



**BSBWOR501**  
**Manage personal work priorities and  
professional development**

**LEARNER RESOURCE**



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# COURSE INTRODUCTION

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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

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This resource covers the unit BSBWOR501 - Manage personal work priorities and professional development.

This unit describes the skills and knowledge required to create systems and process to organise information and prioritise tasks.

It applies to individuals working in managerial positions who have excellent organisational skills. The work ethic of individuals in this role has a significant impact on the work culture and patterns of behaviour of others as managers at this level are role models in their work environment.

No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication.

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## ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

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This resource brings together information to develop your knowledge about this unit. The information is designed to reflect the requirements of the unit and uses headings to makes it easier to follow.

Read through this resource to develop your knowledge in preparation for your assessment. You will be required to complete the assessment tools that are included in your program. At the back of the resource are a list of references you may find useful to review.

As a student it is important to extend your learning and to search out text books, internet sites, talk to people at work and read newspaper articles and journals which can provide additional learning material.

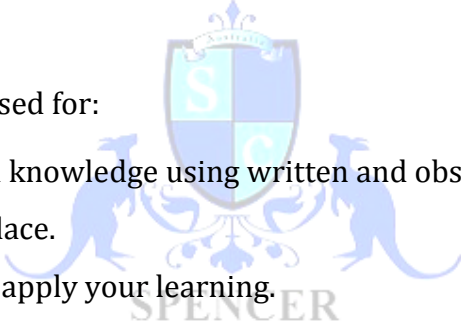
Your trainer may include additional information and provide activities. Slide presentations and assessments in class to support your learning.

## ABOUT ASSESSMENT

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Throughout your training we are committed to your learning by providing a training and assessment framework that ensures the knowledge gained through training is translated into practical on the job improvements.

You are going to be assessed for:

- 
- Your skills and knowledge using written and observation activities that apply to your workplace.
  - Your ability to apply your learning.
  - Your ability to recognise common principles and actively use these on the job.

You will receive an overall result of Competent or Not Yet Competent for the assessment of this unit. The assessment is a competency based assessment, which has no pass or fail. You are either competent or not yet competent. Not Yet Competent means that you still are in the process of understanding and acquiring the skills and knowledge required to be marked competent. The assessment process is made up of a number of assessment methods. You are required to achieve a satisfactory result in each of these to be deemed competent overall.

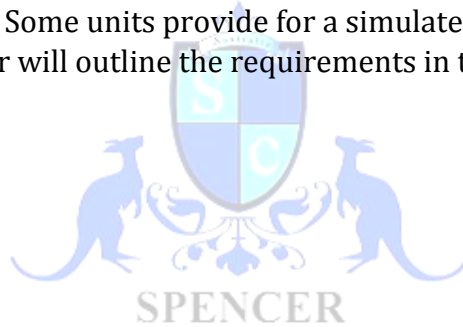
All of your assessment and training is provided as a positive learning tool. Your assessor will guide your learning and provide feedback on your responses to the assessment. For valid and reliable assessment of this unit, a range of assessment methods will be used to assess practical skills and knowledge.

Your assessment may be conducted through a combination of the following methods:

- Written Activity
- Case Study
- Observation
- Questions
- Third Party Report

The assessment tool for this unit should be completed within the specified time period following the delivery of the unit. If you feel you are not yet ready for assessment, discuss this with your trainer and assessor.

To be successful in this unit you will need to relate your learning to your workplace. You may be required to demonstrate your skills and be observed by your assessor in your workplace environment. Some units provide for a simulated work environment and your trainer and assessor will outline the requirements in these instances.



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# ELEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

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1. Establish personal work goals	1.1 Serve as a positive role model in the workplace through personal work planning
	1.2 Ensure personal work goals, plans and activities reflect the organisation's plans, and own responsibilities and accountabilities
	1.3 Measure and maintain personal performance in varying work conditions, work contexts and when contingencies occur
2. Set and meet own work priorities	2.1 Take initiative to prioritise and facilitate competing demands to achieve personal, team and organisational goals and objectives
	2.2 Use technology efficiently and effectively to manage work priorities and commitments
	2.3 Maintain appropriate work-life balance, and ensure stress is effectively managed and health is attended to
3. Develop and maintain professional competence	3.1 Assess personal knowledge and skills against competency standards to determine development needs, priorities and plans
	3.2 Seek feedback from employees, clients and colleagues and use this feedback to identify and develop ways to improve competence
	3.3 Identify, evaluate, select and use development opportunities suitable to personal learning style/s to develop competence
	3.4 Participate in networks to enhance personal knowledge, skills and work relationships
	3.5 Identify and develop new skills to achieve and maintain a competitive edge



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# EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

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This describes the essential requirements and their level required for this unit.

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## KNOWLEDGE EVIDENCE

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To complete the unit requirements safely and effectively, the individual must:

- Explain principles and techniques involved in the management and organisation of:
  - performance measurement
  - personal behaviour, self-awareness and personality traits identification
  - a personal development plan
  - personal goal setting
  - time
- Discuss management development opportunities and options for self
- Describe methods for achieving a healthy work-life balance
- Outline organisation's policies, plans and procedures
- Explain types of learning style/s and how they relate to the individual
- Describe types of work methods and practices that can improve personal performance.

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## PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE

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Evidence of the ability to:

- Use business technology to create and use systems and processes to organise and prioritise tasks and commitments
- Measure and maintain personal work performance including assessing competency against competency standards and seeking feedback
- Maintain an appropriate work-life balance to manage personal health and stress
- Participate in networks

- Develop a personal development plan which includes career objectives and an action plan
- Develop new skills.

Note: if a specific volume or frequency is not stated, then evidence must be provided at least once.



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## ASSESSMENT CONDITIONS

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Assessment must be conducted in a safe environment where evidence gathered demonstrates consistent performance of typical activities experienced in the industry capability - workplace effectiveness field of work and include access to:

- Workplace equipment and resources
- Case studies and, where possible, real situations
- Interaction with others

Assessors must satisfy NVR/AQTF assessor requirements.

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## PRE-REQUISITES

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This unit must be assessed after the following pre-requisite unit:

There are no pre-requisites for this unit.

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# TOPIC 1 – ESTABLISH PERSONAL WORK GOALS

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SERVE AS A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL IN THE WORKPLACE THROUGH PERSONAL WORK PLANNING AND ENSURE PERSONAL WORK GOALS, PLANS AND ACTIVITIES REFLECT THE ORGANISATION'S PLANS, AND OWN RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

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## ROLE-MODELLING BEHAVIOUR

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The strongest influence on employee behaviour is their direct team leader, and because of this influence the importance of modelling the correct work practices and behaviours expected at work, is paramount in effective leadership.

The leader who can gain the respect and admiration of their co-workers is often likely to gain commitment to projects with a high standard of outcomes on a consistent basis.

When influencing others, the role model does not expect team members to mirror every aspect of themselves, authenticity also comes from individuality. For example, when the focus is client centric, effective role modelling guides team members on how they personally could take time for the customer in various ways. Customer friendly role models can be observed showing empathy to the customer and taking personal responsibility to follow through with requests.

Some characteristics of positive role models may include:

- Professional experience and credibility
- Strong communication skills
- Pay attention to their acts
- Effective listening skills
- Ability to build rapport internally and externally
- Encourage teamwork and cooperation
- Commitment to growth and development of others

How to be a good role model:

- **Self-reflect.** Reflect on actions and the reactions that they produce. Leaders who understand why they do something in a particular way, will be able to guide others in similar situations.
- **Receive feedback.** Self-awareness and an open mind to improve oneself is an important trait in effective role modelling.
- **Confidence in self and role.** A favourable approach to tasks and problem solving will be mirrored by others.
- **Communicate.** Good communication means listening as well as speaking. An effective role model builds confidence in others. When people know what is expected of them they are able to add value with their contributions.
- **Show empathy.** People need to know that they are being heard and understood, that the challenges they face are supported and acknowledged by their manager.
- **Have a clear vision.** Setting clear expectations of short term and long term goals, models the expectations of the business to all employees.
- **Lead by example.** Good leadership role models are honest and practice what they preach.

