



Chartered Institute
of Personnel and
Development

Focus on the learner



The change agenda



INTRODUCTION

This Change Agenda considers some practical implications of a powerful proposition. The proposition can be stated as follows:

‘New business forces demand a different approach to the development of employees. Capable and committed people have become the critical source of competitive advantage. Emphasis must be shifted from training as a series of top-down interventions to a focus on individual learning.’

In short, a shift from training to learning in organisations is taking place and we must understand the implications and adjust to the consequences.¹

If this shift from training to learning is taking place, the implications are profound. Managing learning demands a new approach from the human resources development/training professional.

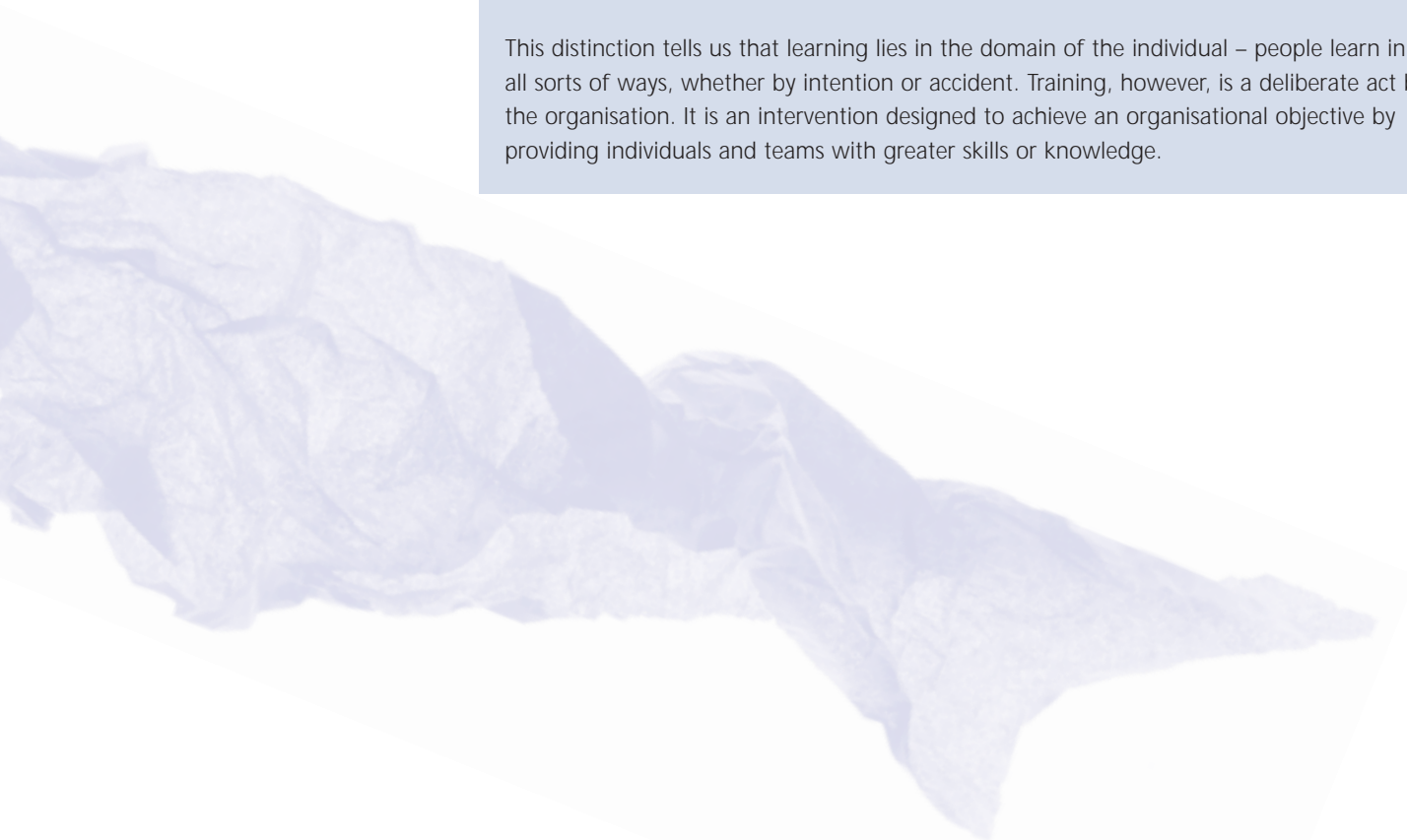
To identify some of the steps that can be taken to effect this transition, the CIPD invited 12 organisations to participate in a short project.² We are most grateful to them for their co-operation and for their willingness to share information and ideas.

This Change Agenda will consider the issues raised by these 12 case-study organisations, in the hope that this will help others generate their own agendas. First, however, the underlying premise will be examined further: is the shift from training to learning happening and, if so, does it matter?

