

You could also do a personal SWOT analysis, in which you will look at your:

- Strengths – i.e. areas in which you are especially skilled
- Weaknesses – i.e. areas where you feel others can perform better than you can
- Opportunities – i.e. things you can use to help you to achieve your goal
- Threats – i.e. things that might stop you from achieving your goal

These techniques should help you to get a clear idea of where you want to be, why and by when, which brings you to step 2.

Section 2: Understand how to produce a personal development plan

Step 2

Creating a plan – now that you have decided on a goal, you need a plan to achieve it. This stage is vital to the success of your self-development because it helps you to identify exactly what you need to do to achieve your goal.

For example, if your goal is to become a social worker, you will need to know what skills/qualifications are required. You will then need to list the skills/qualifications you already have and the ones you don't. Next to the ones you don't have, you can list the training or qualifications available, how long they take, and what they cost. You can then decide which are realistic.

Your plan may include a number of smaller aims you would like to achieve to get you to your final, large goal. The key here is not to feel overwhelmed. Instead, you should prioritise each one, which means choosing which is the most important and aiming to work on that one first.

To prioritise your goals, you can ask yourself:

- How essential is it to achieve this goal now?
- How long will this goal take?
- Do I have the skills needed to achieve this goal now?

Step 3

Put the plan into action and demonstrate progress – choose one goal and focus on it. Decide how you will measure progress in your selected area. For example, you could:

- keep a log that tracks your progress
- make a list where you can cross goals off as you achieve them
- set out a plan for dealing with lack of progress, such as reviewing goals to see if they are too large or ambitious

Section 2: Understand how to produce a personal development plan

Look at the following scenario, which shows an individual taking steps to contribute to their own self-development.

Frieda

Goal: to become a social worker

Research:

- requires an approved degree in social work (3 years full time or 2 years master's degree – fast-track route available)
- background checks
- IT skills
- report writing skills
- excellent communication skills
- ability to remain calm in stressful situations
- ability to build working relationships with families, groups and professionals

SWOT analysis:

Strengths – already have a bachelor's degree (2:1), so could apply for a fast-track training programme; already passed DBS checks for part-time job; already good at building relationships with other people.

Weaknesses – have limited experience in stressful situations.

Opportunities – part-time job at a care home has offered some training; may be able to offer some work experience working at a children's care home they also run.

Threats – have dyslexia (might that affect my ability to write reports?); IT skills aren't as good as they could be.

Personal development plan:

- apply for a fast-track training course
- use current employment to seek out some work experience in a more challenging work environment to build experience of stressful situations
- sign up for IT skills course to brush up on skills
- explore dyslexia support services
- find a course that provides skills to deal with stressful situations

How will progress be demonstrated?

- review progress in six months
- acceptance onto a training course
- completing 20 hours of work experience
- passing IT skills building tests
- receiving dyslexia support
- completing a course on dealing with stressful situations

If progress isn't made?

- review goals and reassess how realistic they are
- potentially change timeframe

Identifying your learning style(s)

Please read the following as it will help you to answer questions 6 and 7.

We all have our own learning style which affects how we learn and process information. Understanding your preferred learning style can be helpful, but it shouldn't dominate your approach to learning. Two of the best-known learning styles, Honey and Mumford and Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic are explored below.

To recap, there are two well-known theories about learning styles:

Honey and Mumford's learning styles

Honey and Mumford (1992) believed that there are four learning styles and that everyone leans towards one style, although they can fall into more than one category. These learning styles include:

- Activist: activists are keen to give everything a go; they are open-minded and flexible and not scared of making a mistake. They are excited at the prospect of doing something new.
- Reflector: reflectors are the opposite to activists: they are careful and methodical and won't make quick decisions. Reflectors are often good at listening and providing insight.
- Theorist: theorists are logical and rational and are able to see themselves objectively, i.e. without emotion. They are able to ask good, thoughtful questions.
- Pragmatist: pragmatists are practical, down to earth and like to plan things. They like to figure out how things work and apply things they learn to their job.

Visual-Auditory-Kinesthetic (VAK) learning styles

According to psychologists in the 1920s, people learn in one of three ways: visual, auditory or kinesthetic (although it is believed that most people use a mix of these styles):

- Visual: visual learners learn better when information is presented in images, charts, diagrams and pictures.
- Auditory: auditory learners learn better when they listen to information, e.g. during a lecture. Being involved in group discussions can also help.
- Kinesthetic: this type of learner prefers learning by physical experiencing, or touching a prop associated with the subject they are learning about.