All employees have a responsibility to act as a role model. Without behaving in the appropriate way, employees lose all credibility, and the team loses cohesion. Whatever you expect from other staff, you need to show by example that you can act in the same way. So how should you act as a role model?

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### FOLLOW COMPANY POLICIES

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Companies expect certain standards of behaviour and dress from their staff. If you don't follow good codes of conduct set out in the company policy or mission statement, then you will come across as hypocritical. You are subconsciously telling the staff that it is acceptable to follow your own standards and that the policy is to be ignored. Follow the procedures of the company regarding holidays, illness and health and safety. Don't put any staff in danger by your mistakes.

## BE PUNCTUAL

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All staff members are expected to arrive on time, so you need to be early. Be on hand before the rest of the workforce so that should any problems arise you are there to deal with them. Being punctual allows you to have plenty of time to be organised rather than rushing around chasing other people to help you.

## SHOW GOOD LEADERSHIP

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To be a manager means you must have self-discipline and leadership skills. If you can't lead then, you shouldn't be in charge. Good leadership means being communicative, diplomatic but at the same time courageous to say what you think. Being a leader means you won't constantly change your mind just to be Mr. or Mrs. Popular. You will gain more respect by sticking to your instincts, doing what you believe is right but not being so rigid that you can't revise your opinions.<sup>1</sup>

## BE TIDY AND ORGANISED

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Linked to good leadership is being tidy and organised. If you are a role model for others, then you need to show by example what good practice is. You are showing your employees that tidiness brings efficiency and again this shows by example that tidiness works to the person's advantage.

## BE ENTHUSIASTIC

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Have enthusiasm for the job. Learn as much about it as you can so you can impart your knowledge on others. Being positive and enthusiastic will lift people's spirits. Don't be afraid to share what you have learned and update your skills. An employee has a responsibility to make the company grow in a positive environment. You will not only motivate staff, but you will prove yourself as someone who works hard and brings the best out of others by:

- Following the company policy
- Being punctual
- Showing good leadership
- Being tidy
- Organised

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.antiessays.com/free-essays/What-Makes-A-Good-Role-Model-277006.html>

- Enthusiastic

You will be a positive role model for others.<sup>2</sup>

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## THE WORK PLANNING PROCESS

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The work planning process structure came from the research, discussion and review by means of a successive series of "Plan, Do, Study, Act" (PDSA) cycles. The structure is based on the concepts of manager as a mentor and the achievement of "mastery" levels by individual staff members. It emphasises the fact that staff clearly have a crucial understanding of the work that needs to be done, and how their individual or group effort contributes to the system. The process is structured so that it is adaptable to both individual and group work planning situations.<sup>3</sup>

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## WHAT IS WORK PLANNING?

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Work planning is an approach to accomplishing work in an organisation. It assumes that all staff members approach their work with a common and consistent desire to do their best. It is a written statement which outlines the work that needs to be performed by an individual staff member in order to successfully achieve the aims of the work group and the organisation.

Work planning assists with the coordination of work activities that encourages innovation and continuous improvement in the organisation.

In order to function effectively, it is essential for all staff in an organisation to clearly understand the organisation's overall strategic direction. This description, or "work plan," provides the basis for empowering staff members to participate in planning how their work is best accomplished.

A work plan is accomplished through a continuous series of Plan, Do, Check, Act cycles which involve information gathering as well as making and learning from mistakes.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.insidebusiness360.com/index.php/acting-as-a-role-model-to-employees-16323/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.umich.edu/~itdtq/2.6.work.plan.proc.html>

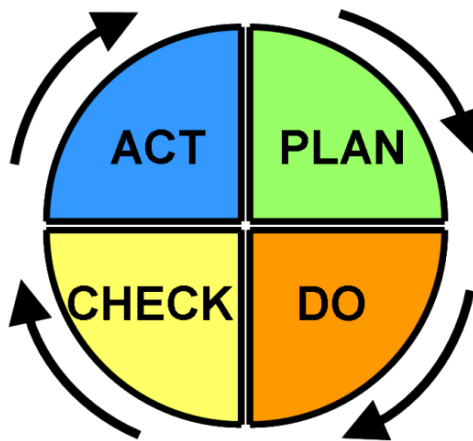
## PDCA

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The fundamental steps of effective continuous improvement processes come from W. Edward Deming's Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle. It is the basis of the problem all TQM solving and monitoring continuous improvement initiatives. The PDCA cycle commences with the identification of what needs to be changed.

From that point, the cycle involves:

- Planning the change
- Doing the change
- Checking the change
- Acting to refine the change



You should at all times ensure that you are planning your work adequately, ensuring you work through the PDCA cycle so that you know and understand what you need to do and you continuously improve your methods and actions in completing your work tasks.

Just as work planning is vital to the team achieving goals so too is it vital for you, as an individual to continuously improve.

## MEASURE AND MAINTAIN PERSONAL PERFORMANCE IN VARYING WORK CONDITIONS, WORK CONTEXTS AND WHEN CONTINGENCIES OCCUR

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Once an annual ritual, performance appraisal has become a continuous process by which an employee's understanding of a company's goals and his or her progress toward contributing to them are measured. Performance measurement is an ongoing activity for all managers and their subordinates.<sup>4</sup> But most of all you need to give your own work a self-appraisal to measure your performance.

Performance measurement uses the below indicators of performance, as well as assessments of those indicators. You can use the following methods to evaluate yourself as you work. This is to ensure that you are working to your highest possible standards.

- Quantity: The number of units produced, processed or sold is a good objective indicator of performance
- Quality: The quality of work performed can be measured by several means. The percentage of work output that must be redone or is rejected is one such indicator
- Timeliness: How fast work is performed
- Cost-Effectiveness: The cost of work performed should be used as a measure of performance only if the employee has some degree of control over costs
- Absenteeism/Tardiness: You are obviously not performing when you are not at work
- Creativity: It can be difficult to quantify creativity as a performance indicator, but in many white-collar jobs, it is vitally important
- Adherence to Policy: This may seem to be the opposite of creativity, but it is merely a boundary on creativity
- Gossip and Other Personal Habits: They may not seem performance-related, but some personal habits, like gossip, can detract from job performance and interfere with the performance of others
- Emergency management: under performing in an emergency or when contingencies are needed can be disastrous. Ensuring you manage in a crisis situation will be vital to your growth as a manager

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<sup>4</sup> <http://tompkinscountyny.gov/files/workforceny/16%20Ways%20to%20Measure%20Employee...>



- Personal Appearance/Grooming: Most people know how to dress for work, but in many organisations, there is at least one employee who needs to be told<sup>5</sup>

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## SELF-APPRAISAL

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You as an employee should appraise your own performance, in many cases comparing your self-appraisal to management's review. Often, self-appraisals can highlight discrepancies between what you and management think are important performance factors and provide mutual feedback for meaningful adjustment of expectations.



