The Project Management Activity Pack

- Plan your work effectively and efficiently
- Managing the budget and your time
- Develop your team-leading and interpersonal skills
- Develop a systematic approach to problem solving
- Selecting, motivating and leading a project team

Eddie Davies

fenman
Professional Training Resources

The Project Management Activity Pack

Published by Fenman Limited 1998 © Eddie Davies
Revised 2006
CD-ROM Version 1.0 © Fenman Limited 2006

Published by Fenman Limited
28 St Thomas Place, Cambridgeshire Business Park, Ely,
Cambridgeshire CB7 4EX
Telephone: +44 (0)1353 665533
Fax: +44 (0)1353 663644
E-mail: service@fenman.co.uk
Website: www.fenman.co.uk

Commissioning Editor and Production: Angela Wilde

Text pages typeset by Norman Brownsword, Upminster
Text pages printed by CLE Print, St Ives
CD-ROM duplication by vt group, Bristol
Cover layout by CLE Print, St Ives
Ringbinder cover inserts printed by CLE Print, St Ives
Ringbinders manufactured by Tennant Varipack Limited, Nottingham

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data.
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN-13 978 1 903310 60 1
ISBN-10 1 903310 60 1

FENMAN ® registered trademark

Contents

About this resource **ix**
A word about copyright **xi**
How to use this resource **xii**
How to use the CD-ROM **xiv**
Applications grid **xvi**
Learning review diary **xvii**
Certificate of attendance **xviii**
About the author **xix**
Further resources **xxii**

1. **An introduction to project management**
   What's involved in managing a project?
   Enable your participants to distinguish what is meant by the term project and identify some of its key features. The session acts as an ice-breaking activity on a learning event that gives the participants an opportunity to rate their current competence as project managers.

2. **The role of the project manager**
   What skills do I need to display during the phases of a typical project?
   This activity introduces participants to three key strands of activity – the 'content', 'structure' and 'processes' – that must be managed concurrently in order to maximise the success of any project.

3. **Define the end product**
   How do I clarify where the project is going and why I want to get there?
   An activity which introduces participants to the need to develop a project statement that clearly defines the goals of the project. Furthermore, it enables them to develop the skills of writing effective goals and completing a SWOT analysis of the project.

4. **The power of planning – part one**
   How do I start the journey to success?
   Participants are introduced to the benefits they will accrue from planning their projects. The activity gives them an opportunity to learn and develop the skills associated with two planning techniques – Fishbone Analysis and Work Breakdown Structure (WBS).

5. **The power of planning – part two**
   How do I work out who does what and when?
   This session continues the introduction to the planning process. It aims to develop the participants' skills in presenting planning information in a visual form that is clear and useful. The technique of drawing up a Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM) – a device for showing who is responsible for what activity identified in the WBS – and how to construct a Gantt chart are also introduced.

6. **Critical Path Analysis**
   How do I plan and schedule more complex projects?
   Participants are shown a popular technique (Critical Path Analysis) for managing projects, enabling them to identify the length of time the critical project activities will take and the impact that any delays in delivering these activities will have for successfully completing the project as a whole.

7. **Managing risk**
   How do I identify and manage potential risks to my project's success?
   An action which improves participants' project management skills and their ability to identify, assess, action plan and control risks throughout their projects that may have a significant impact in delivering the project objectives on time and budget.

8. **Managing money**
   How do I work out and control the project's budget?
   This introduces participants to some of the key concepts and techniques needed to successfully manage a project budget.

9. **Making a project presentation**
   How can I persuade others to back my project proposal?
   Participants are shown the techniques and skills required to make an effective presentation whose objective is to gain commitment to support a proposed project.

10. **Selecting the right person for your project team**
    How do I choose the best person for the project?
    Effective selection relies on using a customised person specification for each job on the project team. This activity provides clear guidelines which will enable the participants to write a person specification and test its effectiveness in a recruitment interview.

11. **Developing your project team**
    How do I encourage an effective project team spirit?
    The session enables participants to recognise and practise the ingredients required for effective teamwork. They then develop an action plan to strengthen the performance of their own work teams.

12. **Project leadership style**
    How do I develop an effective project leadership style?
    An activity which helps to make participants aware of the key differences between management and leadership. As well as introducing them to the essential ingredients for developing an effective leadership style, it gives them the opportunity to rate their current levels of leadership and to identify ways they can build on and develop these qualities.

13. Motivating your project team

How can I get my project team to work hard and effectively?

It is important that participants understand what is involved in motivating individuals in a project team. This activity helps them establish what methods they are currently using at work and assists them in developing action plans to increase future motivation and job satisfaction.

14. Oral communication skills

How can I communicate effectively with others involved in the project?

Participants are introduced to the essential skills they need to carry out effective face-to-face project management discussions. The session gives them the opportunity to practise and develop those skills.

15. Writing project reports

How can I express myself clearly when writing?

An essential skill is expressing oneself clearly when writing project reports. The ground rules explored here are common for all types of writing, and similar structures will apply for other types of report.

16. Managing performance

How can I ensure that my project team members are working effectively?

Participants are introduced to a five-stage process which will ensure that their project staff perform the essential activities to an agreed standard. The session ends with a consolidation exercise during which each participant prepares an action plan aimed at developing their expertise in managing performance.

17. Managing conflict

How do I constructively confront a poor performer?

A vital skill for line managers. Participants are shown the strategy and style necessary to run a discussion with a job holder who is not performing to the required standard. Three main types of behaviour and four predominant styles for handling conflict are discussed. The benefits of an assertive style are identified. They are then given the opportunity to try out the approach and style in a series of mini role-play exercises using real work-based incidents they have experienced.

18. Negotiation skills

How can I achieve a win–win outcome to my negotiations?

Particular skills and techniques are required to negotiate successfully. The session gives participants an opportunity to try out and develop their skills in this area. It introduces The expectation test and the type of information needed to complete it.

19. Time management

How do I plan my day and then work my plan?

This activity encourages participants to appreciate the importance of managing time as a resource for project managers. It introduces them to some of the techniques associated with effective time management, giving them the opportunity to develop these in a project setting.

20. Managing project meetings

How do I ensure that my project meetings are productive?

This session is concerned with what managers can do to improve both the structure and process of their meetings in order to make them more effective. It provides an opportunity to try out key points by participating in two linked exercises: the first being a preparatory meeting for the second – a full meeting. The activity ends with a review of the exercise which allows the key learning points to be surfaced and turned into an action plan for each participant's continued development at work.

21. Problem solving

How do I resolve the problems which arise when I implement my project plan?

Here participants are introduced to a systematic approach to problem solving. They identify how they currently approach problem solving at work and compare this with the Systematic Approach to Problem Solving, a well-established seven-step approach. The session gives them an opportunity to practise the skills involved in using the approach on a real work-based problem.

22. Continuing Professional Development

How can I continue to develop my project management skills after this event?

This session enables the participants to rate their progress in developing the competencies needed to be effective project managers. They generate ideas for a number of opportunities they could use to develop their skills, before finally putting together an action plan for turning their ideas into practical action when they return to work.

About this resource

Project Management is a practical activity pack that provides you with a training resource of 22 activities which have been tried and tested on a wide variety of training programmes within organisations of various sizes and orientation. Each activity is free-standing and contains all you need to prepare and run it.

The resource is based around the essential skills and attitudes that an individual, new to the role of project manager, will need to master in order to deliver the project successfully, on time and to budget. It does not set out to teach the content knowledge that will be the focus of each individual project – this can usually be developed through training, study, experience and qualification in the particular discipline required.

The main focus of the resource is based on the premise that regardless of the technical or professional discipline involved (the 'content' of the project), success cannot be achieved without having a 'structure' (a game plan) which you use to foresee how the project will unfold as you progress from your starting point to your ultimate goal. Many subject matter experts come unstuck because they don't sit down and anticipate the problems and the pitfalls they may encounter along their chosen path. The early activities in the resource take the project manager through the prerequisite steps needed to develop an effective project plan. Whether you are building a river bridge, introducing a computer network or planning a team-building conference, you will find a host of tips distilled from the classic approach to managing a project.

The second half of the resource focuses on the 'process' skills that you will need to make your plan work. These are sometimes called the 'soft' skills to distinguish them from the 'hard' skills which produce a physical end product such as a budget forecast or Gantt chart – but there is nothing soft about them. Indeed they usually represent some of the hardest challenges a project manager has to face. In these activities, you will be asked to consider such issues as 'How do I keep my team on track?', 'How do I keep them motivated?' and 'How do I deal with individuals who are underperforming?' You will not find any easy and prescriptive answers in these activities. Individuals are different and, just to make it even more interesting, their responses can vary from time to time, depending on a variety of factors such as who they are with, what happened last week or even what side of bed they got out of this morning. In these activities, you will learn a set of principles that you will be able to apply flexibly to suit a number of changing and complex situations.

The activities are designed to be led by someone in the central role of trainer. The person fulfilling this role does not have to be someone whose main role is in the training field. The activities can be run equally well by the line manager or their direct staff. The approach used does not require a great deal of expert input. It is based more on acting as a facilitator – establishing a learning climate, using the previous experience of the participants to develop their awareness and identify plans for their continued development as project managers.

It is always advisable for anyone taking the lead training role to have experienced the activities involved before they attempt to introduce them to others. We strongly advise working through each activity before you actually use it with your staff. The experience of working through each activity will give you some real-life examples based on your own experience which you can then use during each activity. Use as many examples as you can from real-life projects you have been involved in, to illustrate the main teaching points in each activity.

The 'Further resources' list contains references to books, videos and DVDs you may find helpful as part of your preparation.

A word about copyright

1. Reservation of rights

This Trainer's Activity Pack is copyright © Eddie Davies 1998, and its accompanying CD-ROM is copyright © Fenman Limited 2006. All rights reserved. No part of this Trainer's Activity Pack or its CD-ROM may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means including, but not limited to, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission in writing of Fenman Limited except strictly as permitted under paragraph 2 below.

2. Limited licence to copy

2.1 THE LICENCE IN PARAGRAPH 2.2 BELOW:

(a) ONLY APPLIES TO CUSTOMERS WHO HAVE PURCHASED THIS TRAINER'S ACTIVITY PACK AND THE ACCOMPANYING CD-ROM FROM FENMAN LIMITED (OR ITS DULY AUTHORISED AGENT OR RESELLER) and does not apply to anyone else. If you have purchased or otherwise obtained this Trainer's Activity Pack and/or its CD-ROM from the original purchaser, you do not have any licence to copy any or all of this Trainer's Activity Pack or its CD-ROM (even if you are a company in the same group as the original purchaser or otherwise closely related to the original purchaser) and must apply to Fenman Limited if you require one.

(b) DOES NOT APPLY if this Trainer's Activity Pack and its accompanying CD-ROM have been made available to you on hire or for the purpose of preview.

(c) IS CONDITIONAL UPON and only applies with effect from payment in full of the purchase price and all other sums due under the contract for supply of this Trainer's Activity Pack and its CD-ROM.

(d) APPLIES ONLY TO PAGES OF THIS TRAINER'S ACTIVITY PACK AND CD-ROM MARKED WITH AN OK TO COPY ICON. You may not copy any other pages.

2.2 Subject to paragraph 2.1 above, you may make copies, both electronic and as hard copy, of pages of this Trainer's Activity Pack and of its CD-ROM marked with an OK TO COPY icon and distribute them:

(a) to employees of yours who are attending any course that is being run using this Trainer's Activity Pack, but not to anyone else; or

(b) if you are an independent training consultant (but not otherwise) to employees of your client who are attending any course that is being run using this Trainer's Activity Pack, but not to anyone else.

How to use this resource

The activities in this resource do not have to be run as a single course starting with number 1 and finishing with number 22. You can 'pick and mix' any combination of activities to meet your precise needs. You may choose to run them over a number of consecutive days or use them as stand-alone sessions to fit into the time you have available for training.

Although these activities have been designed as stand-alone exercises, some of them will be more effective if the participants have already completed other specific activities in the resource. We have indicated in each activity where we consider it appropriate that it should follow on from another. If you want to run the session without this prior experience, we give advice on how to adjust the session accordingly.

The resource is designed for flexible use. On further investigation you will find you have the choice to:

- run each activity as a separate session
- combine it with other activities in the pack
- use it in combination with your existing resources.

Each activity has been designed to give participants the opportunity to work their way around the learning cycle (although, for variety, not always in this strict sequence). This allows them to:

- have an experience
- stop and review what happened
- make sense of the experience and relate it to other past experiences
- produce a plan of action on how they can use the insight gained back at their workplace.

To facilitate this final stage we recommend that you issue a 'Learning review diary' (see example on page xvii). Allow participants time to review the activity and record not only what they have learned, but also what use they intend to make of it. This progressive and considered approach will ensure the utility of the lessons learned and avoid the end-of-event rush when participants may start to focus on more mundane matters such as catching their train or beating the rush-hour traffic.

Participants will be introduced to new experiences, some of which will require them to try out new skills in front of you and their colleagues. Please remember that learning anything new will invariably result in mistakes being made. It is most important to manage the learning environment in such a way that everyone feels that experimenting with their behaviour and taking risks to identify new ways of working are essential ingredients to learning and moving forward. In many of these activities we stress that the process by which you facilitate the session is at least equal to simply following a structure and is often more important to the outcome. It is essential that you act as a good role model and develop the participants in a facilitative and flexible style throughout each activity.

Training is invariably an exhilarating and learning process for both the participants and the trainer. Treat the learning event as a project, and apply the lessons and tips described here to that event.

How to use the CD-ROM

How to load the CD-ROM

Place the CD-ROM in the CD drive of your computer. Wait a few seconds and the contents of the CD-ROM will be automatically displayed on your computer screen.

The contents of the CD-ROM

Once the contents of the CD-ROM are displayed, you will have a choice of files:

PowerPoint® slides of OHTs and handouts

Click this button to open the OHTs and handouts contained in this Trainer's Activity Pack as PowerPoint® slides. (Note: if you don't have PowerPoint® installed on your computer, go to the *Help* section below.) You have all the OHTs and handouts ready to use as you wish – without having to copy them on to acetate.

You can create your own PowerPoint® presentation and select the relevant slides to use in it. You can add slides, change the order, change the background or colours as you desire. To do this, you must open the slides in PowerPoint® rather than the default screen in which they will automatically appear. Either:

– open PowerPoint® on your computer, then select the file on the CD drive through your computer's explorer, or
– open the .ppt file from the *Browse the contents of the CD-ROM* button. This should automatically open in PowerPoint®.

The PowerPoint® slides are designed for projection. If you want to print copies of the OHTs and handouts, you are advised to use the PDF version (below) because print quality will be superior.

Please ensure that your use of the pages is subject to the Copyright conditions on page xi of this resource.

Searchable Adobe® Acrobat® file of the whole resource

Click this button to open a PDF file of all the pages in this resource. (Note: if you don't have Adobe® Acrobat® installed on your computer, go to the *Help* section below.) This file is handy for printing the 'OK to copy' pages, or to search electronically for a particular concept or phrase.

To make navigation easier in the PDF document, there are two tabs on the left-hand side of the PDF screen.

The first is called *Bookmarks*. If you click here, you will see a listing of all the activities in this resource. To move instantly to an activity, simply click on the number.

The second tab is called *Thumbnails*. Clicking here displays a small image of each page, providing you with a fast, visual reference without having to scroll.

Please ensure that your use of the pages is subject to the Copyright conditions on page xi of this resource.

Browse the contents of the CD-ROM
If you want to navigate around the CD-ROM without using the menu, simply click on this button. All the files will be displayed in your computer's explorer window.

Help
There are two sections provided here:

1. PowerPoint® Reader or Adobe Acrobat Reader® installation.

   If you don't have Microsoft PowerPoint® or Adobe® Acrobat® programs installed on your computer, then you'll need to load the complimentary viewer programs provided in order to view the files.

   For PowerPoint®, click the Install PowerPoint® Viewer and follow the instructions.

   For Adobe® Acrobat® (PDF), click the Install Acrobat Reader® and follow the instructions.

   Loading these programs on to your computer will enable you to read the files contained on the CD-ROM, but will only provide you with limited editorial capabilities.

2. Loading the PowerPoint® or Adobe® Acrobat® files outside the browser window.

   If you wish to view the PowerPoint® slides or Adobe® Acrobat® PDF pages outside the automatic default window, you can change the settings by following the instructions.

Applications grid

The activities in this resource can be used to meet a number of objectives. This grid provides you with a speedy reference to each activity.

Activity	Fundamentals of project management	Introduction to management	Performance management	Analysis and problem solving	Budgeting and finance	Communication skills	Sales training	Recruitment and selection	Team development	Leadership skills	Motivating staff	Assertion and influencing	Writing skills	Time and stress management	Managing meetings	Coaching skills
1 An introduction to project management	✓	✓														
2 The role of the project manager	✓	✓														
3 Define the end product	✓	✓	✓	✓												
4 The power of planning – part one	✓	✓		✓												✓
5 The power of planning – part two	✓	✓		✓												✓
6 Critical Path Analysis	✓	✓		✓												
7 Managing risk	✓			✓												
8 Managing money	✓				✓						✓					
9 Making a project presentation	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓						
10 Selecting the right person for your project team	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓								
11 Developing your project team	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
12 Project leadership style	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
13 Motivating your project team	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
14 Oral communication skills	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
15 Writing project reports	✓	✓				✓				✓			✓			
16 Managing performance	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
17 Managing conflict	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
18 Negotiation skills	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
19 Time management	✓	✓	✓				✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
20 Managing project meetings	✓	✓				✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
21 Problem solving	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22 Continuing Professional Development	✓	✓							✓	✓			✓			✓

Learning review diary

Please record your personal reflections on this activity.

Activity	Key learning points	Application to work

Certificate of Attendance

This is to certify that

attended the

training course on

at

Signed

Date

About the author

Eddie Davies MA CMCIPD

Eddie is a Human Resource Development specialist with over 25 years' experience as a manager, trainer and coach gained with national public sector organisations. He is skilled in:

- Identifying training needs.
- Designing development programmes to meet specified objectives.
- Writing comprehensive training and tutor manuals.
- Delivering training and coaching in a lively facilitative style.
- Ensuring the transfer of learning to the workplace.

Eddie is well qualified to write this pack from both his academic and professional background:

- MA Management Development.
- Registered PRINCE2 (Project Management) practitioner.
- Chartered Member: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
- Member: British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.
- Member: Association for Coaching.

Licensed psychometric test user of:

- Occupational Personality Questionnaire (OPQ)
- Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)
- Belbin Team Types (Interplace).

The activities in this Trainer's Activity Pack are based on his experience of designing and delivering project management training on both public and in-company training programmes to a variety of organisations including:

- The Department for Transport.
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- Department of Environment Food Rural Affairs.
- Marine Coastguard Agency.
- Westminster City Council.
- The Highways Agency.
- Henley Management College.
- PriceWaterhouseCoopers.
- Hawksmere plc.
- GBS Training.
- Kingston University Business School – MBA programme.
- *Training Journal*'s master workshop programme.
- London Business School.

His recent project management training delivery experience includes:

- **Fundamentals of Project Management – Government Department**
  A two-day bespoke programme which provided delegates with the fundamental skills of Project Management. This ensured their projects were completed on time, within budget and specification whilst using the PRINCE2 methodology to ensure success.

- **Project Management – International Training Consultancy**
  A two-day public course attended by delegates from leading commercial organisations. The aim was to gain an overview of project management tools and techniques and understand the importance of financial control and effective communication with senior management.

- **Introduction to Project Management – Executive Agency**
  A three-day tailored programme designed for delegates managing major projects being delivered by external contractors. The sessions included The Human Aspects of Project Management, incorporating Belbin's Team Roles analysis.

- **Project Planning – Privatised Utility**
  A one-day introduction (or refresher) which covered the needs and benefits of planning. Including Work Breakdown Structures; Network Analysis; Critical Paths and Gantt Charts.

Eddie is the author of many publications and articles on management training and development. These include:

Publications for Fenman:

Interviewing Skills
Unlocking Your People's Potential
The Manager as Trainer, Coach and Guide
The Essentials of Management
Light Bulb Learning
Motivation in Practice
Essential Interpersonal Skills for Outstanding Managers
Management Essentials

Articles published:

'Commitment to coaching' *Training Officer*, Vol. 34. No 1, 1998.
'How to write training materials' *Training Officer*, Vol. 34 No 2, 1998.
'What do you say after "Hello"?' *Training Journal*, July 2003.
'Introduction to coaching' *Coach the Coach*, 2005.
'Workplace coaching – structure and skills' *Coach the Coach*, 2005.

Eddie is always keen to receive feedback and constructive criticism on how these activities have worked in practice. If you wish to discuss any activity in this pack in further detail, please contact him by e-mail davies_training@msn.com or via his website www.eddiedavies.co.uk.

Further resources

- *All Change – The Project Leader's Secret Handbook*, Obeng E, Financial Times Pitman, London (1995)
  ISBN 0 273622 21 8

- *Applied Imagination*, Osbourn A, Scribner Publishing, New York (1957)
  ISBN 0 012169 87 0

- *The Art of Project Management*, Berkun S, O Reilly, Farnham (2005)
  ISBN: 0 596007 86 8

- 'Choosing Project-planning Software', Chapter 12 in *Project Management Demystified,* 2nd edition, Reiss G, Spon E & F N, London (1995)
  ISBN 0 419207 50 3

- *Creative Thinking and Brainstorming*, Rawlinson J G, Gower, Aldershot (1981)
  ISBN 0 566022 47 8

- *The Definitive Guide to Project Management: The Fast Track to Getting the Job Done on Time and on Budget*, Nokes S, Financial Times Prentice Hall, London (2003)
  ISBN: 0 273663 97 6

- 'Development Sequences in Small Groups', *Psychological Bulletin,* Volume 63, by Tuckman B W, American Psychological Associaton, Washington (1965)
  ISSN 0033-2909

- *Discipline At Work*, ACAS Advisory Handbook, London (1987)
  ISBN 0 906073 33 2

- *How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life*, Lakein A, Gower, Aldershot (1985)
  ISBN 0 566025 50 7

- *How to Write a Successful Report*, Mort S, Business Books, London (1983)
  ISBN 0 091517 90 7 – out of print

- 'Inequity in Social Exchange', Adams J S in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Volume 2, Berkowitz L (Ed), Academic Press, New York (1965)
  ISBN 0 120152 02 9 – out of print

- *Management Standards*, Levels 3/4/5, Management Charter Initiative, MCI, London (1994)
  ISBN 1 897587 92 9, ISBN 1 897587 93 7, ISBN 1 897587 94 5

- *Managing Successful Projects with PRINCE2*, The Stationery Office Books, London (2002)
  ISBN: 0 113308 91 4

- *Motivation and Personality*, 3rd edition, Maslow A, Addison Wesley Longman (1987)
  ISBN 0 060419 87 3

- *The Motivation to Work*, Herzberg F, Wiley (1959)
  ISBN 0 471373 89 3 – out of print

- *On Becoming a Leader*, Bennis W, Hutchinson Business, London (1990)
  ISBN 0 091742 88 9

- *Passing the PRINCE2 Examinations*, Bradley K, The Stationery Office Books, London (2004)
  ISBN: 0 113309 64 3

- *Planning Projects: 20 Steps to Effective Project Planning (Manager's Pocket Guides)*, Young T, Spiro Press, London (1992)
  ISBN: 0 852908 79 2

- *Practical Project Management,* Gould Dr R, Kogan Page, London (1996)
  ISBN 0 749427 42 6

- *Project Management for Dummies*, Portney S, Hungry Minds Inc, USA (2001)
  ISBN: 0 764552 83 X

- *Project Management – Planning and Control,* Burke R, Wiley, Chichester (1993)
  ISBN 0 471942 72 3

- *Project Management – The People Challenge,* Bee R and F, IPD, London (1997)
  ISBN 0 852926 61 8

- *Selection and Assessment – A New Appraisal*, Smith M, Gregg M and Andrews D, Pitman, London (1989)
  ISBN 0 273031 14 7 – out of print

- *The Skilled Helper,* Egan G, Brookes/Cole, USA (1994)
  ISBN 0 534212 94 8

- *The Skills of Leadership,* Adair J, Wildwood House, Aldershot (1984)
  ISBN 0 704505 55 X – out of print

- *Successful Project Management in a Week*, Brown M, Hodder Arnold, London (2002)
  ISBN: 0 340849 37 1

- *Thriving on Chaos*, Peters T, Pan Books, London (1988)
  ISBN 0 330305 91 3

RELATED FENMAN TEXT PRODUCTS

- *Continuing Professional Development*, McMillan S (1997)
- *Recruiting and Keeping the Right People,* Iacovou S (1998)
- *The Manager as Trainer, Coach and Guide,* Davies E (1997)

RELATED FENMAN VIDEOS AND DVDS

- *Body Language Skills at Work* (2004)
- *Effective Listening Skills* (1992)
- *Team Building: A Question of Balance* (1990)

Activity 1
An introduction to project management

Purpose

To enable participants to distinguish what is meant by the term ‘project’ and identify some of its key features. To act as an ice-breaking activity on a learning event that gives the participants an opportunity to rate their current competence as project managers.

Activity 1
An introduction to project management

What's involved in managing a project?

Purpose

To enable participants to distinguish what is meant by the term 'project' and identify some of its key features. To act as an ice-breaking activity on a learning event that gives the participants an opportunity to rate their current competence as project managers.

Application

This activity is designed to be used at the start of a learning event which aims to improve the project management skills of the participants.

What happens

You start the session by discussing with the participants what they understand by the term 'project'. By the end of this discussion, the group will have agreed a definition.

Participants are then placed in pairs and asked to produce a list of ideas of the common features of a typical project. These ideas are reviewed in a plenary session which reinforces the main differences between projects and ongoing management processes.

The participants are once again placed in pairs and asked to spend 5 minutes discussing their partner's work experience, particularly identifying any projects they have been involved in. They reconvene and introduce their partner to the rest of the group. During the introductions you make a list of the range of experiences described.

You then reallocate the participants into fresh pairs. You introduce and discuss the core competencies that are needed to be an effective project manager. The participants then rate themselves against these competencies before discussing their evidence to support their ratings with their partner.

The session ends with a plenary review during which the participants disclose their strengths and weaknesses in project management and identify their key learning goals for the event. They fill in their Learning review diary (where appropriate).

Time

Overall time required: 1 hour 50 minutes (2 hours 5 minutes using option 2).

- What is a project?: 10 minutes
- Features of a typical project: 15 minutes
- Introduce your partner: 35 minutes
- What do you need to know?: 45 minutes (1 hour using option 2)
- Learning review: 5 minutes.

Materials & resources

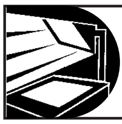
- 4 OHT masters:
  1.1 *? Project*
  1.2 *What is a project?*
  1.3 *Project management competencies*
  1.4 *Competency rating scale*

- 1 Handout master:
  1.5 *Project management competencies*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer

How do I do it?

Start this activity by displaying OHT 1.1 to the group.



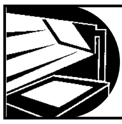
Show OHT 1.1
? Project

Inform the participants that in order for them to work effectively as project managers they must be able to identify clearly what is meant by the term 'project' and where it fits into other management activities.

WHAT IS A PROJECT?

Tell the participants you want them to help you to define what we mean by a project. Ask them to provide you with examples of projects they have been involved in. At this stage they may start to give you a wide variety of suggestions, many of which you will not think of as projects. Reject nothing and write their suggestions on a sheet of flipchart paper.

Tell them you will look at their listed ideas again when you have identified the core ingredients that make a project different from other aspects of management.



Show OHT 1.2
What is a project?

Discuss this common definition of project management and then return to the list on the flipchart.

Review the list and cross out those you do not consider to be genuine projects – they will usually be concerned with the ongoing processes of an organisation.

Point out that these day-to-day management issues are usually the focus of management once the project is completed. Once the project is finished, the process of managing its day-to-day activities then takes over, and the project team is often broken up.

Allow about 10 minutes for this introductory discussion.

FEATURES OF A TYPICAL PROJECT

Ask the participants to break up into pairs and spend 5 minutes exchanging ideas, based on their own experience, of the features of a typical project. Give them an example to get them started, for example:

– Projects have one start point and one finish point.

When they have finished deliberating, reconvene into the main group and conduct a plenary review of their ideas, listing them on a sheet of flipchart paper. Your list should typically include:

- a series of interrelated activities
- a specific goal or end result
- a start and finish date
- a client or sponsor
- a project manager
- a collection of individuals brought together for the event, each with their own specialism or expertise
- working within constraints and limitations, for example, costs
- involving change
- are all, in some way, unique (although any new project may closely follow the pattern of previous projects).

Ask participants if this list has enabled them to get a better focus on what is meant by a project. You can inform them that whilst there is no universally agreed definition, what they have described would cover the vast majority of projects whether they are complex, for example, building the first Polaris submarine involving over 300 contractors, or straightforward, for example, publishing a training manual.

Point out that project management is not just a role for specialists. Whilst there are specialist project managers, just as there are accountants and solicitors, there are also many people who are required through force of circumstances to use the techniques as a part of their job. They may be assigned full-time to a particular project, or, more usually, have responsibility for a specified project added to their list of key work objectives during a performance management appraisal discussion.

Check out their experience

Inform the group that at the start of any learning event it is useful for the trainer to know something about the background of the participants. This will enable you to relate your examples to the participants' own experiences, making the training more real and relevant.

Allow about 10 minutes for this discussion on the features of a project.

INTRODUCE YOUR PARTNER

Divide the group into pairs. Separate any who know each other well, as the activity is designed for them to get to know each other better as a group, as well as to provide you with some relevant training information.

Ask them to spend 5 minutes finding out enough about their partner to form the basis of an introduction to the rest of the training group. Tell them that you want them to focus on their partner's past work experience – particularly if they have been a member of a project team. Advise them to make notes to help them remember what they have learned.

After 5 minutes ask them to exchange roles.

When they have finished, ask for a volunteer to get the introductions under way. Make a note on a sheet of flipchart paper of the type of project each individual has been involved with.

You may be surprised by the range of past experiences offered. The size and variation in the projects will emphasise that project management is an increasing focus of modern management activity. Typical examples may be:

- a charity event
- a new book or video
- exhibiting at a major national conference
- installing a networked computer system
- a school fair
- running a residential conference or training course
- moving the office to another location
- moving a section within a location
- designing a new performance appraisal system
- launching a new product
- widening a motorway
- building a bridge.

You will probably find as many examples as there are participants.

Allow about 25 minutes for this exchange of information.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Inform the group that another key facet of training is to discover how much the participants know against how much they *should* know. This is called 'identifying the training gap', but can be difficult because sometimes the trainees don't know what they don't know.

Show OHT 1.3
Project management competencies

Tell participants that this list shows the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to be good at, because these have been shown to make a difference between average and excellent performance as project managers.

Distribute Handout 1.5
Project management competencies

Ask the participants to review each of the items on the list. Allow 5 minutes for this. Check that they understand what is involved in each.

Inform them that their next task is to rate themselves on a three-part rating scale.

Show OHT 1.4
Competency rating scale

Ask the participants to rate themselves against each of the competencies. Point out that they should give themselves the mark that accurately reflects their experience, not one they think they should say they are at. Allow 10 minutes for this.

E = Exceptional – Can perform this competency at a high level in all manner of circumstances.