To quote from the CIPD Research Report, *How Do People Learn?*:

‘Learning is the process by which a person constructs new knowledge, skills and capabilities, whereas training is one of several responses an organisation can undertake to promote learning.’³

This distinction tells us that learning lies in the domain of the individual – people learn in all sorts of ways, whether by intention or accident. Training, however, is a deliberate act by the organisation. It is an intervention designed to achieve an organisational objective by providing individuals and teams with greater skills or knowledge.



FROM TRAINING TO LEARNING

The field work for this project was undertaken in spring 2003. Participating organisations were asked if they recognised a shift from training to learning as a desirable and realistic objective.

The starting point for the project was a recognition that if there was to be a planned shift to a focus on the learner, some tangible activities must be taking place. Mere intentions and aspirations are not enough. Something must be happening. The participants were therefore offered a list of interventions and activities which could move towards a focus on the learner. They were asked which of these interventions were the subject of current interest in their organisation (for further details, see Note 1).

The findings from the project revealed that organisations felt that it is possible to advance. It is possible to move from a position where individuals expect training to be delivered to them, to one where individuals will take responsibility for their own knowledge and skills development. Although the emphasis varied across the organisations, three activities seemed to be high on everyone's list. These were:

- line managers being expected to act as coaches and receiving training to ensure they had the requisite coaching skills
- an increasing emphasis on competency frameworks
- efforts to deliver training in a more modular form.

These three together could be said to be the focus of current attention and action.

Before looking in detail at these three areas, it is helpful to consider why the transition was considered to be important. Discussions with the organisations that took part in the study revealed two reasons, which, while conceptually different, are inextricably linked in practice.

The first reason reflects the changing nature of competition. In today's business models, people are indeed an organisation's most important asset. This can be expressed more precisely in the following terms: **Committed individuals who understand the organisation's objectives, have the requisite skills, and operate in an environment where they have the opportunity to take the appropriate discretionary behaviour, create powerful business advantages which can be very difficult for a competitor to duplicate.**

What is important here is the word 'discretionary'. In the modern environment, more people interact directly with customers, clients or consumers (whichever term is preferred). They need the knowledge, skills and attitude to determine what needs to be done and to deliver in fast-moving situations. Simply waiting for training to be instigated by the organisation is no longer enough. One feature of appropriate discretionary behaviour is a willingness, indeed a desire, to acquire new skills by learning, as an individual or from other team members. This sentiment came through again and again from the project organisations, though the varied nature of the organisations meant that it was articulated in many different ways.

WHY EMPHASISE LEARNING?

'Because of the nature of the business we can't train everyone to do everything. The emphasis is on getting people to learn within the environment where they work and getting them to adapt and apply that knowledge. In the hospitality industry, probably more than any other service industry, every customer (guest) has different expectations. There is no way we can train for every eventuality. We want our staff to be spontaneous and react and respond to guest expectations.'

Lorna McKee, Area HR Manager, Hilton Belfast

'This switch is not a good thing, it is essential. If someone just turns up on a course they have no commitment.'

Clare Macleod, HR Manager, Hilton Dublin

'If we do not get this right, people will join the local authority and fail to develop (or even shrink in terms of performance). The shift from training to learning is essential for effective human resource planning, for example, succession management.'

Peter Dennett, IT Training Manager, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

'The traditional model of "it's on the course menu or if it isn't you'll have to do it yourself" is no longer appropriate.'

Helen Cairns, Business Manager, HR Training and Development, Dunfermline Building Society

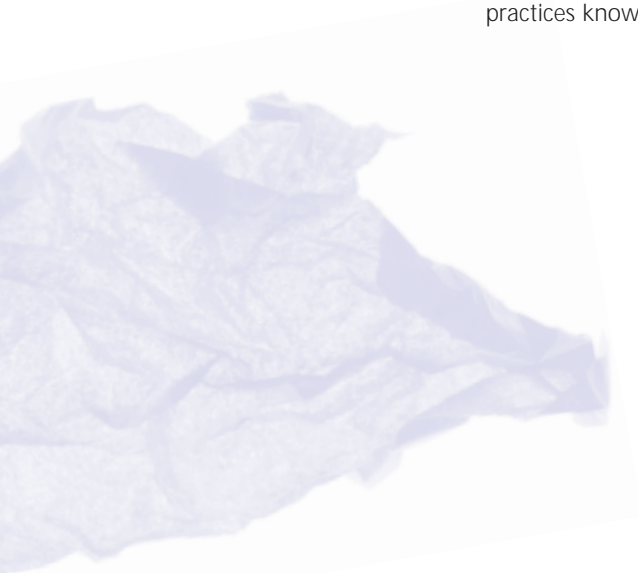
'Training is something that is done to you, learning is what should happen as a result. On that definition, if you are to develop the individual skills that support the business, learning must take place.'

