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Supporting CPD in the workplace.

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The changing face of learning and development, the competitiveness of the job market, and the need for organisations to attract and retain talent, mean that supporting employee Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is being seen by savvy employers as an integral part of their professional development strategy. This paper will discuss what is deemed to be good CPD, what an individual may include in their CPD portfolio and why and how employers and the HR Department should support the process.

What is CPD?

CPD stands for Continuing Professional Development. It refers to the process of tracking and documenting skills, knowledge and experience gained both formally and informally, in and outside of work. CPD is proactive rather than passive, and although it can be drawn from passive activities that may build knowledge or skills, the individual should complement these with proactive reflection, practice, or deployment.

CPD shouldn't be confused with the training or personal development plan (PDP) put in place between employer and employee. These activities complement each other, but are separate. A development plan will be highly focused to organisational objectives rather than individual career paths and self enhancement, but that's not to say the two things don't overlap and enhance each other.

Many professions will require individuals to carry out specific hours or points of CPD within a timeframe, in order to maintain professional memberships. This CPD will be targeted towards the profession, but that's not to say that the individual should restrict their CPD solely to that area. Cross-industry or specialism experience can be highly effective in problem solving and idea generation, and benefit both the individual and employer.

CPD should shape an individual's learning and heighten their competitive advantage. It may support a professional career path, professional membership or certification and demonstrate a desire and interest in the chosen subject or career. However, CPD does not need to directly complement a job specialism, and it may be deemed that non-specialist CPD also improves an individual's supplementary behaviour or knowledge. When documenting the CPD and building a thorough CPD portfolio it is wise for the individual to reflect on how an activity may support their career or profession. For instance, the Royal Statistical Society took the view in 2004 that a formal split into statistical and non-statistical CPD was not needed by its members, as all CPD should enable the practitioner to be more effective as a professional statistician to employers or clients; however for RSS approved CPD, even non-statistical CPD should focus on ability to function as a professional statistician or as a manager of statisticians and members need to demonstrate that this is the case.

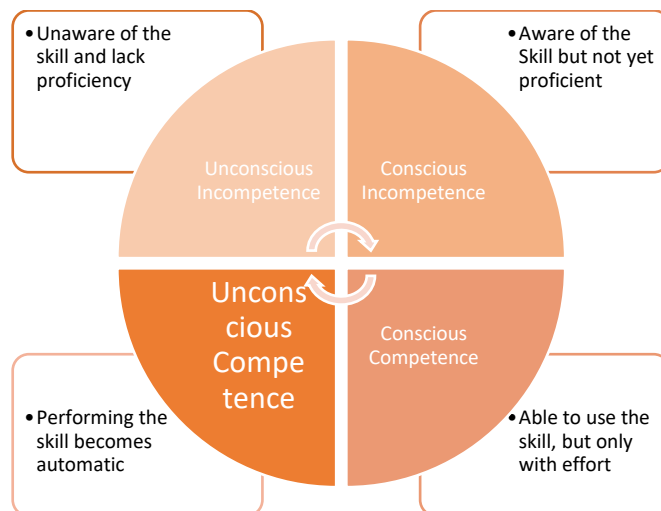
Fundamentally CPD needs to:

- be self-directed: driven by the individual and not the employer
- focus on learning from experience, reflective learning and review
- help the individual set development goals and objectives
- include both formal and informal learning

- be a documented process

Dreyfus & Dreyfus¹ describe how, when learning a task or skill, an individual initially requires rules to follow but over time and experience can apply these rules with increasing amount of flexibility through to being able to act intuitively. In doing so the professional moves through five stages of competence, from the novice, to advanced beginner, to competent, proficient and then finally through to expert.

A slightly simpler model, is the Conscious Competent, describing the awareness of skills and tasks which enable individuals to move from a novice to master.



With this in mind, CPD should complement a holistic learning approach. It should be more than a way of enabling an individual to maintain a professional registration and ideally should be used as one of the mechanisms for striving to become an 'expert' or 'master'. If organisations can nurture and encourage this in their employees it enables them to build and maintain talent and ultimately succeed in their organisational goals.

Building a CPD Portfolio

A CPD portfolio should be a record of what an individual experiences, learns and applies.

The term is generally used to mean a physical folder or portfolio documenting an individual's development as a professional. An ePortfolio is a mechanism of maintaining this information online, rather than in paper form.

When building a portfolio of CPD consider:

- Peer to peer learning including peer reviews, feedback and shadowing or assisting an experienced colleague
- Networking, in and outside of the chosen industry
- Reading about new technologies, new methods of working, legislative changes
- Insights and learning points from coaching and mentoring

¹ Dreyfus, S E (1981) Four models v human situational understanding: inherent limitations on the modelling of business expertise USAF Office of Scientific Research, ref F49620-79-C-0063;

- Reflections, insights and learning points from taking on a new responsibility
- Secondments, deputising and job swaps
- Lessons learned from mistakes, critical incidents or events

As well as logging and recording learning activities the individual should make a note of any outcomes of each learning experience and what difference it has made to them, their colleagues, student or other relevant groups and their employer.