M = Met – Can generally meet the requirements in this area. May still have a development need to meet exceptionally difficult circumstances.

N = Not Met – Either there are considerable elements that require improvement or have not had the opportunity to develop this area.

When they have all finished their rating, divide participants into pairs, preferably different from those they were in for the introduction exercise. Ask them to discuss their ratings with their partner, highlighting the experiences they used as evidence.

Move around the group making sure they are focusing on the task and are using real examples rather than vague generalisations. Remind them to switch roles once one partner has finished their review. Allow 15–20 minutes for this discussion.

When all the pairs have finished, reconvene and lead a plenary review. There are two ways of managing this.

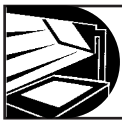
Option 1

Ask each individual to declare their main strengths and weaknesses as a project manager.

Check out with their partner on the accuracy of their statements. Now ask the participant to choose their top three learning goals for this programme. Do not forget to point out that these need not be their weakest area, but should concentrate on developing the skills that are most relevant to the context of their job.

Allow 15 minutes for this option.

Option 2
The second way will be useful if you want to tailor a programme for the particular needs of your audience.



Show OHT 1.3
Project management competencies

Identify the level of competence of the participants for each item. You could use a simple scoring system on a sheet of flipchart paper to record the numbers of participants who rate themselves as E, M or N. Remember to check that they have some evidence for their ratings, not just self-perception.

Depending on the nature of the training event you are running, and your faith in the accuracy of the ratings, you are now in a position to fine-tune the programme to meet the declared needs of the participants. You have the option of either deleting some topics and focusing on others, or moving through certain areas quickly, as a refresher, giving yourself more time to concentrate on the areas of maximum impact.

Allow 30 minutes for this option.

TRAINER'S TIP

If you choose option 2 you may be left with some interesting decisions. For example:

- The majority of the group are strong in one area but a small minority are not.

If this is the case you could consider splitting the event in two, running a 'fast-track' version for the competent and an introductory module for the less experienced.

- One individual has considerably less competence than the others.

Are they on the right event? You have the possibility of rescheduling them to one where they could mix with their peers. Another possibility is to give them extra individual training in the areas they need to develop. This would enable them to get up to speed and join the rest of the group for the more general needs.

- One individual has considerably more competence than the others.

Again, are they on the right event? If they decide to stay, a useful strategy would be to use them as an auxiliary tutor. Imparting your experience to others is a useful development activity that gets you to focus on what you know and why you do what you do. This role could involve them in giving short inputs or acting as a facilitator during practical exercises.

LEARNING REVIEW

At the end of the session, ask participants to take 5 minutes to think back over the session and then to make notes on the key learning points that have emerged, and how they may apply these to their work. They should note these points in their Learning review diary, if they are using this approach to recording their learning (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii).

? Project

?

PROJECT

What is a project?

A project is a series of interrelated activities undertaken to achieve a specific end result within a set time frame.

Project management competencies

1. Recognising key project management needs.
2. Understanding the role of the project manager.
3. Defining the end product.
4. Planning for success.
5. Sequencing activities.
6. Budgeting.
7. Using presentation skills.
8. Selecting your team.
9. Developing your team.
10. Using project leadership skills.
11. Motivating the project team.
12. Using communication skills.
13. Putting it in writing.
14. Controlling performance.
15. Influencing and resolving conflict.
16. Using negotiation skills.
17. Managing time.
18. Chairing meetings.
19. Solving problems.
20. Making a commitment to professional development.

Competency rating scale

E = Exceptional

M = Met

N = Not met

Project management competencies

For each of the following competencies rate yourself on the following scale:

E = Exceptional – You can perform this competency at a high level in all manner of circumstances.

M = Met – You can generally meet the requirements in this area. You may still have a development need in order to meet the competency in exceptionally difficult circumstances.

N = Not Met – Either there are considerable elements that require improvement or you have not had the opportunity to experience and develop this area.

Competence	Content	Rating
1. Recognising key project management needs.	Define the term 'project'. Identify the key competencies. Recognise priority needs.	
2. Understanding the role of the project manager.	Define the project manager's role. Have an overview of the project life cycle.	
3. Defining the end product.	Prepare mission statements. Define project objectives. Identify constraints and terms of reference.	
4. Planning for success.	Develop a work breakdown structure. Identify resource requirements. Pinpoint sub-projects.	

Continued …

Project management competencies

… continued

Competence	Content	Rating
5. Sequencing activities.	Draw up a Responsibility Assignment Matrix. Identify the critical activities. Prepare a Gantt chart.	
6. Budgeting.	Prepare a budget. Monitor costs.	
7. Using presentation skills.	Plan your presentation. Making an effective delivery. Handle objections.	
8. Selecting your team.	Adopt a systematic approach to selection. Choose the right mix.	
9. Developing your team.	Establish the characteristics of effective teams. Outline the stages of team development.	
10. Using project leadership skills.	Understand the leadership role. Develop an effective leadership style.	
11. Motivating the project team.	Understand team members' needs. Take appropriate action to satisfy them.	
12. Using communication skills.	Ask effective questions. Listen actively. Use appropriate body language.	

continued …

Project management competencies

... continued

Competence	Content	Rating
13. Putting it in writing.	Use an appropriate form of written communication. Develop an effective style. Devise a project report layout.	
14. Controlling performance.	Set standards. Give feedback.	
15. Influencing and resolving conflict.	Take a positive approach to disagreement. Use a consensus approach. Manage the poor performer.	
16. Using negotiation skills.	Negotiation should be principled. Adopt effective behaviours. Aim for a 'win–win' outcome.	
17. Managing time.	Identify priorities. Diagnose 'time-robbers'. Plan your day.	
18. Chairing meetings.	Structure meetings for success. Lead discussions.	
19. Solving problems.	Analyse what's going wrong. Develop alternative solutions. Choose best solutions.	
20. Making a commitment to professional development.	Take stock of current level of performance. Review training and development methods. Draw up an action plan.	

Activity 2
The role of the project manager

Purpose

To introduce participants to three key strands of activity that must be managed concurrently in order to maximise the success of any project.

Activity 2
The role of the project manager

2

What skills do I need to display during the phases of a typical project?

Purpose

To introduce participants to three key strands of activity that must be managed concurrently in order to maximise the success of any project.

Application

This activity may be used at the early stages of any learning event that has been designed to improve participants' project management skills.

What happens

You start the activity with a general discussion which highlights some of the things that can go wrong when managing a project. You use an OHT showing a definition of 'The Project Manager', which places the accountability for what happens during any project directly on the manager.

You next introduce the concept that there are three simultaneous strands of activity, each of which has to be actively managed if the project is to be successful. You lead a brief discussion which establishes what is involved in each strand.

The next stage of the session involves the participants in a syndicate exercise during which they consider two of the strands – 'structure' and 'processes' – in more detail. You facilitate a plenary review during which you give short, expert summaries of what is involved.

You finish the session by inviting the participants to look back on what they have learned and identify which key points they could use back at work after the event. They fill in their Learning review diary (where appropriate).

Time

Overall time required: 1 hour 45 minutes

- Introduction: 20 minutes
- Set yourself up for success: 20 minutes
- What's involved in a successful project?: 20 minutes syndicate, 30 minutes review
- Learning review: 15 minutes.

Materials & resources

- 4 OHT masters:
  2.1 *The project manager*
  2.2 *Three strands of activity*
  2.3 *Stages of a successful project*
  2.4 *Project management skills hexagon*

- 2 Handout masters:
  2.5 *Stages of a successful project*
  2.6 *Project management skills hexagon*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- OHT acetates
- OHT acetate marker pens
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

Start the session by asking the participants to recall a time when a project in which they have been involved has gone wrong. Tell them that this could range from a major disaster to an occasion when they felt it had just gone off track.

Give them a few minutes thinking time and then ask them to talk briefly about their bad experience. Whilst they are talking, write up a summary, in the form of a bullet-point list, on a flipchart. You will probably end up with a list of items such as:

- late completion
- overspent the budget

- poor quality of work
- rejection by the customer
- non-arrival of key components
- poor morale in the team
- key team members quit before completion
- clashes with statutory authorities, for example, Trading Standards, Health Inspectors, and so on
- never finishing the project.

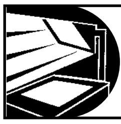
Now ask them who, in their experience, gets the blame. Point out that whilst there may be many scapegoats, the general answer is:

THE PROJECT MANAGER
(write on a flipchart for emphasis).

Point out that whether they think this is fair or not, the project manager is there to be shot at – just as, for example, a manager of a football team invariably takes the blame for the team's failures. Anyone agreeing to take on the role of managing a project should realise that it can be a thankless task. Project managers report that if the project is successful everything is fine, but if there are problems it is the project manager who gets the blame.

Tell the group that this viewpoint has been reinforced by The British Standards Institution which defines a project manager as:

The individual or body with responsibility for managing a project to achieve specific objectives.



Show OHT 2.1
The project manager

Allow 20 minutes for this introduction.

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

Inform the group that one way to set themselves up for success in the role is to be constantly aware of the three strands of activity that run concurrently during any project.

Show OHT 2.2
Three strands of activity

Tell the group that as the project progresses from start **A** to finish **B**, it is easy to become submerged in the content and lose sight of the other two equally important strands of activity ('structure' and 'processes').

'Content' refers to the day-to-day decisions that have to be made as the project progresses. This is a key phase, and no project would achieve success without it. The content is often the main focus for discussion, either through informal encounters, or through more formal project team meetings.

As an example, you could ask the group what they would be discussing if you were planning to exhibit at a major national conference. Content discussions would focus on such topics as where you want the stand, what pictures you want on the display, what sample products you want to promote, who will attend, what they should wear, etc. Point out that the number of topics can seem endless before you even start.

Tell the group that many project managers excel in this area. It is often because of their specialist topic knowledge that they are appointed in the first place. It is lack of attention to the other two processes that may cause their downfall.

Turn to a flipchart and write:

STRUCTURE = *Stages of the Project*

PROCESSES = *Management Skills*

Discuss each point briefly in turn, as follows.

Structure – All projects go through a recognisable series of stages. Like Shakespeare's 'Seven Ages of Man', they have a life cycle where one stage flows on into the next. As project managers they need to know what the stages are, and make sure they cover each stage effectively.

Processes – Project managers are people managers. No matter how much technical expertise they possess enabling them to move through the structure, or subject knowledge to contribute to the content, all will be put at risk if the project manager cannot master the management processes involved.

> **TRAINER'S TIP**
>
> Be careful not to give too much input at this stage. You will shortly be involving the participants in an activity designed to see how much they already know about these two topics.

This part of the activity should take about 20 minutes.

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT?

Inform the participants that they will now take part in a syndicate activity in which they will have the opportunity to demonstrate how much they know about managing projects.

Divide the participants into two syndicate groups. Distribute blank sheets of acetate and a set of suitable overhead-projector marker pens to each group. Tell them they have 20 minutes to discuss and record their conclusions. One group (A) will focus on 'structure' – the stages of a typical project. The other group (B) will focus on 'processes' – the management skills involved. Check that they understand your instructions, clarify if there is any uncertainty, and then get them under way.

Move between syndicates whilst they are discussing the task. Keep them on track and give them an occasional time-check.

When both groups have finished, reconvene and take about 30 minutes to review their conclusions. Ask for group A to go first and to reveal their 'structure' OHT. Discuss each of their points, clarifying precisely what they had in mind for each step.

Show OHT 2.3
Stages of a successful project

Use the OHT to summarise this part of the session. Depending on the expertise of the groups you may find you have little to add at this stage. Fill in any gaps in their knowledge by quoting from the supporting *Handout 2.5* and illustrate with your own examples.

Distribute Handout 2.5
Stages of a successful project

This will serve as a reminder which they can use back at work after the course.

Now move back to group B. Ask them to show their OHT of their conclusions on ‘processes’. Repeat the format you used for reviewing ‘structure’.

Show OHT 2.4
Project management skills hexagon

Conclude this part of the activity by highlighting any areas of difference, and gaps between the participants’ versions and your own.

Distribute Handout 2.6
Project management skills hexagon

This will again serve as a reminder for participants to use back at work after the course.

LEARNING REVIEW

Point out that one of the hallmarks of an effective project manager is their tendency to stop and take stock of how they are progressing. Even when things are going well they are looking for improvements. Tell them that you will be encouraging this process at every stage of the learning event.

Distribute the handout on page xvii
Learning review diary

Ask participants to take 5 minutes to think back over the session and then to make notes on the key learning points that have emerged, and how they may apply these to their work.

When all the participants have finished completing their diaries, ask for volunteers to comment on the key ideas they will take away and implement.

Close the session when all who want to speak have contributed.

TRAINER'S TIP

There are many ways of establishing your credibility with a training group. One involves not asking the participants to try out an activity that you aren't prepared to undertake yourself.
I always advise trainers to try out each activity before running it with the participants.

A second approach is to read more widely about a topic than just the outlines provided here. This will enable you to customise the recommended approach with your own ideas and will provide you with valuable additional information to answer any questions participants may ask on the content.
See the section 'Further resources' at the start of the pack for some recommendations.

The project manager

The individual or body with responsibility for managing a project to achieve specific objectives.

Source: BS 6079: 1996 Guide to Project Management

Three strands of activity

Structure

A ——— Content ——— B

Processes

Stages of a successful project

STAGE ONE – Definition

STAGE TWO – Planning

STAGE THREE – Implementation

STAGE FOUR – Completion

OK TO COPY

Project management skills hexagon

Stages of a successful project

Stage one – Definition

Once the project has been conceived, you will need to work closely with your client – the person who originated, or is sponsoring, the project. Your first task will be to define the scope and purpose of the project.
It will help you establish a clear focus on what is about to be attempted and why. You need to establish your terms of reference, identifying any major constraints and defining the critical success factors to judge the outcome. By the end of this stage you will have established the project's objectives and started to create the initial strategy. It will help you estimate the resources you need to achieve the results identified.

Stage two – Planning

Having established what is to be done, you next focus on how it is to be achieved. During this phase, break down the project into a sequence of activities. This will alert you to the number of sub-projects you will have to co-ordinate to meet your overall objective. You will need to break down each sub-project and prepare a detailed specification of who does what by when. You will have to agree these details with the staff assigned to carry them out and provide clear terms of reference concerning budgets and their other resources. By the end of this stage you will be able to produce an overall project summary sheet which will allow everyone concerned to monitor the project's progress.

Stage three – Implementation

This is the stage when the action you have planned takes place. You will be involved in monitoring to make sure that the project is keeping on target. If the sequence of events is not proceeding to your plan, you will be involved in troubleshooting. This often means modifying the project plan in light of new evidence and experience. Be prepared to introduce a contingency plan where appropriate.

Continued …

2.5

Stages of a successful project

… continued

Stage four – Completion

This is the stage where the project reaches its close. You will need to check that all that you set out to do has been accomplished. Have you achieved the critical success factors you established at the start? If not why not? Was the eventual outcome acceptable to all those concerned? You will need to lead a review on the outcome. Highlight what was successful, as well as areas where you feel you could have performed better. Your final task will usually be to produce a written report for the client, in which you summarise the results and give full recognition to the project team for their achievement.

Project management skills hexagon

To help establish effective relationships and manage performance throughout the project you will need to be able to demonstrate the following project management skills.

Clarify the aims
- Clarify your vision
- Give direction to the project team
- Establish the purpose
- Describe the end results
- Establish critical success factors and standards.

Get things done
- Set short-term plans
- Link to overall aims
- Establish priorities
- Obtain feedback
- Maintain standards
- Act quickly to rectify shortfalls.

Manage time and pressure
- Keep focused
- Manage diversions
- Chair meetings
- Energise others
- Manage own/team's stress levels
- Let off steam
- Use humour appropriately.

Lead your team
- Select a first-class team
- Balance appropriate skills
- Define accountability
- Create a common understanding
- Consult at all times
- Use group problem-solving approaches
- Encourage diversity.

Continued …

Project management skills hexagon

… continued

Motivate individuals

- Get to know each team member as an individual
- Identify their specific needs
- Involve each person
- Value their contribution
- Provide opportunities for development
- Praise and reward as appropriate.

Persuade and influence

- Work out what they want
- Adopt a principled approach, don't manipulate
- Search for a joint solution
- Aim for a win–win outcome
- Use positive body language that supports what you say
- Identify the benefits and overcome any objections
- Make an effective presentation.

Communicate effectively

- Give out, not withhold information
- Use appropriate channel and medium for your message
- Speak and write clearly and succinctly
- Ask open questions
- Listen actively
- Be open to others' ideas and suggestions
- Model effective behaviour.

Activity 3
Define the end product

Purpose

To introduce to participants the need to develop a project statement that clearly defines the goals of the project. To enable them to develop the skills of writing effective goals and completing a SWOT analysis of the project.

Activity 3
Define the end product

How do I clarify where the project is going and why I want to get there?

Purpose

To introduce to participants the need to develop a project statement that clearly defines the goals of the project. To enable them to develop the skills of writing effective goals and completing a SWOT analysis of the project.

Application

This activity is designed to be used at the early stages of any learning event that aims to improve the project management skills of participants.

What happens

You start the session by leading a discussion that encourages the participants to review the advantages of having a clear statement identifying the key purpose of the project. You continue by asking them to recall goals of previous projects in which they have been involved.

You then use a number of examples of project statements to identify the properties of an effective goal. The participants take part in a paired exercise designed to develop and improve their goal writing abilities.

You next introduce the concept of SWOT analysis, giving examples that will help the participants understand what is involved. You give them the opportunity to put that understanding to the test by practising developing a SWOT analysis, in small groups.

Finally, having reviewed the outcome of the SWOT syndicate exercise, you conclude by encouraging the group to take time to review the major points they have learned from this activity. They fill in their Learning review diary (where appropriate).

Time

Overall time required: 2 hours 15 minutes.

- Why are we doing this?: 20 minutes
- Identifying the properties of an effective project goal: 45 minutes
- Identifying project strengths and weaknesses: 1 hour
- What have we learned?:10 minutes.

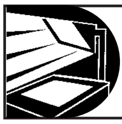
Materials & resources

- 5 OHT masters:
  3.1 *Why?*
  3.2 *What is a goal?*
  3.3 *The project goal – an example*
  3.4 *Properties of effective project goals*
  3.5 *SWOT analysis*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- OHT acetates
- OHT acetate marker pens
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)

How do I do it?

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?



Show OHT 3.1
Why?

Tell the group that in this session they will address this fundamental question – Why? Inform the group that all projects exist for a purpose. They are conceived and developed as part of someone's master plan. The problem with many projects is that people often lose sight of this. They start to do things because they think it might be a good idea, but often find that it has not added anything to the overall aim of the project.

Point out that failure to keep the goal of the project in mind at all times will result in wasted time and effort.

Tell the group that all projects are undertaken for a purpose. In order to clarify this key point, an effective project manager will make sure that they have a written project statement. Ask the participants if any of them has a mission statement at work. Point out that the project statement is the equivalent of an organisation's mission statement. It has a similar role in setting the direction and clarifying the values you want to be seen to be working by. It represents the goal that everyone involved will be working towards.

Ask the participants to recall some of the projects in which they have been involved. Ask them to call out any written goals that applied to that project. Write some of their examples on a flipchart.

Show OHT 3.2
What is a goal?

Remind the group that a general benefit is summed up by a popular saying:

If you don't know where you're going, you're likely to end up somewhere else!

Ask the participants to review the goals you have just written on the flipchart (their own examples). Which of these do they think are the best match to the definition? Probe to establish the reasons why they have rejected the poor goals. They will probably reply along the lines of:

- too vague
- woolly
- not specific enough
- provides no focus to the activity
- ambiguous.

Show OHT 3.3
The project goal – an example

Ask the group what they think would be the benefits of having a clearly defined goal – as with the example. They should reply along the lines of:

- gives a clear sense of direction
- focuses attention
- provides clarity about the task
- a standard for measuring progress
- aid to time management and prioritising
- gives a basis for action plans
- provides an opportunity to clarify and reject options
- presents an objective against which the overall success or failure of the project can be measured.

Allow 20 minutes for this first part of the activity.

IDENTIFYING THE PROPERTIES OF AN EFFECTIVE PROJECT GOAL

Re-show OHT 3.3
The project goal – an example

Ask the participants to deconstruct both this example and any of their own that remain on the flipchart. Tell them that you want them to identify the key ingredients that make these goals effective.

Write their suggestions on a flipchart.

Show OHT 3.4
Properties of effective project goals

Discuss each property in turn, showing how it confirms their own list. Use the previous example (*OHT 3.3 The project goal*) to illustrate each element of the SMARTER approach.

S pecific: *exhibit our full range of products and services*
M easurable: *generating £50,000 of on-site sales and providing 120 contact names for follow-up action*
A chievable: *judgement based on experience*
R elevant: *enhancing our reputation as a high quality provider*
T imebound: *at the Oktoberfest National Training Exhibition*
E xciting: *generating £50,000 of on-site sales*
R ecorded: *it has been written down.*

When you are satisfied that the participants appreciate and understand each element, tell them it is time for them to have a go themselves.

Ask them to think of a current or upcoming project they will be involved in. Tell them that you want them initially to work on their own to draft a project statement using the SMARTER approach. They will have 5 minutes for this phase. When they have finished you then want them to work with a partner. They take turns to explain their approach, justifying each element. The other partner's role is to listen to the explanation and then give constructive feedback. When they have reviewed the statement to both partners' satisfaction, they write a finished version on the blank acetate sheets provided. The partners than swap roles and consider the other's project statement. Inform them they will have approximately 20 minutes for this second phase.

Check they understand your instructions and then get the exercise under way. You will usually find that different participants work at a different pace. As each individual completes their first draft, put them with someone who has also just finished. Continue pairing them in this way until all the participants have a partner.

Move around the group whilst they are working. Keep them on track. Remind them to keep an eye on the time and to change over when they have finished the first review.

When all the pairs have finished, reconvene and lead a plenary review of their work. Ask for volunteers to show their final versions. Check what alterations they made during the paired discussions. Invite comments from the others on how well they have conformed to the brief. Add any further comments you feel appropriate before moving on to another volunteer.

How long you continue this feedback session will depend on how many you have in the training group and the quality of the final versions. When you have a particularly good example of a SMARTER statement, ask the individual if you can take a photocopy of the acetate to provide a supplementary handout for the rest of the group.

This work on producing an effective project goal should take about 45 minutes in total.

IDENTIFYING PROJECT STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Inform the participants that one of the major sins a project manager can commit is to consider themselves omnipotent. Point out that although they may have been appointed because they have outstanding skills in certain areas, they are unlikely to be able to do everything themselves.

Advise them that the sooner they can bring in others to help the better. Point out that having clarified the project's purpose – either with the client/sponsor, or for themselves if they are also initiating the project – then now is an opportune time to get others involved.

Ask the group if they have come across a technique known as SWOT analysis. This approach is used in a number of different business areas. Although it was originally devised as a marketing tool, it can also be adapted for effective project planning.

Show OHT 3.5
SWOT analysis

Take about 30 minutes to explain what each section should include, as follows.

Strengths: What have you got going for you? Identify the particular strengths that your project team or wider organisation can bring to the project.

Either use your own examples, or base them on the following worked example, which is set around a training firm attending an exhibition.

For example:

- Organisation known for developing innovative training solutions that match customers' business needs
- Previous experience of team members in staffing exhibitions
- First-class knowledge, throughout the organisation, of visual display techniques and equipment
- A well-stocked photograph library showing tutors in action on outdoor adventure courses
- In-house despatch service equipped to handle movements of materials to site by due date.

Weaknesses: What factors within your organisation may hinder your success? It is also useful to identify any constraints you may be working with.

For example:

- Staffing implications of having the exhibition at one of the organisation's seasonal peak demands
- A limited budget that will reduce the size of stand and type of activity used, i.e. no room for popular rope-slide exercise
- Deadline of 12th July for confirmed entries will mean team has to get up to speed quickly
- No experience of stand or exhibition brochure design within existing team.

Opportunities: What opportunities may be presented by the project? Try to identify some of the benefits you will gain from completing the project.

For example:

- Directly increase sales and make a profit
- Chance to meet new customers attending the event
- Opportunity to meet old/existing customers and introduce them to new products
- Chance to impress your customers in comparison with your competitors
- Opportunity for your staff to develop skills in new areas, i.e. project management, exhibition sales techniques, stand design
- Will unite and focus the team, giving them a common development opportunity.

Threats: These are the factors that exist in the wider environment over which the project team may have very little influence.

For example:

- Although deadline is some way off, all places may have been allocated
- As a new entrant you will come well down the pecking order for sites. You may end up in a cul-de-sac in the annexe!
- Poor promotion by the exhibition organisers may mean low attendance by new prospects
- Does it clash with any other popular events?
- Competitors' presence and stands could have greater impact than yours
- Competitors will see your new ideas and may pinch them for themselves
- Your existing customers may not attend.

Some of the group may raise the issue here that many of these points can surely be anticipated. A couple of phone calls will clear up many of the 'Threats'. Point out that is precisely why you should explore them. As project managers they must never make assumptions, but clarify as much as they can at this stage.

TRAINER'S TIP

A good way to emphasise this point is to draw the word ASSUME on a flipchart. Now ask the group what can happen if you make assumptions. Take a marker pen and draw two lines so that the word now reads ASS | U | ME. Point out that this is the usual outcome, you both end up looking like asses!

Ask if there are any questions about what you have explained before moving on to a practical exercise.

SWOT analysis exercise
Divide the participants into small groups.
Put together participants who may be working on similar projects. Issue each group with a blank sheet of acetate and a set of marker pens. Tell them that they have 25 minutes to develop a SWOT analysis, using a current project of one of the group as the example.

Allocate each group to a separate area and get them under way. Again move around the groups, keep them focused on the task, clarify any questions and remind them of the time. As an indication, tell them they should allocate about 5 minutes for each quadrant, and another 5 minutes to draw their ideas onto the acetate.

When all the groups have finished, reconvene and lead a plenary review. Ask one of the groups to volunteer to show their OHT and discuss how they approached the exercise as well as give an explanation of the items in their analysis.

Repeat this approach until all the groups have reported back.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

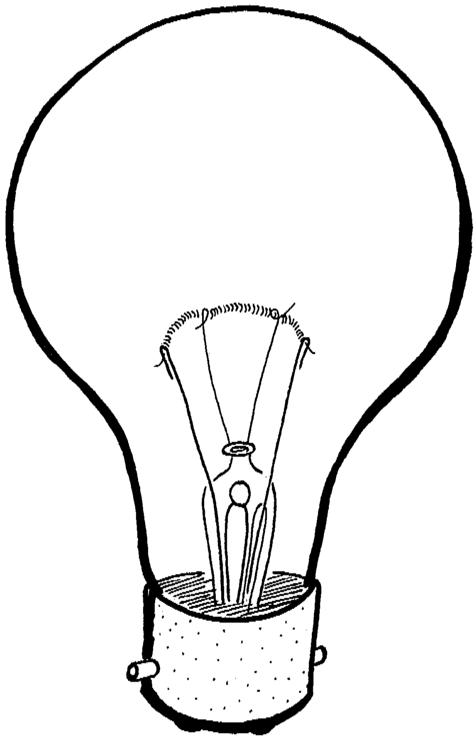
Ask the participants if there are any general learning points about managing projects that have emerged from the exercise. One that they should have identified is that having produced a SWOT they are now in a better position to question the accuracy, effectiveness and likely success of the original project statement. Having weighed up the Strengths and Opportunities, these may not outweigh the Threats and Weaknesses. As project managers they will be in a better position to modify what they can achieve, or even consider abandoning the project. Point out that it will be better to do this if they realise the difficulties from the outset, rather than to launch in and have to abandon the project halfway through because of 'unforeseen circumstances'.

Ask the participants to take 5 minutes to think back over the session and then to make notes on the key learning points that have emerged, and how they may apply these to their work. They should note these points in their Learning review diary, if they are using this approach to recording their learning (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii).

When all the group have finished, ask for volunteers to share their key learning from this activity.

When all who want to contribute have finished, thank them for their participation and close the session.

Why?



What is a goal?

A goal is a concise, precise and measurable statement of intended action.

OK TO COPY

The project goal – an example

To exhibit our full range of products and services at the Oktoberfest National Training Exhibition, enhancing our reputation as a high-quality provider whilst generating £50,000 of on-site sales and providing 120 contact names for follow-up action.

Properties of effective project goals

Set smarter goals

S – Specific
Clear and unambiguous end product

M – Measurable
Observable outcomes of performance
Quantity, Quality, Cost, Time

A – Achievable
Realistic within the capabilities and constraints

R – Relevant
Address a significant need of the organisation

T – Timebound
You have a target date for completion
Now is an opportune time to undertake the project

E – Exciting
Project will stimulate all concerned to action

R – Recorded
Written down for clarity, communication and review

SWOT analysis

Strengths

What have you got going for you? Identify the particular strengths that your project team or wider organisation can bring to the project.

Weaknesses

What factors within your organisation may hinder your success? It is also useful to identify any constraints you may be working with.

Opportunities

What opportunities may be presented by the project? Try to identify some of the benefits you will gain from completing the project.

Threats

These are the factors that exist in the wider environment over which the project team may have very little influence.

Activity 4
The power of planning – part one

Purpose

To introduce participants to the benefits they will accrue from planning their projects. To give them an opportunity to learn and develop the skills associated with two planning techniques – Fishbone Analysis and Work Breakdown Structure.

Activity 4
The power of planning – part one

How do I start the journey to success?

4

Purpose

To introduce participants to the benefits they will accrue from planning their projects. To give them an opportunity to learn and develop the skills associated with two planning techniques – Fishbone Analysis and Work Breakdown Structure.

Application

This activity is designed to be used at the early stages of any learning event that aims to develop a foundation of skills in managing projects.

What happens

You start the session by leading a general discussion which identifies the benefits that accrue when the participants think ahead and plan their projects.

You then introduce the first of two techniques that are used in the early stages of the project planning process – Fishbone Analysis. You discuss the technique and then develop an example on a flipchart to illustrate the technique in action. The participants then practise in groups and review the results in a plenary session.

You then introduce and demonstrate the next technique – the Work Breakdown Structure. The participants return to the same groups to continue the process and apply the technique by turning their Fishbone Analysis into a Work Breakdown Structure. Their results are once again reviewed in a plenary session.

You finish this activity by encouraging the reflective process, urging the participants to use their Learning review diary to review what they have learned from the activity, and to make a note of how they could apply these points to their work.

Time

Overall time required: 2 hours 20 minutes

- Introduction: 20 minutes
- Break down the work into key activities: 45 minutes
- Building a work breakdown structure: 1 hour
- Learning review: 15 minutes

Materials & resources

- 3 OHT masters
  4.1 *The power of planning*
  4.2 *A fishbone diagram*
  4.3 *A work breakdown structure diagram*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- OHT acetates
- OHT acetate marker pens
- Post-it® Notes
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

You start the session by showing the group an OHT.

Show OHT 4.1
The power of planning

Ask participants how many of them have heard this saying 'Failing to plan is planning to fail'. Unfortunately it is too often stated after an event has floundered. Point out that hindsight can be a marvellous thing, but what a good project manager really needs is *foresight*.

Divide the group up into pairs and ask them to identify several benefits that come from planning. Give them about 5 minutes, and when you estimate they are running out of ideas, stop their discussion.

Lead a plenary discussion which identifies some of the benefits they will gain from planning their projects.