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## REVIEWING PERSONAL PROGRESS AND PERFORMANCE

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Closely allied to self-appraisal is the need to regularly review progress with the appropriate personnel. The intention here is to:

- Gain feedback
- Stay on track
- Receive encouragement
- Fine-tune skills already obtained
- Test the depth and levels of skills and knowledge
- Maintain motivation
- Access support
- Modify efforts that are not achieving the desired outcomes

The "appropriate personnel" will vary depending on the self-development being undertaken, but may include:

- Internal and external teachers and lecturers
- Management and/or store-owners
- Your life coach
- Other team members and store colleagues
- Your workplace mentor, coach or assessor
- Head office personnel

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.bayt.com/en/specialties/q/94689/how-quality-in-work-can-be-measured/>

Reviewing your work performance is a vital aspect of a management role otherwise, you may find employee's begin to follow your examples. If you are not continuously improving and gathering feedback and comment from others then your work group or employees will not.

Being a good role model is the best way to ensure everyone in the team consistently performs at their peak and the whole work team works together to achieve the goals of the organisation.



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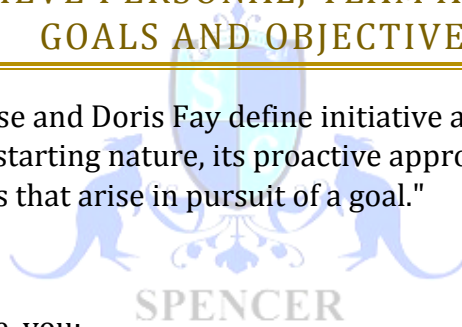
## TOPIC 2 - SET AND MEET OWN WORK PRIORITIES

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### TAKE INITIATIVE TO PRIORITISE AND FACILITATE COMPETING DEMANDS TO ACHIEVE PERSONAL, TEAM AND ORGANISATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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Researchers Michael Frese and Doris Fay define initiative as "work behaviour characterised by its self-starting nature, its proactive approach, and by being persistent in overcoming difficulties that arise in pursuit of a goal."



When you show initiative, you:

- Do things without being told
- You find out what you need to know
- You keep going when things get tough
- You spot and take advantage of opportunities that others pass by
- You act, instead of reacting, at work<sup>6</sup>

Most of us have seen initiative in action. Maybe you've seen a young manager who fills her boss's shoes when he's off work and the rest of the team is unsure what to do.

Organisations want employees who can think quickly and take responsibility for themselves. This type of initiative and courage is what pushes teams and organisations to overcome competition.

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### PRIORITISING DEMANDS

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Working efficiently is important for any business therefore, a well-structured, manageable workload is the key to good time management and will increase your productivity in the workplace.

In order to prioritise your workload you should look at each of the below points:

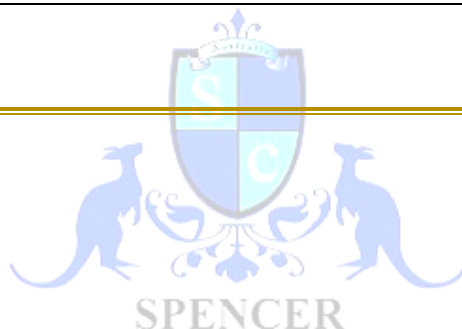
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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/initiative.htm>

- *The to-do list. Don't keep it on different post-it notes or in your head — at the beginning of each day or week, write on a sheet of paper what you want to get done and by when. Rank tasks according to importance or urgency to plan your day and focus your mind.*
- *Review your workload regularly. Is there one task that always ends up at the bottom of the pile? If you find you're avoiding it, can somebody else do it? Consider delegating whole projects that you don't need to be involved in or allocate a specific time when you only do your admin, for example.*
- *Remember the 80:20 rule of workloads. It's very simple — 80 per cent of our work contributes to less than 20 per cent of its value. Concentrate on the most crucial 20 per cent of your workload, because performance would still be strong.*
- *Set realistic deadlines for your tasks. Look at your to-do list and estimate the time each task needs to be completed but don't be overoptimistic. Be honest of what you can achieve in a working day or week so that you don't feel overwhelmed from the start.*
- *Allow time for interruptions. If you need to finish a certain task at a certain time, only deal with urgent queries during this time. You can then quickly pick up again where you left off.*
- *Structure your workload. Avoid picking up a job, doing a bit and then putting it back on the pile. Deal with them one at a time and finish each one before starting another. Your mind will be clear and ready for the next one.*
- *Don't let your inbox drive your workload. If you get 50 mails per day, this means 50 interruptions to your day. Don't check your inbox every time a message arrives. Switch off instant alerts if necessary and allocate a time when you will check your inbox.*
- *Fun, fun, fun. Ticking items off your to-do list is great, but are you concentrating on the quick-and-easy ones? Tackling more challenging projects first might mean more time, but also that a major task is completed and a weight off your shoulders.*
- *Keep multitasking to a minimum. Starting a number of jobs simultaneously means most of them won't get your undivided attention. Think of multitasking*

*as dealing with more than one task during a day, not at the same time. That way you focus on the project in hand.*

- *Keep a log of your workload. If you're unsure how long things take, how often your focus shifts or how many times you get interrupted, keep a log of your working week. This will help you plan your week in future.<sup>7</sup>*



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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.icaew.com/en/archive/library/subject-gateways/business-management/strategy-and-planning/small-business-update/10-ways-to-prioritise-your-workload#sthash.GYab0RTH.dpuf>

## USE TECHNOLOGY EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO MANAGE WORK PRIORITIES AND COMMITMENTS

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There are many work schedule templates available on the internet from personal To-do lists to Rostering software and Project Management programs which can be shared by all relevant staff members. In some cases, it can also be accessed by third parties such as contractors and vendors.

For your personal day to day organisation including work tasks a diary may be a required in your workplace. Other organisations expect you to use Microsoft Calendar to help you organise your work day and have a policy of sharing calendars in work groups to monitor staff movements and allow training time to be scheduled. Electronic Calendars that can be accessed by your colleagues will enable them to identify the gaps in your schedule in which they can organise meetings or discussions. Such devices can also record how you've spent your time, jog your memory, alert you to meetings and important tasks, and store useful information such as to-do lists and contact details. They can also be accessed on smartphones, tablets and laptops so that you can keep track of your daily meetings, tasks and future planning even when you are not near a stand-alone computer or in your office.

Project management tools are used to monitor various projects or tasks at regular intervals and there are a few that are commonly used in the workplace such as Gantt charts, Pert charts, Excel spreadsheets, MS Project (which can incorporate Gantt Charts), and written reports. In the case of reports your workplace will most likely have templates or you may be able to view one which has previously been used to determine the format to use for reporting and the depth of information you need to provide.

Summary of basic level technology to assist in managing work priorities:

- use Microsoft Calendar or other calendar software to help you organise your work day
- sharing calendars in work groups
- Gantt charts (in MS Excel for instance)
- Pert charts (in MS Excel for instance)
- Excel or similar spreadsheets
- MS Project or other Project Management applications

## MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ENSURE STRESS IS EFFECTIVELY MANAGED, AND HEALTH IS ATTENDED TO

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Work-life balance is adjusting your day-to-day activities to achieve a sense of balance between work life and personal life. Some benefits of a healthy work-life balance include:

- Reduced stress levels, at work and at home
- Greater focus and concentration
- Higher levels of job satisfaction
- The opportunity to participate more fully in family and social life
- More time to pursue personal goals and hobbies
- Improved health<sup>8</sup>

### HOW TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORK-LIFE BALANCE?

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Balancing the demands of a busy lifestyle is not an easy thing to do, but is best managed by regularly reviewing and assessing your priorities.

Below are a few ideas to help you strike a good work-life balance:

- Set goals around what you value highly
- Manage your time effectively
- Create a boundary between balancing work and personal time
- Build resilience and have a positive attitude
- Avoid stress, mental exhaustion and burnout
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Enlist a good support system
- Enjoy your work

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/mental-health/balance/lifestyle/index.html>

## WHAT IS STRESS?

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Everyone experiences stress at some stage in their life. It is a way for us to know that something in our life is causing us concern and is affecting how we are thinking and feeling.

