

Project Evaluation

Evaluating a project means performing a rigorous analysis of completed goals, objectives and activities to determine whether the project has produced planned results, delivered expected benefits, and made desired change. As a process, project evaluation takes a series of steps to identify and measure the outcomes and impacts resulted from project completion.

The project evaluation process involves an analysis of different components or indicators that characterize the project's progress towards the achievement of its goals and objectives. These components/indicators are *Outcomes and Impacts*.

These are any measurable and auditable changes that can be obtained as a result of the project's successful accomplishment. They determine the extent to which the identified problems have been mitigated, resolved, or eliminated.

In terms of project evaluation and management, outcomes define the measurable *results and benefits* that are observable within the targeted environment once the project is done. They serve as the general indicator of project progress towards successful implementation of project goals and objectives. Outcomes describe short-term and medium-term effects generated by the project.

Self-Management and Maintaining Commitment to Personal Development

The following are some suggestions of skills and attributes that will help in maintaining your momentum and commitment to achieving your personal development goals and objectives:

Effective Time Management

Suboptimal use of the time you have available is a major contributory factor in failing to achieve personal development goals and objectives. Implementation of good time management skills is an important element of achieving success.

A major absorber of time and therefore a key element of time management - one that everyone falls prey to on occasion - is wasting time. The first stage in reducing or eliminating activity that wastes time is to recognise when you are falling into the traps!

Below is a list of things that could contribute to unnecessary absorption of time. Annotate those that you feel apply to you and identify the 3 most significant for you. Make a commitment to reducing those time-wasting activities. What else might you add to the list?

| | Applies to you (Y/N) | 3 most significant (✓) |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Poor prioritisation of tasks | | |
| Failure to delegate effectively | | |
| Unnecessary or protracted meetings | | |
| Receiving insufficient information | | |
| Difficulty saying no | | |
| Talking to much/too often | | |
| Feeling you must do jobs yourself | | |
| Difficult relationships | | |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Feeling you must jobs yourself | | |
| Lack of clarity on objectives | | |
| Procrastinating/postponed decisions | | |
| Lack of feedback | | |
| Insufficient time allocated to tasks | | |
| Inexperienced under trained staff | | |
| Interruption by supervisors/managers | | |

Time Management 'Top Tips':

- Set up and use a prioritised 'To Do List'
- Use time when driving to think
- Plan your day, set yourself targets
- Tackle important tasks during your 'prime time' when your brain is in its best condition
- Tidy your workspace at the end of each day
- Use gaps in the day to catch up with simple tasks
- Note how long things take to complete
- Find a daily quiet time of at least 15 minutes to think
- Become comfortable saying 'no'
- Ask yourself, 'should I be doing this, and should I be doing it now?'
- Communicate vertically and horizontally
- Delegate as much as possible - ask yourself, is this task peculiarly mine or could someone else do it?

Planning

The key planning tool for managing your personal development will be your personal development plan. Remember it is a 'living document', so revise it regularly and track your progress. Duplicate the targets in your diary. Plan in time to work on your development. Maybe a regular time each week. Diarise regular reviews with a trusted mentor, supervisor or coach.

Motivation

Focus on the result; picturing your success can really help with motivation. Break down the big goals into smaller bite sized chunks. One of the most effective motivators according to Hertzberg was 'achievement'. Achieving those little goals and celebrating your successes along the way will help you maintain your impetus and enthusiasm. Regular sharing of your goals and your progress with your trusted mentor, supervisor or coach provides an anchor - someone to hold you accountable. Creating a high level of accountability gives you less opportunity to let your objectives drift. You will also have the

opportunity to use your trusted person as a sounding board to help untangle complexity and keep you focused.

Evaluating your Personal Development and Practice

The ultimate value of personal development comes in the transfer of new skills or knowledge into the workplace to elevate performance. A period of time is required to consolidate and apply learning - generally 3-6 months. Regular review of personal development is an important element in maintaining focus and momentum towards achieving your personal development goals. Having a structured approach to evaluating your performance and progress provides away to benchmark your development and assess the results of your efforts.

