

Off the Job Development

Personal Development

WHAT IS IT

This Guide focuses on the many opportunities for Off the Job Development outside of the normal workplace to develop and improve current levels of knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Examples of such opportunities include:

- Committee membership for a Professional Institution (local or national)
- Committee membership for a University, College or School
- Committee membership for a Special Interest club or society
- Active member of a Business Best Practice association
- Appointment as a Non-Executive board or Lay member for a company or charitable body
- Representative on a local civic, health, or government group
- Representative on a church / religious order group
- Leader for a young persons group such as Scouts
- Volunteer within the Community, Hospital, Hospice, Charity
- Volunteer with Reserved Forces
- Sports coach, referee, event organiser

Each one of these experiences provides a Leader with opportunities for personal growth.

NOTE: As part of the process for considering the suitability of some of the above options, the individual should consider if their employer has an HR policy that may relate to pursuing that option. In such cases the individual should consult the relevant HR policy to ensure avoidance of potential 'conflicts of interest' and for guidance on any special leave arrangements that may be applicable. An individual's manager must also approve in advance any time-off arrangements that may be applicable.

WHY USE IT

The benefits of such development opportunities are similar to 'on-the-job' assignments except the individual needs to undertake some interpretation of the learning experiences in order to transfer this into their job accountabilities. The similarity is focused around 'learning by doing' with experience being the best teacher.

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

1. WHEN TO USE

'Off the Job' Opportunities, if selected carefully, can all be utilised to play an effective role in stimulating learning and growth through challenge-driven 'off-the-job' experiences.

Utilisation of 'off-the-job' opportunities should not be considered as cheap or inferior options when compared to other options such as attendance at workshops or conferences. Their selection can often be blended with other options to help maximise the overall impact of development on performance results.

2. HOW TO USE

STEP 1

- Identify the development need and consider the most suitable blend of development opportunities to support this need.
- Be completely open-minded to the potential value of 'off-the-job' opportunities in comparison with other development options.

STEP 2

- When an off-the-job development opportunity seems to be quite a strong option consider what types of 'off-the-job' opportunity may be possible.
- Generate as many options as possible using a brain storming approach with a colleague, learning buddy, friend, partner or manager. Aim for quantity and try do not be judgemental at this stage.
- Review and evaluate each opportunity in turn by applying a rating for strength of alignment to your original development need, and key practical factors such as availability of opportunity, physical demands, costs, work-life balance, strength of personal interest etc

STEP 3

- Review the results of the rating exercise and produce a short-list of the most suitable opportunities.
- Explore the suitability of the short-listed opportunities in more detail by:
 - additional in-depth research,
 - consideration against your main development objective,
 - fit with other options you plan to blend with,
 - response from others you asked for feedback,
 - consideration as a result of reviewing any applicable HR policy
- Select the most suitable option and progress application, enrolment, sponsorship for election etc through to actual participation in the selected activity.

STEP 4

- Implement your selected off the Job Opportunity.
- Feel free to experiment. For example:
 - If your development objective was to 'build your confidence' and
 - You selected participation in an amateur dramatics group and
 - You commenced with a role in the group's chorus line, then
 - You could progress and audition for a lead role in a forthcoming production

- Continually reflect upon your 'off-the-job' experiences and draw learning from these experiences that you feel confident in being able to transfer back into your job role.
- Maintain a logbook of these learning experiences to assist with the transfer of skills.

STEP 5

- Transfer the learning you gained from your 'off-the-job' experiences, together with the learning you obtained from other blended options, to your job accountabilities. Obtain feedback from your manager, learning buddy, or colleagues on actual performance.
- Evaluate this feedback, together with your own assessment, against the original development objective and assess the need for any further development to improve performance to the preferred standard.

3. EVALUATION

As part of the process for implementing the 'Off the Job' Opportunities the individual should agree Smart Development Objectives. These should include quantifiable factors that can be used for evaluation.

4. TOP TIPS

The examples in the following table illustrate a small selection of off-the-job opportunities that could be used to stimulate an individual's thoughts when deciding the most suitable option for their needs. The following development needs focus on a range of example behaviours.

Examples of Development Needs	Possible Off-the-Job Development Opportunities
Information Search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best-Practice Associations • Committee Member - Professional Association
Creating Business Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Executive Director • Committee Member – Fund raising group
Flexible Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Member – Fund raising group • Local Stock holder group
Building Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Member - Community Group i.e. Rotary • Civic Community Representative
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Executive Director • Volunteer Leader - Reserved Forces
Developing People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports coach • Leader for young persons group e.g. Scouts
Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counsellor for Samaritans • Civic Community Representative
Building Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amateur dramatics society

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mountain, Lake, Sea Rescue team
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amateur dramatics society • Hospice, Hospital Volunteer
Enable & Drive Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Practice Association • University / College / School Governor

NEXT STEPS

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

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