Stress is not always bad. In small doses, it can help you perform under pressure and motivate you to do your best, but when you are constantly running in emergency mode, your mind and body pay the price.



## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

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- Mental
  - Trouble thinking clearly
  - Memory problems
  - Can't concentrate
  - Low attention span
  - Poor judgement
  - Anxious or racing thoughts
  - Constant worrying
- Emotional
  - Moodiness
  - Easily upset or hurt
  - Irritability or short temper
  - Agitation, unable to relax or keep still
  - Feeling overwhelmed
  - Sense of loneliness and isolation
  - Depression or general unhappiness
- Physical
  - Tightness in muscles
  - Aches and pains
  - Headaches, trembling, sweating
  - Nausea, dizziness
  - Chest pain, rapid heartbeat



- Loss of appetite
- Lack of sleep, dreams, nightmares
- Behavioural
  - Eating more or less
  - Sleeping too much or too little
  - Isolating yourself from others
  - Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
  - Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
  - Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing)

These signs and symptoms of stress can also be caused by other psychological and medical problems. If you experience any of these, it is important to see your doctor - as they can help you determine whether or not your symptoms are stress-related.

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## CAUSES OF STRESS

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The situations and pressures that cause stress are known as stressors. There are 2 types of stressors:

- External (where outside forces act on us)
- Internal (self-generated, we have some control over it)

External causes of stress:

- Major life changes
- Work
- Relationship difficulties
- Financial problems
- Being too busy
- Children and family

Internal causes of stress (self-generated):

- Inability to accept uncertainty
- Doubt

- Negative self-talk
- Unrealistic expectations
- Perfectionism
- Lack of assertiveness

## STAGES OF STRESS

*There are 4 stages of stress that you may go through:*

- *In the first stage, you may find yourself overworked and reluctant to take time off work to recharge and re-energise*
- *In the second stage, you may find yourself unduly tired, irritable and feeling like you are under achieving. You may also be skipping meals and generally not taking the best care of yourself or your relationships*
- *In the third stage, you may feel resentful or guilty, you do not get as much enjoyment out of spending time with family and friends, and you may not be enjoying work at all*
- *Finally, you may withdraw completely, succumb to illness, feel like you have failed in some way, and you may even break down both emotionally and physically*

*If you don't address the causes, stress can lead to mental health problems, including family and work problems, and the presence of physical illness or health concerns. In turn, these health problems can lead to medical complications; especially of concern is the possibility of suffering heart disease, which is a leading cause of death and disability in Australia.*

*If you work with a colleague who is displaying any of these symptoms, be willing to offer genuine support and concern. Try to listen to them without jumping in with a solution. Sometimes, the stressed individual needs to get concerns off their chest and once achieved, can often see the solutions firsthand. It is important to keep the person focusing on today, to live one day at a time and emphasise that a better day today will make tomorrow easier to handle. Take life in bite-sized chunks and keep the positives ahead of the negatives.<sup>9</sup>*

## LEARNING TO MANAGE STRESS

Managing stress is simply the act of efficient coping with the outcome being a balance between all aspects of your life. By managing this you will manage stress in a much more efficient manner.

Some strategies that can help you include:

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.watlfoundation.org.au/pdf/HealthWellbeing\\_Factsheet\\_Stress.aspx](http://www.watlfoundation.org.au/pdf/HealthWellbeing_Factsheet_Stress.aspx)  
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### Your body:

- Know the things that trigger stress in you
- Recognise early warning signs and act on them
- Practise relaxation techniques
- Eat a well-balanced, healthy diet
- Exercise for at least 30 minutes a day
- Get around 8 hours of sleep a night

### Your thinking:

- Don't concern yourself with things you can't control
- Deal with the things you can control
- Set small, achievable goals
- Apply problem-solving techniques in times of stress
- Choose to have a positive attitude
- Compete against yourself, not those around you
- Aim for your personal best

### Your behaviours:

- Plan your load to ensure you have enough time to get tasks done
- Use 'to do' lists and set priorities
- Be open and honest with people
- Seek support when you are feeling stressed
- Create a balanced lifestyle for yourself
- Allow time for recreation and relaxation
- Reward yourself when you reach your goals
- Limit your intake of alcohol, caffeine and other drugs<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/mental-health/balance/lifestyle/index.html>  
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## LEARNING HOW TO RELAX

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You can't completely eliminate stress from your life, but you can control how much it affects you. Relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, and deep breathing activate the body's relaxation response, a state of restfulness that is the opposite of the stress response. When practiced regularly, these activities lead to a reduction in your everyday stress levels and a boost in your feelings of joy and serenity. They also increase your ability to stay calm and collected under pressure.

Everybody has the power to reduce the impact of stress as it's happening in that moment. With practice, you can learn to spot stressors and stay in control when the pressure builds. Stress reduction techniques give you a powerful tool for staying clear-headed and in control in the middle of stressful situations. They give you the confidence to face challenges, knowing that you have the ability to rapidly bring yourself back into balance.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <http://sparshwellness.blogspot.com/>

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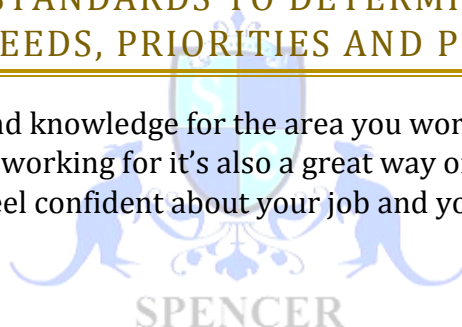
## TOPIC 3 - DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

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### ASSESS PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AGAINST COMPETENCY STANDARDS TO DETERMINE DEVELOPMENT NEEDS, PRIORITIES AND PLANS

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Developing your skills and knowledge for the area you work in is not only valuable to the organisation you are working for it's also a great way of improving your job satisfaction. When you feel confident about your job and your abilities you will enjoy your work a lot more.



Knowing your job well also means that you can make some decisions about where you want to be in the future. Once you've reached the highest level in your area, you might like to advance to a higher position or expand your skills and knowledge in a different direction. Listening to feedback at performance reviews helps you to discover your strengths and weaknesses and enables you to make those clear decisions. Concentrating on what you are good at and being able to enhance skills which are needed but not your strength means that increase your value to the company and make yourself more employable in other organisations as well.

It is one thing to think about improving your skills and knowledge, but to make these thoughts a reality means that you need to take responsibility for your own learning and personal skill development. This is not as hard as you might think. Many organisations offer training and professional development workshops which create opportunities for staff to develop and expand their skills. No matter what is offered to you or is available privately if you choose to study for your own interests or future career, it's up to you to take advantage of them so that you can achieve the career goals you set for yourself.

Your supervisor, manager or HR (Human Resources) department will have information available regarding traineeships, further study, professional development workshops, product information days, First Aid training, Fire Warden training and Union Representative training to name just a few of the opportunities to gain knowledge for you and allow you to contribute to your area and ultimately to the organisation's success.

You may have been assigned a 'buddy' or a 'coach' in your induction phase with the company to observe you working and provide feedback and facilitate problem-solving

to enhance your performance or correct any lack of knowledge. Coaching supports an employee as he/she learns new tasks either through on-the-job training or when introducing new procedures or technologies.

Once you are familiar with your role you may be able to access a mentor in the workplace to help you move forward in your career. Mentoring can be a formal or informal relationship between senior and junior employees for the purpose of supporting learning and development. The mentor provides ongoing support, advice, and career direction to an employee. A mentor holds a higher position and is usually outside the employee's chain of supervision. Mentoring is used to continue the development of talented and skilled staff members and often to groom or prepare individuals who show high potential for management or leadership responsibilities. They may also be available to assist you to retrain and prepare you for a new job or function.

