

# Learning Buddy

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## Personal Development

### WHAT IS IT

This Guide explains how a Learning Buddy can help another individual grow from 'dependence' to 'independence'.

A Learning Buddy can provide a meaningful discussion with someone else, often a peer, where the aim is to help one person develop their skills and knowledge and improve performance. It assumes that the Learning Buddy is the more experienced individual and is motivated to help develop the other person.

### WHY USE IT

Most individuals can benefit from a shared approach to improving their job performance and normally a Learning Buddy, who is not their direct manager, can be a very simple but effective tool.

## BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

### 1. WHEN TO USE

A Learning Buddy can be particularly beneficial to an individual during:-

- job orientation
- when assigned new job accountabilities
- before the start to a new task
- changed methods or procedures

### 2. HOW TO USE

A Manager may assign a Learning Buddy to an individual, alternatively the individual is free to select a Buddy themselves when one has not been pre-assigned. In this latter case, use the subject area for the required learning to select the Buddy together with consideration for their availability and willingness to fulfil such responsibilities.

Effective guidance and feedback from the Buddy has many benefits and some basic tips and techniques for delivering effective feedback include:

- Being **specific and objective** when discussing undesired performance
- Providing feedback privately and preserving **confidentiality**
- Not postponing feedback, but talking to the individual **as soon as possible** after the performance occurs.
- Focusing on **desired behaviour** not personality traits
- Catching the individual **'doing it right'**
- Looking for **opportunities to re-enforce** behaviour change and improvement
- Using "I" statements - **own your message**. Rather than saying, "You need to improve..." say, "I'd like to see you try..."
- Encouraging the **individual to participate** and offer possible solutions
- Agree on **one solution**; the individual summarises your discussion.

### 3. EVALUATION

The individual should evaluate the effectiveness of the relationship and the impact on performance by focusing on specific measures such as:

- Review of specific examples of how they have incorporated feedback and advice received into performance
- Achievement of Performance Objectives
- Achievement of Development Objectives

### 4. TOP TIPS

<b>For the Individual</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work towards an effective relationship with your Buddy</li> <li>● Take ownership of your learning</li> <li>● Be open and honest with how you are feeling</li> <li>● Accept feedback in a constructive way and learn from it</li> </ul>
<b>For the Learning Buddy</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Divide the overall learning up into do-able chunks</li> <li>● Provide a sounding board for the individual whenever required</li> <li>● Keep discussions private</li> <li>● Practice active-listening and observing</li> <li>● Work in the interests of the individual and their employer</li> <li>● Support the individual at all times</li> </ul>

### NEXT STEPS

We trust that this Success Guide will assist your personal development and help build your capability and performance

You may find some of our other Success Guides of value for your Personal or Career Development. For your convenience we list these below and you can access the index for these via the link below:-

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- Secondment
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