If CPD is individually focused, why should an Employer support the process?

For some, CPD will be second nature and be an integral part of their life, not just their working life. Reflection, for example, will be imbedded practice for most healthcare professionals due to following a structure throughout their training years and professional lives in order to maintain their ability to practice. Most professions that are regulated by a Charter, Institute or Society will require CPD to be undertaken by their members. For others, CPD is not second nature but with encouragement and support they could reap the benefits personally and for their employers. Organisations who incorporate CPD into the working life of their employees will capitalise on an engaged, excelling workforce regardless of their professional sector.

For employers, the benefits of a workforce engaging in CPD has many benefits. CPD can empower the individual to identify and address skills gaps, and therefore can feed onto and help shape the organisation's own professional development programmes. It support individual growth as well as provide the foundation for teams development.

CPD isn't just about training, it's about developing professional knowledge and skills using a range of activities including coaching, mentoring, networking, self-study and practical experience. Having this mix of development will mean that your employees are resilient, can rise to meet new challenges and emerging business needs. By not supporting professional development, organisations risk losing their best talent and as a result are unable to keep up with rising standards and deliver best practice.

It is proven that staff who feel valued are more likely to stay at an organisation, and that there is a positive correlation² between well-structured CPD, motivation and innovation. When employers invest in their employees by providing them with opportunities to learn new skills or knowledge, it signals an investment in their present and future career growth. Numerous reports have been undertaken correlating employee satisfaction, training and career progression. Notably in a 2016 report from The Society for Human Resource Management, 40 percent of employees said that their job satisfaction links directly with their employer on having opportunities for career development.³

² Amanda Rosewarne, CPD Research Project, www.whatiscpd.com

³ <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Documents/2016-Employee-Job-Satisfaction-and-Engagement-Report.pdf>

CPD should not be used as a cost saving exercise or a way of cutting the L&D budget. However, this does not mean it doesn't have a positive value to the bottom line of the organisation. CPD supported and encouraged by the employer can provide the following benefits:

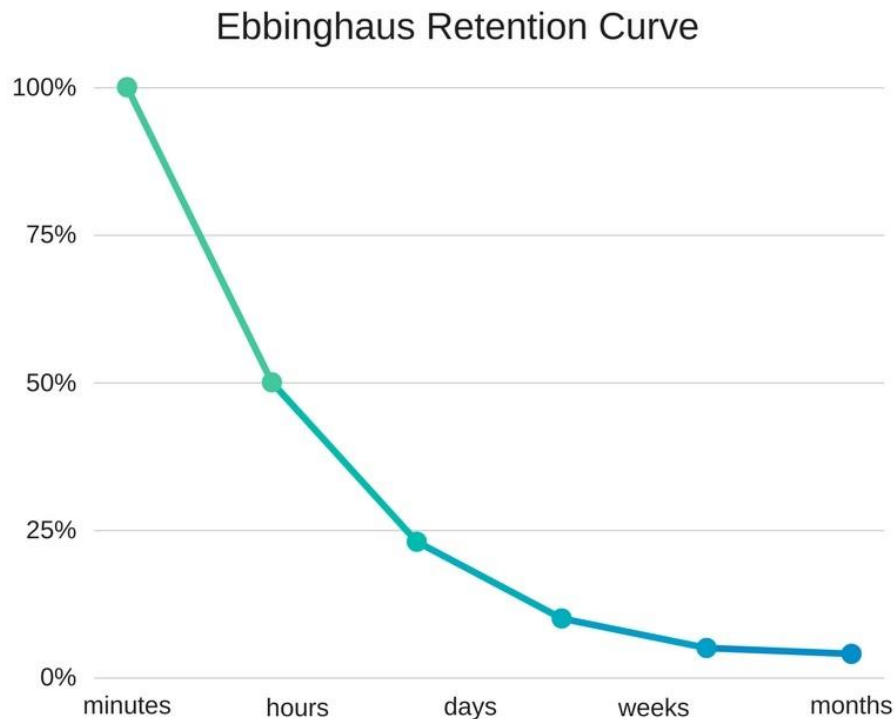
- Increased motivation, productivity, loyalty and retention
- Improved job performance
- Aiding recruitment and being seen as an employer of choice

Adding Value

Research suggests that in the forgetting (retention) curve within one hour, people will have forgotten an average of 50 percent of the information you presented.

