

4

HR development

STARTER

Discuss the statements below with a partner. Do you agree or disagree with them?
What aspects of HR development do you think the statements refer to? Are they key HR concepts?

- 1 'Nobody can guarantee lifetime employment, but there's a lot you can do to improve the odds.'
- 2 'Quality feedback improves performance.'
- 3 'Those most at risk of leaving are new employees.'
- 4 'All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others.'

1 Match the HR staff development practices in the box with their definitions (1–8) below.

appraisal • equal opportunity policies • flexible working practices •
induction programme • long-term individual development • mentoring •
secondment • team development

- 1 flexible working practices: to adapt the way of working (flexitime, teleworking, etc.) to suit the diverse needs of employees' lives
- 2 _____: the temporary transfer of an employee to another organization or part of the company
- 3 _____: continually updating and promoting the professional development of employees
- 4 _____: regular evaluation of an employee's performance, development requirements, and potential
- 5 _____: to maintain fair working practices and equal treatment for each employee
- 6 _____: to motivate a group of employees to work together effectively
- 7 _____: to provide an employee with an experienced person who can assist with professional development and offer support and advice
- 8 _____: to inform new staff about the company and its procedures and to help them to settle successfully into their new job

Which aspects of staff development mentioned above does your company use? Which do you think are the most effective?

AUDIO

10-13

2 Listen to four people talking about staff problems, and fill in the missing words. Then discuss with a partner what solution you would recommend for each problem.



1 You know, I only started here four months ago but I'm already thinking about leaving. Gerry, the shop floor _____¹, is always correcting me, always telling me that things are done differently here and he's so negative. He never gives me any real help. And my team is also against me. I just don't know how much longer I can cope. I don't feel in control of the _____².

Natasha: Shop floor team leader

2 Listen, I'm having _____³ with a major project. I have put together a team of marketing staff from all our different branches, not just here but all over the world, to work together to update our global marketing procedures. The problem is that nobody _____⁴ the meetings and progress is slow. Several members have already asked to leave the project.



Miguel: Marketing director



3 I need help with a problem employee. He's making a lot of mistakes and is argumentative with _____⁵. What's more, he's taken 20 days' sick leave in the last year and other employees are complaining about it. Several clients have also recently _____⁶ about his attitude.

Janet: Departmental manager

4 I've been here seven years and I desperately need some training on the latest _____⁷ and accounting procedures in my field. I'm now coordinating an international project and it's embarrassing that I know almost nothing about E.U. law. My boss tells me we're too busy for training _____⁸, but it's essential that I'm totally up to date. What do you recommend? Can you talk to my boss?



Holger: Project manager

Now listen again and match the problem with the most appropriate solution below.

Development solutions

- a We are so global in our business approaches, I recommend that we introduce team development training for our managers and staff generally. My proposal is to put it on the agenda for the international managers meeting in three weeks' time.
- b It's essential that we enable our employees to broaden their professional skills and keep up to date in their field of work. We'll lose staff if we continue to expect them to muddle through without investing in their – and our – future!
- c Clearly this should be dealt with by the manager personally! It's high time we introduced a staff appraisal scheme. This is long overdue and will focus managers' minds on the development and evaluation of their employees and hopefully avoid a lot of communication problems like this one.
- d In order to avoid problems like this, we need to introduce an induction programme to inform and empower new employees. Maybe we should look into the benefits of a mentoring scheme too.

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Making recommendations

We need to introduce ...

My proposal is to put/is that we put ...

Maybe we should also look into ...

I propose introducing/that we introduce ...

It's essential to take up/that we take up references ...

I (can) recommend talking/that we talk ...

It's high time (that) we introduced ...

3 Study the useful language for making recommendations above. Then use the following phrases to make recommendations about staff development issues of your own.

I recommend hiring _____.

It's *high time* we introduced _____.It's *essential* client needs _____.Obviously we *need to* ensure that _____.Maybe *we should* also _____.Having studied the problem and discussed it with my staff, *I propose* _____.My *proposal* is that we _____.**4 Now use the language above to make recommendations. Discuss with a partner what HR development you would recommend for these staff problems.**

- 1 A female accountant has complained that her salary is lower than two other male employees who do the same work. She was promoted to the job five years ago, is very well qualified, and has been with the company longer than one of the two men.
- 2 A long-established company has lost some good employees recently because they found it impossible to balance their working lives with the demands of their family life. There is currently no flexitime, very few part-time jobs, and only one male employee has taken paternity leave to look after his child due to the negative feeling about such practices.
- 3 An engineering company has lost a number of international contracts that it expected to win. The sales manager suspects it is because the engineers find it difficult to communicate their ideas in presentations in English. Their written English is good and they do not have a lot of time to study.
- 4 An editor has developed severe pain in his arm. He finds his workstation inappropriate and wants new furniture. The cost of the furniture is £2000. He is working on a very important project and it would not be good for him to take time off at this stage.

5 Below are some of the reasons why companies introduce appraisal schemes. Match the correct heading (a–d) with the sentences.