Sue Lenkowski, Training and Development Manager, Irwin Mitchell

'Ultimately our success depends on the relationship with the customer. We need to shift the emphasis of our first-level managers. We want them to really pay attention to the quality of their relationship with their team so that they in turn have the best opportunity to create a great experience for our customer.'

Marcus Powell, Head of Learning and Development, Marks & Spencer Group plc

This emphasis on the acquisition of new knowledge and skills through learning is not just a feature of service industries. Two of the project organisations who had adopted deliberate learning strategies, INA Bearing Company Limited and DARA, mostly employed traditional blue-collar workers. Individual and team learning have become key elements of a set of practices known as high-performance working (HPW).⁴



STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING

INA Bearing Company Limited

INA Bearing Company Limited is a subsidiary of a privately owned German engineering group. At its UK manufacturing facility in Llanelli, West Wales, where bearings and precision engine components are produced, it employs 360 people. The business has faced a particularly challenging time. In the 1990s it experienced rapid growth. In the last three years, the company has been faced with increasing competition from low-labour-cost countries as group production capacity has been placed in eastern Europe (Slovakia and Romania) where wages are a fraction of those in the UK.

INA Bearing Company Limited has responded by seeking to compete through developing the capability to deliver higher-value-added products. There has been a planned and sustained focus on continuous improvement, cost reduction and, as an integral component of the process, a sustained attempt to upskill the workforce.

The change process began with a management off-site strategy day held in March 2001. The culture change programme developed there identified 'production location of choice' as the vision for the Llanelli plant. 'Integrity, innovation, respect, commitment and passion' were identified as values. A series of initiatives were put in place on a planned timetable. The culture change programme involved continuous improvement, training and flexibility. Significantly, they were linked and supported by the statement, 'the rate of learning must be greater than the rate of change' (L>C).

'Previously the investment has been in machinery, now the investment is in people ...You never know what the next product will be, so you need to update the skills so that people have new techniques to cope with whatever comes their way.'

Adrian Roberts, Personnel Manager, INA Bearing Company Limited

DARA

The Defence Aviation Repair Agency (DARA) employs some 4,100 people across four sites, undertaking repair and overall maintenance of aircraft and aero systems. It is government-owned but is now established as a commercial organisation with a trading fund. The main customers are the UK services, especially the RAF, but DARA is increasingly seeking to develop new lines of business, often partnering private sector organisations. In 2002 DARA introduced a programme entitled 'New Ways of Working'; a year later DARA won the 2002 People Management Award for this programme. It started with an intervention, which was experiential and involved feedback using psychometric instruments, for the senior team. This proved successful and it has been cascaded as self-directed team training for all operating teams. Managers are trained to deliver the programme to their teams so 80 per cent of the effort is resourced in-house.

The programme is fundamentally about empowerment. Teams are encouraged to diagnose their own departmental culture and behaviour, identify constraints on team performance and develop action plans to solve them, using problem-solving techniques which they have been taught. This initiative is currently being extended beyond the shop floor to the commercial and support areas.

'Project management is an example. We could just send out the competency framework and invite people to choose if they wanted to develop project management skills; however, we would miss a whole number of people who really need such development.'

Caroline Hose, Head of Organisation and Employee Development, DARA

LEARNER PREFERENCES

The second reason why the transition from training to learning is so important is that it is taking place whether we wish to encourage it or not. It is a reflection of individual learner preferences across all sectors, but is particularly pronounced in knowledge-intensive firms.

In 2002 the CIPD published the results of a telephone survey of 750 people who had received training at work in the preceding 12 months.⁵ This showed that on-the-job training (defined in the survey as 'being shown how to do things then practising them') was by far the most popular method of learning. Just over half of all respondents reported finding it the best method. A further 16 per cent rated 'learning from colleagues and people you work with' – an informal form of on-the-job training – their best method. Hardly anyone found on-the-job training and learning from colleagues the least appealing method of learning. A significantly higher proportion of women respondents (58 per cent) than men (42 per cent) said that being shown how to do things and practising them was their most popular learning method. Although classroom training comes equal second in popularity, only 16 per cent rated it their best way of learning, not far ahead of other methods.

In 2003 the CIPD published some results of the research undertaken by the University of Bath team as part of the CIPD People and Performance study. This study considered smaller 'knowledge-intensive firms'. In these firms there is unquestionably a shift from training to learning and much more emphasis on individual responsibility for learning. In these organisations a focus on the learner is happening in practice. Formal instructor-led training, delivered internally, is not seen as important. As the study report puts it:

'Taught training courses were therefore of little value and it was only the sharing of experience in different communities within the organisation and with the client that laid a solid foundation for knowledge creation.'⁶

Generally in the knowledge-intensive firms there was an unbreakable link between learning and knowledge development – the two could not be separated as a concept or in practice. Group and team learning was pervasive. There was emphasis on the developmental aspects of performance appraisals. Mentoring and coaching were used extensively, as were developmental assignments designed to stretch the individual. Consideration was given to the provision of time to learn and, in at least one case, the opportunity to acquire new knowledge was given as a reward for effective performance.