Typical suggestions will include:

- Makes us think before we act
- Gives a clear sight of the end of the project. As we work continuously we can lose sight of our destination
- Saves us time – although we will have to spend time to do so
- Helps prioritise our efforts into the best areas to achieve our goal
- Enables us to schedule our resources to maximum effect
- Saves money as we may be able to achieve more with fewer staff
- Makes it easier to know where we are going, formulating short-term goals to achieve longer-term strategies
- Enables us to anticipate problems and identify potential solutions
- Helps us to identify who is going to do what, and the training needs they may have
- Increases professionalism of the project team as they approach their task
- The confidence that comes from a well-worked plan will improve motivation and morale and make achievement more likely
- We can use our plan to put forward our case for resources, for example, more staff or money
- Our clients are in a better position to consider our requests.

TRAINER'S TIP

How you proceed from here will depend on the previous experience of the group. If they have already completed *Activity 3 Define the end product*, then you can move straight ahead. If not, you will need to give a short input on the early stages of a project. These will involve the project manager and their team writing a project statement that sets out what is to be achieved and considering a detailed SWOT analysis of their current situation.

Take about 20 minutes to cover this essential early ground, then you can move on to the next item.

BREAK DOWN THE WORK INTO KEY ACTIVITIES

Inform the group that having identified the purpose of the project, the next stage will involve them in taking stock and identifying the key activities they will need to complete to help them achieve this purpose. This exercise is what professional project managers – i.e. those who exclusively manage projects for a living – call the Work Breakdown Structure. You will often see this abbreviated to WBS in technical journals.

Tell participants that as an essential first step to preparing their WBS they must identify all the activities that have to be achieved to reach the project's goal. Tell them not to worry about any particular order at the moment – what you are after is an overview of all the activities involved.

Show OHT 4.2
A fishbone diagram

Tell the participants they should use the Fishbone Technique as it can be a useful first step in any project planning process. (It is basaed on the 'Cause and Effect' diagrams developed by Professor Kaora Ishikawa, a leading quality guru from the 1950s.)

Draw an example on a flipchart to demonstrate how the technique works. At the 'effect' end of the fishbone write a potted version of the project goal. Explain that each arm represents a main activity that will have to be completed to ensure the project's success.

Ask the group to call out some activities that can form the main bones for the project you covered in Activity 2 – the Training Exhibition. Write these on to the bones.

Typical examples for the exhibition project could include:

- design the stand
- design an exhibition brochure
- train the staff
- inform existing customers
- build stand on site.

Point out when an activity suggested is a supporting branch of one of the main activities. This will reinforce the message that any project is made up of a series of activities, each of which can become a mini-project with dependent activities of its own.

For example, 'design an exhibition brochure' and 'inform existing customers' are both sub-activities of the major branch 'Marketing the project'.

Stop and check with the group as the fishbone builds up. Is their suggestion a major activity, or a supporting activity that will help achieve one of the major ones? Write their suggestions on the appropriate branches after getting them to analyse where they should go.

Point out that the advantage of using the Fishbone Technique over merely listing the events is that it enables links to be made between connected areas. They will find that, just as in other brainstorming activities, one idea triggers another.

Let's try out this technique

Having taken about 20 minutes to conduct the whole-group practice, point out that it is time to apply the technique to their own projects. Divide the participants into small groups of three or four people. It will help the exercise to group individuals who are working on similar projects. For example, projects that are concerned with appearing at an exhibition, managing an office relocation or installing a new computer network will have many common features, even if the precise content differs.

Issue each group with a set of marker pens and blank sheets of acetate. Tell them they have 20 minutes to brainstorm a fishbone diagram for a project of their choice. Make sure they understand the task, and get them under way.

Move between the groups answering any questions and keeping them on track and to time. When they have finished, reconvene and lead a plenary review. Ask for a volunteer to show their group's final fishbone and to explain how they approached the task. Invite questions from the remainder of the participants and add any other comments of your own that will help improve their understanding of this technique.

This part of the activity should take about 45 minutes.

BUILDING A WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE

Inform the group that having generated a list of the likely activities, their next step is to convert these into some form of hierarchy – a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) chart.

The WBS chart is a way of showing, in an easy-to-understand diagram, how the project breaks down into the key and supporting activities. The Fishbone Technique provides the raw material, but the very nature of the brainstorming approach produces a huge volume of random elements. WBS provides an opportunity to structure the project in a systematic and logical manner.

Show OHT 4.3
A work breakdown structure diagram

Point out that what they see is a hierarchy where each lower level supports the ones above. It may remind them of their own company's organisational charts.

Tell the group that they start at the top with the overall project title, for example, 'Training Exhibition – Oktoberfest'. The project is then broken down into its main activities, for example, 'Marketing the project', 'Designing the stand', 'Staffing the exhibition', 'On-site construction', and so on.
Each main activity is then broken down into its supporting activities, which have to be completed to achieve it. The process is repeated until all the key tasks have been identified.

The completed diagram gives an overview of the project and the interrelation of the activities involved.

Point out that having already identified many of the activities using the fishbone, they should find it easy to sequence them into a systematic structure.
The WBS helps us define the scope of the project. All the work that needs to be done to make the project a success will have been identified. The WBS helps establish the many sub-projects that are necessary to met the overall project objective.
It will form the basis of a timed programme of activities showing the most efficient and economical way forward for the project.

Allow about 15 minutes for this introduction to the WBS chart.

TRAINER'S TIP

Inform the group that they will be returning to the WBS in *Activity 5 The power of planning – part two*.

Ask the participants to move back into their groups.

Issue each group with a pack of Post-it® Notes, marker pens and some clear acetate sheets. Tell them they have 30 minutes to produce a detailed Work Breakdown Structure. Ask them to start by using the Post-it® Notes to identify each activity. This will make it easier to move their ideas around until they have finalised their chart. They should then draw their final version on the acetate for use in the plenary review.

Check that they understand the requirements of the exercise and get them under way. Move around the groups, answer any questions and provide some input where appropriate if they need help with the concepts. Make sure they are aware of the time and keep them on target to finish after 30 minutes.

When the groups have finished, reconvene and lead a plenary review. Ask for a volunteer to go first and show their finished WBS diagram. Ask the group to discuss their breakdown and describe the process they used to reach their final decision. Invite questions and comments from the remainder of the participants and provide any additional feedback you feel will develop their understanding of this technique. Take about 15 minutes for this discussion.

LEARNING REVIEW

At the end of the session, ask participants to take 5 minutes to think back over the session and then to make notes on the key learning points that have emerged, and how they may apply these to their work. They should note these points in their Learning review diary, if they are using this approach to recording their learning (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii).

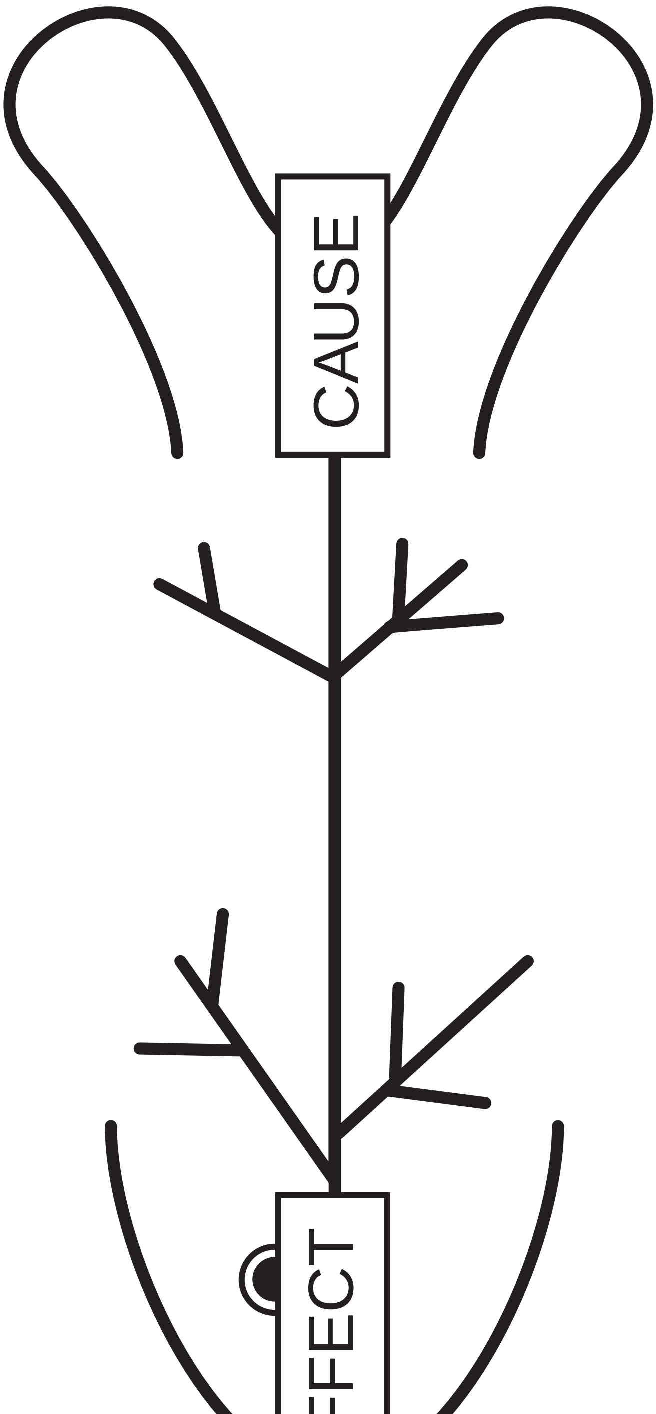
When they have all finished their individual reflections, ask for a volunteer to take a few minutes to describe to the rest of the group the key learning points and any workplace applications. Continue this process until all who want to contribute have spoken.

Thank participants for their efforts and close the session.

The power of planning

Failing to plan is planning to fail.

A fishbone diagram



A work breakdown structure diagram

Marketing the project

Designing the stand

Staffing the exhibition

On-site construction

Recruit the staff

- Job description
- Person specification
- Internal advert
- Issue application forms
- Sift candidates
- Interview short-list
- Make selection
- Inform candidates

Train the staff

Activity 5
The power of planning – part two

Purpose

This activity continues the introduction to the planning process. It aims to develop the participants' skills in presenting planning information in a visual form that is clear and useful.

Activity 5
The power of planning – part two

5

How do I work out who does what and when?

Purpose

This activity continues the introduction to the planning process. It aims to develop the participants' skills in presenting planning information in a visual form that is clear and useful.

Application

The activity is designed to be used as part of introducing participants to the foundation skills required for effective project management. It follows on from *Activity 4 The power of planning – part one* and builds on the Work Breakdown Structure technique introduced at the end of that activity. We recommend that you do not run *Activity 5* before this essential preparatory work.

What happens

You start the session by reminding the participants about what they learned during *Activity 4*, by showing an OHT of the Work Breakdown Structure (WBS). You then lead a discussion during which you introduce the technique of drawing up a Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM) – a device for showing who is responsible for each activity identified in the WBS.

You demonstrate to the group the three stages of the process, using an example of your choice. The participants then have an opportunity to try out the technique, using the example project developed into a WBS in *Activity 4*. Their work is then reviewed and constructive feedback given by both fellow participants and yourself.

In the next stage of the session you consider the essential ingredients that should be covered in a discussion between the project manager and the person assigned responsibility for an activity. The participants return to their groups and carry out a briefing discussion in which they have the opportunity to role-play the participants and develop the skills involved.

Following a plenary review which constructively analyses what went on, you then introduce the second approach – the Gantt chart.

Participants are given the opportunity to develop this technique, using the same project WBS. Following a review of what happened, you encourage the participants to think about how they may apply what they have learned from the activity back at their workplace. They fill in their Learning review diary (where appropriate).

Time

Overall time required: 3 hours 35 minutes

- Specify key accountabilities: 20 minutes
- Let's put it into practice: 40 minutes
- Specifying each assignment: 20 minutes
- Role-play activity: 50 minutes
- Developing the project timetable: 20 minutes
- Practice makes perfect: 50 minutes
- Learning review: 15 minutes

Materials & resources

- 3 OHT masters
  5.1 *A work breakdown structure diagram*
  5.2 *Responsibility Assignment Matrix*
  5.3 *Properties of effective project goals*

- 2 Handout masters:
  5.4 *Observer's review sheet*
  5.5 *Project Gantt chart*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)

- An A1-sized year planner
- A tape-label maker
- A set of pencils and an eraser for each group
- A sheet of flipchart graph paper for the trainer

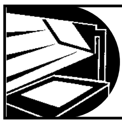
In preparation

During this activity you will need to produce a RAM and a Gantt chart based on one of your own projects. We suggest you think through your ideas and draft them onto a flipchart before starting this activity.

How do I do it?

SPECIFY KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

You start the session with a brief summary of what was covered in *Activity 4 The power of planning – part one*.

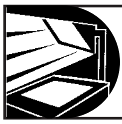


Show OHT 5.1
A work breakdown structure diagram

This illustrates how the project manager can identify the key activities involved. Point out that this is an essential first step in planning and gaining control over what happens.

Tell the group that having established the WBS, the next step will involve them in identifying who does what. Point out that it is very important that everyone involved in the project is clearly assigned responsibility for completing each individual element. If you do not establish this it will be difficult to hold individuals accountable. Confusion will reign over who is to do what. Point out that this can lead to some jobs being done twice, by different people, whilst other key tasks may either be missed or only partly completed.

Inform the participants that, having created their WBS, they now have a tool that will help them assign responsibilities. One straightforward way of doing this is to draw up a Responsibility Assignment Matrix which clearly identifies who is going to do what.



Show OHT 5.2
Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM)

Point out to the participants that when drawing their matrix they will need to consider two elements: what needs to be done – taken from the key activities in the WBS – and who will do it. A further useful refinement is to identify not only the person who has the main responsibility of carrying out the task (represented on the chart by a capital M), but also the individuals who will be supporting them (represented by a capital S).

Draw up an example on a flipchart. (Use the information you have prepared before the session.) Explain each stage to the participants as you write.

Stage One: Write the key activities for the project down the left-hand side of the page.

Stage Two: Write the titles of the people who will be involved on the project across the top of the page.

Stage Three: Identify the individual with the main responsibility for achieving that activity (write M in the appropriate box of the matrix). Specify if they need support (write S in the appropriate box).

This first part of the activity should take about 20 minutes.

LET'S PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Ask the participants to return to the groups they worked in to produce their WBS. Issue each group with a fresh acetate sheet. Inform them that they have 15 minutes to produce a Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM) for their project.

Advise them that if it is a general rather than a specific example then they should use common job titles to signify who will be involved, for example, Training Manager, Chief Designer, Assistant Personnel Officer, Transport Manager, and so on.

Check that they have no questions about the task and then get them under way. Move around the groups to give advice and keep them on track and to time.

When all the groups have finished, reconvene and lead a plenary review of their ideas. Ask participants to comment on each other's work and give any constructive feedback you feel is appropriate.

Take about 40 minutes for this practice and discussion.

SPECIFYING EACH ASSIGNMENT

Remind the group that one of the features of a project is that you will have different people working on different activities at the same time.
The RAM will help them to co-ordinate all the activities into a coherent whole. However, identifying who will do what does not guarantee they will do it entirely to your satisfaction.

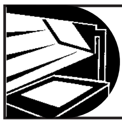
Ask the group if they have any examples of situations when they have delegated work to someone or commissioned a job, and the end result has been far from what they anticipated or required. It will be unusual if the majority haven't had such an experience.

Point out that it is easy to make assumptions that the other person knows what you expect. (Use the ASS | U | ME flipchart example – see page 3–9.
If possible flip back to it as a reminder.) The best approach to make sure you get precisely what you need is to discuss the activity you have assigned with each of the individuals concerned.

Check with the group to see how many of them set performance objectives as part of their organisation's performance management appraisal system. Point out that what you are proposing is a similar process. Probe to find out what is involved in their current system. You should find that a project specification discussion includes all or most of the following points:

- identify the person responsible for the successful completion of that activity
- confirm that the activity is appropriate for that individual
- set out what is to be achieved in specific, measurable terms
- identify any liaison required with other project members
- specify the technical standards or regulations that must be followed during the work
- specify other quality issues required of the end product
- discuss any conflicts in meeting these project objectives with other work the individual has
- establish priority between any conflicting objectives
- gather information on a realistic time-scale for completing the activity to the specification agreed
- identify the resources that are going to be required to carry out each activity
- estimate how much it will cost to provide each of these resources.

Point out to the group that any effective project activity specification should meet the SMARTER criteria.



Show OHT 5.3
Properties of effective project goals

Discuss each point and clarify what you are looking for.

Point out that the information gained from these discussions will enable the project manager to cost the project accurately and sequence the order in which the activities will take place. A successful discussion will give a realistic, rather than imposed, timetable for completion. You should ensure that the individuals who have been consulted in this way feel involved and motivated to make a success of what is becoming *their* project.

This section of the activity should take about 20 minutes.

ROLE-PLAY ACTIVITY

Ask the participants to return to their groups. Tell them that you want two volunteers within each group, one to role-play the project manager, the other the individual who has been assigned a major activity in the RAM.

Tell them you want the project manager to lead a 10-minute discussion on the appropriate task. The discussion should end with the drafting of a specification for that activity which both parties are happy to agree to.

The remainder of the group are to act as non-participating observers. Their role will be to provide feedback on how well the project manager runs the discussion. You also want them to review the effectiveness of the final specification against the SMARTER criteria. Point out that they will find it useful to make notes on the handout as the discussion progresses. These notes will enable them to give specific and helpful feedback.

Distribute Handout 5.4
Observer's review sheet

Review the items on the handout. Answer any questions participants have about what they should be writing.

Tell them they all have 30 minutes for the activity. This will include time to provide the role-players with feedback.

Check that they all understand what is required and then get the exercise under way. Move around the groups to keep them on track and answer any questions they may have.

When the groups have finished, reconvene and lead a plenary review. Focus on both the content of the final specification and on the process and skills the project manager used to reach agreement.

Write some examples of their project activity statements on the flipchart and compare each with the SMARTER criteria described in OHT 5.3.

Re-show OHT 5.3
Properties of effective project goals

Allow about 10 minutes for this plenary review.

When you are satisfied that the participants have demonstrated they know how to write effective specifications, move on to the next part of the activity.

DEVELOPING THE PROJECT TIMETABLE

Inform the group that one of the most common ways to analyse project timings is to draw up a chart that shows the sequence and duration of each key activity. Ask how many have heard of or used Gantt charts. Inform them that these were first used by Henry Gantt in about 1914. They have been adapted as the basis for one of the most common tools in project management. The charts have the advantage of showing the start and finish times for all the activities that make up the project, and are an excellent medium for both communication and control.

Turn to a fresh flipchart sheet and – using the example you prepared before the session – construct a simple Gantt chart on a project of your choice. Describe each step in the process as you draw.

TRAINER'S TIP

If you have a special flipchart pad of graph paper this will make your task easier.

Step one: Draw a timeline across the top and bottom of the sheet. Start with the earliest start-date of the first activity and finish with the date for the completion of the project.

Step two: List the key activities identified in your WBS down the left-hand edge of the paper. When you write the list, start at the top of the page with the initial project task. List the other activities in the logical order and sequence identified from your WBS analysis. Head this section 'Activities'.

Step three: Draw a column down the page alongside each activity. Enter the number of days you anticipate each activity will take. Head this column 'Days'.

Step four: Draw another column alongside the last. Enter the name or initial of the person who has the main responsibility for achieving that activity. Head this column 'Who'.

Step five: Starting at the appropriate time point for each activity, draw a bar which shows its estimated start and finish dates. The bar is positioned at the earliest start-date of each activity and the length of the bar shows the estimated duration.

Step six: Review your chart. Have you got the sequence of the activities in the most economical order? The chart should cascade down the page from top left (the start) to bottom right (the finish).

This process is usually completed by a period of trial and error as you move the bars around the chart. It has been compared with filling in a large jigsaw. You have only finished when all the pieces finally fit.

This explanation will take about 20 minutes. Do point out at this stage that there are a number of computer packages that can help you do the work, and that it is useful to understand the concepts used by the various packages. If the participants don't have a project management package they can draw up the chart on most spreadsheet packages. This tool will enable them to move activities around the chart as their interdependency becomes apparent. A spreadsheet will allow them to introduce a new activity, or change the amount of time an activity will take. This will avoid the time taken to redraft a hand-drawn chart.

Distribute Handout 5.5
Project Gantt chart

The handout shows an example of what a finalised chart produced on a spreadsheet could look like.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

For this exercise we suggest that you issue each group with a large wall-sized planner – A1 size or bigger. This has months and dates laid out on a grid. Issue each group with a tape-label maker. They should produce a tape-label for each activity. The length of each label will reflect how many days each activity will take. If your participants don't like this approach, you can issue them with a set of pencils and an eraser instead.

Ask the participants to return to their groups, and make sure they have all the necessary equipment. Tell them that they have 30 minutes to prepare a first draft of a Gantt chart for the project they have been working on.

Check to see if they have any questions about the task and then get them under way.

Move between the groups to give any support and advice needed. You may find there is a little confusion and apprehension to start with, especially if this is a totally new area. Encourage them to persevere and start drafting. Usually, once they've started they quickly grasp what's required. Point out that the purpose of any first draft is to get their ideas on paper for later review and amendment.

When all the groups have finished, reconvene and lead a 20-minute plenary review of the exercise. Ask for one group to show their Gantt chart and to discuss how they arrived at the final version.
Ask the other participants to comment, and add any

feedback you think appropriate to help them develop this technique.

Point out that one of the features of Gantt charts is that they enable everyone involved to see the overall project and also how their individual items contribute to final success.

An added refinement is to give each individual a Gantt chart for their own area of interest. This has the benefit of helping them concentrate on their own speciality whilst keeping the whole project in mind as on the master chart.

5

LEARNING REVIEW

At the end of the session, ask participants to take 5 minutes to think back over the session and then to make notes on the key learning points that have emerged, and how they may apply these to their work. They should note these points in their Learning review diary, if they are using this approach to record their learning (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii).

When they have all finished their individual reflections, ask for a volunteer to describe the key learning points and any workplace applications to the rest of the group. Continue this process until all who want to contribute have spoken,

Thank them for their efforts and close the session.

TRAINER'S TIP

For larger projects the participants may need to look at more complex tools to analyse what's involved. This will involve identifying the critical path through the project (the path through the network that shows the minimum time needed to finish). Participants will need to set up a Network (PERT) chart for the project. All project managers now use one of an increasing number of software tools on the market. *Choosing Project-planning Software (s*ee our 'Further resources' list on page xxii) is a recommended source of information.

A work breakdown structure diagram

Marketing the project

Designing the stand

Staffing the exhibition

On-site construction

Recruit the staff

- Job description
- Person specification
- Internal advert
- Issue application forms
- Sift candidates
- Interview short-list
- Make selection
- Inform candidates

Train the staff

Responsibility Assignment Matrix

Activity / Assigned personnel	Managing Director	Marketing Manager	Production Manager	Personnel Officer
1 Market project				
1.1				
1.2				
1.3				
2 Design Stand				
2.1				
2.2				
2.3				
3 Staff exhibition				
3.1 Recruitment				M
a Write job description				M
b Person specification		S		M
c Advertise	M	S		
d Issue applications			M	S
e Sift		S		M
f Interview	M	M	M	S
g Select	M	S	S	S
h Inform				M
3.2 Training				
4 Construction				
4.1				
4.2				
4.3				

Properties of effective project goals

Set smarter goals

S – Specific
Clear and unambiguous end product

M – Measurable
Observable outcomes of performance
Quantity, Quality, Cost, Time

A – Achievable
Realistic within the capabilities and constraints

R – Relevant
Address a significant need of the organisation

T – Timebound
You have a target date for completion
Now is an opportune time to undertake the project

E – Exciting
Project will stimulate all concerned to action

R – Recorded
Written down for clarity, communication and review

5.4

Observer's review sheet

Opening

Introductory remarks

Explain the purpose of the discussion

Establish common ground

Discussion

Explore the task

Identify constraints

Gain commitment

Conclusion

Set the objective

Check that it's SMARTER

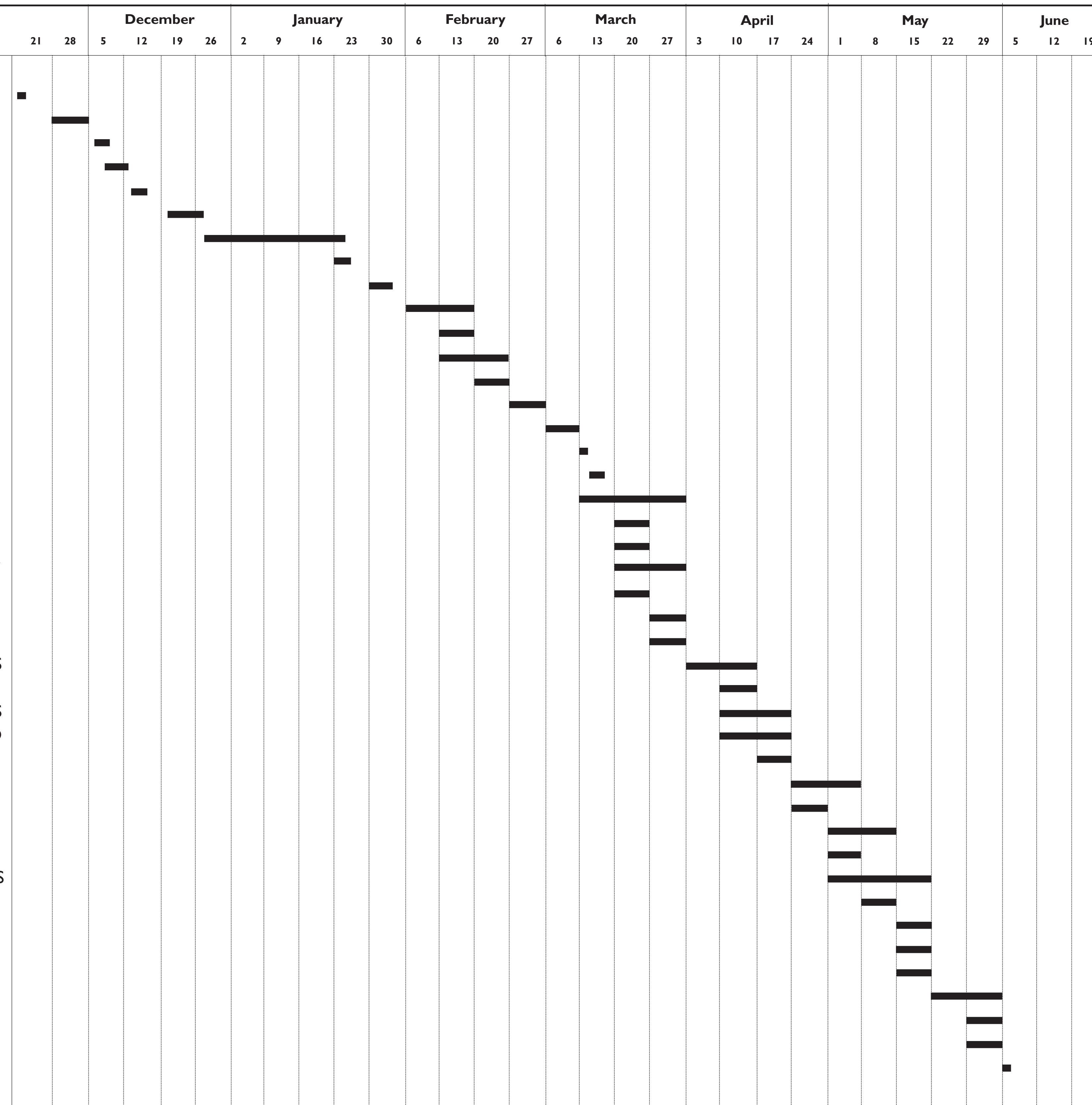
Close the discussion

Use the above items as a checklist to note whether the topic area was covered. Write descriptive comments of good and less effective examples to enable you to give full feedback to the participants.

A project Gantt chart

Project

Activities	Days	Who
BRG brief and R&D of concepts required	1	PS
R&D develop response to BRG brief	5	AS
R&D present proposals to BRG	2	AS
BRG select from R&D proposals	3	BRG
Selected proposals to research	2	PS
Market research company briefed	5	EG
Research carried out	20	MRCO
BGR receive MR results	2	EG
R&D receive MR results from BRG	3	PS
Trawl market for products	10	TS
Supply product samples to R&D with costings	5	TS
Confirm final concept of product	10	AS/PS
R&D costings to Purchasing	5	AS
Purchasing confirm cost estimates	5	HS
Draft manual inserts	5	AS
Final acceptance of product by BRG	1	PS
Brand review accepted operational feasibility	2	BR
Agree volume requirements to Purchasing/R&D	15	PS/AS
BRG advise RT which product new lines required	5	PS
Marketing Ops final acceptance	5	BRG
Draft product specification	10	AS/MW
Purchasing advise stock of product	5	HS
Order placed with supplier(s) for first time	5	HS
Agree future order lead times	5	HS
R&D approve 1st pilot product	10	R&D/TS
R&D action manual sheet production	5	AS
Pilot run 2, R&D sign off to TS	10	R&D/TS
Final product specification confirmed	10	TS/R&D
Production of first order commences	5	MANF
Production of training video	10	PS/AS
First order completed	5	MANF
Order 1 signed off, incl. bacto result	10	RD/TS
Menus printed	5	PS
Bulletin details to BRG	15	R&D/HS
Product delivered to Central Distribution	5	MANF
Product in all distribution depots	5	DIST
Confirmed costings and GP rates produced	5	R&D
Working outline, manual inserts	5	PS
Product delivered to branch – test kit	10	HS/DIS
Product delivered to branch – volume	5	DIST
Product test in branch, staff training	5	OPS
Menu launch	1	OPS



Activity 6
Critical Path Analysis

Purpose

To introduce participants to a popular technique for managing projects by enabling them to identify the length of time the critical project activities will take, and the impact that any delays in delivering these activities will have for successfully completing the project as a whole.

Activity 6
Critical Path Analysis

How do I plan and schedule more complex projects?

Purpose

To introduce participants to a popular technique for managing projects by enabling them to identify the length of time the critical project activities will take, and the impact that any delays in delivering these activities will have for successfully completing the project as a whole.

6

Application

This activity is designed to be used a part of a programme introducing participants to the foundation skills required for effective project management. It can be run independently as a stand-alone session but will have greater impact if it follows on from *Activities 4* and *5* (*The power of planning – parts one and two*), as it builds on the essential preparatory work covered in these activities.

What happens

You start the session by asking the participants to remember when they have been involved in a project and have been pressed to give a completion date. You explore how difficult it can be to give an accurate time frame for completion, and the impact on many projects if that estimate is unrealistic. This opening discussion sets the scene to introduce a technique used by professional project managers – Critical Path Analysis (CPA). It is one of the most useful tools for planning and analysing projects.

Having established the benefits of CPA to the Project Manager, you put this approach into the context of having a well-developed project plan. You introduce them to a plan that identifies the complete range of project activities, which of these are sequential, and which are more independent (and can be run in parallel). You now use an activity based on cooking a popular meal – Spaghetti

Bolognese – to help them recognise the differences between these activities.

You next take the participants through a five-step process for drawing up a network diagram and identifying the critical path – the key events that dictate the overall length of the project. Using a simple example and overheads, you explain the process and aid participants' understanding of what can seem like a complex process to the uninitiated.

