Learning and Development definition

Learning and development, a subset of HR, aims to improve group and individual performance by increasing and honing skills and knowledge. Learning and development, often called training and development, forms part of an organisation’s [talent management](https://www.hrzone.com/hr-glossary/talent-management-definition) strategy and is designed to align group and individual goals and performance with the organisation’s overall vision and goals.

On a practical level, individuals responsible for learning and development must identify skills gaps among groups and teams (often through SMART objectives, one-to-one interviews and [performance appraisals](https://www.hrzone.com/hr-glossary/performance-appraisal-definition)) and then finding suitable training to fill these gaps.

Procurement is an important part of the training and development process because training providers must be cost-effective and appropriate for the organisation’s needs. Good training provides individuals with tools and skills and shows them how to apply these new tools and skills within their own organisation and role.

**A learning and development strategy outlines how an organisation develops its workforce's capabilities, skills and competencies to remain successful. It’s an important part of an organisation's overall business strategy and its policies.**

**This factsheet looks at the influences on learning and development strategy: business strategy, operational and cultural factors, the human capital approach, keeping strategy updated, and how this translates into policy It also examines the different stakeholders involved in organisational learning and development. Finally, the factsheet considers the practical elements of implementing a learning and development strategy and policy.**

# The Importance of Professional Development for Educators

Education is a never-ending process. It doesn’t stop after earning a degree and starting a career. Through continuing education, career-minded individuals can constantly improve their skills and become more proficient at their jobs. In the field of K-12 education administration, it is particularly important for school administrators to encourage teachers to pursue professional development, not only to ensure the best learning outcomes for their students but also to be more effective and satisfied in various other aspects of their work.

Educational technology, school district guidelines and curriculum standards are constantly changing, making it challenging for teachers to keep up with trends and best practices in the field. Professional development transforms teachers into better and more apt educators by enabling them to create relevant and tailored course instructions for today's students. Research by the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences concluded that [student achievement can improve by as much as 21 percentile points](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/pdf/rel_2007033_sum.pdf) as a result of teachers’ participation in well-designed professional development programs.

National Board Certification is one path for teachers to pursue professional development and keep up with the latest educational standards to ensure optimal student learning. [One study by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools](http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/accountability/REA/Documents/National%20Board%20Certification%20Report.pdf) found that student performance on end-of-course tests in Algebra II, Biology, Civics and Economics, Chemistry and Geometry was significantly higher for those students taught by National Board Certified Teachers than students of teachers without National Board Certification.

**Training isn’t just important to any company, it is vital.**  
  
Although there are many categories of training such as management training and or sales training, employees with Project Management skills are an important asset to any organisation.  
  
  
**But what does training and development,  mean to your organisation?**  
  
Training presents a prime opportunity to expand the knowledge base of all employees, but many employers in the current climate find development opportunities expensive. Employees attending training sessions also miss out on work time which may delay the completion of projects. However despite these potential drawbacks, training and development provides both the individual and organisations as a whole with benefits that make the cost and time a worthwhile investment. The return on investment from training and development of employees is really a no brainer.  
  
  
**So what are the benefits?**  
  
**Improved employee performance** – the employee who receives the necessary training is more able to perform in their job. The training will give the employee a greater understanding of their responsibilities within their role, and in turn build their confidence. This confidence will enhance their overall performance and this can only benefit the company. Employees who are competent and on top of changing industry standards help your company hold a position as a leader and strong competitor within the industry.  
  
**Improved employee satisfaction and morale** – the investment in training that a company makes shows employees that they are valued. The training creates a supportive workplace. Employees may gain access to training they wouldn’t have otherwise known about or sought out themselves. Employees who feel appreciated and challenged through training opportunities may feel more satisfaction toward their jobs.  
  
**Addressing weaknesses** – Most employees will have some weaknesses in their workplace skills. A training program allows you to strengthen those skills that each employee needs to improve. A development program brings all employees to a higher level so they all have similar skills and knowledge. This helps reduce any weak links within the company who rely heavily on others to complete basic work tasks. Providing the necessary training creates an overall knowledgeable staff with employees who can take over for one another as needed, work on teams or work independently without constant help and supervision from others.  
  
**Consistency** – A robust training and development program ensures that employees have a consistent experience and background knowledge. The consistency is particularly relevant for the company’s basic policies and procedures. All employees need to be aware of the expectations and procedures within the company. Increased efficiencies in processes results in financial gain for the company.  
  
**Increased productivity and adherence to quality standards** – Productivity usually increases when a company implements training courses. Increased efficiency in processes will ensure project success which in turn will improve the company turnover and potential market share.  
  
**Increased innovation in new strategies and products** – Ongoing training and upskilling of the workforce can encourage creativity. New ideas can be formed as a direct result of training and development.  
  