The extent that such practices represent the way of the future is debatable. However, the tendencies evident in these knowledge-intensive firms represent a major challenge to our traditional view of learning and training. They draw our attention to the ongoing, often informal, activities that lead to learning, as opposed to the deliberate interventions that constitute training.

Can we manage such activities and, if so, how?

SOME PRACTICAL INITIATIVES

Given that learning is the domain of the learner, how can it be encouraged, guided, supported or managed? Is it not simply a matter of making learning opportunities available and hoping that willing learners embrace them?

There are at least three reasons why this is not a sensible policy.

First, because on occasion the organisation needs employees to learn something. It is a requirement of their job. Health and safety is always a good example; compliance training in the financial services is another. More generally, certain knowledge (and sometimes skills) must be acquired if the requirements of the job are to be met. As Marcus Powell, Head of Learning and Development at Marks & Spencer, puts it:

'There are certain things that staff must do in this organisation and at the end of the day that is a training requirement. How to operate a till is a good example.'

The **second** reason concerns resources. Learning interventions, however appropriate, absorb resources. Two sorts of resources are spent if employees learn: time and money. There may be the odd exception: individuals can learn in their own rather than the employer's time (on a distance-learning MBA course, for example); and learning through experience doesn't involve direct cash expenditure. However, generally resources spent on learning will compete for resources spent on other organisational objectives – some of which have a more immediate evident connection with bottom-line results.

The **third** reason is that simply making the opportunities available will not produce results. Participation in the offer will depend on individual motivation (it will be the committed volunteer who takes advantage). Many learners, whatever their predisposition towards the opportunity to learn, will require assistance and support in the process.

The organisations that participated in the project recognised the importance of individual and team learning and were taking active steps to promote this activity. As has been noted, three areas were the focus of particular attention. These three:

- coaching
- competency frameworks
- delivering training in a more modular form

are considered in turn on the following pages.



COACHING

Coaching has been recognised as a key element of individual development in organisations for some time. As a result, coaching skills have been a feature of the course menu offered by most training departments. What is new is the growing recognition that coaching is a near-essential component in the armoury of the manager's skills.

The greater emphasis on coaching activities of line managers manifests itself in several ways. First, there is a more extensive provision of training; second, such training is not exclusively the preserve of those who request it – to different degrees the acquisition of coaching skills is less likely to be seen as an optional activity; and third, initiatives may be in place to ensure that line managers undertake coaching as part of their day-to-day activity.

Coaching as a management style

In a recent CIPD book,⁷ Janice Caplan describes a coaching style in the following terms:

'A coaching style of management is not about "being the boss", giving directions and instructions and telling people what to do, how they should do it, should have done it, or jumping in with the answer. Rather, a leader's role today is to enable, encourage and facilitate so that staff have a stronger sense of control over their own work and their own time and so that they identify their own options and solutions to problems. To achieve this the manager also needs to act as a role-model of the desired behaviours. Nonetheless, there may be times when the manager will still need to be more directive with a member of staff.'

There are many reasons for coaching. These can broadly be grouped into two: coaching in spontaneous circumstances and coaching to enhance learning and development.

The aim should be for coaching to be part of how managers and staff do things on a normal, day-to-day basis. With coaching they have an opportunity to improve – the way they manage, develop their staff, plan for succession, and share knowledge and expertise. For example, they may need to help someone inexperienced to develop a new skill or to take on a new responsibility; they may need to coach a poor performer to help that person reach the desired standard; they may need to find time to help someone sort out a problem or to help someone broaden their skills and knowledge to prepare them for promotion.



Building coaching capacity

'Every two weeks all associates are expected to participate in a discussion with their managers known as a 10/10. This is a 20-minute conversation with 10 minutes input from the manager and 10 minutes input from the associate. The general support and coaching skills for managers are therefore of recognised importance to the development of the business ... Coaching is but one manifestation of the skill-set required. This capability must be delivered in a way that is appropriate to the situation: non-directive for the high performer and in a more directive approach for the low performer. Coaching skills will be a major focus of the development curriculum for managers that is being developed. This initiative has support at all levels, including the highest.'

Kevin Hogarth, Director of International Resourcing, Capital One Bank (Europe)

'One of the biggest successes, which secured a National Training Award, concerns the Sales Through Service Lead Generation programme. This was driven by the changing business requirements concerning the sale of insurance products. Classroom training was a success but results tailed off after time when participants were back in the job. Accordingly two coaches were identified and attached to the training department to support branches in their efforts. This proved so successful that seven 'branch coaches' were appointed after internal recruitment. They concentrate mainly on improving staff sales but work as performance coaches assisting staff to meet all aspects of their job. For an organisation of this size this is a big resource commitment.'