Participants' knowledge of the CPA planning process is reinforced and developed by an exercise designed to enable them apply all parts of the technique. You provide advice, guidance and support and finally lead a discussion reviewing a model answer, during which you identify the major learning points to emerge from the exercise.

Having established the basic model for CPA, you now briefly discuss a more advanced variation known as PERT. This approach has been developed to enable the project manager to question assumptions that have been made about the timings used. You follow this with a discussion about taking remedial action, if the actual times to complete activities are different from those shown on your CPA.

Participants now take part in a syndicate group exercise, during which they identify ten possible actions they could take as project managers to help shorten the critical path and get their project back on time.

You discuss their suggestions in a plenary review. Comment and add any others based on your own experience before concluding the session with a key point reminder of the benefits of using Critical Path Analysis.

Time

Overall time required: 2 hours

- Introduction: 3 minutes
- Critical Path Analysis: 12 minutes
- What's cooking?: 15 minutes
- How do I draw a Critical Path Analysis chart?: 30 minutes
- Consolidation exercise: 30 minutes
- Taking remedial action: 20 minutes (including syndicate exercise)
- Conclusion: 10 minutes

Materials & resources

- 5 OHT masters
  - **6. 1** *How do I draw a Critical Path Analysis chart? – an overview*
  - **6.2** *Activity on node data box*
  - **6.3** *Sequencing – an example of forward and backward pass*
  - **6.4** *Critical Path exercise – answer sheet*
  - **6.5** *PERT formula*

- 5 Handout masters
  - **6.6** *Classic home-made Spaghetti Bolognese*
  - **6.7** *Sequencing activities – creating a network diagram*
  - **6.8** *Critical Path estimating and scheduling exercise*
  - **6.9** *Some ways you can shorten the Critical Path*
  - **6.10** *Critical Path Analysis key point summary*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- A3 sheet of paper for each participant
- Pencil, eraser and calculator for each participant
- Area where participants can work undisturbed in syndicate groups
- A flipchart complete with paper and suitable marker pens for each syndicate group

In preparation

Prepare the material above for use during session.

Think about projects in which you have been involved that were in danger of over-running their time frame, and what remedial action was taken to get them back on track.

6

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

Start by asking the participants if they have ever been approached to manage a project and been asked by the client or sponsor ‘How long will that take?’. Most managers will recognise having been in that situation.

Now find out how accurate their original time estimates were. Ask for a show of hands on the following: How many were out by 25 per cent? How many by 50 per cent? How many by 100 per cent, i.e. it took twice as long as they predicted? Ask for examples when their estimates were over by an even longer time.

Now ask them to think what would happen if they were on a project which had a definite, non-negotiable time frame. Typical examples of this could be a building project linked to a major event such as a stadium for a World Cup Final, setting up a stand at a major exhibition or presenting a paper to an international conference.

They should readily agree this would be disastrous. Even though they may be able to complete some of the project within the time frame, they will not deliver the agreed end product and not get the full success and, consequently, recognition all their hard work deserves. Point out that in many project environments (such as construction and information and communications technology) it is usual to insert a penalty clause in the contract. This means they will have to pay financial compensation to the project owners as a result of late delivery.

Inform the participants that in this session you will introduce them to a powerful tool that will help them to schedule and manage complex projects. It was developed in the 1950s to control large defence projects, and has been used routinely since then. It is called Critical Path Analysis.

CRITICAL PATH ANALYSIS (CPA)

Point out (particularly if they have previously completed *Activity 5 The power of planning – part two*) that when managing a project they may have completed a Gantt chart as part of their project planning. (Gantt charts are useful tools for analysing and planning projects and are named after their progenitor Henry Gantt; fuller details on this method are covered in Activity 5.)

Critical Path Analysis (CPA) plans are similar to Gantt charts in that they help you to plan all the activities that must be completed as part of a project. They act as the basis both for preparation of a schedule, and for resource planning. During management of a project CPA allows you to monitor achievement of project goals. They also help you to see where remedial action needs to be taken to get a project back on course.

Why bother?

Point out that the main benefits of using CPA over Gantt charts is that Critical Path Analysis formally identifies activities which must be completed individually, on time for the whole project to be completed on time. CPA also identifies which activities can be delayed for a while if resource needs to be reallocated to catch up on missed activities. The disadvantage of CPA is that the relation of activities to time is not as immediately obvious as with Gantt charts. This can make them more difficult to understand for someone who is not familiar with the technique.

How long will it take?

A major benefit of Critical Path Analysis is that it helps to identify the minimum length of time needed to complete a project. Where they need to run an accelerated project, it helps them to identify which project steps they should accelerate to complete the project within the available time; this helps them to minimise cost while still achieving their overall objective.

CPA and the project plan

Explain to the participants that the project plan is the heart of effective project management. The plan defines the project's scope, resources and schedule in one place, and will enable them to keep these factors in balance throughout the project. A project plan spells out factors such as exactly how many and what activities need to be done: Who's going to do each activity? What is the estimated cost of each activity and of the entire project? What is the best activity sequence? What are the dependencies between activities? What is the estimated duration of each activity, and the length of the overall project?

To put together an effective project plan, they need to:

- Identify all the project activities and who or what will do them.

- Get work and time estimates for all the activities (preferably from experts, people with direct experience and those responsible for the activities).

- Determine activity dependencies; for example, find out if one activity can't start until another finishes, if several activities must start at the same time, or if two activities must finish at around the same time.

- Enter activity and project constraints; for example, they might want an activity to begin or end on a certain date.

Remember – the more accurate the information, the more accurate the project plan.

Introduction to network analysis of projects using CPA

Critical Path Analysis (CPA) is one of several related techniques for project planning. CPA is used for projects that are made up of a number of individual 'activities'. If some of the activities require other activities to finish before they can start, the project becomes a complex web of inter-related actions. CPA can help determine:

- how long the complex project will take to complete
- which activities are 'critical', meaning that they have to be done on time or else the whole project will take longer.

By putting in information about the cost of each activity, and how much it costs to speed up each activity, CPA can help work out:

- whether it is necessary to speed up the project and, if so,
- what is the optimal plan for speeding up the project?

What are activities?

CPA starts when all the individual activities in the project have been noted. In CPA terms an activity is defined as specific – something gets done.

The essential concept behind Critical Path Analysis is that certain activities cannot be started until others are finished. These activities need to be completed in a sequence, with each stage being more or less completed before the next stage can begin. These are called '**sequential**' activities and must be completed in series for a successful outcome.

Some activities are not dependent on the completion of others; these can be undertaken at any time before or after a particular stage is reached. These are termed non-dependent or '**parallel**' activities.

If there are limited resources in a project, then knowing the Critical Path can be very helpful. The Critical Path through a project is the minimum time required to complete the project. If any activity on the Critical Path is delayed, then the project will finish late. Analysing the Critical Path allows prioritisation of critical activities when planning, and can help you to identify key slippages or slack in the plan when tracking activities. The reliability of the Critical Path depends on accurate estimates of time and resources required.

Point out that a good analogy is cooking a meal. For example, if you are preparing Spaghetti Bolognese you will be involved in a number of sequential and parallel activities before you can serve and eat the finished meal.

'WHAT'S COOKING?'

Distribute Handout 6.6
Classic home-made Spaghetti Bolognese

Give participants a few minutes to read through the instructions, and ask them to work in pairs to identify what steps are performed in sequence and which run in parallel.

They should be able to identify that there are two separate strands of activity: making the Bolognese sauce and preparing the fresh pasta.

For the sauce, Steps 1 to 6 should be followed in sequence. Point out that many of the pasta steps can be run in parallel once the sauce is underway. Steps 7 to 9 for the pasta need to be run in sequence.

Step 10 could also run in parallel to these if you want to complete the meal in the optimum time; otherwise when you've finished making the pasta there will be a long time gap with nothing else happening whilst you wait for a large pan of water to come to the boil. By starting this step earlier you will be ready to move efficiently to Step 11 when you've finished Step 9.

Both main strands of activity come together in Step 12, and 13 and 14 follow in sequence.

Step 15 is to eat the meal (usually accompanied by a glass of good red wine).

Ask if there are there any experienced cooks in the group? How do they cook this recipe or a similar meal? They should be able to confirm that they move through these stages juggling the various activities and constraints against each other to get the meal on the table in the best possible time frame.

Ask them what happens if you simply follow the sequence step by step and finish each step before starting the next (that is, without parallel running of the activities). They will readily identify that the whole project will take much, much longer.

Finally, ask what happens if you do some of the sequential activities out of their designated order?

They should again identify that it usually has unfortunate consequences for the project. For example, if you add ingredients such as the wine and parsley before cooking the mince, you could end up with an undercooked sludge instead of a tasty meal.

HOW DO I DRAW A CRITICAL PATH ANALYSIS CHART?

Show OHT 6.1
How do I draw a Critical Path Analysis chart – an overview

Tell the group that you intend to take them through each of these key steps, one at a time, giving more information on each step. Inform them that at the end of the section they will be asked to tackle an exercise designed to help them explore and develop their knowledge of this technique.

Step 1: Identify the activities

The first step to using Critical Path Analysis is to set out the activities that must be completed in order for the whole project to be completed. Taking a straightforward construction project, such as building a garden shed, the identification of activities might look something like this:

A Prepare the site
B Lay foundations and base
C Assemble the walls
D Construct and attach roof.

Anyone who's completed a building will probably realise that there's much more to it than the above list, but this is only a simple example, and it can easily be expanded. Point out to the group that they could go as far as doing a separate analysis for constructing the roof. They are only limited by the detail that you include.

Step 2: Plot the dependencies

Once they know what activities they must complete in order to complete the whole project, they need to decide what dependencies there are. This will involve creating a hierarchy for the activities: they will need to consider which previous activities must be completed before they can start this activity.

Point out that the original list (in Step 1) has a letter for each activity – just for convenience. Here is what the dependency list should look like:

A Depends on none
B depends on **A**
C depends on **A**
D depends on **B** and **C**.

Step 3: Determine timescales for each activity

The next step is to add the activity lengths. The CPA plan aims to identify events that are important (on the Critical Path), as this will dictate the overall length of the project; so if one activity on the path is delayed, the whole project is delayed.

The following list shows an estimation of the length of time that it will take to complete each activity. The predictions made here will be the basis for the final path.

A Prepare the site – 5 hours
B Lay foundations and base – 4 hours
C Assemble the walls – 1 hour
D Construct and attach roof – 3 hours.

Once the times are estimated, the next step is to draw the network diagram.

Step 4: Draw a network diagram

Explain that there are two sets of conventions to drawing up network diagrams: *activity on arrow* and *activity on node*. With *activity on arrow*, as the name implies, the arrows represent the activities, whilst the circles that link the arrows represent the ends of some activities and the starts of others.

In this session, we are using the other main convention *activity on node* as it is used in most modern project planning tools (Microsoft® Project for example). This convention uses a set of interlinked boxes. Each box (the nodes) represents the activities, while the lines between the boxes show where the start of one activity depends on the completion of another.

Nodes are used in networks to represent activities. When drawing up an *activity on node* plan, the activity boxes can show these various features:

- name of the activity
- an identifier, such as a number, letter or code
- a projected normal time duration
- a cost to complete (optional)
- the resources used, such as labour, materials (optional).

This is a node of the type recommended by the British Standards Institute.

Show OHT 6.2
Activity on node data box

This helps to reinforce your explanation.

Step 5: Plot forward and backward pass

Critical Path Analysis can be very complex, especially if it has to be done manually. Remind the group that the key dependency is knowing which activities have to finish before another starts and which activities can run in parallel.

The Critical Path network uses two key dates:

- the earliest start date (this depends on the duration of preceding activities), and
- the latest finish date (the date on which the activity must be completed if it is not to delay subsequent activities).

If these two dates for an activity are known and also the duration of the activity, then they can identify the amount of *float* available. (Float being the amount of free time.)

Reassure the group that if it sounds complicated, this isn't something they would want to do manually for a complex plan, but that it is useful to understand the theory. Knowing where there is float, and where there are critical dependencies, can allow them to direct resources more effectively.

Being able to identify the Critical Path through a project is a skill that can be developed with practice. They should remember that uncertainty always equals a risk.

Critical Path Analysis (or Time Analysis as it is sometimes called) is the basic calculation performed on the project plan. The dates calculated need to also take into consideration any external date constraints that may have been imposed on the project or on the individual activities. These date calculations are done in what are known as the *forward* and *backward passes* through the project.

Show OHT 6.3
Sequencing – an example of forward and backward pass

The forward pass

The *earliest start (ES)* and *earliest finish (EF) dates* are calculated by working forwards through the network from the start date, and adding the activity durations to the calculated dates. The early start date is the earliest date the activity can start whilst obeying all the constraints of its predecessors. The early finish date is the early start date plus the duration, and is the earliest date the activity can finish while obeying all the date constraints of its predecessors.

The backward pass

The *latest start (LS) and latest finish (LF) dates* are calculated by working backwards through the network from the target completion date, and subtracting the activity durations from the calculated dates. The latest finish date is the latest date the activity can finish while obeying all the date constraints of its successors. The latest start date is the latest finish date minus the duration, and is the latest date the activity can start whilst obeying all the date constraints of its successors.

The difference between the early and late finish dates is the quantity called *total float (TF)* or slack.

Step 6: Identify the Critical Path

Any activity with zero float is said to be *critical.* A delay in starting or completing this activity will delay the project beyond its target finish date. It is this figure which will help you identify the Critical Path.

Refer the participants again to OHT 6.3 and point out the Critical Path is A, B, D. All these activities must start and finish on time if the project is to be completed in the indicated time.

Point out that activities with a positive float (i.e. a number above zero) can be delayed without delaying the project completion date.

In the example on OHT 6.3, Activity C can either be started at 5 and finish at 6, or it can be started any time up until 8. However, it must be finished by 9 to enable Activity D start on time.

Distribute Handout 6.7
Sequencing activities– creating a network diagram

Give the participants a few minutes to read through and absorb the material. Answer any questions they may have at this stage before introducing a consolidation exercise.

CONSOLIDATION EXERCISE

Distribute Handout 6.8
Critical Path estimating and scheduling exercise

Provide the participants with some A3 sheets of paper, pencils, erasers and calculators, if required. Point out that the arithmetical calculations are very simple; it is the relationship between the activities and identifying the Critical Path that provides the challenge.

Tell them the exercise has four phases and they can either work on their own or with a partner.

Phase 1: Draw the network diagram
Phase 2: The forward pass
Phase 3: The backward pass
Phase 4: Identify the Critical Path.

TRAINER'S TIP

Ask the participants to work at their own pace, but to stop at the end of each phase and check their results with you before they move on to tackle the next phase. You will then be able to take corrective action if required, and not let them flounder down an unfruitful path if they make a mistake early on

Move around the group giving advice and encouragement as required.

Check individual progress at the end of each phase and don't allow them to proceed until any errors have been corrected.

Show OHT 6.4
Critical Path exercise – answer sheet

Show this when everyone has finished the exercise.

How many had the right answer:
Start → A → C → F → K → Finish?

Answer any questions the participants may have at this stage.

Ask them which parts they found most difficult. (This is usually the backwards pass involving the impact of more than one activity, for example, J and G both impact on the latest finish of B, and C and B impact on A.)

Which aspects did they find easiest? (These usually involve drawing up the network and making the forward pass.)

Congratulate all those who came to the correct answer. Ask those who struggled what they need to know more about to help them feel more confident and competent in using this method.

It's all in the timing

Point out that because estimating the time needed for activities is an inexact science, they might need some help in refining these estimates, keeping track of variations against the estimates and predicting the knock-on effects on resources and product delivery.

There a number of techniques available to help scheduling activities. These include PERT (**P**rogramme **E**valuation and **R**eview **T**echnique). PERT is a variation on Critical Path Analysis that takes a slightly more sceptical view of time estimates made for each project stage; its uses include complex engineering projects. To use PERT, estimate the shortest possible time each activity will take, the most likely length of time, and the longest time that might be taken if the activity takes longer than expected.

PERT uses a formula to calculate the time to use for each project stage:

Show OHT 6.5 *PERT formula*

A PERT calculation helps to bias time estimates away from the unrealistically short timescales normally assumed.

For example, if you were installing a new ICT system, you might determine:

- At best, you need 24 days
- Most likely you need 36 days
- And if things goes wrong, you need 51 days.

Your PERT estimating equation for that activity would be:

$$\frac{(24 + (4 \text{ x } 36) + 51)}{6} = 36.5$$

Your weighted average is therefore 36.5 hours to complete that activity.

Inform the group that it's a good idea to use a simple method if they are new to project planning techniques. They may be able to employ these techniques very quickly if they are using project scheduling software but, whether they use a software application or analyse the plan manually, they will first have to:

- Divide the project into activities
- Sequence the activities
- Identify dependencies between activities (where one activity cannot start until another has finished)
- Estimate a timescale for each activity
- Convert the timescales to real calendar dates.

TAKING REMEDIAL ACTION

Even the best-planned projects can go awry; remedial action may need to be taken and should always be prepared for.

What if?

An important part of Critical Path Analysis is the consideration of what will happen to the project under different sets of circumstances or scenarios.

For example, participants may find that they need to complete a project earlier than their Critical Path Analysis says is possible. In this case, they need to take action to reduce the length of time spent on project stages.

To do this they could pile resources into every project activity to reduce the time spent on each, but this would probably consume huge additional resources. A more efficient method would be to look only at activities on the Critical Path.

For example, it may be necessary to complete the project in 31 weeks rather than 33 weeks. They could, say, look at using two extra workers in Activity C and two instead of one in Activity K. This would shorten the project by two weeks, but would raise the project cost; doubling resources at any stage often only improves productivity by, say, 50 per cent. This is because time spent on co-ordinating the project generally consumes time gained by increasing resources.

Syndicate exercise – shorten the Critical Path

Divide the participants into two groups. Ask them to identify ten actions they could take as project managers to help them shorten the Critical Path.

Issue each group with a flipchart and inform them they have 15 minutes to complete the activity.

When the allotted time has finished, reconvene into a large group and lead a plenary review of their suggestions. Add your own ideas to theirs.

Distribute Handout 6.9
Some ways you can shorten the Critical Path

This handout is a further reinforcement tool.

CONCLUSION

End the session by asking if the participants have any final questions about using CPA as a project management tool.

Answer any questions, and conclude the activity with a reminder of the following key points illustrating the benefits of this approach.

Distribute Handout 6.10
Critical Path Analysis key point summary

Go through the handout with participants, answering any questions they may have.

How do I draw a Critical Path Analysis chart? – an overview

Step 1: Identify the activities

Step 2: Plot the dependencies

Step 3: Determine timescales for each activity

Step 4: Draw a network diagram

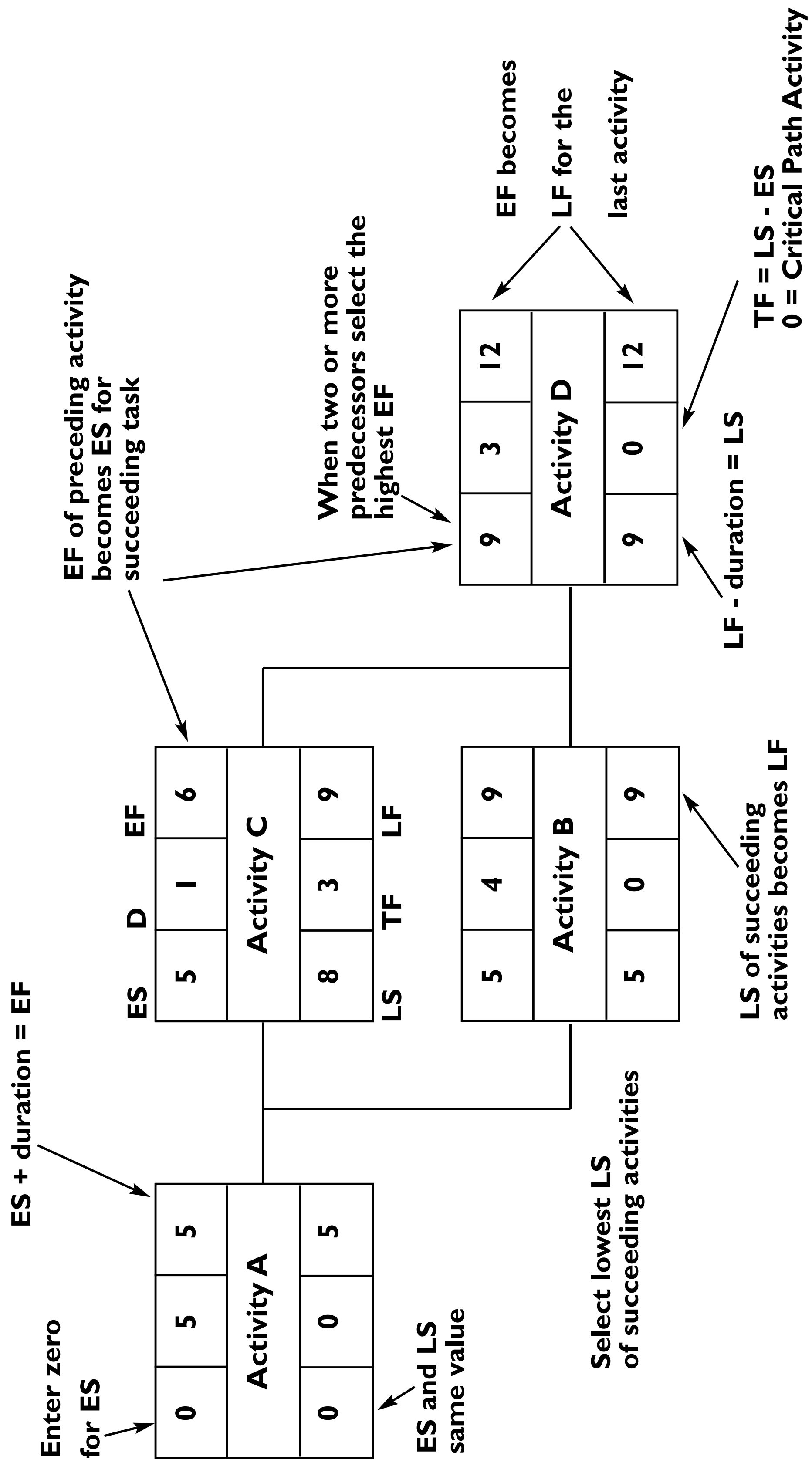
Step 5: Plot forward and backward pass

Step 6: Identify the Critical Path

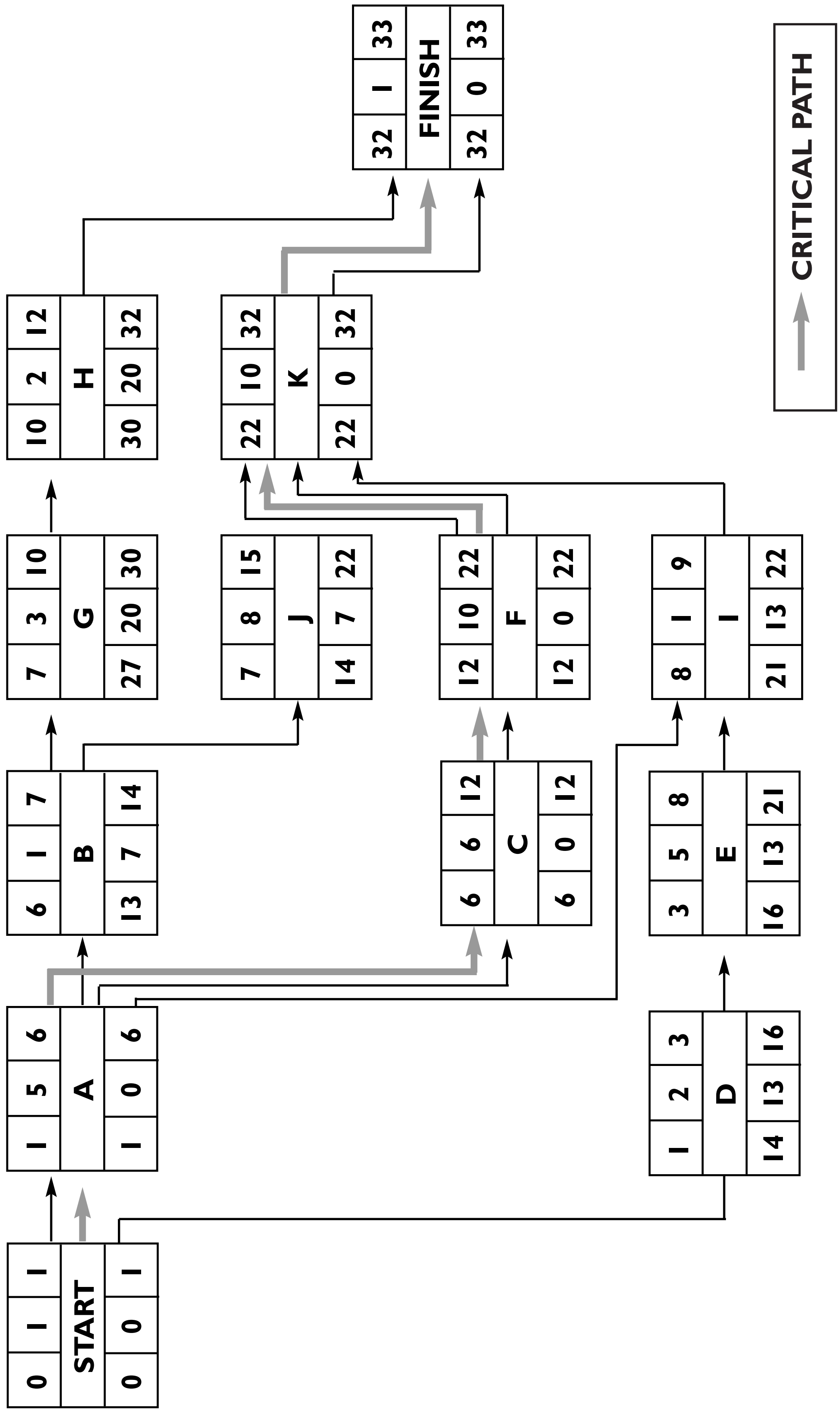
Activity on node data box

Earliest start date	Duration	Earliest finish date
Activity name Activity description		
Latest start date	Float	Latest finish date

Sequencing – an example of forward and backward pass



Critical Path exercise – answer sheet



PERT formula

Programme Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) uses the formula below to calculate the time to use for each project stage:

$$\frac{\text{(optimistic estimate + (4 x most likely estimate) + pessimistic estimate)}}{\text{divided by 6}}$$

This helps to bias time estimates away from the unrealistically short timescales normally assumed.

6.6

Classic home-made Spaghetti Bolognese

1. For the Bolognese sauce, heat the olive oil in a frying pan, over a medium heat.
2. Add the chopped onion and garlic, and pan-fry for 4 to 6 minutes, until the onion has softened.
3. Add the mince and continue to fry. Stir well until the mince has browned and cooked all over.
4. Add the mushrooms and cook for a further couple of minutes, before adding the red wine, beef stock and tomato purée.
5. Add the Tabasco sauce and season to taste.
6. Add the chopped parsley and cook to allow the wine and stock to reduce a little.
7. For the fresh pasta, place the plain flour and the egg into a food processor; pulse until the dough has come together, but is still grainy in texture.
8. Remove the pasta dough from the processor, and place onto a lightly-floured surface.
9. Knead the dough until it has become firm, and then begin to pass the dough through the rollers of a pasta machine, gradually reducing the increments, before finally passing the dough through the pasta cutters, to form spaghetti.
10. Heat a pan with plenty of boiling water, over a high heat.
11. Add the pasta strands to the water, and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, or until *al dente*.
12. Drain the pasta, from the water, then place in the Bolognese sauce.
13. Toss well, to evenly coat, and spoon into a serving bowl.
14. Garnish with the chopped chives, to serve.

Sequencing activities – creating a network diagram

Each box represents an activity and contains all relevant data.

Earliest start | Duration | Earliest finish

<table>
<tr><td>ES</td><td>D</td><td>EF</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Activity number or name
Description
Resources required</td></tr>
<tr><td>LS</td><td>TF</td><td>LF</td></tr>
</table>

Latest start | Total float | Latest finish

Time Analysis

Effective resourcing and control of each activity depends on knowing:

Earliest start
Earliest finish — for all activities
Latest start
Latest finish.

All this information is contained in the activity data box by using forward and backward pass methods.

Continued …

Sequencing activities – creating a network diagram

… continued

Forward pass

1. Starting with the first activity, enter zero in the earliest start box – ES.
2. Add duration time to ES value to get earliest finish and enter in box – EF.
3. The EF value becomes the earliest start for the succeeding activity, therefore also put this in the ES box and continue.
4. When you reach a 'merge' activity (one which depends on the completion of more than one preceding activity) trace all paths to the activity and put the *highest* number in the ES box.
5. For the last activity, the earliest and latest finish times will be the same value, so the EF figure is also placed in the LF box.

Backward pass

Start with the very last activity.

6. Subtract the duration time of the last activity from latest finish time (LF) to get the latest start time, and enter this in the LS box.
7. The LS time becomes the LF time for the preceding activity and is also entered in the LF box. Continue backwards to the first activity.
8. If you reach a 'burst activity' (one which controls the start of more than one activity), select the *lowest* value leading back to it. This becomes the latest finish time and is entered in the LF box.
9. When you arrive back at the first activity the LS and ES should be the same.

Total float

10. For any given activity, this is the difference between ES and LS values. (Or LF and the EF values).

If the value is zero, then the activity in question is *critical* and, unless action is taken, any delay will cause the project to overrun its target. It is this figure which will help you identify the Critical Path.

A positive value indicates the amount of slack time available and is useful for control and resource decisions.

Critical Path estimating and scheduling exercise

Activity	Duration	Predecessor
Start	1	–
A	5	Start
B	1	A
C	6	A
D	2	Start
E	5	D
F	10	C
G	3	B
H	2	G
I	1	A, E
J	8	B
K	10	J, F, I
Finish	1	H, K

Use the above information to construct a network/precedence diagram and find the Critical Path.

Some ways you can shorten the Critical Path

- Reduce the duration of some of the activities. (Simply allow less time for them.)
- Add more resources to some of the activities. (If you assign more people or equipment, you can often reduce the time required. Be careful, however, since this can increase the co-ordination time required.)
- Allow more hours in the workday. (Allow for overtime or add another shift.)
- Allow more workdays in the schedule. (Allow for weekend or holiday work.)
- Change the relationships of activities. (Instead of performing some activities sequentially, perform them at the same time, in parallel fashion.)
- Use float time more effectively. (Find slack between activities or downtime for some resources, and move up, or plan to complete pending activities during this time.)
- Redefine one or more project phases. (Check to see if some activities contained within a phase are causing the phase to be delayed needlessly; then consider moving these activities to the next phase.)
- Redefine 'done'. (Consider whether some deliverables, particularly interim deliverables such as blueprints, prototypes or drafts, might be defined as 'finished' in a less complete form.)
- Reduce the amount of deliverables that a particular activity produces. (It takes less time to do less work!)
- Reduce the overall project scope. (Eliminate some work products, processes, or deliverables.)