An individual training plan may be drawn up at your performance review and in addition, you may be asked to take part in special projects or be co-opted to work in another area of the organisation to broaden your skills and allow a greater appreciation of your part in it. Special projects or assignments are often used to:

- Enhance an employee's knowledge or skills in a particular area
- Complete tasks or assignments when a mix of people with expertise in different areas is needed
- Prepare an employee for career advancement or develop specific knowledge or skills
- Broaden an employee's knowledge of other functions and departments in the organization
- Motivate and challenge an employee who has been on a job for a long time.
- Two of the most common types of special assignments are shadowing and rotational assignments
- A shadowing assignment is an assignment during which you observe another person in his/her daily routine for a period of time. These assignments give you a sense of the duties and responsibilities of the job and how the person handles the work and situations that arise
- A rotational assignment is a detail or transfer to another position or work unit to broaden your knowledge of different operations and working environments

Most importantly, taking advantage of any training and mentoring adds skills and experience to your resume, hopefully safeguarding your tenure with the organisation and assuring the advancement of your career.



## SEEK FEEDBACK FROM EMPLOYEES, CLIENTS AND COLLEAGUES AND USE THIS FEEDBACK TO IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP WAYS TO IMPROVE COMPETENCE

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Many people dread performance review meetings thinking that their boss is going to tell you what he really thinks of you, and we nearly always assume it's not going to be praise! Others see it as a thankless task that the HR department requires before they'll sign off on yearly raises. Or could it be an exercise in cutting and pasting comments from a bunch of old reviews to make some "new" ones.

How people perform is critical to an organisation's success, yet we often fail to monitor their progress on a regular basis. Imagine what would happen if you only occasionally looked at your bank balance, and just assumed that funds would be there when you needed them; or if you trusted that your machines would keep working, without any routine maintenance.

Seeking feedback from your colleagues and clients gives you a regular opportunity to find out how you can perform better individually, eliminate problems that you might not otherwise have been told about and further your own career goals by being able to improve your performance and exceed expectations of your supervisors.

Managers and supervisors conduct regular performance appraisals to ensure you are meeting your KPI's, and sometimes teams are appraised as well. Using the same approach you can invite constructive feedback from those around you as well as clients or customers to monitor yourself and your team. Conducting regular performance appraisals helps you:

- Detect and eliminate barriers to effective performance
- Pick up dissatisfactions that would otherwise lead people to leave
- Focus people's efforts in the right direction
- Motivate people to work towards important goals
- Help them develop skills and competencies necessary to achieve future objectives
- Celebrate their successes



## WHY IS FEEDBACK IMPORTANT

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It is important that your work performance is monitored and that you receive feedback which is constructive and encourages you to strive for improvement.

Types of feedback can be:

- Positive feedback – indicates that tasks were carried out well. It acknowledges personal efforts and the good cooperation among team members. It encourages all members to continue to strive for excellence.
- Negative Feedback – Informs team members that tasks were not completed well. It analyses the reason for the problems encountered and proposed ideas for improvement.
- Constructive feedback – encourages and acknowledges good job performance. It also suggests areas for improvement and strategies for achieving this improvement.

Hardly anyone likes asking for comments on their work, but the process is critical to career development and good results.

It is important to accept feedback from others so that you can learn and improve from your mistakes, this way in the future you can do a much better job. Getting feedback from your manager will also help see ourselves from the perspective of others, to see ourselves as other see us. We can learn a great deal from feedback. You should encourage your manager to give you feedback so that you know what tasks you are doing really well and what task you are not so great at doing.

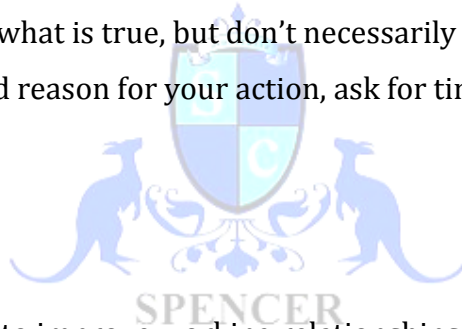
## ACCEPTING NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

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What is negative feedback? It's a little like letting the genie out of the bottle and then finding you can't put it back. However, accepting negative feedback gracefully and gratefully is a skill of great leadership. Remember, though, other people may not know how to give negative feedback diplomatically, like you have. So take a deep breath and swallow your pride.

You may find these guidelines useful when receiving negative feedback.

- Listen without interruption – you may learn something of real value
- If you hear something you don't agree with, simply say, "That's interesting!" and discuss it at the end
- Ask questions to clarify what exactly went wrong; what you did or didn't do
- Acknowledge what is true, but don't necessarily change your position – you may have good reason for your action, ask for time to think and then get back to the person



Can feedback really help to improve working relationships and productivity?

Remember, feedback doesn't always have to be negative. Start by looking for occasions when you can get positive feedback and remember to plan carefully for the occasions when you have to get negative feedback – and make the negative more constructive. Try some of the ideas above and see what happens.

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### WHO GIVES FEEDBACK?

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There are many different people in your organisations that you can get feedback from, and those feedback can be positive and negative, it is how you choose to accept and learn from them that is important.

Feedback may be given by:

- Your supervisor or manager
- Other management staff
- Employees
- Team leader
- Team member
- Clients and/or customers
- YOU of course

## METHODS OF FEEDBACK

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Feedback on performance may be formal or informal.

- Formal performance appraisals generally occur on a regular basis. The first appraisal usually takes place three months after an employee starts a job then every six or twelve months thereafter. These appraisals allow for a formal method of feedback which can lead to modification of a job description, further training and re-evaluation of performance.
- Feedback from supervisor and colleagues. This is mainly in the form of informal comments on a job well done or suggestions of how to complete a task
- Feedback from customers giving positive comment and praise for good customer service
- Personal reflection. This involves thinking about what you have done and how you can improve on it next time
- Routine organisational methods for monitoring service. These include customer's complaints or satisfaction form, and surveys that are completed at the end of a task or a job for a customer<sup>12</sup>

Feedback is valuable to a workplace as it can:

- Improve business relationships
- Identify and overcome existing problems
- Eliminate entrenched work practices
- Improve productivity
- Enhance output quality
- Contribute to the future development of the workplace


When feedback is given it is best to use the following acronym **S.W.O**,

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<sup>12</sup> [http://hsc.csu.edu.au/business\\_services/services\\_120/work/4118/feedback.htm](http://hsc.csu.edu.au/business_services/services_120/work/4118/feedback.htm)  
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- **Strength** – Praising on the good work completed
- **Weakness** – Letting them know where improvement is needed
- **Options** – Discussing the options on how to improve in the set areas

Feedback is essential for people to know how they are progressing, and also, evaluation is crucial to the worker's confidence too. A successful conclusion to your annual performance review should help you and your supervisor or manager understand the following:

- 
- What has been done?
  - What is left to do?
  - What is the quality of my team's objectives?
  - How well aligned are the people in my team?
  - How are they progressing on achieving their goals/objectives?
  - Where do I need to focus to drive better outcomes?

Once these questions have been answered, and taking on board any comments which may have been conveyed informally as well, you and your supervisor should have all the information you both need to come up with any training or mentoring you need to enhance your skills before the next review period. This timeframe is called a rating period – covering the time between one performance review and the next.

It is important to understand the difference between formal and informal feedback. Both are valuable and relevant. Firstly, the easiest to take on board and which usually doesn't present to staff as threatening in any way is the informal approach.