Helen Cairns, Business Manager, HR Training and Development, Dunfermline Building Society

'One consequence of the greater emphasis on the manager as coach is we will need to consider the span of control. It's no good expecting a manager in retail to coach dozens of staff members who are working across different shifts.'

Gill Rudge, Head of Human Resources, Finance Group, Marks & Spencer

COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS

Frameworks for the learner

Again, competencies have been a feature of progressive human resources development for more than a decade. What is new is their central importance as a means of providing a framework for the learner, with his or her manager, to take responsibility for their own learning. Competencies can be defined as the behaviour that employees must have or must acquire to input into a situation in order to achieve high levels of performance.⁸ The competency frameworks that organisations in the project are introducing have a clear purpose. They are designed to indicate what the good performer should be doing. One key way in which these frameworks will be judged is their use as a vehicle for an individual to identify his or her developmental needs. This process will take place in conjunction with the line manager, but the framework should be sufficiently transparent that it can be understood by the employee alone. The potential contribution of electronic technology (linked to e-learning) is evident.

In this sense, competency systems are a signal to individuals of what is required of them. They act as a link between the business model and individual contribution; they signpost appropriate discretionary behaviour. They can then be used to identify learning gaps. Given this link with the business model, it is not surprising that almost all the study organisations developed their competency frameworks themselves. They need to own them rather than have them imposed from outside.

One participating organisation expressed some misgivings on the centrality of competency frameworks. Marks & Spencer were the most advanced organisation encountered in terms of empowering the individual. Once an appropriate learning culture was in place, it was argued, employees would take advantage of as much or as little development as they wished. Given this approach, the value of competency frameworks is questionable. People deliver outcomes. They can do the job in a variety of different ways. They must be encouraged to exercise that choice.

In the view of Marcus Powell, Head of Learning and Development, the process of learning skills is, and can only be, driven by the individual:

'they make the decision to learn subconsciously ... Competency should be about developing innate skills and talents. Only the individual can do this. Published frameworks may not assist and can discourage this personal initiative to learn.'

INITIATIVES ON COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS

'The management committee of the corporate and commercial business discussed the leadership behaviours required to drive the business forward. In the course of this investigation they identified five behaviours and recognised that they should be extended beyond leadership to cover a whole range of management activities. The five behaviours were: fast-moving, results-driven, innovative, customer-centred, engaging. They are known by the acronym, "Fried Rice" ... The behaviours are integral to Zurich's performance management/review system. Traditionally, this review, leading into a salary assessment, has been based on business outcomes. However, all staff now have 20 per cent of the performance assessed against the five behaviours. Moreover, those staff who are managing other people and can be identified as those who carry out another's appraisal have an additional 10 per cent of their performance assessed in terms of how well they discharge these management responsibilities. Three component activities have been identified: performance management, talent management, learning and development.'

Ian Canning, Head of Learning and Development, Corporate and Government, Zurich Financial Services

'Competencies are a management tool. They help managers understand what is going on, how and what people are doing and how people can be developed. This gives them a level playing field in assessing staff. From this, they can recognise current gaps and future needs.'

Janet Dean, European Communications and Development Manager, Aearo Ltd

MODULAR TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Short, but sweet

Many organisations in the project reported that they were delivering basic training in shorter modules so that staff did not need to be away from the workplace for long periods. Typically, two-day courses were seen as the maximum. Some respondents were delivering soft-skills modules in two- or even one-hour blocks.

Is this tendency connected with the move from training to learning? Or is it simply good training when time is the new scarce resource? There is an argument that it is a necessary component of the shift to learning in that it offers the learner and manager more choice, takes away the pressures, and makes it easier to learn. However, modularisation can be demanding and difficult to practise, and is not always appropriate.

The challenge of modularisation

'The training team is attempting to deliver management and interpersonal management skills in chunks of one hour – for example, supervisory skills, personal assistant skills and others have all been modularised in this form. This poses a considerable challenge for the training function. There is a need to set a certain amount of information across a given time – professional standards may be pushed to the limits. Sequencing of material can be very difficult, if not impossible (some participants may arrive for module four, having missed module three). Much of this modularised training is delivered first thing in the morning, at lunchtime or immediately after work.'

Sue Lenkowksi, Training and Development Manager, Irwin Mitchell

'In some respects it is easier to arrange cover for one day than one hour. In hospital a loss of a person for an hour can be very evident in an emergency.'

Simon Tisdale, Head of Training and Development, Salford Royal Hospitals NHS Trust

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINERS

By designing, planning, implementing and monitoring appropriate initiatives or activities, it is possible to move the organisation along the continuum from training to learning. Such a journey is certainly challenging, and not without risk. The training and development professionals were all too aware of the pressures. Many of them stressed the need to create new mindsets, in some cases among their own colleagues in human resources and training departments.