Caution: Point out that after you have determined which of the methods you would like to use to shorten the Critical Path, you should discuss them with your client and stakeholders. Since many of these methods result in fundamental changes in project structure, you should discuss the positive and negative effects they might have on the project, and obtain client approval.

Critical Path Analysis key point summary

Critical Path Analysis is an effective and powerful method helping you to:

- decide the sequence in which all work should be conducted
- show the logical dependency of one or more activities on another
- find the earliest completion time for the project
- identify related resource demands
- identify those activities that dictate the overall project duration, that is, the *critical* ones
- act as a rehearsal of the actual work on paper
- give the earliest and latest acceptable start and finish times of each activity
- show the dates on which resources will be committed to the project
- assess the level of each resource required at each stage
- show the dates at which supplies must be available
- allow modelling of alternative methods.

An effective Critical Path Analysis can make the difference between success and failure on complex projects. It can be very useful for assessing the importance of problems faced during the implementation of the plan.

As with Gantt charts, in practice project managers tend to use software tools like Microsoft® Project to create CPA charts. Not only do these assist in drawing, they also make modification of plans easier and provide facilities for monitoring progress against plans.

Activity 7
Managing risk

Purpose

To improve participants' project management skills and their ability to identify, assess, action plan and control risk throughout their projects.

Activity 7
Managing risk

7

How do I identify and manage potential risks to my project's success?

Purpose

To improve participants' project management skills and their ability to identify, assess, action plan and control risk throughout their projects.

Application

This activity can be used on any introductory or intermediate level course which aims to improve participants' project management skills. It fits best after events which introduce the basic concepts of planning the projects major activities although an in-depth knowledge of these topics is not necessary for success as the activity can stand alone. The final stage of this links well with *Activity 15 Writing project reports*.

What happens

You start the session by leading a discussion exploring some of the common features behind why major projects fail. One of the common threads you discuss is the subject of this activity – the managing of risk. Participants are asked to share their definitions of what 'risk' means in terms of project management and their definitions are compared with a current popular version.

The participants now work in small groups to identify the potential benefits to the project manager of implementing risk management procedures. Following a review of their ideas you demonstrate a four-part risk management model and then take them through each stage one step at a time.

Following inputs on the key features involved in identifying risk and assessing how important they may be to the project success, you share a matrix which will help them prioritise the risks. The participants then take part in a short exercise using the ideas behind the matrix and apply them to an everyday problem – missing a holiday flight.

You review their ideas and then go on to introduce the four steps involved in risk planning. The participants return to the earlier exercise and, once again, have the opportunity to apply the key principles for addressing common project risks.

In the next stage of the session you introduce them to the first of two monitoring documents – the risk register. Following on from your explanation and discussion, the participants are given an opportunity in small groups to draft a risk register for a project they are currently involved in.

Following a plenary review which constructively analyses what went on, you then introduce them to the final stage – risk control, and the second useful monitoring document – the project status report.

Participants are given the opportunity to discuss how they might use this approach in their real workplace projects.

You finish the session by encouraging the participants to review how they will apply what they have learned from the activity back at their workplace. (They fill in their Learning review diary where appropriate) The session closes with individuals being given the opportunity to declare one key point they will take away from the course and use later.

Time

Overall time required: 2 hours 35 minutes

- Introduction: 15 minutes
- Benefits of risk management: 15 minutes
- Risk management model: 20 minutes
- Holiday exercise – part one: 15 minutes
- Risk planning: 10 minutes
- Holiday exercise – part two: 20 minutes
- The risk register (including exercise): 30 minutes
- Project status reports: 15 minutes
- Learning review: 15 minutes

Materials & resources

- 9 OHT masters:
  7.1 Project management's seven deadly sins
  7.2 A project risk – a definition
  7.3 Risk management – a definition
  7.4 The risk management model
  7.5 Risk assessment
  7.6 Probability/impact matrix
  7.7 Risk planning
  7.8 The risk register – a definition
  7.9 Project dashboards or RAG reports

- 2 Handout masters:
  7.10 The risk register – a sample proforma
  7.11 The project status report – a sample proforma

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

Start the session by asking the participants the following question:

'How many projects have you been involved in that ran perfectly – where you met your customers' expectations, delivered exactly on time and on budget?'

They might be able to think of a couple of examples but will probably remember far more that didn't go so well.

Tell them that while some projects end successfully, many more fail and most end somewhere in between. Often one of the key measures is missed; you've gone over deadline, exceeded budget or not fully met customer expectations.

Point out that both the public sector and private industry are littered with failed projects. Many industry studies say that in excess of 70 per cent of IT projects are abandoned before completion. For example, in July 2004 the House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee published a 76-page report, which highlighted the problems of the flawed telephony and computer system used by the Child Support Agency. The report said the new £450m computer system, which is causing problems for thousands of clients, was over-spec, over-budget and overdue.

Other examples you could refer to are the new IT systems for the Immigration and Nationality Department, the Passport Office and the Probation Service. All came in late and over-budget. The Benefit Card payment system was scrapped after about £700m had been spent and, in 2004, the £200m system for doctors to book hospital appointments for their patients managed to make only 63 appointments against a target of 205,000.

TRAINER'S TIP

I rarely talk about complete project failure (other than projects being scrapped totally) as there are many factors that can be used to judge 'success' or 'failure'. It depends on the stakeholders' viewpoint. For example, the Channel Tunnel finally opened, a year late, in 1994, leaving EuroTunnel with debts of £925m a year later. Yet it was voted the best construction achievement of the 20th century in a survey of 400 engineers in March 1999, and people using the Tunnel will probably call it a success. The equivalent of the UK population – 57 million – travelled in the Channel Tunnel from 1994 to 2000.

The Millennium Dome was over budget (just!), but met its deadline and was regarded architecturally as a success. It also had the largest tourist attraction figures, whilst it was open, of any tourist attraction in the country. Some people regarded it as a 'failure' on political grounds because, as stakeholders, they never bought into the concept from the outset.

Inform the group that there is no universal agreed definition of 'project failure'.

Some projects fail to meet their original targets for completely legitimate, unforeseen circumstances. Some projects 'fail' because they become too successful.

An example of this kind of situation was the Hoover flights saga in the early 1990s, when the company failed to honour an offer in a marketing promotion to provide free flights. It was the biggest promotions give-away ever: spend more than £100 on a Hoover and get two free flights to America worth twice as much.

In 1992, more than 220,000 people tried to take up the offer. Hoover's Scottish plant was left working all-out to meet soaring demand for its products. It even took on an extra 75 workers. But the scheme was doomed from the outset. The Hoover management hoped the offer would help turn around a European deficit of more than £10million. Instead, it ended up costing the firm up to £50m – and forcing it to sell up to Italian washing machine maker Candy. The whole scheme created false demand for Hoover products and raised false expectations.

The symptoms and outcomes of a project gone wrong are painful. Here are some of the classic reasons which together conspire to make many projects 'fail'.

Show OHT 7.1
Project management's seven deadly sins

Inform the participants that in this session they will explore the seventh of these deadly sins – risk management.

TRAINER'S TIP

Refer participants to other training activities you have either covered or will cover from this Trainer's Activity Pack to develop their skills as effective project managers.

Point out that a key component of project management is making decisions – ideally these would be based on complete information with a high degree of certainty of the outcome. However, in the real world, most decisions are based on incomplete information with an associated level of uncertainty about the outcome.

In the private sector, company success is achieved by pursuing opportunities to gain a competitive advantage. In the public sector there is a strong drive to continually improve services to the public whilst achieving best value for the tax-payer's money. Projects have typically been set up to achieve these goals – introduce something new, or change an existing product or service. So, risk has always been an intrinsic part of project management. With increasing market competition, ever-improving technology and an increasing rate of change, risk management is gaining significance and importance.

Definitions

Ask the participants to suggest what is meant by the term 'risk' in project management?

Listen to, and comment on their suggestions. Compare their answers with OHT 7.2.

Show OHT 7.2
A project risk – a definition

Point out that these objectives may be revised and changed *in response to changing circumstances* as the project progresses through its life cycle. These changes should never be attempted unless sanctioned by the senior sponsor and the project board, and are subject to change controls and further risk management.

Show OHT 7.3
Risk management – a definition

Risk management consists of a series of logical steps to be followed, and until all of these steps have been completed risk management has not been done. The term is now widely used but in many cases means managing risk and not the complete process of risk management.

BENEFITS OF RISK MANAGEMENT

Ask the participants to work in small groups (trios are ideal) for 5 minutes and identify a range of benefits they think will follow from effective risk management.

Reconvene when the allotted time is up. Write their suggestions on a flipchart, and clarify what each suggestion means. Compare their ideas with the following and add in any missing items.

The benefits of implementing risk management procedures include:

- More effective strategic planning
- Better cost control
- Enhancing shareholder value by minimising losses and maximising opportunities
- Increased knowledge and understanding of exposure to risk
- A systematic, well-informed and thorough method of decision-making
- Increased preparedness for outside review
- Minimised disruptions
- Better utilisation of resources
- Strengthening culture for continued improvement
- Creating a best practice and quality organisation.

RISK MANAGEMENT MODEL

Show OHT 7.4
The risk management model

Inform the participants that the most popularly accepted risk management model sub-divides the risk management process into four distinct stages.

Explain that you will now take them through the model one stage at a time.

Stage one – risk identification

Point out that risk identification is probably the hardest, and most important, part of the risk management process. If you cannot identify a risk, it will be excluded from further analysis and therefore you will not probably respond to it.

The process of risk identification should not be a one-off, one-time event, but rather a continuous process, its frequency depending on the level of risk on the project and the schedule of meetings. Risk management needs to be an agenda item for every meeting because new risks arise and old ones change.

Risk identification should be a systematic process to ensure nothing significant is overlooked. Techniques for identifying risk include:

- Analysing historical records, for example, weather reports for an area and close out reports from similar types of projects.
- Structured interviews and questionnaires with stakeholders and experts
- Brainstorming amongst the project team (if formed)
- Structured checklists
- Delphi technique.

Ask the participants if they have either heard of, or have used, any of these techniques. Many will have come across the first four but, in my experience, the final point (Delphi technique) often needs further explanation.

TRAINER'S TIP

You may find this information useful in providing an explanation on this approach

Delphi technique

The Delphi technique uses a highly-structured and focused questionnaire approach in order to establish a consensus opinion from 'experts'. Recognising that these experts may be geographically dispersed, it was designed to be conducted by post, although this does not preclude its use in face-to-face interviews.

Experts (all of whom are physically separated) respond to a series of questions. The responses are tabulated and a second set of questions prepared which contains information and opinions of the whole group. Each expert then reconsiders and revises previous responses in the light of the group information. This continues until some consensus is reached.

The aim is to progressively clarify and expand on issues, identify areas of agreement or disagreement, and begin to establish priorities.

The success of these techniques depends on how the risk management team have been selected and brought together. A balanced team that incorporates experience, knowledge, judgement, internal members and external consultants stands the best chance of success. It also needs to be remembered that the later the risk is identified, the more costly it is to address.

Stage two – risk assessment

Point out that having identified a range of risks, the next step is to quantify the probability of each risk occurring.

The approaches to this quantification are based on the following model.

Show OHT 7.5
Risk assessment

For non-recurring risks a subjective or heuristic (rule of thumb based on experience) approach will be required to determine the probability (low, medium or high) of the occurrence and for the overall impact on the successful completion of project on time and on budget.

For risks that recur on a regular basis there may be statistical information available (for example, days lost due to inclement weather). Such quantitative and statistical techniques include cost-benefit analysis, decision trees, PERT, and Critical Path Analysis (see Activity 6 for a fuller explanation of the latter two).

Having quantified the risk, it is necessary to assess the likely impact, or consequence to the project, associated with that risk. A common approach to this assessment is a probability/impact matrix.

Show OHT 7.6
Probability/impact matrix

The probability/impact matrix plots the probability of the risk occurring against the impact on the project. This gives a matrix of nine possibilities, the output being a ranked list that prioritises the risks.

- For an identified risk a value [1 (low), 2 (medium) or 3 (high)] is allocated for the probability of the risk occurring and a value [1 (low), 2 (medium) or 3 (high)] is allocated for the impact on the project. Multiply the two values together to get a score for each risk. This score will be between 1 and 9.

- This scoring system is then applied to each identified risk.

- A ranked list (in descending order) of risks can then be produced based on the scores for the risks.

- Whilst all risks need to be addressed, attention is focussed on the risks at the top of the list, as these typically have the greatest chance of occurring and the greatest impact on the project.

HOLIDAY EXERCISE – PART ONE

Describe an example to help the participants grasp the approach. Ask them to imagine they are due to drive to Gatwick airport to catch a plane to New Zealand for holidays. Ask them to identify some suggestions of the possible risks of not getting to Gatwick on time and/or missing their plane.

7

Write their suggestions on a flipchart. These might include:

1 Car refuses to start
2 Car breaks down on way
3 Car runs out of petrol
4 You become sick on your journey
5 You forget your passport
6 You forget your tickets
7 Traffic jam(s)
8 Car parks are full
9 Terrorist threats close airport.

Ask them to work in pairs or trios to identify the probability and impact of these potential risks and assign a rating of 1–9 for each using the matrix.

Review their answers. Did all the participants have the same ratings? Explore with them how individual differences and perceptions can alter the rating of risks using this approach.

Inform the participants that five factors should be kept in mind when conducting a risk assessment:

i *No technique is perfect.* Each has its own strengths and weaknesses.

ii *Some techniques are easier to apply than others.* Some require elaborate calculations while others rely on qualitative approaches. Some use a combination of both.

iii *More detail does not necessarily mean more accuracy or reliability.* Analysing risk is, at best, shooting at a moving target and anticipating something that might happen. Data in a model can quickly become 'old' or inaccurate due to changing circumstances.

iv *It is impossible to eliminate the subjective influence of the analyst.* Be aware of potential bias and try to avoid, or mitigate, its effects.

v *Risk is variable*. At any time, the probability of risk and degree of its impact can change. This is because the environment can change for many reasons.

Stage three – risk planning

Having identified, quantified and prioritised the risks, a risk response plan needs to be developed. There are two key parts to risk planning:

1 Having identified, quantified and prioritised the risks, ways have to be found to address each risk – what can and will we do?

2 A risk register is then compiled identifying (in rank order) the risk, score (if required) and how the risk will be dealt with, by whom and when by. In effect it's a contingency plan; a plan that provides an outline of decisions and measures to be taken if defined circumstances, outside the control of a project, should occur.

There are a number of possibilities for dealing with identified risks:

Show OHT 7.7
Risk planning

- **Accept the risk**

When a risk arises, if project managers decide to let the risk occur by taking no action, they show they are willing to accept the consequences. For example, if an event on the Critical Path slips, thus extending the project completion date, the project manager may do nothing – the slippage is accepted. Accepting the risk is a proactive choice. It does not mean do nothing. We might decide to live with the risk, but there is a need to continue to monitor it, as the risk may increase and we might then decide to take some action

- **Mitigate the risk**

To mitigate a risk means reduce the risk's probability and impact but live with it. When a risk arises, project managers may take some action to reduce its effects – but they don't eliminate it completely, they live with it. For example, if a project's budget is cut by 30 per cent, the project manager reduces expenditure on training and overtime to compensate.

- **Eliminate the risk**

This looks into ways of avoiding the risk completely – by either removing the cause, or taking an alternative course of action. This should be considered as early as possible, as the cost of change is low.

- **Transfer the risk**

Such a step involves transferring the risk (in part or whole) to another party. This can be achieved through, for example, subcontracting and taking out insurance (examples include car, house insurance and one-day cricket matches insuring against bad weather).

HOLIDAY EXERCISE – PART TWO

Ask the participants to return to their previous groups and tell them they have around 5 minutes to identify some options they could take under each heading that could help manage the risk they might miss their aeroplane to New Zealand.

Call a halt at the end of the indicated time and ask them to volunteer their suggestions. Write their answers on a flipchart for added emphasis.

Among the answers you might expect are:

- **Accept the risk**
  - Do nothing, as you have a new car and have regularly driven this route with no incidents.

- **Mitigate the risk**
  - Join a breakdown service
  - Give the car full service at least a week before departure
  - Have your second car serviced in case your main car develops a fault
  - Identify alternative routes in case of traffic jams
  - Read papers and/or teletext and/or listen to radio for prior warning of problems
  - Develop a checklist for essential documents and tick off items before you leave
  - Leave early (3 hours for a journey with a 2-hour average time).

- **Eliminate the risk**
  - Abandon your trip (extreme but avoids risk of missing aeroplane)
  - Go by train (point out that this will mean a new risk analysis)
  - Travel the day before and stay overnight in an airport hotel.

- **Transfer the risk**
  - Book a taxi (with a penalty clause for non-arrival)
  - Take out holiday insurance with missed departure cover.

Inform the participants that for all these methods of risk response the following points should be noted:

– These are not mutually exclusive ideas – your response may use a combination of them all

– All these responses cost money, so a cost-benefit analysis should be performed, as it may be more cost effective to accept a risk rather than taking expensive steps to mitigate or eliminate it.

Popular methods of addressing common project risks include:

- Adding more people, equipment, supplies and money
- Changing team leadership and membership
- Training key personnel
- Control systems, for example, variance analysis for budgets and total float for schedules
- Improving processes, for example continuous quality improvement, business process re-engineering and benchmarking
- Contingency planning.

THE RISK REGISTER

At this stage a risk management plan should be written. This gathers and documents the output from the previous sections (identify, assess and plan) and assigns responsibility for implementation.

Show OHT 7.8
The risk register – a definition

The risk register (also often called a risk log) provides a means of recording the identified risks, the analysis of their severity and an outline of the response to be taken should they occur. The fields that it may contain are:

- Unique identifier (ID number) – a unique code to allow the grouping and quick identification of all the information on this risk

- Description – a brief description of the risk identified in the risk assessment process
- Category – type of risk, for example, business, legal, technical, financial
- Probability – estimate of the likelihood of the risk occurring
- Impact – effect on the project if the risk were to occur
- Timescale – how soon, or when, the risk is likely to occur
- Risk control procedures – what actions have been/will be taken to manage, or counter, the risk
- Resources – resources required for implementing the selected countermeasures, for example, money, materials, machinery, manpower
- Risk owner(s) – name of person (or team) who will be responsible for managing this risk; implementing the required control procedures
- Monitoring process – what further actions are required to keep evaluating the risk through the life of the project
- Date of review – date when monitoring process will be reviewed to check status of risk
- Current status – **RAG**

Inform the group you will be covering RAG reports in more detail later in the session.

RED A task whose level of risk is of grave concern and will have an adverse effect on the project if the problem is not addressed immediately.

AMBER A task that shows an indication of becoming a project-critical problem and should be addressed.

GREEN A task which has had the problems addressed and resolved in last period, or is finished, or is deemed to have no change in its low status and is of little threat to the project goals

The risk register should clearly identify which action steps will need to be taken, by whom, by when, what resources they will need to use and the expected outcome to ensure the project remains on time, on track and on budget. It is these action steps that, in essence, become the risk management plan.

Distribute Handout 7.10
The risk register – a sample proforma

Risk register exercise

Ask the participants to work in pairs or trios. One of the members of each syndicate group should be working on a current project, so make sure they are identified before the exercise gets underway.

Tell them they have 15 minutes to work with the other members of the syndicate to produce a sample risk register for their project.

Make sure each group can work without being disturbed by the others. Move around during the exercise giving advice, support and information when required.

When each group has finished (or at the end of the allotted time), reconvene and lead a plenary review. What worked well? What was more difficult to achieve? Do they have any outstanding questions about using this technique in practice when they return to their workplaces?

When you have finished the review, and answered all their questions, move on to the final section of this activity.

Risk control

Inform the participants that the risk control function implements the risk management plan to make it happen. The plan will consist of all the action steps identified in the risk register. These will consist not only of the steps to be taken to manage the immediate and pressing risks to the project objectives, but also of the review and monitoring activities that you need to keep an eye on to ensure their status remains benign.

There should be checks for any new risks every time the risk register is reviewed and minimally at the end of every key stage or milestone.

Key points to convey to the group about risk control include:

- The risk management plan needs to be communicated to all the project participants.

- The risk management plan should be monitored and updated on a regular basis to ensure that they learn from recurring risks and that it is relevant to changing circumstances, such as changes in team members, changes in suppliers, and so on.

- Risk management should become an item in the project progress meetings to prompt discussion, identify potential new areas of risk and develop appropriate responses.

- Risk management should become an integral part of the project's reporting system – particularly any project status reports

TRAINER'S TIP

Refer to *Activity 15 Writing project reports*, for a more in-depth review of the skills and techniques required to produce effective reports.

PROJECT STATUS REPORTS

A project status report enables the project manager to provide the project sponsor with an update on project progress. It may be copied to the project board, line managers and others who have an interest in the project.

It contains only the essential information required to indicate the health of the project. It should be used to control the project and to keep management informed of the project status; as such, it is intended to be quick and easy to complete.

Generally, a project status report will be required at a fixed frequency (typically weekly or monthly).

The timing may be synchronised with the routine meetings of the project board or the senior responsible owner/project owner. This is the individual responsible for ensuring that a project or programme of change meets its objectives and delivers the projected benefits. They should be the owner of the overall business change that is being supported by the project.

A project status report may also be completed at any time to 'raise an exception' with the governing body. This is a situation where it can be forecast that there will be a deviation beyond the tolerance levels agreed between the project manager and project board. This project status report is also called an 'exception report' – a report that describes a deviation from the agreed plan, provides an analysis and options for the way forward and identifies a recommended option. The project manager presents it to the project board.

Project dashboard or RAG reports

In order to provide a visual indicator of project progress and a way of focusing on important issues, a system of colour coding is often used to aid and simplify communication.

Show OHT 7.9
Project dashboard or RAG reports

Give a brief explanation of the traffic light system for monitoring project risks:

Red = major concern – escalate action to the next level
The project task is unlikely to deliver the intended results, has major unresolved issues, or is already running late. There is a real probability that there will be an adverse impact on the overall project objective and corporate goals.

Amber = minor concern – being actively managed
There are concerns that this project area may not meet its targets. Key risks and issues have been identified, but action plans have been put in place to manage them and keep the project on track.

Green = normal level of attention and activity
This part of the project is on track and the outlook favourable; issues and risks have been identified and are being managed *and/or*
This part of the project is completed and has met all the agreed criteria for success identified by the project manager and project board.

Typically the project status report should focus on the following:

- Accomplishments considered against the project plan;
- Comments on work that should be completed but is behind schedule
- Problems (issues) encountered, the impact to the project, and the work needed to resolve them
- Scope to change requests
- Newly-identified risks
- Observations that will be useful to the reader.

Distribute Handout 7.11
The project status report – a sample proforma

Give the participants a few minutes to review the report form.

Ask them if they have any questions about its use in the management of risk in project management.

Clarify any issues that may still be outstanding about the topic covered in this session.

LEARNING REVIEW

What will you take away?

Finish the session by asking the participants to think back over what they have covered. What have been the key learning points for them? Tell them you'd like to hear one key action they will take when they return to work to improve their project management skills and their ability to identify, assess, action plan and control risk throughout their projects.

Give them a few minutes' private reflection, and then ask for volunteers to share their key action steps with the rest of the group.

When all who want to volunteer and give action points have spoken, thank everyone for their attendance, participation and contribution and close the session.

Project management's seven deadly sins

1. Poor project scoping and undefined project objectives, roles and responsibilities
2. Not ensuring early buy in from a senior business sponsor and stakeholders
3. Failing to account for all project activities
4. Setting unrealistic project deadlines
5. Assigning under-skilled project managers to high-complexity projects
6. Lack of regular checks to ensure the project is on track – to time and budget
7. No risk assessment or contingency plan.

A project risk – a definition

A project risk may be defined as:

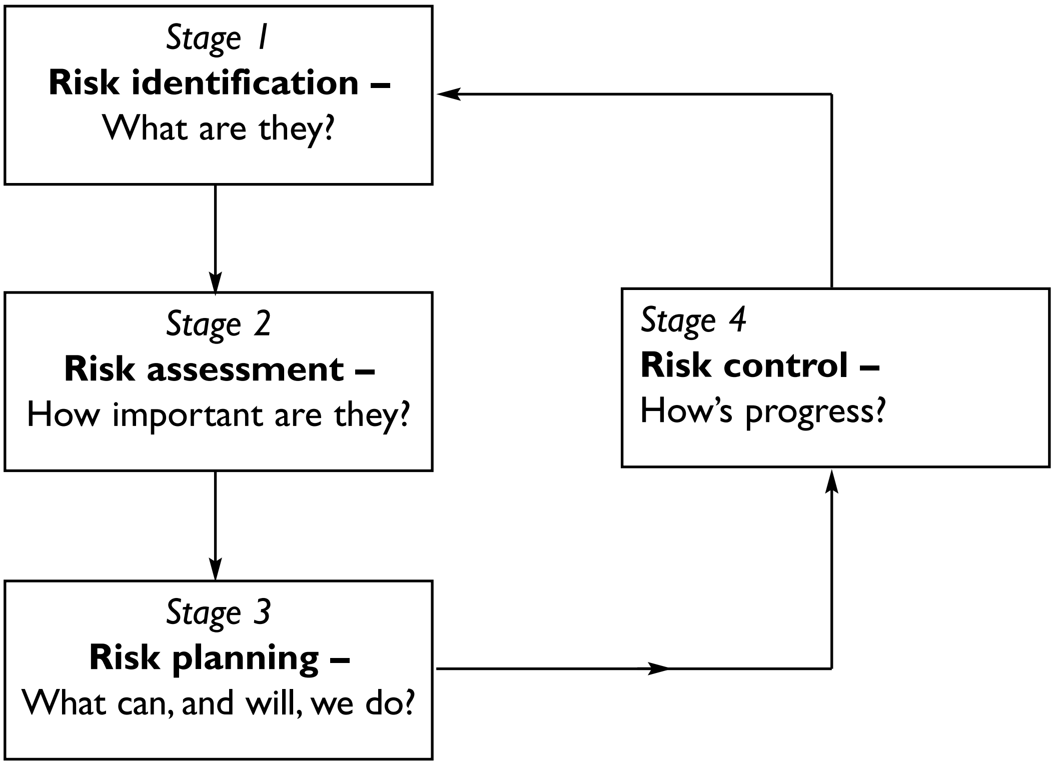
Any event that prevents or limits the achievement of your objectives as defined at the outset of the project.

Risk management – a definition

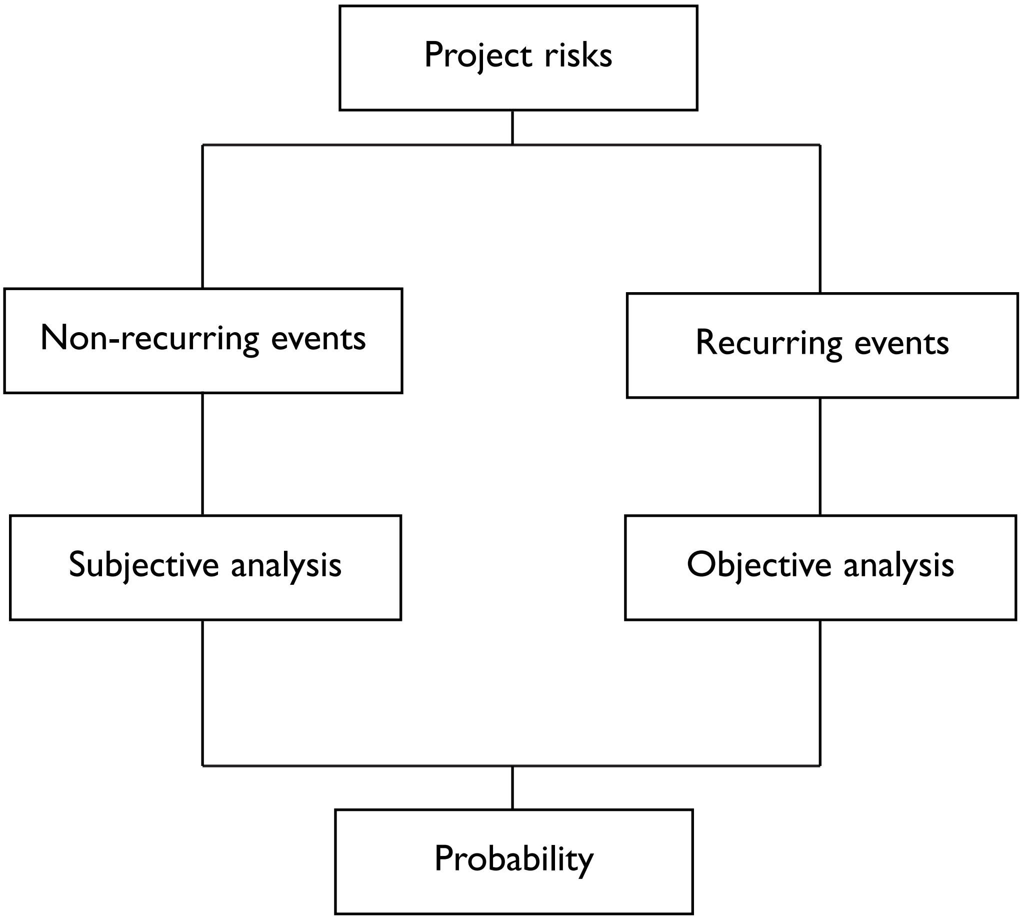
Risk management can be defined as:

The processes concerned with identifying, analysing and responding to uncertainty. It includes maximising the results of positive events and minimising the consequences of adverse events.

The risk management model



Risk assessment



Probability/impact matrix

	High				
	3	**3**	**6**	**9**	
Probability	2	**2**	**4**	**6**	
	1	**1**	**2**	**3**	
	Low	*1*	*2*	*3*	*High*

Consequence/impact

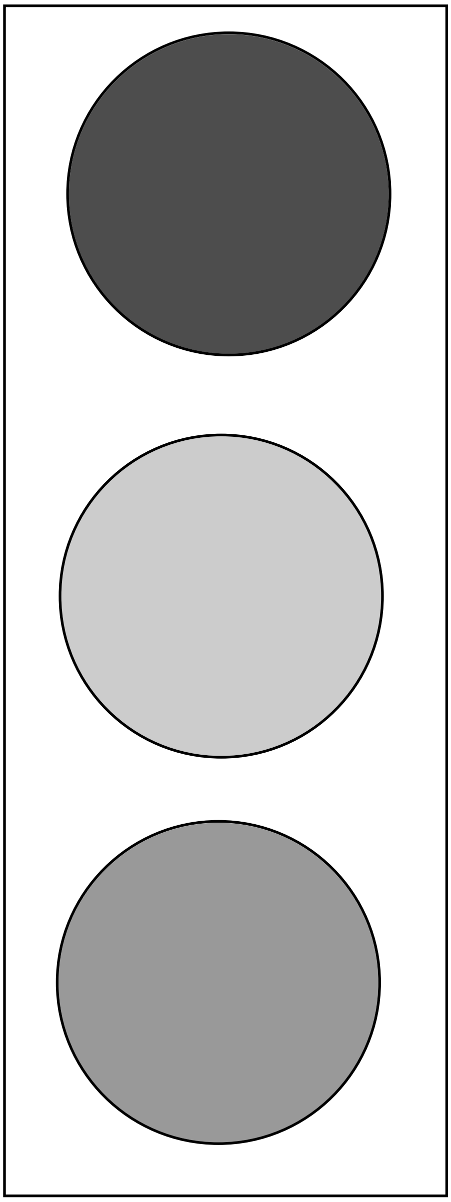
Risk planning

- **Accept the risk**
- **Mitigate the risk**
- **Eliminate the risk**
- **Transfer the risk**

The risk register – a definition

A body of information listing all the risks identified for the project, explaining the nature of each risk and recording information relevant to its assessment and management.