- a Succession planning
- b Motivating staff
- c Improving performance
- d Encouraging better communication

- 1 To give feedback on what employees are achieving already and enable them to do their job better.
- 2 To enable companies to identify potential for future promotion and focus on certain individuals.
- 3 To promote better contact between managers and their staff.
- 4 Open feedback and setting targets for the future, generally encourages staff.



6 Gaby Meyer, a line manager at Aus-pharma, is carrying out an appraisal interview with Peter Grahame, an employee from the Edinburgh branch who is on secondment in Vienna for two years. Listen to their conversation. Put the problems and solutions they discuss below the appropriate appraisal goal.

Peter and Gaby need to improve communication • Peter needs to delegate more
 • 25% down for six months • arrange a meeting with the team • get your team's output up to scratch • Gaby is always busy • Antonio to have cultural training • meet weekly for a while • Peter to have leadership training



Motivating staff

Improving performance

Encouraging better communication



7 Listen to the interview again and using the words below, complete the appraisal report on Peter Grahame. Decide on the last two action points yourself and then compare them with a partner.

- communicate • cultural • decrease • delegate • leadership • long-term sickness • production director • overtime • relationships • skills • training manager • to detail

Aus-pharma AG

Appraisal Report

Name: Peter Grahame
 Appraiser: Gaby Meyer
 Date: 12 December 20..

Job title: Team Leader (bottling)
 Location: Vienna
 Date of last appraisal: na

Strengths:

Attention _____¹, excellent. Accuracy, good.
 Peter feels he doesn't have any problems with staff _____².
 Wife now in employment of her choice.

Weaknesses:

Peter doesn't always _____³ to team members and this causes overwork for himself and thus a _____⁴ in output. Communication _____⁵ need attention.

Problems:

Decrease in output caused by Antonio's _____⁶, inability of other team members to work _____⁷, shortage of staff in the team. Peter didn't feel able to _____⁸ with me. Antonio needs _____⁹ training (as does all the team!).

Action:

- 1 Speak to _____¹⁰ about:
 - temporary transfer of member of staff to Peter's team.
 - _____¹¹ skills and time management training for Peter.
- 2 Talk to _____¹² about cultural training for all of Peter's team.
- 3 _____¹³.
- 4 _____¹⁴.

Signed: Appraiser _____ Appraisee _____

8 Match these expressions from the dialogue with their definitions.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1 to pay attention to detail | a to make sth as good as it can be |
| 2 to get a little behind | b to notice and deal with small individual facts |
| 3 to be on target | c to feel happy in a new environment |
| 4 to raise an issue | d to be at the exact level predicted |
| 5 to get sth up to scratch | e to mention sth for people to discuss |
| 6 to settle in | f to be slower than expected |

USEFUL LANGUAGE

The language of appraisal interviews

The idea of appraisal is to put the wrongs right and then look forward. Questions should always be formulated carefully to avoid upsetting the appraisee during the interview. Being diplomatic and using language to soften disagreement also helps to create a 'positive' environment.

Being diplomatic

- Use *would*, *could*, and *may* to make statements less direct: *That would/could/may be very difficult.* (Not: ~~*That is very difficult.*~~)
- Avoid negative words like *terrible*, *awful*, *very bad*. (Not: ~~*That's a terrible attitude.*~~) Instead use *not very* plus a positive word: *That's not a very positive attitude.*

Appraisal questions

- Could you tell me (how things are going with ...)?*
- How do you see (your team developing in ...)?*
- Would you like to give me more details about ...?*

When did you realize that ...?

Would you mind giving me more information on ...?

Is there anything else we should talk about?

Softening disagreement

With respect, I think ...

To be quite frank, Sven, I don't think ...

Frankly, we should deal with that differently ...

I respect your opinion, but ...

I'm afraid we can't/I'm sorry but we can't ...

You have a point there, but ...

To a certain extent I agree, but ...

9 How can you improve these statements and questions from an appraisal interview? Find more diplomatic equivalents in the appraisal dialogue in exercise 6.

Example: 1 *How do you see the relationship with your team?*

1 *Don't you have a good relationship with your team?*

2 *Your figures were really bad – 25% below target won't do!*

3 *You should have told me.*

4 *It's terrible you didn't even tell me about it.*

5 *The results are awful, Peter.*

6 *You just have to learn how to delegate more!*

7 *Communication with me has to improve immediately, is that clear?*

8 *So Peter – how's the wife – any happier?*

10 Now work with a partner to practise an appraisal interview with a member of staff who is unhappy in his or her job. Either use the profiles in the Partner Files or think of a situation of your own.

PARTNER FILES

Partner A File 04, p. 60
Partner B File 04, p. 62

USEFUL LANGUAGE

Asking about the job

I'd like you to tell me how you see your progress over the last year.
Has there been anything you have found difficult to cope with?
How are things with the rest of the department?
What do you like most about your work?