Implications and risks

'One of the barriers to making that shift is the outside perception on the role of the training function. If we try to transfer ownership for training, people will say "but that's your job". They will put the onus back to me arguing that they haven't the time.'

Sue Lenkowksi, Training and Development Manager, Irwin Mitchell

'Senior managers need to understand what the implications are before you can ask them to give staff time to learn.'

Peter Dennett, IT Training Manager, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

'We need to educate people on what is training and what is learning. We need to show people that it is often the work-based experience which is the most effective form of learning. The training department will have changed from being a passive provider of training to a situation where we can identify and support learning more generally.'

Simon Tisdale, Head of Training and Development, Salford Royal Hospitals NHS Trust

'Through appraisals and their own training needs analysis in the business, they must tell us what training is needed and we discuss with them how it's delivered.'

Clare Macleod, HR Manager, Hilton Dublin

'A shift in culture, reflected in behaviour, is required. Employees must not think that the manager is a parent. They must learn to do things for themselves.'

Jill Richardson, Head of Corporate Training, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

'Our role becomes a facilitatory role rather than an ownership role. My frustration is that responsibility for training initiatives is always on my objectives, whereas in some respects it should belong to the line managers.'

Janet Dean, European Communications and Development Manager, Aearo Ltd

'Currently the function is perceived as either delivery of training or as a training administrator. Training professionals must become, and be seen to become, far more as consultants offering an advisory service. When they deliver training it will increasingly take the form of customised or bespoke solutions. In some areas there is a perception that the function exists to organise and deliver a shopping list of training courses.'

Shelagh Preston, Head of Training and Development, Crown Prosecution Service

Good judgement is required on what is possible. In moving to place more responsibility on individuals and on managers, to some extent a training department is risking its own credibility. It is possible to redefine the capabilities of the highly effective training manager in terms of what is required to manage this transition. They need a clear vision of what they want to achieve, to have secured the support of business leadership for this vision, understand the culture of their organisation, know what initiatives will be effective, and secure the resources to deliver the initiatives efficiently and effectively.

On balance the respondents in the survey organisations felt that this risk of loss of credibility was a short-term issue. In the long run, the shift from training to learning would enhance the standing of training and the trainer – the contribution of the function to the business objectives would be greater and would be seen to be greater. And learning would become recognised as a key business driver.

Two features of the transition emerged from the study regardless of organisation size or sector. They were both related to the need to create an effective platform if a move from training to learning was to take place. One concerned support from the board and senior management and a recognition of the business value of learning; the second was a requirement to meet what might be described as the essential obligations of the training department.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

The need for senior management support will come as so surprise – how often have we heard that sentiment? The project suggested that this factor could be best described as a necessary precondition before any of the others could be delivered. Generally what the project organisations had to report was good news: there was wide recognition of the importance of developing people and its links to business performance. However, there is a subtler point at issue here: when the emphasis shifts from learning to training, the board may be supportive but are they necessarily certain of the implications of what they have endorsed? The importance of this point becomes apparent when the impact of these changes on the role of the training professional, as seen by others in the organisation, is considered.

This high-level commitment would be secured by making an effective business case. At the heart of the case is the argument that investing in the self-development of people would be less costly in the long run. 'We can deliver more for less in support of the business objectives and this will result in improved performance.' Beyond that, the benefits are related to the needs of the business and must be expressed in the language of the business: 'improved speed to market', 'better quality and delivery of service', 'the creation of higher-value products' and 'cost-reduction' were among the objectives identified by survey organisations. Irrespective of the situation, the heart of the business case is that more learning is a deliverable and that this must be achieved in a real environment if it is to be implemented in the workplace.

Emphasis must be placed on both demonstrating and delivering value. Here, some new thinking may be required. Study organisations generally agreed that traditional measures of the effectiveness of training (the classical approach to evaluation) were no longer appropriate. Wider measures and metrics, which indicated the links between learning and performance, would be needed in the future. Balanced scorecards and the appropriate use of staff surveys were seen to point the way forward.

Once this high-level commitment has been secured, what is required is a significant change management programme. The key influencers and decision-makers who would need to be convinced could be located in a variety of positions at a number of different levels in an organisation. The change management process will need sensitive handling – and this may be particularly true in the public sector where overt political considerations apply.

ESSENTIAL OBLIGATIONS

The second issue, the need for the training department to meet its essential obligations, is straightforward. In almost every organisation there are some basic training requirements: these could include induction training, basic information technology (IT) training and in some cases training to meet regulatory or statutory requirements. The training function will not be able to move on to its wider strategic ambitions unless these obligations have been met effectively and are seen to have been met. Only then will deployable resources of budget and trainer's time become available. In this sense the function needs to earn the right to move forward. Once this basic platform is in place, it is possible to advance. It is possible to move from a position where individuals expect training to be delivered to them to one where individuals will take responsibility for their own knowledge and skills development.