Project dashboard or RAG reports



Stop!

Major concern – escalate action to the next level

Take care!

Minor concern – being actively managed

Go!

Normal level of attention and activity

7.10

The risk register – a sample proforma

Unique identifier ID no.						
Description						
Risk category						
Probability						
Impact						
Timescale						
Risk control procedures						
Resources						
Risk owner						
Monitoring process						
Date of review						
Current status – RAG						

The project status report – a sample proforma

Project title	From project definition		
Reference	From project definition	Date	of report
Period covered	From: *date*	To: *date*	
Reporting frequency	e.g. weekly/monthly, etc.	**Next report due**	based on agreed frequency

Tasks, milestones, outcomes delivered this period

Highlights principal advances and/or problems during this reporting period.

Tasks, milestones, outcomes delivered this period		Completion dates	
Tasks, milestones, outcomes	Comments	Plan	Actual

Key activities for next period

Where attention will be focused between now and the next status report.

Tasks, milestones, outcomes delivered this period		Completion dates	
Tasks, milestones, outcomes	Comments	Plan	Actual

Project dashboard

G = Green (normal), A = Amber (minor concern, taking corrective action),
R = Red (major concern, needs immediate review, issue an exception report)

Overall status Enter G, A or R in each of the boxes	**Schedule**	**Budget**	**Resources**	**Issues**	**Risks**

Key issues

Issue	**Required action(s)**
Issues are problems that are happening now.	

Key risks

Risk	**Action(s) to reduce risk/contingency**
Risks are problems that are likely to arise in the near future unless action is taken now.	

Activity 8
Managing money

Purpose

To introduce participants to some of the key concepts and techniques needed to successfully manage a project budget.

8

Activity 8
Managing money

How do I work out and control the project's budget?

Purpose

To introduce participants to some of the key concepts and techniques needed to successfully manage a project budget.

Application

This activity is an essential ingredient for all training events that are designed to increase participants' skills in project management. It could also be used on more general management training in sessions that are aimed at introducing line managers to accounting and finance.

The session assumes some previous knowledge and experience of drawing up a Work Breakdown Structure and is designed to follow on from *Activity 4 The power of planning – part one* which develops participants' skills in this key area.

What happens

You open the activity with a discussion focusing attention on the symptoms of a poorly managed project. The integral part that good money management plays to effective project management is identified, and the overall importance of project and cash flow timing is stressed.

The participants then take part in a group exercise which encourages them to identify the benefits to the project manager of developing budgets.

You introduce them to the techniques of drawing up a cost matrix. The challenge of identifying all the elements of a project that attract costs are explored in a group exercise. You then demonstrate a step-by-step approach to drawing up a cost matrix. The participants are given the opportunity to practise and develop this skill by working in threes to produce a budget for one of their own projects.

The work from the exercise is reviewed and constructive feedback given.

You then introduce them to the technique of cash flow profiling leading to the production of a cash flow curve (alternatively called an 'S' curve on account of its S shape). This is discussed with examples and the participants are then given the opportunity to extend their analysis from the previous activity by developing a curve for their own project.

You draw the session to a close by having them identify the steps a project manager can take when they find there is a difference between their predicted and actual curves.

You close the session by inviting participants to consider how they might apply their learning to their work. They fill in the Learning review diary (where appropriate).

Time

Overal time required: 3 hours

- Introduction: 10 minutes
- What are the benefits?: 20 minutes
- Drawing up a cost matrix: 20 minutes
- Putting it into action: 40 minutes
- Profiling the cash flow: 30 minutes
- Producing a cash flow curve: 20 minutes
- Exploring the variance: 10 minutes
- Getting the budget back on track: 20 minutes
- Review your learning: 10 minutes

Materials & resources

- OHT masters:
  8.1 *Balancing the project requirements*
  8.2 *Typical project resources*
  8.3 *Project budget cost matrix*
  8.4 *Cash flow profile – an example*
  8.5 *Cash flow curve – an example*
  8.6 *Variance*

- Handout master:
  8.7 *A typical exhibition budget*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen

- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- OHT acetates
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)
- Graph paper
- Pencils and erasers
- Pocket calculators
- Photocopying facilities capable of copying paper onto acetate would be useful
- Flipchart and marker pens for trainer
- Two £10 notes

In preparation

You will need to prepare in advance worked examples of the following real projects from your own organisation:

- cost matrix
- cash flow profile
- cash flow curve.

TRAINER'S TIP

Finance is a technical area with a language all of its own. Unfortunately the language and practices vary from enterprise to enterprise. Therefore serious consideration should be given to seeking assistance from an in-house expert in the finance department to check that the terms and approach used in this activity are consistent with those used in the participants' organisation.

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

You start the session by reminding the participants (if they have already completed *Activity 2 The role of the project manager*) that among the symptoms of poorly managed projects they identified:

- cash flow difficulties as the project progresses
- the overall cost being well over the estimated budget.

Project management has frequently been compared to a juggling act. The manager must keep their eyes on several balls which are in the air at the same time. Point out that in reality it is even more complex. The 'balls' are often competing against each other.

Show OHT 8.1
Balancing the project requirements

Point out that decisions made concerning one area will have an impact on the others. Nowhere is this more noticeable than in the area we are focusing on in this activity – MONEY.

Ask the group to tell you about some examples of the impact on cost of decisions taken in the other areas. They could come up with such examples as:

Time – leaving printing decisions until the last minute doubled the cost because a new printing machine had to be brought on line.

Quality – the decision to go for a four-colour brochure rather than two-colour doubled the cost of the product.

Quantity – using three people to man the exhibition stand on a rota increased the salary costs over using the minimum of two, but meant that staff were fresh and able to handle more visitors.

Inform the group that in these cost-conscious days all project managers need to be able to predict accurately how much the project will cost, and be able to keep track of how much they are spending against their predicted budget.

For impact hold up a couple of £10 notes.

Tell the group that many managers, when they are asked to prepare a budget, become flustered. Budgeting is often seen as a 'dark-art' practised by these modern sorcerers of the business world – the accountants; an art which they, as mere mortals, are fearful of entering.

Now hold up a ruler.

Tell the group that in reality a budget should no more frighten them than the common school-room ruler. Explain that a budget is like a ruler: it is a financial tool with which we can measure how much money we are going to spend and then use to see how much we are actually spending compared with our original estimate.

This introductory session should take about 10 minutes.

8

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Divide the participants into pairs. Ask them to spend 10 minutes discussing the uses a well-prepared budget will have for a project manager.

When they have finished their deliberations, ask each pair in turn to contribute one of their ideas. Take another 10 minutes to build up a list of suggestions on a flipchart. Among the ideas put forward you would expect to find the following.

Decision making – At some stage the client, sponsor or project manager will need to sit down and decide on the viability of the project. Cost will be a prime factor in the decision to go ahead. If costs greatly outweigh the benefits the project will be unlikely to proceed.

Planning – Plans specify in detail what will be done, how, where, when and by whom. This will enable you to prepare a more detailed budget which will show the costs of each phase and of the overall project. At this stage there may be some reappraisal on the overall decision in the light of the more detailed costing.

Communicating – The budget process will enable each participant in the project to make their needs known to the project manager. If they have been allocated a fixed cost they will be able to tell you what can reasonably be expected at that price. Each section will know exactly how much they can spend over what timescale as they work towards their own particular target.

Co-ordinating – You will be able to keep the project in balance and ensure that all those concerned are moving forward harmoniously. You will also be able to plan and to check that one section is not running ahead by spending all the money.

Controlling – You can make sure that the finances are controlled properly so that the project meets its financial targets, stays on track and ensures the organisation as a whole survives. For more complex projects you can ease your cash flow by having money ready just when it is needed, rather than paying out for everything at the start.

Comparing – As the project progresses you can compare actual and planned performance and intentions. Doing this on a regular basis will mean that your organisation has detailed and first-hand knowledge on progress and any problems that may occur.

Correcting – The budget will enable you to consider what corrective action is needed if things are going awry. Why did the original forecasts go wrong? What corrective action is needed? How will this affect costs allocated to other resources? Can you take corrective action and still come in on time and budget?

Motivating – By setting an agreed target you can motivate your project team to work towards it. They will be encouraged to make small adjustments to keep the project on track. Some project managers offer a direct incentive – finish the project to specification but ahead of time and the team will be paid a bonus (but make sure you budget for this eventuality or you may lose your advantage and end up with an overall loss).

Discuss each of these points, and any other suggestions put forward by the group, by drawing out examples based on the participants' and your own experience of budget management.

DRAWING UP A COST MATRIX

Point out that estimating costs can be a difficult process. Historical figures may give an indication but they are unlikely to be accurate. For a new project there may be no precedent on which to base your estimates.

One of the first steps in making a reliable estimate is to identify the major activities in the project accurately and with sufficient precision. This is usually called identifying the Work Breakdown Structure – WBS. (If the participants have completed *Activity 4 The power of planning – part one,* they will already be familiar with the stages involved in creating a WBS for their projects.)

For each activity in their WBS they will need to identify the resources that will be required and then the costs for providing each of these. A total cost estimate for the project can be prepared by totalling the costs for each WBS element. Budgets can then be prepared for each element and for the project as a whole.

The detail required for costing the resources will depend on the nature and scale of the project.
For small internal projects you will probably only need to account for any additional costs incurred (for example, hiring equipment, buying materials, hiring labour or other expenses). For larger or external projects your costings will have to be more detailed and may have to show indirect costs. For example, indirect costs will be incurred when resources used on a project are provided by a department whose labour and efforts are used on various other projects or activities in the organisation. These could include such items as office stationery, labour costs such as cleaning, or even expenses such as lighting, heating and rent.

Whatever the detail you choose to use, it can be quite easy to underestimate what is involved.
To illustrate this, ask the group to imagine they are the project managers for an exhibition (the subject of previous WBS examples in earlier activities).
Ask them to work with a partner and develop a list of the items that could cost them money as part of this project.

Give them about 10 minutes to confer and then lead a plenary review. Write their collective ideas on a flipchart.

Distribute Handout 8.7
A typical exhibition budget

Ask participants to compare and contrast their own lists and the one on the handout, and to identify the additional items. (Don't be surprised if they have identified items not on the handout. This serves to demonstrate how detailed a task this can be.)

Explain that when they have prepared an estimate of the overall expenditure they will be able to draw up a cost matrix. The cost matrix is another diagrammatic way of representing material to make it more easily understandable to all concerned.

To prepare a cost matrix you will have to identify the major categories of resources you will need for each item in the project Work Breakdown Structure. Once this is done you will then be in a position to make a more accurate costing.

Show OHT 8.2
Typical project resources

Point out that this is not an exhaustive list but is designed to illustrate many of the resources that may apply to a project. Ask them to relate the items to the previous example of the exhibition project.

Typical project resources

People – Cost of employing own staff on project. Additional costs of employing temporary staff.

Machinery – Any equipment that is removed from other work or has to be brought in (hired or purchased) for the project.

Materials – Any items used from your own stocks or bought in.

Premises – Costs you will have to bear to rent premises for the duration of the project.

Other expenses – This category could cover a wide range of expenditure depending on the complexity of the project. These expenses are what it costs simply to set up (an exhibition, for example) without making or selling anything. Such costs may include providing management and support services; National Insurance, pension and staff benefits; rent, rates, light, heat and servicing the buildings.

Point out that you will have to take a management decision about what share of the overheads this project will bear. Different organisations will adopt different policies.

Once you have identified your project costs you will need to break them down by type of resource for each activity and then set them down in a detailed project budget.

TRAINER'S TIP

Find out who did a project last year. Is there a file on the project? Is this the first time this project has been run, or has any project been run before?

Show OHT 8.3
Project budget cost matrix

Issue a prepared example of a real cost matrix from your own organisation.

This introduction to the cost matrix should take about 20 minutes.

PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Exercise 1 – Producing a cost matrix

Divide the participants into groups of three. Issue each a group with graph paper to make recording their calculations easier. Ask them to identify within the group a real project they are currently working on which would be suitable for this activity. They then work together to produce a cost matrix for that project. Point out that due to time constraints it is unlikely they will have the time to produce more than one matrix per group. They will have 30 minutes for this exercise.

Tell them that they will need to identify the relevant resource items and enter a figure for each resource and activity. Issue each group with a calculator to help them work out the figures.

Move around the groups until each has produced at least one matrix. Clarify any areas of concern and give advice when appropriate.

Review the activity by asking one group to volunteer their budget for scrutiny.

TRAINER'S TIP

Photocopy the group's matrix as a supplementary handout for the other participants. If you have the facility (and the correct transparency film) you could also produce an instant OHT of their matrix using the photocopier. This will have the benefit of giving the rest of the participants something visual to focus on when the group are explaining their figures.

Ask for comments from the group on how they approached the exercise. Get feedback from the other participants on the final outcome and provide any further constructive criticism you think would help them learn from their experience.

Allow 10 minutes for this discussion.

PROFILING THE CASH FLOW

Point out that having produced a detailed budget for the project, the next step for more complex and lengthy projects is to produce a cash flow profile.

The profile is used by the project manager to illustrate when the money will be spent on the project. A project manager will need to identify how much money will be paid out and when, and how much money will come in, and when. This is known as a cash flow profile, and it provides details of the various cash flows on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. The precise period used will be determined by different organisations' needs and their budget procedures.

The starting point for this exercise is the cost matrix. You will need to look at each item of expenditure identified and estimate when you will need to spend the money.

Show OHT 8.4
Cash flow profile – an example

Issue a prepared example of a cash flow profile from your own organisation.

Exercise 2 – Producing a cash flow profile
Ask the participants to return to their original groups. Their task is to produce a cash flow profile for the project they worked on earlier. The exercise should take 20 minutes. Issue each group with fresh graph paper to make the recording easier.

Once again, take 10 minutes to review an example from the group once they have completed the exercise. What difficulties did they experience in conducting the exercise?

Point out the need for managers to monitor the total cumulative spend to date. It will be important to ensure that the total amount spent does not exceed the available funds at any one time.
The example cash flow profile on OHT 8.4 is quite simple, as in this project there is only money being spent – no inflows of funds are shown.

TRAINER'S TIP

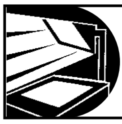
As the policies of different organisations vary you may wish to hold a short discussion at this stage identifying the way funds are allocated in your organisation (or the participants' organisation if that is different). You should also be aware of the effect that year ends may have. Additional funds may be made available in the new financial year. This is likely to be reflected in both the budgeted and actual expenditure patterns. Allow extra time if you decide to include this option.

PRODUCING A CASH FLOW CURVE

Having profiled your budget and identified the timings of the various cash payments and receipts, and set out your cash flow profile, the next step is to produce a cash flow curve.

Once a cash flow profile is made up, the information is then plotted on a graph showing the anticipated expenditure against time. Although the precise shape of the graph will be determined by the type of project and financial arrangements adopted (for example, supplier payment terms, wage payment intervals, incidents of any on-account receipts, and so on) a curve shaped like an S is usually found to emerge (hence the alternative name 'S' curve).

These curves are used by a project manager to identify graphically the cash flows of a project.
If actual cash flows are recorded then it will be possible for the project manager to identify whether he is under or over-budget at given stages of the project. In addition other curves can plotted thereby monitoring the project's cash flow against the project's progress, purchase commitments, etc. In a well-managed project the 'cash flow' curve should be to the left of 'progress' and 'commitment' curves until the completion of the project.



Show OHT 8.5
Cash flow curve – an example

Point out that S curves provide a quick view of progress to the project manager once the project is underway. You are able to record actual expenditure to date on the graph. This will enable you to identify any variance between what is actually happening compared to what was predicted to happen. At that point you can make a decision about what action you want to take. But first you will need to profile the budget and draw your curve.

Issue a prepared example of a cash flow curve from your own organisation.

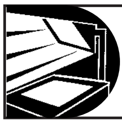
Exercise 3 – Producing a cash flow curve
Ask the participants to move back into the same groups they were in for the earlier exercises. Issue each group with fresh sheets of graph paper to make calculations easier. Ask them to estimate when the costs are likely to be incurred throughout the project, i.e. to prepare a profile. For the sake of simplicity in this exercise, ask them to predict the date any actual payments will have to be made (again precise methods will depend on individual organisations' financial management practices).

Move around the groups as they work on the task. Clarify any areas of concern and give advice when appropriate. When all have finished (allow about 10 minutes), ask for a different group to volunteer their efforts for scrutiny.

Adopt the same approach to reviewing their output as before. Ask for comments from the groups on how they approached the exercise; get feedback from the other participants on the final outcome and provide any further constructive criticism you think would help them to learn from their experience.

EXPLORING THE VARIANCE

Remind the participants that you pointed out that one of the main benefits of a cash flow curve is that it helps show up discrepancies between planned and actual expenditure. What they will also need to keep an eye on is a figure called the variance. This is a term used by project managers to describe the difference between the original budget minus the actual costs plus the remaining planned costs to complete the project. This revised prediction will give the estimated cost of the project at completion and provide them with the best indicator of whether the project can be completed on budget or not.



Show OHT 8.6
Variance

This will help the participants understand the concept:

variance =
original budget – actual cost + cost to complete

Tell the group that as project managers they are faced with a situation where they have worked out the figures which show the project is running well under budget. Ask them: Is this a case for joy or concern? The answer should be neither – it is a case for further investigation.

One possible answer is that the individuals responsible for each part of the WBS have found cheaper ways of achieving their goals and the project will make a bigger profit. But wait, maybe the project is well behind schedule and the money hasn't been spent because the work hasn't yet started. What if in order to cut costs they have gone for inferior-quality products which may store up problems later, costing more than the original savings to put right?

GETTING THE BUDGET BACK ON TRACK

Ask the participants to work in their groups and spend 5 minutes identifying five ideas for actions they could employ when their analysis shows the project is not running to budget.

When they have finished, lead a 15-minute plenary discussion and list their ideas on a flipchart. They could include some or all of the following suggestions.

1. Do nothing – the gap between actual and planned costs may be too small to worry about in some circumstances.

2. Revise the budget – all plans are based on guess work and estimates which may be incomplete. The revisions will be based on more up to date information.

3. Reduce specifications – substitute the quantity or quality of resources required by using cheaper material for future activities.

4. Substitute – use your own internal staff (provided they have the necessary skills and time) rather than continuing to use expensive external contractors.

5. Re-negotiate your budget – you may need to go back to the negotiating table to negotiate a budget increase with your client as a result of the information.

6. Delete – removing desirable but less than essential activities or resources from the remaining project activities may save you money.

7. Offer an incentive – a bonus to project staff to come up with suggestions or work more effectively to get the project back on track.

8. Manage – one reason for variance is that the project manager is not keeping in touch with what is going on. Set up regular team meetings and regularly 'walk the job' to inspect the quality of the work to avoid future problems.

REVIEW YOUR LEARNING

Ask the participants to look back over the last activity. Ask them to think for 5 minutes about:

- What key learning has emerged for them.
- How might they apply this to their own projects back at work?

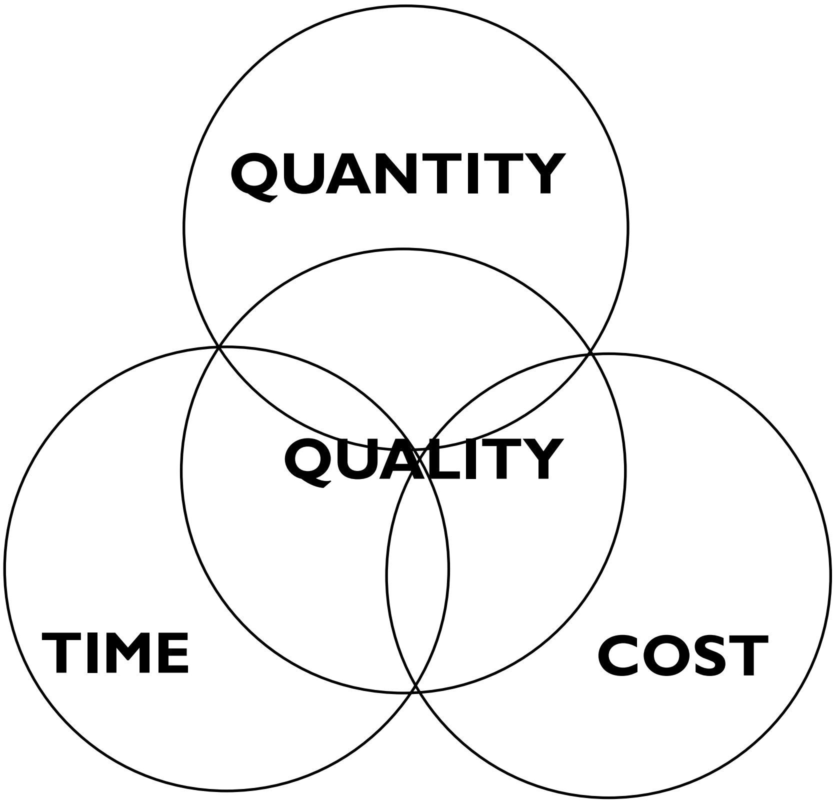
They should note these points in their Learning review diary, if they are using this approach to recording their learning (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii).

When they have finished, reconvene and clarify any outstanding questions.

Ask for volunteers to disclose their key learning action points to the group.

When all those who want to speak have finished, thank all the participants for their work and close the session.

Balancing the project requirements



Typical project resources

PEOPLE

MACHINERY

MATERIALS

PREMISES

OTHER EXPENSES

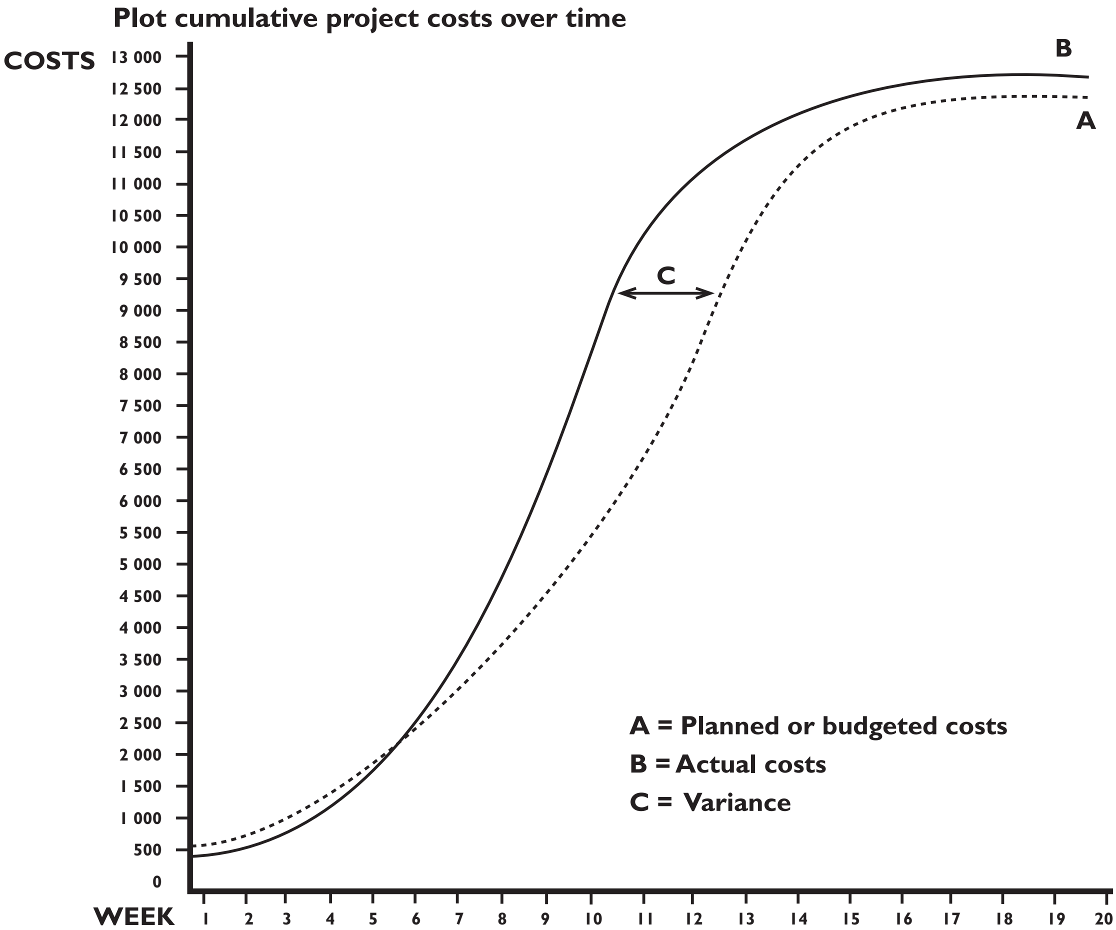
Project budget cost matrix

Activity / Resources	People	Machinery	Materials	Premises	Other expenses	Total
Market project **1.1 Marketing material** **1.2 Exhibition material**						
Design stand **2.1 Design stand** **2.2 Stand materials**						
Staff exhibition **3.1 Recruitment** **3.2 Training**						
Construction **4.1 Deliver** **4.2 Assemble** **4.3 Services**						
Total cost						

Cash flow profile – an example

Period (week) payments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
People							100			150		100								
Machinery				400																
Materials				400						150		200								
Premises							100					100								
Other expenses							100													
Total weekly payments				800			300			300		400								
Cumulative				800			1100			1400		1800								

Cash flow curve – an example



8.6

Variance

variance =

original budget –

actual cost +

cost to complete

A typical exhibition budget

Exhibition hall expenses
- Space costs
- Shell scheme
- Stand fittings
- Services: electricity, water
- Telephone and fax: install and calls
- Cleaning
- Insurance
- Furniture and carpet hire.

Exhibit material
- Professional fees: designer, copywriter, editor
- Exhibit material (products): bought-in, in-house
- Stand effects: lighting, music, audio-visual
- Exhibit material (brochures): printing, display racks
- Stationery
- Storage: pre-exhibition, post-exhibition
- Assembly
- Disposal
- Transport.

Marketing
- Advertising: press, direct mail, catalogue, posters
- Tickets
- Press releases
- Photographer
- Photocopying
- Flowers
- Entertaining: fridge, food, drink
- Special events: juggler, conjurer, dancers, competition prizes.

Staff costs
- Salary costs
- Hotels
- Subsistence
- Travel and car parking
- Transport: car, van hire
- Overtime
- Hiring temporary staff – to work on stand or as replacements at work
- Management meetings: manage project, brief staff
- Training: trainer's fees, videos
- Uniforms – clothing allowance
- Security.

Activity 9
Making a project presentation

Purpose

To introduce participants to the techniques and skills required to make an effective presentation whose objective is to gain commitment to support a proposed project.

Activity 9
Making a project presentation

How can I persuade others to back my project proposal?

Purpose

To introduce participants to the techniques and skills required to make an effective presentation whose objective is to gain commitment to support a proposed project.

Application

This activity may be used at all training events that are designed to improve the skills of project managers. It could also be used on courses in Presentation Skills or Sales Training.

The activity will work best if the participants have previously completed *Activities 3, 4, 5 and 6* as they provide essential preparation material which will be used in the presentation.

What happens

You start the session by stating that giving a presentation can be a stress-inducing experience. This stress needs to be managed, and one way of doing this is through systematic preparation. You finish this introduction by showing a five stage model for effective presentations.

During the next phase of this activity you take the participants through each of the stages step by step. This will involve you in introducing the concepts and having everyone participate in micro-exercises before using the insight they have gained to prepare for the consolidation exercise at the end of the activity.

You pull all the parts together by having each participant make a presentation which includes handling audience participation. Each presentation is based on a real project proposal that the participants are working on. At the end of their presentation they will have the benefits of feedback from their audience and tutor. (We also recommend that you record each presentation, and the feedback session on video for later review and reflection after the event.)

You conclude the session by asking the participants to complete a Learning review diary which helps them identify how they will transfer their key learning points back to the work place.

Time

Overall time required: 6 hours 15 minutes (6 participants).

- Introduction: 20 minutes
- Stage one – Gather your facts: 30 minutes
- Stage two – Structure your presentation: 45 minutes
- Stage three – Present professionally: 30 minutes
- Stage four – Manage participation: 30 minutes
- Stage five – Summarise and gain commitment: 10 minutes
- Practical presentation:
  15 minutes common preparation
  30 minutes per presentation
  3 hours 15 minutes for 6 participants
- Learning review: 15 minutes.

Materials & resources

- 15 OHT masters:
  9.1 *The performance curve*
  9.2 *Stages of an effective presentation*
  9.3 *Key questions for a persuasive presentation*
  9.4 *Find out what they want*
  9.5 *Filter your facts*
  9.6 *The three tells*
  9.7 *Strain your P's*
  9.8 *Intro*
  9.9 *Three ingredients of communication*
  9.10 *Features of the caravan site*
  9.11 *Tips for effective presentation*
  9.12 *Tips on using visual aids*
  9.13 *Objections – a definition*
  9.14 *Handling objections – a model*
  9.15 *Clinch the deal*

- 1 Handout master:
  9.16 *Project proposal presentation observer review sheet*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- Post-it® Notes
- Video camera and tripod
- Video (or DVD) playback machine and TV monitor
- Blank video cassettes and labels
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)

In preparation

Participants should be informed before they attend that they will be giving a presentation based on a current project proposal. They should be asked to bring material prepared for *Activities 3–6* in order to prepare for the practical exercise.

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

You start the session by asking the participants to make a note of three situations in their business life that cause them stress and anxiety. Having given them a few minutes to consider, ask them to call out their ideas and list them on a flipchart. Among common choices you will usually find:

- disciplining staff
- making people redundant
- giving a presentation.

Highlight 'giving a presentation' and inform the group that it is this particular topic you want to cover in this session. Check with the group how many of them either had it on their list or recognise it as an experience that has pulled on their emotions in the past. Most will readily admit it is one of their most feared situations.

Point out that it is not your purpose to take away that fear altogether.

Show OHT 9.1
The performance curve

Point out that this piece of research demonstrates that we generally perform better when we have an optimum amount of stress and pressure in our lives. Too little and we can't get started, we become lazy and complacent. Too much, of course, will mean our performance gets out of control and could have a serious effect on our general health.

What's the answer

Write the word 'Iceberg' on a flipchart. Ask the group what is one of the most noticeable features of an iceberg. They should reply that only about a quarter of the berg is visible; the rest is below the sea's surface. Draw a picture of an iceberg on the flipchart with a line dividing the figure into top 25 per cent, and the rest 75 per cent. Ask the group if they can spot the similarity between an iceberg and an effective presentation. The answer you are looking for is that what you see on the surface – the presentation – is supported by a weighty foundation – the preparation. Write these terms on the chart to reinforce your message.

Tell participants that in order to manage their anxiety and make a presentation that achieves the desired objective, they need to set themselves up for success by spending a greater proportion of their time in planning and preparation.

Show OHT 9.2
Stages of an effective presentation

Briefly comment on each stage.

Tell them that having given an overview of the five stages you now want to explore each in more depth.

This introductory discussion should take about 20 minutes.