**Reduced employee turnover** – staff are more likely to feel valued if they are invested in and therefore, less likely to change employers. Training and development is seen as an additional company benefit. Recruitment costs therefore go down due to staff retention.  
  
**Enhances company reputation and profile** – Having a strong and successful training strategy helps to develop your employer brand and make your company a prime consideration for graduates and mid-career changes. Training also makes a company more attractive to potential new recruits who seek to improve their skills and the opportunities associated with those new skills.  
Training can be of any kind relevant to the work or responsibilities of the individual, and can be delivered by any appropriate method.  
  
For example, it could include:

* On-the-job learning
* Mentoring schemes
* In-house training
* Individual study

**Blended learning** is becoming more and more popular and as a company we have seen a definite increase in this method of training over the last year. Blended Learning is the effective combination of online learning and classroom learning. Many of 20|20’s clients prefer their staff to learn on-site rather than attend off-site training programmes – especially in industries like oil and gas where it is often very impractical to attend off-site courses. On-site learning programmes like the blended learning approach, allow 20|20 to train more people working across a larger international footprint than just the UK. This makes it much more cost-effective and allows for greater process consistency.  
  
**The importance of training your employees – both new and experienced – really cannot be overemphasized.**

Getting your first sustainable management job isn’t easy. As [The Guardian put it in 2013](https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/how-to-career-sustainability-work), “Only the best and brightest—and most bloody-minded—need apply.”

Why is it so difficult?

The answer: Companies and governments have started to recognize that [sustainability is good for business](https://sustain.wisconsin.edu/sustainability/careers/). But positions such as sustainability coordinator or corporate sustainability officer are still few and far between—and competition is steep. Also, most professionals who lead sustainable business projects do not have the word “sustainability” in their title or job description, so finding these positions isn’t easy.

There is no road map for a sustainability career, and that makes it tough to know where to start. But don’t panic. With a little planning and initiative, you can discover new opportunities and get sustainability job experience that boosts your resume.

Here are six ways to do just that. (Bonus: with real-life success stories from UW Sustainable Management students!)

## ****1. Get an internship at a company you admire.****

There’s no getting around it—internships are an effective way to get practical experience, make connections, and test the waters before leaping into a sustainable business career. And it could lead to a full-time job.

A 2015 study found that [72 percent of students](http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2016/07/06/paid-interns-get-more-job-offers-higher-salaries-than-unpaid-peers/) who completed paid internships with private, for-profit companies received job offers prior to graduation. Just over 50 percent of students who had paid internships at non-profits were offered jobs.

So, how do you choose the right internship for you?

Pick your dream organization and check the job boards. Or look for an opportunity that gives you the chance to wear multiple hats—perhaps at a smaller organization, startup, or nonprofit—so you can explore two or three different functional roles.

That’s what [UW Sustainable Management graduate Stacie Reece](https://sustain.wisconsin.edu/blog/combining-sustainability-and-business-director-sustain-dane/) did. For the degree program’s capstone course, Stacie chose to complete a business internship at the non-profit Sustain Dane. When the director of sustainable business initiative resigned, Stacie was asked to fill the role.

“I gained a ton of connections to sustainable businesses,” Stacie said. “Even if I hadn’t gotten the job I have now, I am confident those connections would have led to other career opportunities.”

## ****2. Work on your people and business skills.****

Employers will be more likely to hire you for a sustainable management job if they think you have strong people skills. [Directors at major corporations](https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/how-to-career-sustainability-work) were asked which qualities they look for in sustainability applicants:

Many… are generic for good managers everywhere: good people skills, the ability to drive change, and strong networking skills.

How can you improve your interpersonal skills? Two steps: read and practice.

Eric Barker has written some helpful, research-backed posts about improving interactions at work and in life, like how to [read people](http://www.bakadesuyo.com/2016/06/how-to-read-people-2/), [become a great conversationalist](http://www.bakadesuyo.com/2015/02/love-to-talk/), and [improve your body language](http://www.bakadesuyo.com/2016/07/body-language/) and be more influential.

Ok, your people skills are locked down. Anything else? More advice from a corporate director:

People who want to save the world but can’t understand a corporate balance sheet won’t cut it, he says. Business folk in mainstream functions are inherently suspicious of the soft world of sustainability. To make inroads, you need to be able to speak their language and understand their priorities.

Understanding the business world takes education and experience. To brush up on your business knowledge, try listening to top podcasts such as [HBR Ideacast](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/hbr-ideacast/id152022135?mt=2%22%20target=), [The $100 MBA](http://100mba.net/show/), or [How to Start a Startup](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/how-to-start-a-startup/id922398209?mt=2).

If you’re looking for an in-depth, specialized sustainable business education, consider a[bachelor’s or master’s degree in Sustainable Management](https://sustain.wisconsin.edu/).