It should be noted that there was one thing all the organisations were agreed on. The transition from training to learning may be challenging and demanding, but the end destination is compelling and attractive. Imagine an organisation composed of self-confident individuals who are seeking actively to acquire the requisite knowledge and skills that would enable them to meet customer/client requirements and advance the organisation's goals or objectives. That surely is nirvana, a state of bliss, and will be seen as such both by the chief executive and the training and development professional!

E-LEARNING Helping the transition process

E-learning, the new opportunity that has arisen from the connectivity of computers, is an enabling tool of enormous and as yet untapped potential. It is, however, just that: an enabling tool, not a complete answer in itself. In the recent past it has been shamefully oversold.

Three activities have been identified as being at the heart of the current agenda of the training managers interviewed in the course of the study: the development of coaching capacity; the introduction or extension of competency frameworks; and the modularisation of training provision. How can e-learning help these activities?

The obvious benefit that e-learning brings to competency frameworks is the instant access and transmission of up-to-date information. In this instance, what we call e-learning may be little more than an extended 'filing cabinet'. It is, however, possible to offer web-based modules linked with many of these competencies and indeed signposting to many external sources of information and assistance. Tracking of progress can also assist but – and this is an important 'but' – all except the most self-confident learner will require support or assistance in moving from such systems to embark on effective personal development.

It is even easier to see how e-learning can assist modularisation; indeed, this has been one of the most powerful arguments advanced for its introduction. 'Bite-size chunks' has entered the training lexicon to describe the short modules that can be made available on an individual's personal computer.

But how can e-learning assist in the development of a coaching provision? Here any connection is less evident, if it exists at all. True, it is possible to communicate electronically across the organisation what may be required or desired. The information content of a coaching course may be stripped out and made available in advance; in this way classroom time can be reduced and used for the face-to-face element. But that is the extent of its contribution. Mercifully, this now seems to be accepted and the rise of the term 'blended learning' seems to be recognition of the limitations of technology.

'With e-learning comes an ideal opportunity to change the role from delivery to support. This will help to alter the perception of the function.'

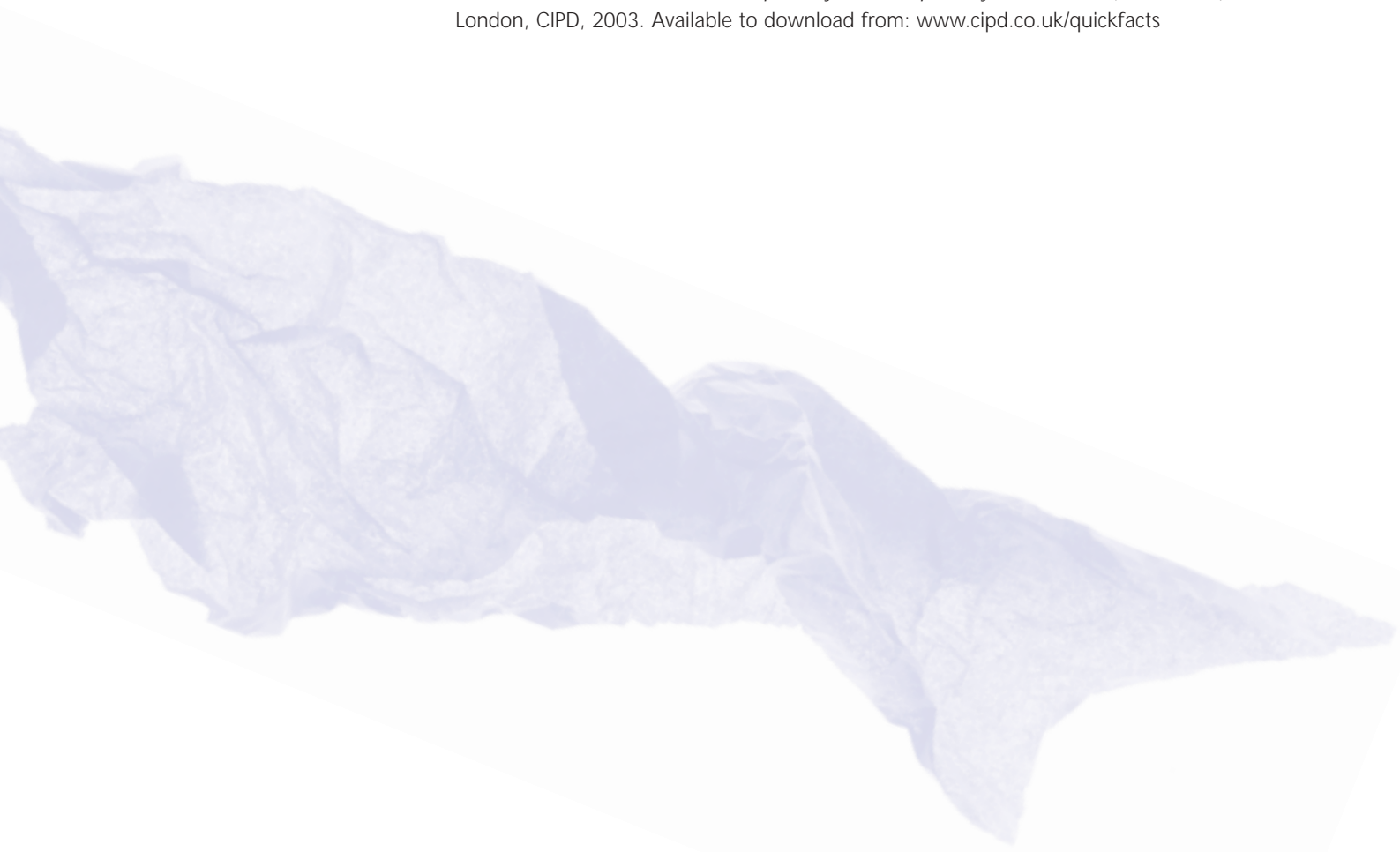
Sharron Hughes, Training Manager, Crown Prosecution Service