Informal feedback is concrete, practical suggestions given either immediately, during (particularly if safety is a concern) or immediately following, an action or customer interaction. For example, brief feedback might be given while you are practicing the appropriate use of a platform ladder. They come in various sizes and can look deceptively similar to a domestic ladder, however in the workplace you may be using it on a slippery or uneven surface and reaching for material which is heavier than you would attempt to handle at home. The feedback may be preceded with "Let me show you an easier way to lock those casters" or "Let me give you some feedback on your lifting technique".

Formal feedback can be given outside of performance reviews and can happen in cases where an informal approach is not appropriate or suffice. When a set period of time,

usually five to 20 minutes or longer, is set aside for reflection and providing practical suggestions following a particular workplace experience. For example, formal feedback might be scheduled immediately after your team has participated in a safety drill in order to assess whether the team performed efficiently and discuss any areas of the exercise that may need improvement. At other times, it may be given after a particularly difficult client encounter or when inappropriate behaviours or actions have been observed in the workplace. Respect for privacy and appropriate timing of this form of feedback is important as all aspects of the situation need to be determined before the appropriate action is taken. Formal feedback is also the feedback that is provided during weekly scheduled supervision sessions in which case, the period of time may be from 30 minutes to one hour. These can simply take the form of a team meeting or a one-on-one with your supervisor to touch base with any issues arising that you may not have had the opportunity to discuss with them. It is also an opportunity to bring up any sensitive issues that require intervention or solution from a higher level employee.

## SPENCER

This form of feedback advocates the encouragement of staff self-evaluation, and should, therefore, be interactive. Generally, you know that the feedback will be given, and so will have had the opportunity to reflect on performance. For example your supervisor could open the session with a question such as "How did that training session go for you?" and then "What went well, and what might you have done differently/better?" Points you make during self-evaluation can then be reinforced, and solutions and strategies for improvement explored.

The final and most well-known type of feedback is the official Performance Review, also known as an Appraisal. Traditionally the purpose of this formal process, sometimes but not always held with a senior staff member who you may not know very well, is to gain the kind of information management need to make decisions regarding their workforce:

- Promotion, separation, and transfer decisions
- Feedback to the employee regarding how the organisation viewed the employee's performance
- Evaluations of relative contributions made by individuals and entire departments in achieving higher level organisation goals
- Criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of selection and placement decisions, including the relevance of the information used in the decisions within the organisation
- Reward decisions, including merit, increases, promotions, and other rewards
- Ascertaining and diagnosing training and development decisions
- Criteria for evaluating the success of training and development decisions

- Information upon which work scheduling plans, budgeting, and human resources planning can be used

Two major flaws in the traditional approach to performance appraisal exist. The flaws are:

- Organisational performance appraisal is typically primarily concerned with the past rather than being forward-looking through the use of setting objectives or goals
- Performance appraisal is usually tied to the employees' salary review. Dealing with salary generally overwhelms and blocks creative, meaningful, or comprehensive consideration of performance goals

Developmental performance appraisals focus instead on relating to employees as individuals. This uses the performance appraisal as a contributor to employee motivation, development, and human resources planning. The development approach contains all of the traditional overall organisational performance appraisal purposes and the following additional purposes:

- Provides employees the opportunity to formally indicate the direction and level of the employee's ambition
- Shows organisational interest in employee development, which helps the enterprise retain ambitious, capable employees instead of losing the employees to competitors
- Provides a structure for communications between employees and management to help clarify expectations of the employee by management and the employee
- Provides satisfaction and encouragement to the employee who has been trying to perform well

The manager has the unenviable job of:

- Translating organisational goals into your job objective
- Communicating management's expectations regarding your performance
- Providing feedback to you about job performance in light of management's objectives

- Coaching you on how to achieve job objectives/requirement or arranging for this to take place via the training department or through a third party
- Diagnosing your strengths and weaknesses
- Determining what kind of development activities might help you better utilise your skills to improve performance on the current job

This needs to be done for every staff member the manager is responsible for and requires time, effort and tact to do it well. Hopefully, your organisation has previously conducted a skills audit (which can be incorporated into your PD review), reviewed your resume and consulted you about your work and personal goals. Once you and your supervisor clearly understand the difference between what you need to know and what you know right now you will discover the skills gaps and be able to determine how to gain the knowledge or abilities that are required.

This typically consists of four inter-related steps as follows:

- Establish a common understanding between the manager (the person doing the evaluating) and you (the person being evaluated) regarding work expectations; mainly, the work to be accomplished and how that work is to be evaluated
- Ongoing assessment of performance and the progress against work expectation. Provisions should be made for the regular feedback of information to clarify and modify the goals and expectations, to correct unacceptable performance before it is too late, (via informal feedback and more formal one-on-one meetings) and to reward superior performance with proper praise and recognition
- Formal documentation of performance through the completion of a performance and development appraisal form appropriate to your organisation
- The formal performance and development appraisal discussion, based on the completed appraisal form and ending in the construction of a Personal Development Plan for you (also known as a Professional Development Plan)

Some organisations also conduct what is called 360 Degree Feedback, sometimes referred to as multi-rater appraisals or multi-source feedback. It is a tool designed to address the problem of being judged by only one person and trying to remove any personal prejudices that may exist between the reviewer and you. By gaining feedback from peers, reports, managers and even internal and external customers a person gets a valuable insight into how others see them. In which your peers, that is people whom you work with at the same employee level, reports, meaning anyone you supervise and customers are all exposed to you in different ways. Feedback is no longer one dimensional. This multi-dimensional approach often provides great insights into how different groups see you. For example leaders really need to understand how their reports see them, just as much as they need to understand how their own boss sees them.

Now that you have completed your skills audit, had your performance review, given 360 degree feedback to your team and your supervisor and come up with a Personal Development Plan for the next rating period - you are now ready to put everything you've done so far into a format that is measurable and actionable to help you keep on track as you progress along the work and training path you have both decided on for the next rating period.



## IDENTIFY, EVALUATE, SELECT AND USE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES SUITABLE TO PERSONAL LEARNING STYLE/S TO DEVELOP COMPETENCE AND IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP NEW SKILLS TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN A COMPETITIVE EDGE

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### **Setting Goals**

Goal setting is much more than simply saying you want something to happen. Unless you clearly define exactly what you want and understand why you want it the first place, your odds of success are considerably reduced. By following some simple rules, you can set goals with confidence and enjoy the satisfaction that comes along with knowing you achieved what you set out to do.

### **SMART**

You have probably heard of SMART goals already. But do you always apply the rule? The simple fact is that for goals to be powerful, they should be designed to be SMART. There are many variations of what SMART stands for, but the essence is this – goals should be:

- Specific.
- Measurable.
- Attainable.
- Relevant.
- Time Bound.

### **Set Specific Goals**

Your goal must be clear and well defined. Vague or generalized goals are unhelpful because they don't provide sufficient direction. Remember, you need goals to show you the way. Make it as easy as you can to get where you want to go by defining precisely where you want to end up.

### **Set Measurable Goals**

Include precise amounts, dates, and so on in your goals so you can measure your degree of success. If your goal is simply defined as "To reduce expenses" how will you know when you have been successful? In one month's time if you have a 1 percent reduction or in two years' time when you have a 10 percent reduction? Without a way to measure your success you miss out on the celebration that comes with knowing you have actually achieved something.

### **Set Attainable Goals**

Make sure that it's possible to achieve the goals you set. If you set a goal that you have no hope of achieving, you will only demoralize yourself and erode your confidence.

However, resist the urge to set goals that are too easy. Accomplishing a goal that you didn't have to work hard for can be anticlimactic at best, and can also make you fear

setting future goals that carry a risk of non-achievement. By setting realistic yet challenging goals, you hit the balance you need. These are the types of goals that require you to "raise the bar" and they bring the greatest personal satisfaction.