As for experience, see #1 on this list.

## ****3. Volunteer.****

The ultimate test of your passion and commitment? (No, not marriage.) Volunteering.

Take [Ken Holdorf](https://sustain.wisconsin.edu/blog/must-see-sustainability-masters-graduates-stories/)—while job hunting, this UW Sustainable Management graduate volunteered at the Eco Justice Center, a farm operated solely on renewable energy. Now, he has a position at the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

Ken’s volunteer work served a triple purpose: It helped him gain valuable sustainability job experience, explore different roles that interested him, and confirm his passion for the work.

## ****4. Start a green project at your current workplace.****

Want to transition to a full-time sustainability job? From [Shannon Houde, sustainability careers adviser](https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/how-to-career-sustainability-work):

A key interim step… is to gain experience in your current role. Joining the company’s volunteering scheme or championing a green initiative in the office all help you earn your sustainability spurs and prove your interest in the subject.

Opportunities for sustainable development are found even in the unlikeliest places. UW Sustainable Management grad Matt Vanderloop is an auditor for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. He started a paperless initiative there—and since his department involves medical records, going paperless is huge.

There are countless stories like this from students in the UW Sustainable Management program: [One led a $1.7 million project](https://sustain.wisconsin.edu/blog/sustainability-student-perspectives-air-force/) to convert his Air Force base’s airfield lighting system to LED. Another works at Goodwill and has drastically improved the recycling program for scrap glass.

Employers are more willing to hire sustainability professionals if they think they’re getting an innovator who can help them do business better. And, in developing sustainability projects at your current workplace, you could convince upper management to carve out a new position for you. A [2013 survey by Greenbiz](https://www.greenbiz.com/blog/2013/09/05/how-make-career-change-sustainability-management) showed that 55 percent of corporate responsibility and sustainability professionals were internal hires.

## ****5. Get LEED certified.****

Passion and credentials go a long way. If you have a [sustainable management degree](https://sustain.wisconsin.edu/)and are interested in specializing in green building or environmental design, look into[LEED certification](http://www.usgbc.org/credentials). To employers, a LEED credential signifies that you’re a leader in the green building movement—and that you’re committed to professional growth.

The U.S. Green Building Council offers five different LEED certification specialties: building design and construction, operations and maintenance, interior design and construction, neighborhood development, and homes. Each specialty has its own exam, which costs anywhere from $250 to $550 to take.

## ****6. Join a sustainability association.****

Just like volunteering, joining a sustainability association is all about making connections and showing your commitment.

1. [Small Business](https://smallbusiness.chron.com/)»
2. [Business & Workplace Regulations](https://smallbusiness.chron.com/business-workplace-regulations/)»
3. [Workplace Health & Safety](https://smallbusiness.chron.com/workplace-health-safety/)»

# The Importance of Training & Development in the Workplace

by Shelley Frost; Updated June 30, 2018



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Training presents a prime opportunity to expand the knowledge base of all employees, but many employers find the development opportunities expensive. Employees also miss out on work time while attending training sessions, which may delay the completion of projects. Despite the potential drawbacks, training and development provides both the company as a whole and the individual employees with benefits that make the cost and time a worthwhile investment.

### Addressing Weaknesses

Most employees have some weaknesses in their workplace skills. A training program allows you to strengthen those skills that each employee needs to improve. A development program brings all employees to a higher level so they all have similar skills and knowledge. This helps reduce any weak links within the company who rely heavily on others to complete basic work tasks. Providing the necessary training creates an overall knowledgeable staff with employees who can take over for one another as needed, work on teams or work independently without constant help and supervision from others.

### Improved Employee Performance

An employee who receives the necessary training is better able to perform her job. She becomes more aware of safety practices and proper procedures for basic tasks. The training may also build the employee's confidence because she has a stronger understanding of the industry and the responsibilities of her job. This confidence may push her to perform even better and think of new ideas that help her excel. Continuous training also keeps your employees on the cutting edge of industry developments. Employees who are competent and on top of changing industry standards help your company hold a position as a leader and strong competitor within the industry.

### Consistency

A structured training and development program ensures that employees have a consistent experience and background knowledge. The consistency is particularly relevant for the company's basic policies and procedures. All employees need to be aware of the expectations and procedures within the company. This includes safety, discrimination and administrative tasks. Putting all employees through regular training in these areas ensures that all staff members at least have exposure to the information.

### Employee Satisfaction

Employees with access to training and development programs have the advantage over employees in other companies who are left to seek out training opportunities on their own. The investment in training that a company makes shows the employees they are valued. The training creates a supportive workplace. Employees may gain access to training they wouldn't have otherwise known about or sought out themselves. Employees who feel appreciated and challenged through training opportunities may feel more satisfaction toward their jobs.