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- A shift in focus from training to learning is a realisable objective and can be managed.
- The main drivers of this move arise from modern business competition, but there is also evidence that employees may prefer to learn rather than be taught.
- In the long run, the shift from training to learning will enhance the standing of training and the trainer, as the contribution of the function to the business objectives will be seen to be greater.
- In the short run, a move from training to learning may carry some risk for the credibility of the training function.
- This risk can be minimised if those in senior management are aware of the implications of, and are supportive of, this transition.
- High-level commitment must be secured by making an effective business case. At the heart of the case is the argument that investing in the self-development of people will be less costly in the long run.
- The central argument in the business case is that more learning is a deliverable and that this must be achieved in a real environment if it is to be implemented in the workplace.
- Once this high-level commitment has been secured, a significant change management programme is required.
- The training function must be seen to be meeting its essential obligations before embarking on this transition.
- Three activities comprise the current transition agenda: the development of coaching capacity; the introduction or extension of competency frameworks; the modularisation of training activities.
- The shift from training to learning means that employees accept more responsibility, but the organisation will need to ensure that appropriate learning takes place.
- E-learning may emerge as an enabling mechanism to assist the transition.
- Wider measures and metrics, which indicate the links between learning and performance, would be needed in the future.
- New attitudes and approaches will be required, not least from those who work in the training function.

NOTES

- 1 All the arguments and issues outlined in this Change Agenda are considered more fully in **SLOMAN, M.** *Training in the age of the learner*. London, CIPD, 2003. Available to purchase:
 - online: www.cipd.co.uk/bookstore
 - by telephone: CIPD Publishing on: 0870 800 3366
 - by post: CIPD Publishing, Unit 5 & 6, Industrial Estate, Brecon, Powys, LD3 8LA.
- 2 The participating organisations were Aearo, Capital One Bank (Europe plc), the Crown Prosecution Service, DARA, Dunfermline Building Society, Hilton Hotels Ireland, INA Bearing Company Limited, Irwin Mitchell, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, Marks & Spencer, Salford Royal Hospitals NHS Trust, and Zurich Financial Services.
- 3 **REYNOLDS, J., CALEY, L. and MASON, R.** *How do people learn?* (Research Report). London, CIPD, 2002. 70pp. p 9. See also the Change Agenda publication with the same title.
- 4 **ASHTON, D. A. and SUNG, J.** *Supporting workplace learning for high performance working*. Geneva, International Labour Office, 2002. ix, 182pp.
- 5 **CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF PERSONNEL AND DEVELOPMENT.** *Who learns at work?* (Survey Report). London, CIPD, 2002. 16pp. Available to download from: www.cipd.co.uk/surveys
- 6 **SWART J., KINNIE, N. and PURCELL, J.** *People and performance in knowledge intensive firms* (Research Report). London, CIPD, 2003. ix, 76pp. p 71.
- 7 **CAPLAN, J.** *Coaching for the future: how smart companies use coaching and mentoring*. London, CIPD, 2003. xii, 177pp.
- 8 This definition is taken from: *Competency and competency frameworks* (Quick Facts). London, CIPD, 2003. Available to download from: www.cipd.co.uk/quickfacts





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This Change Agenda was written by **Martyn Sloman**, CIPD Adviser, Learning, Training and Development. The arguments and issues outlined are considered more fully in the CIPD publication, *Training in the Age of the Learner*.

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