You might not be aware of the learning style, or styles, you rely on, but it is useful to have some insight as it can help you to understand why some information is easy to remember and other information is not.

The best way to identify your learning style is to complete a styles questionnaire. The Index of Learning Styles Questionnaire, developed by Richard Felder and Barbara Soloman, is a set of questions that helps to work out your learning style(s). A range of tools exist that will help you to identify your learning style(s). For example, you could visit: **https://www.hfe.co.uk/learning-styles-questionnaire/**

Identifying opportunities and resources to support your development

Once you understand your preferential learning style, you can choose resources that best support your own development. For example, if you are a visual learner, you could seek out videos or diagrams that can support the learning materials. Auditory learners may prefer to find lectures, listen to podcasts or be involved in discussions, whereas people who learn by doing may seek out opportunities for work experience or hands-on workshops where they can try out new skills.

If you know that you are a reflector, i.e. that you like to take things slowly and complete them in a logical order, then you may look for a well-structured course that allows you to work at your own pace.

Personal development plans

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 8.

A personal development plan is a way to document the process of reflecting on what you would like to achieve, appraising your strengths and weaknesses (e.g. using a SWOT analysis) and deciding on steps you will take to achieve your goal.

A personal development plan will include the following key elements:

- your goal, i.e. what you want to achieve
- skills/qualities you need to develop
- development opportunities research
- an action plan that details what you will do to reach your goal(s)
- recording outcomes, i.e. what you achieved
- review and evaluation of the process/success

Plan your own personal development

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 9.

The first step in self-development is choosing something you want to achieve, change or improve. Once you have done this, you can create a personal development plan.

STEP 1 – Perform a personal analysis

Look at your strengths, weaknesses (and areas for development), opportunities and threats. An example has been created to help you see the types of things you can include in a personal analysis.

Example

Asheena is 26 years old. She graduated from university with a degree in social care and aims to become a manager in the child and family services department of a local council. She currently works as a social worker at a home for children with emotional and social difficulties.

Asheena's manager is supportive of her goal to become a manager, although he has been unable to provide Asheena with much time to study for the extra qualifications she needs to progress into the management programme.

Asheena works on her personal development plan, starting with a personal analysis.

Personal analysis – Asheena

Strengths	Weaknesses – areas for development	Opportunities	Threats
• degree in social work • excellent work-based assessments • proven ability to handle complex workloads • up-to-date computer-based skills	• not much experience managing others • no leadership training	• show my manager why he should provide me with time to complete management/ leadership training, i.e. value I will add to department • demonstrate to my manager that, due to work experience, I am able to solve problems analytically, which helps me to find good solutions	• lack of confidence in my ability to guide others – need more hands-on experience • need to work on changing mindset from doing tasks to assigning and overseeing them

STEP 2 – Set goals – Create a personal development plan

By this stage of the process, you already know a) what you want to achieve, b) what skills you have that you can use to achieve your goal and c) what skills you need to acquire. Next, you can decide:

- what you want to learn/be able to do
- what you have to do to achieve your learning/self-development goal
- what, if any, resources and support you may need
- how you will measure the success of your plan
- how/when you will review your progress towards achieving your goals

These decisions will form the basis of your development plan. Look at the next step in Asheena's process to see how she approached setting goals.

Setting goals – Asheena

What do I want to learn/ be able to do?	What do I have to do to achieve my goal? Targets	What resources and support will I need? Activities	How will I measure the success of my plan? Timeline	How/when will I review my progress?
Get experience in managing others	1. Complete a management qualification 2. Get more responsibility at work managing colleagues	1. Management course/support from manager to take time to complete course 2. Manager to assign new responsibilities to help me gain experience	1. Completing management course within one year 2. Having the opportunity to manage others on three different occasions in the next six months	I will review the progress I have made in my course in six months and again in one year. I will use assignment dates to see if I am keeping up with the workload. I will review any opportunities I have had to manage others during the monthly one-to-one meetings and annual appraisal I have with my manager
Set aside a specific amount of time each week to work on my goals	1. Look at my personal schedule and work out when I can take time to work on my goals 2. Talk to my manager and work on incorporating professional development time into my work week	I will need support from my family at home and from my manager at work	Being able to set aside five hours per week of my personal time and two hours per week of time at work	I will review my progress in a month to see if I have managed to set up personal and professional timetables. Subsequently, on a monthly basis I will perform a review of how well the timetable is working. If the goals are unrealistic and I am missing targets, I will make changes accordingly

STEP 3 – Reviewing progress

Setting goals is an important step in the self-development process, but you also have to consistently look at your progress to:

- see if the goals you have set are realistic and achievable
- monitor how well you are doing

In Asheena's example, for both of her goals she has written down when she will review her progress and how. For each goal, she has set more than one review date and stated what type of review she will do, for example:

- monthly one-to-one reviews and annual appraisal with her manager
- six-monthly and annual review of progress with the management qualification
- monthly review of the goal timetable

It is important not to underestimate the importance of the review stage, as it is the best way to assess how well you are progressing with your goals.