Talking about problems

Unfortunately, there have been some problems. There seems to be a personality problem between myself and someone in the department.
Well, actually, someone is making life rather unpleasant for me.
I didn't feel able to talk to you about it earlier.

11 Match the headings to these short descriptions of four training courses.

Assertive leadership skills

Leadership and team building

Managing your time

Balancing priorities and managing projects

1

Being a competent leader means being able to motivate and get things done. The course includes decision-making, diplomacy, and being sensitive to the needs of others.
(8-hour 1-day course)

2

Learn how to set priorities, control your workload, and complete tasks on time. Identify what's important and fulfil targets and objectives more effectively in less time.
(1-day seminar)

3

Successful leaders know how to ...
• handle people effectively and get results.
• deal with conflicts and communicate confidently.
• earn the respect of their peer group and their superiors.
(2-day course for managers and supervisors)

4

Prioritize and keep on top of multiple projects, manage conflicting demands, and take control over your workload. Set deadlines and stick to them. Get more done in less time than you thought possible.
(2-day seminar)

Which course would you send Peter Grahame on? Why? Discuss with a partner.

12 Match words from both sets to form word partnerships from the course descriptions above. The first one has been done for you.

- 1 competent
- 2 peer
- 3 to take
- 4 to get
- 5 to set
- 6 to complete
- 7 to fulfil
- 8 to handle

priorities

control

group

people

results

leader

targets

tasks

13 In pairs, design a one-day 'time management' course for a department in your company. Write an introduction as in the examples on page 39 and a short list of the contents. (Try to use a few of the word partnerships in exercise 12.) Present your results and compare with others in the group.

14 Word families: Complete the following sentences with words related to the key words. (You might need to add prefixes or suffixes and change the form.)

equal

- 1 _____ pay for men and women is still a big issue in some sectors of business.
- 2 All personnel are subject to the same rules, so everybody is dealt with _____.
- 3 The Race Relations Act is about doing away with _____ and discrimination.

appraise

- 4 If we introduce an _____ scheme, we must offer training on interviewing techniques and managing the scheme.
- 5 The people doing the interviews are the _____ and the people being assessed are the _____.

15 Where would you expect to find the following statements written? Do you find similar statements in your company or other companies in your country? What is your reaction to them?

"... striving to be an equal opportunities employer and service provider. We are working towards a workforce that reflects the wider community and actively encourages job applications from under-represented groups."

"... committed to Equal Opportunities & Investors in People."

"... offers flexible patterns of work including job-sharing, part-time, and short-term contracts and is working towards equality of opportunity for all."

"... we value having a workforce as diverse as the city we serve. We therefore welcome, develop, and promote people from all sections of the community."

"... our policy is that all people receive equal treatment regardless of their sex, marital status, sexuality, race, creed, colour, ethnic or national origin, or disability."



OUTPUT

Read the following article from an equal opportunities website.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with a navigation menu at the top: Site map | Site help | Contact us | Advanced search | What's new | Glossary | Coming soon. On the left, there is a vertical menu with categories: About us, Age, Childcare, Disability, Gender, Harassment, Race, Religion and belief, and Sexuality. The main content area features the title "Equal opportunities versus diversity ..." in large blue font. Below the title, a paragraph explains that U.K. companies are encouraged to publish equal opportunity policies. A bulleted list follows, detailing protected characteristics: race, ethnic origin, nationality, sexual orientation, gender, disability, age, trade union membership, marital or family status, and religion or religious belief. The article then compares this to 'managing diversity', which focuses on respecting and maximizing potential. An illustration shows a man in a suit talking to a green alien, with a speech bubble saying, "I'm sure we can find you a position in our sorting office." At the bottom left, there is a box titled "Equality checklists for Managers & Supervisors" with a checkmark icon. The browser's address bar and various icons are visible at the top.

Equal opportunities versus diversity ...

Companies in the U.K. are encouraged to publish equal opportunity policies which show that they are equal opportunities employers and do not harass, victimize, or discriminate against people (whether employees, applicants for employment, customers, service providers, or members of the public) because of:

- race, ethnic origin, nationality
- sexual orientation
- gender
- disability
- age
- trade union membership
- marital or family status
- religion or religious belief

How does this differ from 'managing diversity'? Managing diversity is about respecting people and helping them to maximize their potential. Unlike 'equal opportunities', it does not focus on specific groups of people, nor does it only address situations where direct discrimination may occur. Diversity acknowledges that the differences people bring to a job may enhance the business and furthermore that their perspectives and ideas can improve the overall quality of the workplace. In other words, diversity recognizes the benefits of differences and, to provide for these differences, allows for such things as flexible working hours, time off for caring for dependants, paternity freedom, and doing away with age criteria.

I'm sure we can find you a position in our sorting office.

Equality checklists for Managers & Supervisors

OVER TO YOU

According to the article, what is the reason for publishing equal opportunity statements?
 Do you think such statements add value to the reputation of a company?
 How many companies that you know of are actively involved in diversity? How is it dealt with in your organization?