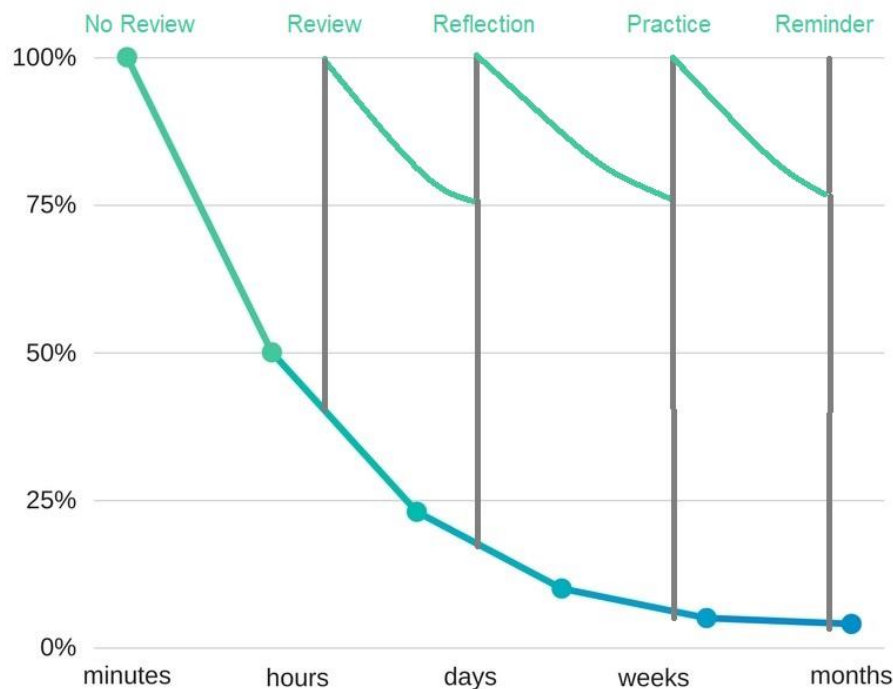
Within 24 hours, they have forgotten an average of 70 percent of new information

Within a week, forgetting claims an average of 90 percent of it.



If 90% of learning is forgotten a week after it took place, as an employer, are you wasting 90% of your training budget by not enabling retention techniques?

With retention aides such as review, feedback, reflection and putting learning into practice, the retention improves greatly.



By supporting techniques embedded in good CPD employers are effectively stretching their learning budgets and securing best value.

The Role of HR

We've already discussed how CPD can support employee retention, support organisational objectives and add value to the business as well as ensuring you are an employer of choice for candidates, but how can the HR department support this?

The HR department has a responsibility to ensure that company policies are known and enforced across the business. If an organisation is implementing CPD support for the first time they must ensure it is communicated well to all staff and backed up with a well-defined policy. If the organisation is committed to CPD it's important that it is treated as high a priority and managers are aware of how they should support their teams.

The nature of CPD being driven by the individual can make implementing a CPD policy a challenge and the employer, supported by HR will need to carefully manage the implementation in order for it to be a success. Encouragement rather than enforcement should be adopted. This type of project is likely to have medium and long term gains rather than short terms wins, so stick at it and ensure employees can see CPD being undertaken within their leadership team so that there is a clear correlation between individual and organisational success and "putting the effort in".

Key areas for HR to consider are:

- Make CPD accessible

Critically, provide employees with the time to undertake CPD. Build this into the weekly or monthly schedule so that it is integrated into working life. Consider providing software to support CPD. There are a range of ePortfolios on the market that help an individual to build their portfolio, many use engagement techniques to help encourage the user, are responsive

and mobile and so encourage logging on-the-go. Additionally they should allow the individual to take their portfolio with them when and if they leave the organisation. A good example of an ePortfolio, used by over 10,000 individuals is “[Vital](#)” by Enterprise Study.

- **Make CPD Personal**
CPD should come from a range of activities and learning opportunities. The broader the range the more personalised the CPD can be.
- **Include Peer to peer training, shadowing and mentoring**
CPD isn't just about reading or elearning. Provide activities that encourage cross industry or company networking for example conference visits and secondments. The most successful companies have strong mentoring schemes embedded in the workplace. An American Society for Training and Development study found that 71% of Fortune 500 companies have some type of corporate mentorship program. It also found that 75% of executives credit their mentors with helping them reach their current positions. That's not to say that only large corporates can take advantage of mentoring. Savvy individuals will utilise their network to source potential mentors.
- **Support Managers**
Encouraging Staff to take control of their own development requires strong leadership and management and CPD should be built into the performance review and appraisal process. However, once established many managers find that their role can be made easier as individuals choose to learn rather than being pushed to do so.

About Enterprise Study

At Enterprise Study, we work hard to understand the specific challenges of our customers. Our Learning Platform and ePortfolio solutions help support L&D departments in managing all elements of the learning process. If you'd like to discuss your learning challenges with us, arrange to have a free trial of our systems, please email enquiries@enterprisestudy.com or call 00 44 1242 254 254

CPD Accreditation

If you're a trainer, training company or employer looking to become accredited, we would recommend visiting <http://www.cpdstandards.com>

Additional References

<http://www.jobs.ac.uk/careers-advice/managing-your-career>

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