### Set Relevant Goals

Goals should be relevant to the direction you want your life and career to take. By keeping goals aligned with this, you'll develop the focus you need to get ahead and do what you want. Set widely scattered and inconsistent goals, and you'll fritter your time – and your life – away.

### Set Time-Bound Goals

Your goals must have a deadline. Again, this means that you know when you can celebrate success. When you are working on a deadline, your sense of urgency increases and achievement will come that much quicker.

### **Set Goals in Writing**

The physical act of writing down a goal makes it real and tangible. You have no excuse for forgetting about it. As you write, use the word "will" instead of "would like to" or "might." For example, "I will reduce my operating expenses by 10 percent this year," not "I would like to reduce my operating expenses by 10 percent this year." The first goal statement has power and you can "see" yourself reducing expenses, the second lacks passion and gives you an excuse if you get side-tracked.

Frame your goal statement positively. If you want to improve your retention rates say, "I will hold on to all existing employees for the next quarter" rather than "I will reduce employee turnover." The first one is motivating; the second one still has a get-out clause "allowing" you to succeed even if some employees leave.

If you use a To-Do List , make yourself a To-Do List template that has your goals at the top of it. If you use an Action Program , then your goals should be at the top of your Project Catalogue.

Post your goals in visible places to remind yourself every day of what it is you intend to do. Put them on your walls, desk, computer monitor, bathroom mirror or refrigerator as a constant reminder.

### **Make an Action Plan**

This step is often missed in the process of goal setting. You get so focused on the outcome that you forget to plan all of the steps that are needed along the way. By writing out the individual steps, and then crossing each one off as you complete it, you'll realize that you are making progress towards your ultimate goal. This is especially important if your goal is big and demanding, or long-term. Read our article on Action Plans for more on how to do this.

## **Stick With It!**

Remember, goal setting is an ongoing activity, not just a means to an end. Build in reminders to keep yourself on track, and make regular time-slots available to review your goals. Your end destination may remain quite similar over the long term, but the action plan you set for yourself along the way can change significantly. Make sure the relevance, value, and necessity remain high.

## **Learning**

Good learning and information skills are essential for successful professionals in the workplace. Early in your career you must study a huge volume of information, simply to become effective. As you become increasingly successful, you'll need to process large volumes of documents, data and reports, just to keep up-to-date in your field.

The main reason for all training is to learn something new or improve a skill. But what determines how much you learn and how successful the training is? Often it's the effort you put into it. We attend training programs for all sorts of reasons. Think about what you want to gain from the program. Certainly you'll learn skills you need to do your job better, but what other benefits are there? We might want to upgrade our skills, learn new things, or take longer-term training to change careers.

You know how important it is to ensure that you and your team members are given plenty of training and development opportunities. However, it's just as important to focus on your own personal learning and development. To do this, it's essential to set aside enough time which can be difficult as it is competing with family and social obligations. However, when you make learning a priority, you increase your value to your organisation. You become more marketable as a professional, and you're in a better position when you apply for a challenging project, seek a promotion or apply for another job.

Depending on your level of previous experience you may be assigned a mentor in the first few weeks in the job. Feedback on how well you understand the job will be gained in part in this mentoring process. Most organisations have regular staff appraisals where you'll be given feedback in relation to how well you perform your tasks. This feedback will come to you directly from external sources e.g. customers and internally from your supervisors and colleagues and perhaps other departments within your organisation. The precise methods employed to evaluate your performance and the recording of that information are likely to be detailed in your organisation's policies and procedures along with timeframes for these sessions. Most commonly they are yearly, however in some areas, where KPI's carry crucial safety factors they may occur more often, quarterly or half yearly.

How you perform your tasks and the way you conduct yourself is in itself a means of promoting your organisation. The impression you leave people with is the impression they will take away with them about your organisation. Reviews help you to understand your role in the organisation and how you fit into the bigger corporate picture. Generally feedback for all staff is gained and given to allow you to make informed choices about your career, now and in the future.



### WHAT SKILLS SHOULD I BE CHOOSING FOR MY PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT?

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Once you have researched all the training providers and had your questions answered you can begin to sort through the list and decide on a couple that suits your requirements.

There are several simple steps to this activity.

- Start with the training that does not suit your requirements or family/personal commitments. Put these aside as for now they will not be included
- Then choose the ones that fully meet your requirements for training and for your personal/family commitments. Hopefully, you have a couple of these or at least some that meet most of your criteria
- Then sort out the rest. Some will be 50/50 on meeting your requirements now, but they may meet them at a later date

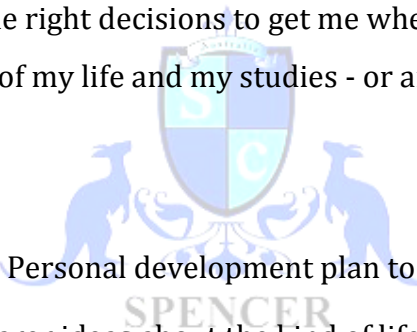
Don't dispose of any of your research as what does not suit you now may work well for you in the future. For example you may need public transport to get you there now, but you may be able to drive at a later date when you have a car or a license. You also may need to be home for children now but in the future you may have someone who can do some child minding for you, or the children may start school. Never give up because of obstacles.

### WHY SHOULD YOU CREATE A PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

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Personal development planning means creating opportunities to think through, in a structured way, questions such as:

- What do I really want to achieve from life?
- What kind of person do I want to be?
- Am I clear about my personal goals and ambitions?
- Am I making the right decisions to get me where I really want to be?
- Am I in charge of my life and my studies - or am I just hoping it all will work out somehow?



What are the benefits of a Personal development plan to your working life?

- It gives you clearer ideas about the kind of life and work you want
- It gives you greater confidence in the choices you make
- It gives you greater confidence in the skills, qualities and attributes you bring to the career of your choice
- It will place you in a better position to compete for jobs
- You will be better able to discuss your skills, personal qualities and competencies with employers
- You will be better at problem-solving and planning skills
- It will help you develop the positive attitudes and approaches associated with a successful professional life

Many employers now expect employees to understand their own performance - and to know how to adapt to meet times of increased workload, stressful situations or conditions of change.

Employees are often expected to show personal commitment to their own professional development, actively seeking out information, training and events that will keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date. Knowing how to learn, and how you learn best, will be invaluable in the workplace.

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### WHY SHOULD I RECORD MY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES?

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Although you may find this a little confronting and/or challenging to begin with it is actually a really important step in the process.

the space below and be honest about it, because

What is my current state?	
<p>What are my <b>strengths</b>?</p>  <p>What are my <b>weaknesses</b>?</p>  <p>What are the common <b>feedbacks</b> (positive &amp; negative) that I received from others?</p>  <p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate well with others</li> <li>Positive thinking</li> </ol> <p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack confidence. Always stuck in comfort zone</li> <li>Lose temper easily</li> </ol> <p><b>Feedbacks</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not assertive enough</li> <li>Lack initiative. Too much planning but no action</li> </ol> <p><b>Focus area priorities</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop more self-confidence &amp; courage</li> <li>Learn to be assertive</li> <li>Control my temper &amp; not get worked up so easily</li> </ol>
<p><b>Strengths?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> <li></li> <li></li> <li></li> <li></li> </ol>	
<p><b>Weaknesses?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ol>	

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Once you have completed your own strengths and weaknesses table, you will be in the position to then list the current skills you already have. The strengths you have listed will be some of the current skills you have, however; as far as skills are concerned for this step you will be able to add many more. Some of the skills you could write down could be:

- Good with money
- Excellent communication skills
- Love working with people
- Good at working in a team environment
- Good at working independently
- Excellent personal presentation
- Punctual
- And the list goes on

Then you can do the same for knowledge. You may have been working in the tuck shop in your child's school. This is all experience for your career. You would have probably completed a food handler's certificate, handled money and many other duties that have given you knowledge and skills in an area without you even realising it. There are many ways we gather knowledge in our lives, both formal and informal, and you need to consider these when completing this task.