STAGE ONE – GATHER YOUR FACTS

Point out that one of the hallmarks of an effective project manager is that they sit down and plan what they are going to do. If your participants have already completed the earlier activities in this pack they should already have the answers to the questions on the next OHT.

Show OHT 9.3
Key questions for a persuasive presentation

TRAINER'S TIP

Point out where each question complements the other activities in this resource.

Why are we doing this? – The project's purpose and objectives (*Activity 3 Define the end product*)

What will be the key tasks? – The project Work Breakdown Structure **WBS** (*Activity 4 The power of planning – part one*)

Who will be involved? – The Responsibility Assignment Matrix **RAM** (*Activity 5 The power of planning – part two*)

When will the activity take place? – The project Gantt chart (also in *Activity 5*)

How much will all this cost us? – The project budget forecast (*Activity 8 Managing money*)

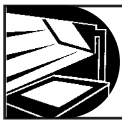
If they have covered all these details they will be well placed to turn this raw material into an effective presentation. But they must not forget a key component.

Not only 'Why are you proposing this project?' but also 'What is your objective for making the presentation?'.

The short answer to this must be to gain approval to go ahead with the project. Point out that with this objective in mind they must also consider their audience.

Find out what they want
Ask the participants to picture an audience they maybe presenting to in the near future. This could either be a small group – such as a management board – or a large audience – the whole workforce for some large projects. Tell the participants that the key to any successful persuasive presentation is to see the proposition from the other person's point of view. They need to be able to put themself in the audience's shoes and work out the answers to a key question each member of the audience will be asking themselves, 'What's in this for me?'

People buy goods and services for a variety of reasons. Many of these can be summed up by the mnemonic SPACED.



Show OHT 9.4
Find out what they want

Briefly explain each item.

Ask the group to think of a recent decision they have made. How much were they influenced by one of the intangible factors on this list?

Tell them that they will now need to prepare for an actual presentation which they will be giving the rest of the group.

Ask them to think about the likely audience for a project presentation. Who will be there and what motivational factors are likely to appeal to them?

Point out that different members of the audience may be after different things from your proposal. They will have to take this into consideration and make sure that each sees something desirable in the presentation.

They are now in a position to assemble all the facts needed to support the case. A useful method is to 'dump' all they know onto a Mind Map®. This method, which is similar to brainstorming on one sheet of A4 paper, will help to develop the ideas and is more flexible than a straightforward list.

Preparation exercise – part one
Give the participants 15 minutes to develop a Mind Map for the presentation they will do later in this activity. This should, where possible, be a proposal based on an actual work project on which they are involved.

Provide them with paper and pens and encourage them to think widely about the 'hard' facts and 'soft' opinions involved.

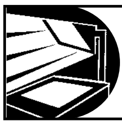
When they have finished their first draft, ask them to spend 5 minutes reviewing the material with a partner from the group. They may need a few minutes to re-draft after these paired discussions.

Move around the participants as they work on their own and with their partners. Clarify any questions and give advice where required.

Work on Stage one should take about 30 minutes in total.

STAGE TWO – STRUCTURE YOUR PRESENTATION

It usually becomes apparent that the participants have far too much information to fit into a short 15 minute presentation. The first part of the next stage involves them in filtering the information into A, B or C topics.



Show OHT 9.5
Filter your facts

A – Must be covered
B – Should be covered
C – Could be covered

Preparation exercise – part two
Ask participants to take their Mind Maps and highlight which topics they want to fit into the A, B, C categories. Issue each with a set of Post-it® Notes. Tell them that after they have identified the category they can write a key word summary of each topic on a separate note (writing the category in the top corner).

Again move around the group as they work on this exercise, clarifying any areas of concern.

Put it into a logical order
Classic presentations have three phases. These are often called The Three Tells.

Show OHT 9.6
The three tells

Inform participants that you want them initially to concentrate on number 2 – **The main body**. Once they have set this up then 1 and 3 can be built on.

How should they structure the middle? They should aim to develop a structure that is as simple and straightforward as possible. It should unfold in a logical fashion, taking the audience from what they currently know into unknown areas.

Point out that the advantage of using the Post-it® Notes is that they are free to move these around until they are satisfied they have got the best running order for their presentation.

A tried and tested approach to making persuasive presentations can be found on the next OHT.

Show OHT 9.7
Strain your P's

Show and briefly discuss the items:

P – Position	a brief outline of the current situation
P – Problem	describe the need which the project can meet
P – Possibilities	describe some of the alternatives you and the audience will want to consider
P – Proposal	outline your project – the recommended course of action
P – Participation	ask the audience to ask questions and clarify their involvement.

Preparation exercise – part three

Ask the participants to spend 10 minutes putting their notes in order. Point out that they may want to add additional information which helps link their key points together in logical order. Remind them to check through the running order with their partner. It is always good to get a fresh view, and if they don't understand neither will the audience.

Opening the presentation

Remind the participants that they will also have to think about how they want to open their presentation. A good opening creates a tone for the rest of the presentation. Having prepared the main body of the talk they should now be in a position to prepare the opening. This should follow the INTRO mnemonic.

Show OHT 9.8
Intro

Briefly discuss each item:

I – Introduce yourself – (particularly important if you aren't known to the audience). Be polite and thank them for coming or for asking you to present. Give a little bit of information about why *you* are giving the presentation.

N – Need – Why they need to know about this presentation. What's in it for them.

T – Title – What the subject is about. Show an OHT to reinforce your message.

R – Range – What steps you will be covering in what order. Don't forget to mention your policy on questions and whether you will be giving handouts to support visual aids.

O – Objective – What you want them to do at the end of the presentation, that is, vote to support your project proposal.

Preparation exercise – **part four**
Give participants 10 minutes to prepare an opening following the INTRO approach.

When they have finished, ask for a volunteer to stand up (this immediately reduces their comfort levels) and run through their opening in front of the rest of the group.

Listen and invite feedback and constructive criticism from the participants. Probe to establish what was good and worked well, and identify what was less effective with suggestions for improvements.

Ask for a few more volunteers and continue until all who want to have a go have done so. Give the participants another 5 minutes to revise their openings using some of the key points from this micro-exercise.

Allow a total of 45 minutes to complete Stage two of the activity.

STAGE THREE – PRESENT PROFESSIONALLY

Show OHT 9.9
Three ingredients of communication

TRAINER'S TIP

These are rounded figures supported by definitive academic research. Some authors, however, count tone of voice within the overall body language.

Cover up the half of the transparency that shows the figures.

Ask the group if they are aware of the research into the importance of each of these three components when making a presentation.

Ask for their estimates of the percentage of each segment. Once you have had a number of guesses reveal the hidden half. Check out with the group what they think of these findings (which here have been rounded out to make them easier to remember). You often find disbelief that words are so low. Point out that you are not saying that words are not important, but the research points to the greater need for congruence (the consistency of one ingredient with the others). You may have written a wonderful presentation but if you don't look as if you believe in the project and speak enthusiastically about it the audience may fail to be convinced.

You must show conviction in your project. You are not going to persuade anyone if you don't believe in it and can communicate that belief to your audience.

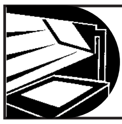
Choose your words – sell the benefits
As you explained when discussing preparation, people are more likely to be influenced to support your proposal if they can see something in it for

them. Salespeople call this approach ‘selling the benefits’. You must convince your audience that your project satisfies a need and provides a benefit for them.

Benefits should be distinguished from features. While a feature describes something (they are usually tangible), a benefit identifies what that feature will do for them.

Tell the group that in order to find the benefit of a feature you should ask yourself ‘So what?’ or ‘Which means that …’. You should always follow up any statement of a feature with a benefit that is important to your audience. You should try to make your benefits answer the issues you identified when you did the ‘Find out what they want’ exercise.

To illustrate the difference between features and benefits, run a short activity. Draw a line down the middle of a flipchart. Write ‘Features’ at the top of one column and ‘Benefits’ at the top of the other. Tell the group that your proposal is that they join you for a family holiday on your caravan site in West Wales.



Show OHT 9.10
Features of the caravan site

Ask the participants to work in pairs to provide suggestions of the benefits for each feature. Allow them about 10 minutes for the exercise. While they are working write down the features on the ‘Features’ side of the flipchart.

When they have finished, lead a plenary review. Keep a note of their suggestions on the ‘Benefits’ half of your flipchart.

Their suggestions should cover such benefits as:
1. Plenty of space to move around.
2. Privacy. You don’t have to turn the bed back into a table to eat breakfast.
3. Flexibility. Your friends can drop in and stay over.

4. Privacy and convenience. You don't have to wander across the site at night.
5. Just like home. You can prepare a full range of meals and have plenty of room to keep your drinks cold.
6. No noisy teenage parties, and a convenient store to buy those forgotten essential items.
7. You don't have to take and park the car. Lots of local attractions for different members of the family.
8. You can keep in touch with the rest of the world, and have the option of a quiet night staying in watching TV.

Point out that this example shows it is important to relate the benefits to your audience. Different people will have different needs, so don't make the mistake of selling benefits they don't want or this may actively put them off your proposal.

Preparation exercise – part four

Tell the participants to review their material to make sure they have linked each of the features described in their presentation with a benefit. These should be tailored to the needs of their audience and the factors they identified in part one.

It ain't what you say, it's the way that you say it

Remind the group that they also need to consider the non-verbal elements if they are to impress. Divide the participants into four teams. Ask two teams to think of very effective presenters they have seen (either in person or the media). The remaining teams are requested to think of poor presenters. Ask each group to develop a list of the non-verbal elements that contribute to their judgement. Give them 5 minutes for this exercise.

When they have finished, lead a plenary review. Draw out the main points and develop a checklist of good practice on a flipchart. It should contain some of the elements listed on the next OHT.

Show OHT 9.11
Tips for effective presentation

Briefly discuss each element, giving a graphic demonstration where appropriate.

Your voice – Create variety through pauses, varied speed and volume. You can create greater emphasis by slowing down and increasing your volume. At other times when the message is simpler you can quicken your pace (but not too fast) and speak at a more even volume.

Eye contact – It is extremely important that you look at each member of the audience directly. You must balance staring and not looking at all. You should aim to make everyone there feel as if you are talking to them on a one-to-one basis.

Mobility – Influential presenters give an impression of enthusiasm and commitment to whatever they are proposing. You can reinforce this by moving in front of the group rather than remaining static. You should avoid actions that will form a pattern and prove to be distracting.

Use your hands – Your hand gestures are another good way of suggesting enthusiasm. Try to think of a time when you felt relaxed and confident in front of a group. Can you picture your hand movements? Try to 'anchor' that memory and use those gestures again with a new group. Avoid hand gestures that give the impression of being fed up or complacent such as hands in pockets, folded across chest or behind your head if you are sitting.

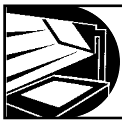
Facial expression – Vary your facial expression to match the mood and themes of your presentation. Smiling at the right time can relax the audience and build rapport. Use humour carefully – unless you are skilled it can easily backfire.

Ask the participants to think about how they may include the positive features in their presentation.

A picture is worth a thousand words
Point out that it will often be necessary to use visual aids, especially when you want to put over

complex information quickly and accurately. Their use should be planned carefully and you should develop them after you have written the main body of the presentation. Beware the temptation to put in a visual simply because it looks good. Keep asking yourself 'What does this add?' or 'Would the presentation suffer if I left it out?'.

Some tips are included on the next OHT.



Show OHT 9.12
Tips on using visual aids

- KISS (Keep It Short and Simple) – avoid complicated material or too much information on one slide
- Talk to the group and not the slide, screen or board
- Give time for the group to read the information, try not to talk and show slides at the same time
- Focus their attention. Switch off the projector or turn over the flipchart paper – *you* want to be the focus of attention, not the aid
- Limit the number of aids you are going to use, too many will overwhelm or confuse
- Don't use too much technology. Rather than set up a 35 mm slide show for one or two slides, have them transferred onto OHTs
- Check your equipment before you start. Sod's law dictates the worst will happen. Is there a spare bulb? Have you an extra power lead or fuse? Think about a contingency plan if all the equipment fails.

Allow a total of 30 minutes for this section of the activity.

STAGE FOUR – MANAGE PARTICIPATION

Inform the group that there are three main strategies for managing participation during a presentation.

1. The audience can ask questions at any time. This strategy is best used when you have an expert presenter with a good case and lots of time. Point out that once you let the audience interrupt you lose control over what's going on.

2. The audience can participate at clearly identified points. This approach works well if your participation divides neatly into clear segments. You can ask for questions or comments at each pre-determined point and then move on having convinced them on that point.

3. Participation at the end. This approach is often the best for the novice presenter, or when you are presenting a complex scenario in a limited time-scale. It has the disadvantages of storing up all questions and comments into what can seem a difficult final session. But with skill you can pull this around to your advantage.

Point out that whilst the choice is theirs, you suggest they adopt the third option for the coming exercise, unless the participants are particularly skilled and confident of their cause and ability.

Handle their objections
Tell the group that as they have done their research and planning they should be able to answer most straightforward questions. Point out that if they are stuck for an answer the worst thing they can do is to try and bluff or bluster their way through. Advise them to check if anyone else present can answer and if not advise that you will get back to them as soon as you have found out.

What they have to watch out for are objections. An objection is defined as:

An adverse reason or statement; expressing a feeling of disapproval or dislike.
(Concise Oxford Dictionary)

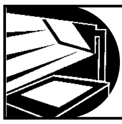
Show OHT 9.13
Objections – a definition

When your audience raises an objection to your project proposal it is because they have not been convinced; they are uncertain or have worries that have not been satisfied.

Tell the group not to be afraid of objections. Once voiced they will give you an opportunity to answer them to the audience's satisfaction and convince them of the strength of your case. Objections are an integral part of the persuasion process. When you ask them to accept your proposal they will ask themselves, 'What are the snags?', 'What problems will fall to me if I accept?' Once you recognise that this is a general part of most people's make-up, rather than a desire to embarrass or be awkward, the objection becomes easier to handle.

Point out that some objections may not be personally relevant to the person raising it. They may be playing Devil's Advocate to check the robustness of your proposal. They may also have to go back to their own management and convince them of your case, and are rehearsing the type of objection they anticipate they will have to answer themselves.

Most proposals will lead to objections being raised. Don't get emotionally involved, argue with the audience or take the objection personally. Try to anticipate them in advance by analysing your audience, and pre-empt them by building the counter-points into your talk. Thinking ahead will also enable you to think of an appropriate way of handling them. If stuck you can use the Handling Objections model.



Show OHT 9.14
Handling objections – a model

Briefly discuss each of the points.

Step one: Listen

You can't handle their objection if they don't think you are paying attention and treating it seriously.

Step two: Clarify

Don't make assumptions and think you know what they're talking about. Their original statement may cover up a more deep seated fear.

Step three: Consider

You don't have to jump in immediately with an instant reply. Pause and think through an effective approach.

Step four: Assess

Objections fall into two categories, True or False. Your assessment of which category will decide your approach.

Step five: Answer

You now have a choice of two approaches:

TRUE *Acknowledge* – Admit that their statement is a disadvantage and could be considered a drawback.
Compensate – What factors can you put forward that will off-set this disadvantage.
Reinforce – Put forward other benefits that could outweigh the disadvantages.

FALSE *Protect* – Take care of their ego; no one likes to look like a fool. Present it as a common misunderstanding.
Present – Put forward the facts and figures that support your case.
Restate – Emphasise the other benefits they will have from accepting your proposal.

Step six: Check back

Has your approach successfully handled their objection? If it hasn't you need to clarify why. Often it is because there is another underlying objection.

This should now come to the surface and enable you to handle it by repeating the above six steps.

Preparation exercise – part five
Divide the group up into pairs. Ask one partner to put forward a typical objection to a project proposal; the other partner then answers, using the model where appropriate.

Some typical examples could include:

- This will cost too much
- The unions won't wear it
- There isn't enough time to do a good job
- We entered this exhibition five years ago and it was a complete flop,

etc…

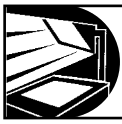
Give them 10 minutes for this micro-exercise. When they have finished, reconvene and lead a plenary review. Ask for volunteers to disclose both the objection and their answer. Throw each open to the whole group. You will probably find that even when others had a similar objection they used a different approach when answering.

The whole of Stage four should take about 30 minutes.

STAGE FIVE – SUMMARISE AND GAIN COMMITMENT

Point out that there will come a point when you will be ready to pull it all together. Keep an eye on the time. You want to stay in control and have the last word rather than being cut off by the meeting Chairperson.

Choose the right moment to clinch your proposal. Start with a summary. This should cover specific points.



Show OHT 9.15
Clinch the deal

Point out that they need to be careful not to push too hard when they have reached their objective. You don't want to risk losing it by starting another debate.

PRACTICAL PRESENTATION

Preparation exercise – part six
It is time to pull all the parts together.

Check that the participants have no further questions on any part of the previous five stages. Answer any outstanding queries and when satisfied that they are ready, give them 15 minutes' preparation time to pull their final presentation together in order to deliver it to the whole group.

TRAINER'S TIP

At this stage you have several options depending on the number of participants and the availability of additional tutors and technology. Aim for groups of six participants; this will blend practical presentation time with audience participation. If you have video equipment available then use it. It is a powerful learning mechanism for the presenters; one that is difficult to argue against when participants are presented with 'live-action' pictures.

When they have finished their preparation, issue each member of the audience with an observer review sheet.

Distribute Handout 9.16
Project proposal presentation observer review sheet

Check that the participants understand each item.

Ask them to concentrate on the presentation and to fill in the sheet when the individual has finished. I often nominate the next to go as the main person to lead the feedback at the end of each presentation. This makes them concentrate on the topic in hand and can stop them worrying about their own performance.

Practical exercise – the project proposal
The target time for each presentation should be 10–15 minutes which is then followed by 5 or 10 minutes of questions and objections from the audience. Stop the presentation after the 20 minutes have elapsed and lead a 10-minute review on the key strengths, weaknesses and learning needs of the presenter. Then move on to the next presentation until all have finished.

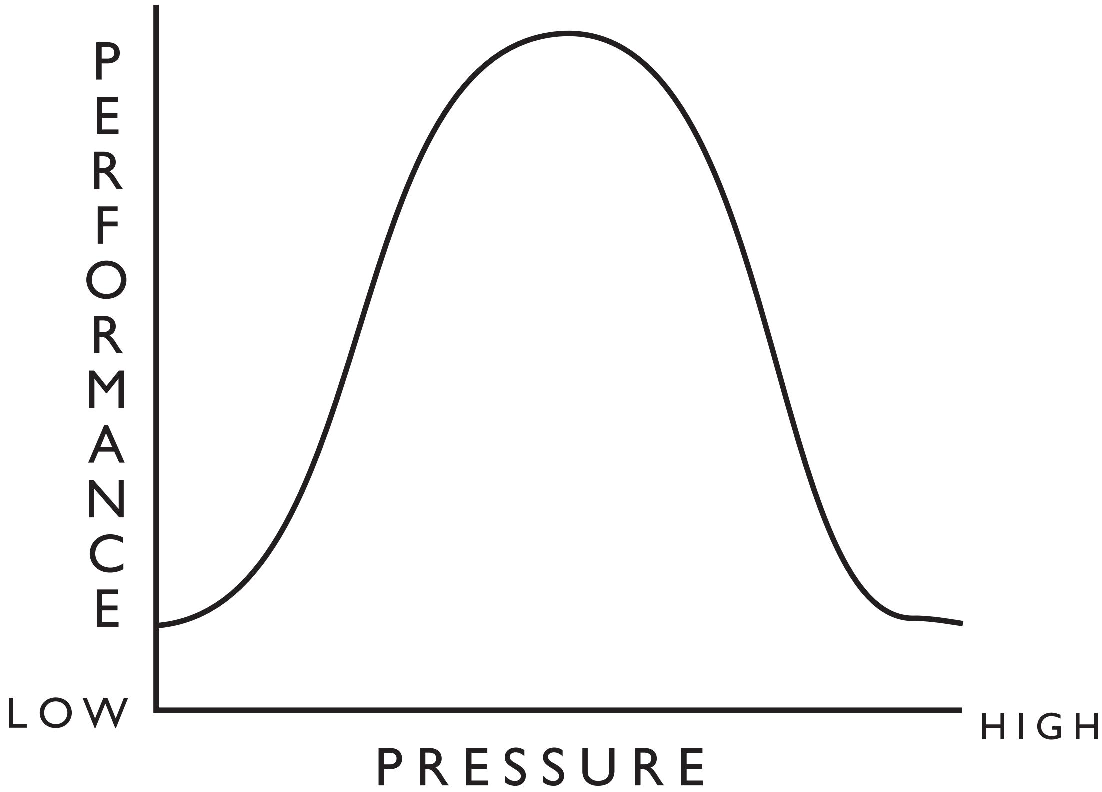
LEARNING REVIEW

At the end of the session, ask participants to take 5 minutes to think back over the session and then to make notes on the key learning points that have emerged, and how they may apply these to their work. They should note these points in their Learning review diary, if they are using this approach to recording their learning (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii).

When they have all finished this period of reflection, ask for volunteers to disclose one or two key learning points they will take away as a result of this session.

When everyone who wants to speak has done so, thank the group for their hard work and close the session.

The performance curve



9.2

Stages of an effective presentation

Stage one – Gather your facts

Stage two – Structure your presentation

Stage three – Present professionally

Stage four – Manage participation

Stage five – Gain commitment to act.

OK TO COPY

Key questions for a persuasive presentation

Why are we doing this?
- The project's purpose and objectives

What will be the key tasks?
- The project Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

Who will be involved?
- The Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM)

When will the activity take place?
- The project Gantt chart

How much will all this cost us?
- The project budget forecast

Find out what they want

S – Safety and security

P – Performance and productivity

A – Appearance and attractiveness

C – Convenience and comfort

E – Economy and efficiency

D – Durability and delight.

Filter your facts

A – Must be covered

B – Should be covered

C – Could be covered

The three tells

1. **Tell them what you are going to talk about**
   – **The introduction**

2. **Tell them what you want them to know**
   – **The main body**

3. **Tell them what you have told them**
   – **The conclusion.**

Strain your P's

P – Position

P – Problem

P – Possibilities

P – Proposal

P – Participation

Intro

I – Introduce yourself

N – Need

T – Title

R – Range

O – Objective

Three ingredients of communication

Words	10%
Tone of voice	40%
Body language	50%
Total	100%

Features of the caravan site

1. 10-metre family-size caravan

2. Two double bedrooms

3. Sleeps eight in total

4. Integral mains connected WC and shower

5. Fully-fitted kitchen with standard-size cooker and fridge

6. Quiet family site with own shop and off-licence

7. Five minutes' private walk to beach, castle and coastal path

8. Radio and colour TV provided.

Tips for effective presentation

- **Your voice**
  Create variety through pauses, varied speed and volume

- **Eye contact**
  Look at each member of the audience directly

- **Mobility**
  Give an impression of enthusiasm and commitment

- **Use your hands**
  Another good way of suggesting enthusiasm

- **Facial expression**
  Vary to match the mood and themes of your presentation.

Tips on using visual aids

- KISS (Keep It Short and Simple)
- Talk to the group
- Give time for the group to read the information
- Focus their attention
- Limit the number of aids you are going to use
- Don't use too much technology
- Check your equipment before you start.

Objections – a definition

An adverse reason or statement; expressing a feeling of disapproval or dislike.

Handling objections – a model

Step one:	**Listen**		
Step two:	**Clarify**		
Step three:	**Consider**		
Step four:	**Assess**		
Step five:	**Answer**		
		True	**False**
		Acknowledge	**Protect**
		Compensate	**Present**
		Reinforce	**Restate**
Step six:	**Check back**		

Clinch the deal

Summarise:

- **The original problem**
- **The main features of your proposal**
- **The benefits to your audience**
- **Who you propose should do what by when**
- **A clearly-defined first step.**

Then:

- **Ask for agreement to your proposal and …**
- **Keep quiet.**

9.16

Project proposal presentation observer review sheet

Introduction	
Introduce yourself	
Need	
Title	
Range	
Objective	
Main body	
Position	
Problem	
Possibilities	
Proposal	
Participation	
Presentation skills	
Voice	
Eye contact	
Mobility	
Use your hands	
Facial expression	

Continued …

OK TO COPY

Project proposal presentation observer review sheet

… continued

Use of visual aids KISS (Keep It Short and Simple)	
• Talk to the group	
• Give time for the group to read the information	
• Focus their attention	
• Limit the number of aids used	
• Don't use too much technology	
• Check your equipment before you start.	
Conclusion Summary of:	
• The original problem	
• The main features of your proposal	
• The benefits to your audience	
• Who you propose should do what by when	
• A clearly defined first step.	
Final remarks:	
• Ask for agreement to your proposal and …	
• Keep quiet.	

Notes for feedback

Main strengths as a presenter are:

Main development needs as a presenter are:

Activity 10
Selecting the right person for your project team

Purpose

To demonstrate that effective selection relies on using a customised person specification for each job on the project team. To provide clear guidelines which will enable the participants to write a person specification and test its effectiveness in a recruitment interview.

Activity 10
Selecting the right person for your project team

How do I choose the best person for the project?

Purpose

To demonstrate that effective selection relies on using a customised person specification for each job on the project team. To provide clear guidelines which will enable the participants to write a person specification and test its effectiveness in a recruitment interview.

Application

This module is an essential element for any course that covers recruiting and selecting staff for a project team.

As it concerns making objective decisions on the candidates' ability to perform the key elements of the job, it is also very relevant for any more broadly-based recruitment and selection training.

What happens

You lead a discussion on the lack of effectiveness of the average selection interview, and identify what steps the selector can take to ensure that they will recruit the best person for the job.

The participants then take part in three interconnected exercises. These are designed to produce a checklist for use in the selection interview which will help ensure a better match between job and person.

The session finishes with a practical selection exercise during which they have the opportunity to assess how well a candidate matches the competencies identified in the previous exercises. Participants are encouraged to fill in their Learning review diary.

Time

Overall time required: 4 hours 45 minutes.

- Introduction: 30 minutes
- Stage one – The job specification: 45 minutes
- Stage two – Key criteria: 45 minutes
- Stage three – Person specification: 45 minutes
- Putting it all together: 30 minutes
- Practical interviewing exercise: 1 hour 15 minutes (based on groups of six)
  - 30 minutes preparation
  - 20 minutes interview
  - 10 minutes feedback
  - 15 minutes break
- Learning review: 10 minutes
- Conclusion: 5 minutes.

Materials & resources

- 6 OHT masters:
  - **10.1** *Accuracy of selection methods*
  - **10.2** *The recruitment cycle*
  - **10.3** *Job specification – contents*
  - **10.4** *Key competencies – a definition*
  - **10.5** *Types of question*
  - **10.6** *An interview structure*

- 5 Handout masters
  - **10.7** *Job specification – contents*
  - **10.8** *Key results areas – an example*
  - **10.9** *Person specification – an example*
  - **10.10** *Interview working guide-sheet*
  - **10.11** *Selection interviews – observer's guide*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- OHT acetates
- OHT acetate marker pens
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)

In preparation

It would be helpful to have, as handouts, copies of the participants' own organisation's forms (where available) for the following: Competency framework, Job specification, Person specification, Interviewing guide and an Application form. You should also prepare a flipchart ‘Accuracy of average interviews’ created by drawing a target on the flipchart, with 100 at the centre and successive bands showing 75, 50, 25 and 0 per cent (see *OHT 10.1 Accuracy of selection methods*).

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

Bias and distortion in selection interviews

Start the session by revealing the previously prepared flipchart headed ‘Accuracy of average interviews’.

Ask the participants for their estimate as to the success rate of the average interview in being able to accurately predict a candidate’s subsequent performance.

Draw in the participants’ estimates – you will probably find they overestimate by a wide margin.

Tell them that a wide variety of studies of the effectiveness of the average interview (as summarised by Mike Smith of Manchester University – see ‘Further resources’) have found it to have little reliability and poor validity, as an accurate method of selection. Ratings for the typical interview are usually to be found around the 15 per cent mark.

Show OHT 10.1 and emphasise the typical interview rating.

Show OHT 10.1
Accuracy of selection methods

Point out that the poor outcomes for their projects which will result from recruiting the wrong person are numerous and invariably expensive. Tell them that in this part of the session you will examine some of the most widely recognised pitfalls of typical interviews, as a knowledge of these may help to avoid them.

Ask the group for ideas, based on their experience of being on the receiving end of ineffective selection interviews, for suggestions of the weaknesses that may be present in typical selection interviews. List their ideas on a flipchart and ensure that the following are highlighted, adding them to the list yourself if they are not volunteered by the group.

- **Lack of preparation:** The selectors often have no clear idea of the knowledge, skills and abilities required to do the job under review. They often rely on their own pet theories or a gut reaction that the candidate is the right type.

- **Poorly-structured interviews:** Because of a lack of a clear profile of the requirements to do the job, the interview often proceeds in a haphazard manner.

- **Ineffective questioning technique:** Questions seem to bear little relevance to the requirements to perform the post successfully.

- **Contrasting candidates:** Assessments come from contrasting candidates with earlier interviewees rather than against objective performance criteria. Because one candidate gives a virtuoso performance at the interview it doesn't automatically prove they have the capabilities to carry out the duties successfully.

- **Prejudices and stereotypes:** The variety of the candidates' attributes are simplified and distorted by the inability of the selector to recognise relevant attributes. There is a tendency to focus excessively on a general picture of 'a good employee' and to ignore or not to have defined more specific and pertinent qualities.

- **Timing of decisions:** There is a tendency to come to conclusions early in the interview and to stick to them. Some research points to an average decision time of under 4 minutes. The selector then interprets subsequent information to fit their early impression.

- **Accuracy of recall:** Because of a lack of interview structure and note-taking, selectors are not good at recalling accurately what they have heard in the interview, and make different interpretations of the selection data.

Tell the participants that the main approach to resolving these problems and raising their success levels requires them to adopt a systematic approach and to treat recruitment as a sub-project of the major project goal. They will need to adopt a structured format for all stages if they want to get the best results for their project team. Point out that as with other activities, planning and preparation will set them up for success.

Describe the selection process
Having established the need for a structured approach to overcome the difficulties of common selection interviews, tell the group that the actual interview is only one stage in a wider recruitment cycle. To be effective recruiters, they will need to consider what has to be done to ensure success.

Divide the group up into threes. Ask them to come up with the chronological stages they need to go through in an effective recruitment and selection process. Ask each group to write their ideas on a blank acetate (provide them with suitable marker pens). Tell them they have 10 minutes for this task.

When they have finished, display all the groups' completed sheets. Ask them to consider each other's suggestions. Check to see where they are in agreement and where there are any differences.

Show OHT 10.2
The recruitment cycle

Briefly talk about the stages and discuss where each one fits into the cycle. Draw their attention to any that are missing from their suggestions.

Point out that the interview can only succeed if the selector has full, accurate and unbiased information about the specific attributes required for the particular job.

Tell the participants that you will now guide them through the necessary stages that will enable them to make sure they can carry out a successful selection interview.

Compile a job and person specification
Inform the group that you will take them through the three stages of effective specification. Each stage will involve an exercise designed to develop and practise the skills involved.

Allow 30 minutes for this introduction to the activity.

STAGE ONE – THE JOB SPECIFICATION

Start by telling the participants that every post should have an up-to-date job description, which will enable the manager and the employee to know exactly what their roles and obligations are.