There are a range of processes by which your progress could be benchmarked or evaluated:

- Manager/Peer Review - asking for feedback on how your performance has improved in areas you have been focusing on within your personal development. 360 appraisals, if used in your organisation, could be a valuable source of evaluation from peers, subordinates and managers.
- Performance in formal development programmes including results of formal assessment, exams and coursework.
- Undertaking a Strengths and Weaknesses Audit. Earlier in the workbook, Personal SWOT analysis was introduced. The SWOT analysis you create at commencement of a personal development period can be used to evaluate progress at various stages throughout your development particularly if you incorporate a scaled set of measures, to score your performance on a scale of, say, 1-10. For example, adapting the SWOT table.

Assessing your own Performance through Feedback and Reflection

Through systematically reflecting on your application of personal development, you can make big improvements. Taking time to reflect on each significant interaction you are involved in will reap dividends in terms of improving your performance and serve as a basis for consideration of further development. The reflective cycle should be an ongoing process of personal development followed by implementation of your development activity into working practice with review and reflection on how it went and how you might have done it differently, followed by reapplication of the learning. The simplified process is depicted below:



Personal Development Plans

The following section will give you guidance on the Personal Development Plan, what it is? and how you can utilise it in support of your professional aspirations. 3 key questions to ask yourself.....

1. What is a Personal Development Plan (PDP)?

A PDP is just another name for a plan of action, only this one refers specifically to your aspirations regarding personal development. We make plans every day, but do not always write them down; a PDP allows you to set your own personal targets and find the best way to achieve them.

2. Why Should I have one?

An action plan will help you to visualise what you are doing and keep track of your achievements. To be totally effective, it must be a fluid document that is reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that it is always accurate, relevant and realistic.

1. How can I write one to reflect my own aspirations?

You now have 2 options. Some of you may feel confident enough to go straight ahead and fill in a PDP, you may need a little more time to consider the various factors that will affect your future decisions. If this is the case, take some time to go through the guidance on the following pages. The questions aim to promote thought and consideration of the direction that you want to go in and the methods that you want to use. They also take account of your own personal circumstances before you decide on a course of action.

Steps to writing a PDP

Ask yourself a further 3 questions:

Where am I now?

Where do I want to be?

How can I get there?

What might stop me?

Challenge

Consider the following example and then repeat the exercise to reflect your own circumstances.

SWOT Analysis

| | |
|--|--|
| What am I good at? (Strengths) | What do I need to work on? (Weaknesses) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good interpersonal skills • Sound IT skills • Fair organisational skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pool Technical Knowledge • H&S Knowledge |
| What could help me along? (Opportunities) | What might stop me? (Threats) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending seminar soon • Plenty of exciting projects underway at work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to organisation imminent • Possible detachment • Lack of resources (money/time) |

- The above example could apply to someone wanting to improve their Technical & H&S skills (see box 2) rather than more people-based skills (see box 1).
- They could use this exercise to identify that attendance at a sport excel seminar would be an ideal solution. (see box 3).
- The skills gained are transferable and learning could continue wherever they are in the world (see box 4).

This exercise is called a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats), it can be done by an individual or an organisation to set direction for an action plan.

Where do I want to be?

This is the most exciting but also the most difficult stage to define. Only you can answer this question but be aware that there are many factors to consider when finding the solution. You may find the following questions provoke thought in many areas.....

What do I like doing? In my job, as a hobby....

What is my motive for learning? Promotion, Personal Improvement, Overcome a Learning Difficulty....

What qualifications and/or experience do I already have? Some of these may be transferable.

What method of study would suit me best? Part-time, Distance Learning, E-learning....

How much time do I have to complete my learning? Be realistic, development takes time.

What effect will studying have on my home life? Consider commitments that you already have.

Are there any imminent changes to my lifestyle? Marriage, Children, Promotion....

What will happen if I am detached or posted? Can you study anywhere in the world?

What is my ultimate goal? A qualification, personal fulfilment, career development. Up to date knowledge

How will I measure my success? Recognised qualifications, promotion, goals.....

Where can I get help and advice?

Once you have considered all of the factors, you will have decided on a future goal. This may be one single goal, or many smaller goals that make up the final solution. Either way, you have now defined the upper edge of your Learning Gap.

How can I get there?

You have now identified your Learning Gap. The question of "How can I get there?" can be answered by splitting your task into "bite-size pieces". This is a good way to plan effectively without losing sight of your overall aim and will motivate you to continue as you achieve small victories on your way to completing the final goal.