The importance of seeking and responding positively to feedback

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 10.

Receiving feedback is an important element of personal development because it:

- helps you to understand where you have succeeded
- helps you to understand areas that have not been as successful
- allows you to identify areas that need more work
- helps you to make changes or updates to your personal development plan

Constructive feedback, whether positive or negative, is designed to help you improve and succeed, so while it may be difficult to hear, it is important that you respond well to it and accept it for the value it can add to your professional life.

Below is an example of constructive feedback.

'Shona, I can see that you've been very diligent in completing your assigned tasks. Your work is of a high standard and you always meet deadlines, which is incredibly important to the success of the whole team. In the next part of the project, I'm hoping you could work on recognising tasks that are outside those assigned to you and using your initiative to get involved. For example, if a colleague seems to be struggling, you could offer to give them some support.'

Reviewing progress against objectives in a personal development plan

Please read the following as it will help you to answer question 11.

You should set a timescale in which you will complete all of the goals in your self-development plan. Once you reach the date you have set, you should then spend time reviewing your plan. By performing a review, you will:

- be able to identify what went well
- be able to identify what did not go well, or the way you thought it would
- be able to assess what you would do in future – what you have learned, and what changes you would make that would help you to achieve your goals

When Asheena reviewed her action plan, she identified the following successes and failures:

Successes

1. I managed to negotiate two hours per week of self-development time at work.
2. I was accepted onto a year-long management diploma course, and my employer agreed to pay for half of it.
3. I was given six hours per week as a manager.

Things to work on

1. Despite negotiating time at work to do my self-development, in reality it was very difficult to take the time. Because I work in a busy environment, there was nowhere for me to work uninterrupted.
2. A month after I set out my plan, there was a new arrival at the children's home, and they required a lot of extra attention and support from me. This meant I worked longer days, which cut into my self-development time at home.

Reflecting on key experiences or incidents

An important part of reviewing your plan is looking at the most memorable experiences you had while working towards your goals. These can be successes and failures; both are important to your future self-development plans.

If we look at Asheena again, this is what she had to say about the key experiences of her plan a year after she started it.

"When I wrote my plan, I was quite naïve about how much I thought I could work on my goals in the real world. I thought if it was written down it would be easy to follow, but I didn't allow for an increased workload or for aspects of my personal life that also take up my time, such as my children or caring for my poorly grandmother. Trying to stick to my plan was actually quite stressful, and I know now that I should have built in contingency time as a cushion. I think that would have helped me to feel less like I was failing and would have reduced the stress I felt.

The plan did really help me to focus on what I wanted to achieve though, and being able to tick off certain elements was a great source of motivation. When I was accepted onto my course, I put a huge red tick over that box."

Suggesting improvements

Reviewing your development plan will help you to identify what you would improve on or change if you were to create another one in the future. For example:

- would you give yourself smaller, more achievable goals?
- would you allow more time to complete them?
- would you change the way you reviewed your progress?

Asheena would make the following improvements to her action plan:

- I would do more research on how much time each of my goals would require before I included them in the plan.
- Then I would set a more reasonable timetable that takes into account other factors in my life.

Section 2: Understand how to produce a personal development plan

Knowledge Activity 2: Go to https://www.webtools.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ and take the questionnaire to identify your preferred learning style(s).

Knowledge Activity 3: Think about a goal you have for the future to continue your self-development. Describe what you think you would need to do to achieve that goal.

Summary

In this workbook, you have learned about:

- the role of a team leader
- how to produce a personal development plan

Section 3: Extension activity

Extension Activity: Think about a goal you have for the future to continue your self-development. Describe what you think you would need to do to achieve that goal.

Well done!

You have now completed Workbook 13 and should attempt the assessment. If you require any help or guidance, please contact your Assessor/Tutor.

Please use this page for additional notes

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EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

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