### HOW DO I KNOW WHAT THE REQUIRED SKILLS ARE?

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The next step is to record all the skills and knowledge required to do the job you would like to do.

Previously you have gathered information about the jobs you would like to do and the training required to do it. You have also recorded your current skills and knowledge. Now is the time to record all this in a plan for your career. From the information, you gathered previously outline all the skills and knowledge you need for the job role you

have chosen. Then work your way across the table completing each section as you go for each required skill.

Required Skills and knowledge					
Skill required	Skill possessed	Current level	Required level	Update required	Meets criteria required
Communication	Yes	Excellent	Excellent	No	Yes
Product knowledge	Yes	Good	Excellent	Yes	No

As you can see, documenting the required skills and knowledge will allow you to look clearly at whether you actually meet the requirements or whether you will need to update or up-skill in the near future.

## LEARNING STYLES

There are three basic types of learning styles and often people will use different learning styles for different tasks.

**Auditory learner** - Understand information best when you **hear** it

- Listening
- Talking
- Group discussion
- Audio based instruction
- Music

**Visual learner** - Understand information best when you **see** it

- Pictures and images



- Diagrams, maps and charts
- Whiteboard
- Powerpoint presentations
- Videos/films

**Kinaesthetic learner** - Understand information best by '**doing**' or feeling

- Making and creating
- 'Hands-on' activities
- Movement and dance
- Uses the whole body



### WHAT'S YOUR PREFERRED LEARNING STYLE?

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For each statement below, give yourself points according to the following scale:

5 = Often true

3 = Sometimes true (about half the time)

1 = Seldom or almost never true

#### Section I. Visual Learning Style

\_\_\_ Follow written directions better than oral directions.

\_\_\_ Like to write things down or take notes for visual review.

\_\_\_ Am skillful and enjoy developing and making graphs and charts.

\_\_\_ Can understand and follow directions on maps.

\_\_\_ Can better understand a news story by reading it than by listening to it on the radio.

\_\_\_ Feel the best way to remember is to picture it in your head.

\_\_\_ Grip objects in your hands during learning periods.

\_\_\_ Obtain information on an interesting subject by reading related materials.

#### Section II. Auditory Learning Style

- \_\_\_ Can remember more about a subject through listening than reading.
- \_\_\_ Require explanations of graphs, diagrams, or visual directions.
- \_\_\_ Can tell if sounds match when presented with pairs of sounds.
- \_\_\_ Do better at academic subjects by listening to tapes and lectures.
- \_\_\_ Learn to spell better by repeating the letters out loud than by writing the word on paper.
- \_\_\_ Would rather listen to a good lecture or speech than read about the same material in a book.
- \_\_\_ Prefer listening to the news on the radio than reading about it in the newspaper.
- \_\_\_ Follow oral directions better than written ones.

### Section III. Kinesthetic Learning Style

- \_\_\_ Bear down extremely hard when writing.
- \_\_\_ Enjoy working with tools or working on models.
- \_\_\_ Remember best by writing things down several times.
- \_\_\_ Play with coins or keys in pockets.
- \_\_\_ Chew gum, snack or smoke during study time.
- \_\_\_ Do a lot of gesturing, am well coordinated.
- \_\_\_ Am good at working and solving jigsaw puzzles and mazes.
- \_\_\_ Feel very comfortable touching others, hugging, handshaking, etc.<sup>13</sup>

Scoring: Add up your score for each section above. The highest total indicates your preferred method of learning while the lowest score indicates your least preferred.

### Section I. Visual Learning Style

\_\_\_ Total number of points

### Section II. Auditory Learning Style

\_\_\_ Total number of points

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.bluegrass.kctcs.edu/~media/Bluegrass/Study\\_Skills/documents/learning...](http://www.bluegrass.kctcs.edu/~media/Bluegrass/Study_Skills/documents/learning...)

### Section III. Kinesthetic Learning Style

\_\_\_\_ Total number of points

Knowing and understanding your learning style will better assist you when it comes time to continue or update your knowledge. Remember; not everyone learns in the same way so understand how you learn best will help you to choose the right type of education or information for you.

## PARTICIPATE IN NETWORKS TO ENHANCE PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND WORK RELATIONSHIPS

Networking is the process of intentionally meeting people, making contacts and forming relationships in hopes of gaining access to such business-related benefits as career advice, job leads, business referrals, useful information and ideas and support.

Networking is a full-time job no matter your career or business. You want to have a professional business network established long before you need a network.

*You can become a magnet who attracts people and resources if you invest the time and energy necessary to develop a strong network of contacts. Business networking requires a leap for many professionals. Depending on your personality, meeting strangers and greeting people that you hardly know can be stressful and even - scary.*

*Walking into a group of strangers, extending your hand and introducing yourself can be daunting for many. Others love the experience of meeting new people and plunge into business networking events with enthusiasm and skill. No matter where you fall on this continuum, you can improve your networking skill and comfort. It's worth it for your career and for the opportunity to give and receive assistance.*

#### *Advantages of Business Networking*

- *Build a network of partners to keep an open eye and ear for new opportunities for you, and vice versa, you for them*
- *Reach targeted individuals for your business or career in two ways: directly or indirectly through your contacts*
- *Build visibility within your industry or profession by raising your profile*
- *Build visibility within your community to assist your organisation to develop a reputation as an employer of choice*
- *Build a strong network with co-workers within your organisation to accomplish work more successfully by utilising your network of mutually beneficial relationships*
- *Create a diverse network of people with whom you can share ideas and gain*

*information*

- *Aim for a diverse group of people from whom you can learn*
- *Develop an online network of colleagues with whom you can share all of the advantages cited in the advantages*

#### *The Secret to Successful Business Networking*

*Successful business networking is about what you can do for them. You need to trust that what goes around comes around. It never fails, even if it takes a while to show.*

*Networking can be scary and difficult, especially when you need help with something such as a job search or clients, but emphasise instead, what you have to give and share, and networking becomes a win-win. If you've ever spent time networking or watching the networking pros at a professional event, you have networking tips to share. Since networking seems universally disliked by many, your networking tips will help.*

#### *Follow through*

*It is very easy to have attended a great networking event at which you made some potentially exciting contacts but then fail to follow through. For example, you might have promised to put your new contact in touch with a TV engineer or send them a copy of an article you had mentioned. The secret is simple, follow through with a promise ASAP. If you don't deliver at this early stage of a relationship, the trust you are trying to build is being thwarted from the start. And if you didn't make a promise, just dropping them a line to say how much you enjoyed meeting them is a nice gesture (as long as it is sincere!).*

#### *Remember Who You Met*

*You can meet so many people at a good business event that I now take the time to jot some information about what we talked about on each business card as I receive it. You won't remember if you wait until the end. I write just enough to remember what we talked about and if I promised to share something.<sup>14</sup>*

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<sup>14</sup> [http://humanresources.about.com/u/ua/careernetworking/networking\\_tips.htm](http://humanresources.about.com/u/ua/careernetworking/networking_tips.htm)

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## SUMMARY

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Now that you have completed this unit, you should have the ability to manage personal work priorities and professional development.

If you have any questions about this resource, please ask your trainer. They will be only too happy to assist you when required.



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## REFERENCES

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[http://humanresources.about.com/u/ua/careernetworking/networking\\_tips.htm](http://humanresources.about.com/u/ua/careernetworking/networking_tips.htm)