Ask them how many have current job descriptions for their own posts. For those who have, ask them a further question: 'How accurately do those job descriptions describe what you currently do in the post?' The answers are usually 'The job description is not a very accurate record of current responsibilities'.

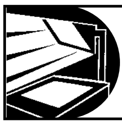
Point out that as this is true in many organisations, they should not use the current job description for the vacant post without thinking about the future.

Point out that for selection purposes the average job description needs to be expanded into a job specification. The exact format of the specification will depend on the purpose for which it is being used. For example, one for recruiting internally may not be as detailed as one used for external recruitment.

Essentially the job specification is a detailed statement of:

- the physical and mental activities involved in the job
- the purpose, responsibilities and relationships involved in the post
- the physical and economic factors that affect the job.

A good way of producing an effective job specification is to put themselves in the position of the candidate. If they were applying for this job, what information would they want to know about the post? Ask the group to call out suggestions of what they wanted to know when they applied for their last job. Write their suggestions on a flipchart and then compare them with OHT 10.3.



Show OHT 10.3
Job specification – contents

Expand on each point of the overhead, using a real job and organisation you know well.

Distribute Handout 10.7
Job specification – contents

Also issue any local examples of job specifications you may have prepared earlier.

Exercise one – Producing a job specification
Check with the group to see if they need any points clarifying. Now tell them that they are going to have an opportunity to develop a job specification for themselves. They will be focusing on a job about which they all have a good working knowledge.
Ask them to divide into suitable groups so that each person has a common job they can work on.

Provide each group with blank acetate sheets and marker pens. Tell them that they have 15 minutes to produce a job specification following the checklist outlined in *Handout 10.7 Job specification – contents.*

After the set time, check with the groups that they are ready, and reconvene them into the main group. Hold a plenary review to discuss how the exercise went. Ask for a volunteer to show their OHT to the rest of the group. Review each in turn, highlighting the good points and inadequacies of each example.

Ask the groups which items came easily during the exercise. Was there any particular item that they found more difficult? How common is this approach in their current selection procedures?

Take a total of about 45 minutes to complete this first part of the activity.

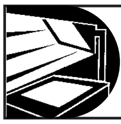
STAGE TWO – KEY CRITERIA

Explain to the group that once they are satisfied that the job specification is accurate, the next step is to identify the key attributes required to perform the tasks outlined in the specification.

This will involve them in two phases. First they will need to identify the Key Result Areas (the KRAs) for the post. These are the areas of the job in which good performance is essential, or conversely in which poor performance could be disastrous.

A useful tool is the 80/20 rule. Eighty per cent of the value comes from twenty per cent of the activities. These critical success factors, once identified, will have a marked impact on the effective performance of the job holder.

Once the KRAs have been identified, the second phase in determining how well a person is likely to fit a job is to describe each key area in terms of the competencies required to perform it effectively.



Show OHT 10.4
Key competencies – a definition

Explain this definition to the participants.

At this point either show your own organisation's competency framework or use the participants' in-company competency framework.

TRAINER'S TIP

A competency framework that is in general use can be found in *The Management Standards* (see 'Further resources'). Developed by the Management Charter Initiative (MCI), these describe the standards of performance expected of managers and supervisors in their job roles. Although devised for all managers, regardless of the sector in which they are working, many organisations are using them as the basis for recruitment and selection, promotion and performance review and appraisal.

Distribute Handout 10.8
Key results areas – an example

Discuss this analysis for a management training manager. (Alternatively have a locally prepared example of your own available.)

Exercise two – the key attributes
Tell the participants that you want them to return to their earlier groups. Give them 15 minutes to produce a list on acetate of the Key Result Areas of the job specification produced earlier, and then to describe each KRA in terms of the core competencies that contribute to its successful performance.

Check with each group towards the end of the allotted time and when they have finished hold a plenary group review, probing to check the reasons for their choices.

Again, take about 45 minutes to complete this stage of the activity.

STAGE THREE – PERSON SPECIFICATION

Tell the group that the information they have gathered is now used to produce the person specification. This specification describes the kind of person best suited to fill the post. It is a key document in the recruitment and selection process. It is used to draft advertisements, sift candidates at the application form stage and provides the content for your interviewing guide that will assist you in structuring your interview.

Point out that they should identify and select from the competency framework the detailed elements that are required to meet each competency. These are usually indicators to what performance is required to meet the competency specified.
For example, to meet the competency 'Communication and personal impact' you would expect the individual to demonstrate that they could 'Communicate clearly and effectively both orally and in writing within and outside the organisation'.

In addition to specifying the competencies in more detail, you will need to identify the background qualifications and experience that the post-holder would have had in order to develop the competencies at the level required.

Explain that in specifying the factors in the person specification it is important to identify not only what is essential but also what is desirable. *Essential* means that any candidate lacking in this attribute must be rejected; *desirable* indicates an additional attribute which can be useful to distinguish between two or more acceptable candidates.

Distribute Handout 10.9
Person specification – an example

(Alternatively issue your own prepared example.)

Discuss any points the participants may have about constructing such a specification.

Exercise three – the person specification
Sub-divide the participants into the same groups they were in for Exercise Two. Tell them they have 15 minutes to produce, on an acetate sheet, a fresh specification which describes the person best suited to fill the post that they analysed earlier. This should identify the numerous key attributes of the ideal person and should indicate each item as 'essential' or 'desirable'.

Move around the groups answering questions and giving advice as appropriate. Check that the groups have finished and reconvene for a plenary review of their efforts.

Use the discussion to ensure that they have set their requirements at the right level. Look out for over-specification, for example, high academic qualifications for routine clerical work, or ill-defined or vague specifications, for example, 'a good standard of education'. Point out that these give ample scope for subjectivity of interpretation, and may lead to race or sex discrimination. All attributes need to be as precisely defined as possible rather than based on general phrases and assumptions, for example, 'Five GCSEs or equivalent (minimum grade C) including English, maths and a science subject, all gained in one sitting'.

Watch out for phrases such as 'must fit in' or 'have a suitable personality' as a description of interpersonal skills. Industrial tribunals have often seen this as a method of perpetuating the discriminatory practices that go on in many organisations.

About 45 minutes is allowed for this part of the activity.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Tell the participants that having assembled all the basic material they are now in the best possible position to prepare for the interview. They can now start to develop an interview plan which will determine how they will attempt to observe or measure the key attributes.

Point out that when they look at their lists they will see that some can be reviewed from the application form as part of the short-listing process. Others, such as disposition and abilities in non-verbal reasoning and figure work, are best assessed through psychological or practical testing.

Where an interview is involved, careful thought will need to go into identifying what questions are required to provide the accurate information needed to make an assessment.

Point out that whilst many experienced interviewers think that they can do without a structured interview working guide-sheet, the research evidence shows that using one results in better quality decisions. By using a guide, the interviewer will be applying the same frame of reference to each candidate and covering the same areas for each. This is not a straitjacket, but an example of how structure can give freedom to explore the chosen area in greater depth.

The interview guide should be developed after studying the analysed information. It should give the interviewer an initial series of questions with which to probe the candidates. These will concentrate on the areas that have been highlighted from the analysis as having a significant impact on the candidate's ability to do the job effectively.

Interviewers who use guides are better able to recall information, and know what to ask and what to do with the information.

Issue a copy of your own interview guide or issue Handout 10.10.

Distribute Handout 10.10
Interview working guide-sheet

Point out that having determined the content of the question from the Interviewing Guide they will still need to think carefully how they are going to phrase it.

Show OHT 10.5
Types of question

Point out that the better-quality questions don't give the candidate the answers, and get them talking about the key issues involved.

Ask the participants to note down some of the key points for framing questions. Write their suggestions on the flipchart. They should include the following points.

Effective questions:
- are brief
- are simple single queries that the interviewee can understand
- relate directly to the topic being discussed
- are free from assumptions
- don't suggest the 'correct' answer
- develop thinking from a constructive point of view
- are carefully chosen to identify evidence that the candidate meets the core competencies.

Inform participants that you want each question they pose in the practical exercise to be phrased in the best way for identifying good-quality information from the candidate.

The interview structure
Tell the group that research has shown that to be effective the interview must be structured.

Inform them that the structure you want them to follow will be made easier if they appoint one of their group as the interviewing panel chairperson. The person in this role has the responsibility to ensure that all the parts of the structure are covered.

Point out that all interviews have beginnings, middles and ends and a simple but effective structure for a selection interview is WASP.

Show OHT 10.6
An interview structure

Point out that each is a distinct stage with a definite purpose. The proportion of time spent will need to be varied according to individual circumstances. Whilst Stage 2 is the most important, it is unlikely to be as effective unless Stage 1 has been handled well. Similarly Stage 3 should not be seen simply as a nicety to the interviewer. As well as giving the candidate an opportunity to clarify areas of concern, the information requested by the candidate can often give clues to their character and motivation.

Ask the participants for examples, from their own experiences of effective behaviour in each stage. Make sure that the following points emerge.

Welcome (Stage one)
Point out that while the interviewers may be nervous, the interviewee almost certainly will be. There is little to be gained by pitching in with deeply searching questions as soon as the candidate has sat down.

The intention of the opening stage is to allow the interviewee to settle down. The aim is to do this by giving essential information and building up rapport.

The opening is usually handled by the person in the Chair role and will involve:

- a welcome, either by fetching the candidate, or at least by greeting at the door
- introducing by name, title and department, the other panel members
- 'icebreaker' – checking that the candidate found the interview location without difficulty and has no external distractions
- Explaining what will happen – the structure of the interview
- outlining the length of the interview, the areas that will be explored and who will cover what area
- mentioning note-taking if applicable

- giving a brief explanation of the vacancy and where it fits into the organisation
- asking a straightforward question to 'warm-up' the interviewee.

The above will suggest to the candidate that this is a professionally planned interview and that the organisation is thorough and credible in its approach to selection.

Ask questions (Stage two)

– Tell the participants that when we discussed the early stages of the recruitment process they devised a person specification which highlighted the core competencies necessary for successful performance in the job.

– Point out that the main part of the interview will centre around asking questions of the candidate which specifically relate to the selection criteria they have identified.

– Advise that most of the information that is needed can be obtained from investigating the candidate's most recent work experience. Each interviewer should ask the questions noted on the interviewing guide for the specific areas of the person specification they have been allocated by the Chairperson.

The structured ordering of interviewing topics will enable the interviewer to cover all parts of the person specification in a systematic way, ensuring that no essential aspect is overlooked.

Supply information (Stage three)

– Tell the participants that it is usual to offer the candidate the opportunity to ask questions towards the end of the interview.

– Always check with your co-panellists to see if they have finished their coverage before signalling to the candidate that, as promised, it is now their turn to clarify any areas they wish.

– Point out that the type of questions asked can be revealing. Tell the participants that they should always be aware of the need to probe the candidate's thinking if any of their questions give you cause to question their motivation.

– The manner in which the questions are asked may also give an indication of the candidate's communication abilities.

Part (Stage four)

– Advise the group that they need not linger over this session. A useful concluding point is to ask the candidate if there is anything they would like to add to support their application. This will ensure that all possible supporting information has the opportunity to emerge.

– Explain to the candidate what are the next stages of the recruitment process, together with a likely time-scale of when this should be happening.

– Tell them to thank the candidate for attending and guide them to whoever is responsible for paying expenses and seeing the candidate out of the building.

PRACTICAL INTERVIEWING EXERCISE

Explain that the following exercise will provide an opportunity to put all the previous material of this session into practice.

Display on a flipchart the interviewing timetable for the rest of the session.

TRAINER'S TIP

If there are more than eight course members, the group should be split in two separate sub-groups, each led by a separate tutor. Two groups will mean that each participant will get a favourable balance between participating and observing.

Tell the participants they will be asked to carry out a realistic interview for the post for which they produced a job and person specification earlier in this activity.

Whilst the group members actively involved in the panel are interviewing, the remaining members of the group will act as observers. The observers' role is to give constructive feedback at the end of the interview to help the interviewers improve their selection interviewing performance.

Ask one of the non-participants to volunteer to play the candidate for that particular vacancy. Point out this is not a job-hunting course and the focus will be on the panel, not on the candidate's performance. The candidate will also be asked to give feedback on the panel's performance.

Having secured a volunteer for each of the interviews, issue to each candidate the details of the post they are applying for. (You can do this by photocopying the acetate sheets prepared by each group in earlier exercises.) For added authenticity you can also ask them to fill in an application form or provide a relevant CV for the post.

Point out that whilst some role-playing may be necessary, this should be kept to a minimum. Details on the application forms or CVs should reflect the candidate's actual experiences, and only be changed to make their application credible.

Advise the interviewing panel to review their job specification and person specification and then draw up an interviewing guide based on the key information they want to probe in the interview. They should also appoint a Chairperson and decide on a running order for asking questions.

Photocopy any completed application forms or CVs for each of the panel members.

Break them into their panel groups and tell them they have 30 minutes to prepare for their interview.

Inform them they will have 20 minutes to carry out the interview, which will be followed by 10 minutes of review. Point out that as the second group of panellists will start their interview after coffee, it is essential they also prepare now.

Move among the groups. Be available for questions and make sure they keep to time.

Call a halt to preparation. Point out there will never be enough time for this practice exercise, but they have already covered much of the essential foundation work during the earlier exercises.

Show OHT 10.11
Selection interviews – observer's guide

While the first panel are setting up, issue and discuss the observer's sheet, pointing out the areas you'd like each observer to concentrate on.

Start the activity.

At the end of each interview start the debrief with the panel. Ask them how they felt the exercise went, what they thought they did well and which areas they needed to improve on and how. Ask the observers for their comments. Make sure they are specific and stick to what actually happened, not what they (the observers) would have done. Finally ask the candidate for their feedback on how effectively they felt their past experience and suitability for the post were explored.

After about 30 minutes, if there are no further teaching points you'd like to make, break for coffee before proceeding with the subsequent interviews.

LEARNING REVIEW

Ask the participants to spend some time reflecting on the session. Tell them they have 10 minutes to fill in their Learning review diary (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii) which will enable them to identify the key things they will do when recruiting for their own project team back at work. When they have all finished, ask for a few volunteers to share their plans with the main group.

CONCLUSION

Remind the participants that there are a number of consequences of not following a structured, systematic approach to defining the best person for the job.

- Selection standards will be vague and ill-defined
- The criteria may be incomplete, with critical attributes ignored
- Selectors will be more prone to the influence of irrelevant factors because they do not know what to look for
- Their assessments will become prone to the bias and distortion that hallmarks an ineffective interview.

The results for the project will frequently be disastrous and often expensive.

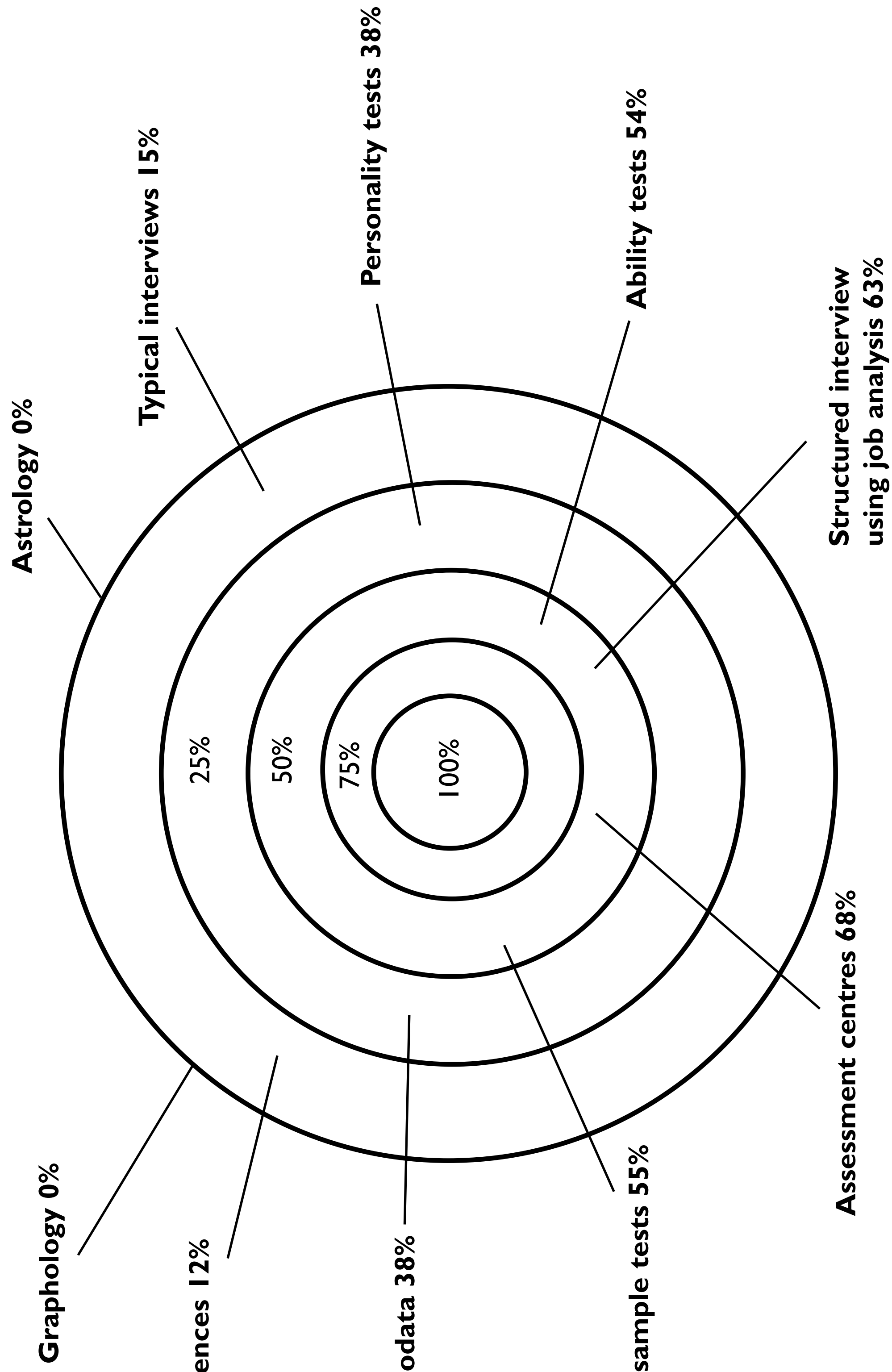
A systematic approach to analysing the essential requirements for the effective performance of the job will enable the interviewer to prepare effectively, ask the relevant questions and help them to … select the right person for the job.

TRAINER'S TIPS

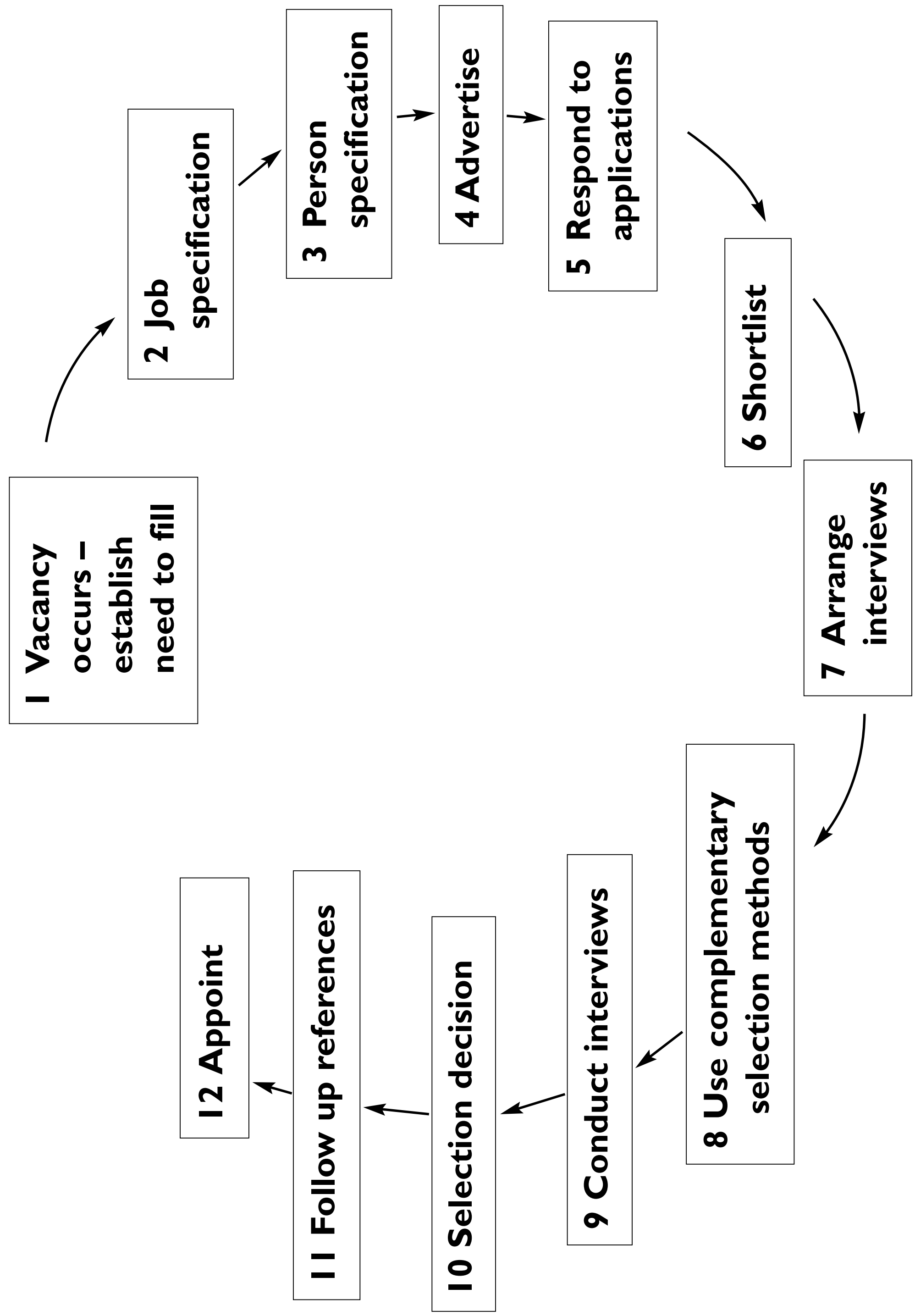
Further information on the research into the effectiveness of selection interviews can be gained by reading *Selection and Assessment – A New Appraisal* by M. Smith, M. Gregg and D. Andrews (see 'Further resources').

Fenman have a Trainer's Activity Pack dedicated to this topic. If you want to learn more and are interested in previewing a copy of *Recruiting and Keeping the Right People*, please contact our Customer Service Department on 01353 665533.

Accuracy of selection methods



The recruitment cycle



Job specification – contents

1. Identification of the job
2. Purpose
3. Responsibilities
4. Relationships
5. Physical conditions
6. Social conditions
7. Economic conditions
8. Promotion prospects

Key competencies – a definition

Individual characteristics or skills that can be measured reliably and that can be shown to make a significant difference between superior and average performance.

Types of question

Open	**'What are the main types of problem you encounter in your job?'**
Closed	**'Do you have any problems with the new computer network?'**
Probing	**'What do you think are the main causes?'**
Hypothetical	**'Suppose we revised the manual to show on-screen examples, what effect would that have?'**
Leading	**'And you wouldn't want that to happen would you?**
Multiple	**'So do you think the causes are poor maintenance or inadequate training? Is it because the workload is too high or is it down to poor supervision? What impact would it have if we drew up a precise users' schedule?'**

An interview structure

The opening

W – Welcome (1)

The main body

A – Ask questions (2)

S – Supply information (3)

The close

P – Part (4)

Job specification – contents

1. **Identification of the job**
   Current job title, department, division (etc.), location.

2. **Purpose**
   The purpose of the job and how it is to be achieved. Its objectives, clearly stated and quantified if possible. The duties involved and the methods by which they are carried out.

3. **Responsibilities**
   Responsibilities for which resources, for whom and to whom.

4. **Relationships**
   The person or people that the post-holder will liaise with.
   The relationships that will influence the achievement of objectives, both internal and external.

5. **Physical conditions**
   Where and how the work is performed. Whether it is sedentary, active or a mixture. Any potential accident or health risks.

6. **Social conditions**
   If group work is involved, what social pressures and influences there are. What types of people will be contacted. Who initiates the contact.

7. **Economic conditions**
   Salary range, increments, pensions, other benefits, car,
   relocation expenses.

8. **Promotion prospects**
   A realistic assessment of the potential for career progression and the opportunity or necessity to transfer to other locations.

Key results areas – an example

Key Result Areas: Management training manager

KRA	Competencies
Present sessions to managers at all levels	Communication and personal impact
Produce new courses and adapt existing ones	Using information effectively
To carry out training needs analyses	Organisational culture and job knowledge
Manage training budget	Business acumen
Promote training services and find new customers	Marketing and promotional skills
Manage staff in General Office	Management skills

Person specification – an example

Post: Project Team Leader	**Essential**	**Desirable**
QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE		
Educated to degree level (or equivalent)	X	
Relevant post-graduate professional qualification	X	
2 years practical experience of project management and co-ordination		X
Proven management experience of resources in a large organisation	X	
Extensive experience of industry sector, an appreciation of changes currently faced		X
Practical experience of IT contracts, formulation, management and monitoring	X	
Financial management experience gained through public sector projects	X	
Experience of press, public relations and media communication		X
Competencies		
Contract management and monitoring		
Implements policy on contract management Sets targets within corporate framework	X	
Monitors performance in line with contract specification ensuring information is recorded and analysed	X	
Communication and personal impact		
Displays sensitivity, tact and diplomacy in all challenging situations	X	
Negotiates, persuades and instructs as necessary to achieve required results	X	
Management skills		
Determines priorities of work and sets targets accordingly	X	
Develops and maintains effective team working relationships within organisation	X	
Marketing and promotional skills		
Represents the project team professionally within and outside the organisation	X	
Uses research, advertising and selling techniques to influence internal and external stakeholders	X	

10.10

Interview working guide-sheet

Interview working guide-sheet

It is recommended that this or a similar interview sheet is used by each member of the selection panel.

Enter the Key Criteria (including competencies), together with the weighting considered to be appropriate, prior to the interview.

Department: ____ Ref: ________

Division: ____________________ Vacancy: _______________ Grade: ______

Candidate's name: ____

Key criteria required (from Job specification/ Person specification/ Competencies)	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	

6 = Excellent 5 = Very good 4 = Good

3 = Satisfactory 2 = Adequate 1 = Unsatisfactory

Name of interviewer:

Signed: Date:

Selection interviews – observer's guide

Please tick the appropriate item and make a note of specific instances under each heading.

Welcome (1)

- Introductions ❑
- Icebreaker ❑
- Explain the structure ❑
- Timings ❑
- Note-taking if applicable ❑
- Explanation of the vacancy ❑
- Transition question. ❑

Ask questions (2)

- Open ❑
- Closed ❑
- Probing ❑
- Hypothetical ❑
- Leading ❑
- Multiple. ❑

Supply Information (3)

- Candidate questions ❑
- Quality of panel answers. ❑

Part (4)

- Asked if there was anything they would like to add to support their application ❑
- Explained what are the next stages of the recruitment process ❑
- Thanks. ❑

Learning summary

Key strengths as an interviewer

Key development areas

Activity 11 Developing your project team

Purpose

To introduce participants to the essential ingredients required for effective teamwork. To enable them to recognise and practise these ingredients and develop an action plan to strengthen the performance of their own work teams.

Activity 11
Developing your project team

How do I encourage an effective project team spirit?

Purpose

To introduce participants to the essential ingredients required for effective teamwork. To enable them to recognise and practise these ingredients and develop an action plan to strengthen the performance of their own work teams.

Application

This activity is appropriate for all who either work in or lead project teams at work. It can be used in any type of organisation and is not dependent on the teams being of a particular size, specialism or technology.

In addition to project management training it has been used on a variety of general management development events including: Leadership Development – both indoors and on outdoor adventure training; Team Development Awaydays and Facilitation Skills for Managers, Trainers or Consultants.

What happens

You start the session with a general discussion which focuses attention on what is a team and how teams differ from other groups or collections of individuals.

You ask the participants to identify the characteristics of effective teams they have been members of, and then give them an opportunity to put their ideas into practice with a stimulating and fun, practical teamwork exercise.

You direct them to review their team's performance by introducing them to models of how teams learn to develop and the three strands of activity they need to look for. The teams present their review findings and their ideas are compared with a popular model for effective teamwork.

In the final part of the session you introduce them to the four stages that teams progress through to reach maturity. The participants compare their own work teams with the model and devise plans to progress through the stages.

In order to facilitate the transfer of learning back to work they are encouraged to fill in their Learning review diary which shows their plans for practical application.

Time

Overall time available: 3 hours 15 minutes.

- Introduction: 15 minutes
- Characteristics of effective teams: 15 minutes
- Bridge over the River Wye: 1 hour
  - Briefing: 15 minutes
  - Planning: 30 minutes
  - Building: 15 minutes
- Review of teamwork exercise: 45 minutes
- Stages of team development: 45 minutes
- Learning review: 15 minutes.

Materials & resources

- 1 Flipchart master
  - **11.1** *The Learning Cycle*
- 4 OHT masters:
  - **11.2** *What is a team?*
  - **11.3** *Three strands of team activity*
  - **11.4** *Ingredients for successful teamwork*
  - **11.5** *Stages of team development*
- 3 Handout masters:
  - **11.6** *Bridge over the River Wye*
  - **11.7** *Key questions for working teams*
  - **11.8** *Ingredients for successful teamwork*
- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- OHT acetates
- OHT acetate marker pens

- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)
- The following items for each team participating in the exercise:
  1 x 500 ml can of beer
  1 x pint glass or jug
  12 x 2 metre bamboo canes
  1 x roll of parcel string
  1 x reel of cotton
  4 x plastic cups
  1 x box paper clips
  1 x box rubber bands
  1 x roll Sellotape®
  1 x scissors
  1 x small Stanley® knife
  1 x expanding metal tape

In preparation

You will need to prepare two flipchart sheets:
1. Different types of group (see suggestions below)
2. Learning Cycle (see *Flipchart master 11.1 The Learning Cycle*).

11

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

Start the session by revealing a prepared flipchart on which you have listed a range of different types of group, for example:

Manchester United football team*
A church congregation
Your poker school
The 'Big Brother' House*
A crowd at a bus stop
The church choir *
A classroom of pupils
The British Lions rugby team *

(Add ideas to the list based on your own and your participants' backgrounds and interests.)

Inform the participants' that some of these groups can be classified as teams, whilst others cannot. Ask them to tell you which they would pick. Lead a brief discussion exploring their reasons.

Point out that the groups on the list marked *
would all qualify as they conform to the common definition of a team.

Show OHT 11.2
What is a team?

Discuss this definition with the group, paying particular attention to each phase.

'A number of people' – A team must consist of more than one, but there is no conclusive definition that states there should be any optimum number. The appropriate number of people will depend on the complexity of the task or objective. What many teams have is sub-teams who are performing their own group of tasks for the benefit of the larger team.

'Complementary skills' – This produces a blend of individual talents which when added together can be greater than the sum of the individual parts. This is a phenomenon known as 'synergy'.

'United to achieve a common goal' – What distinguishes a team from a crowd or other gathering of people is that they are all focused on achieving a common purpose.

Point out that one of the benefits a project team has over more routine everyday work is that the project has a clearly defined goal to aim at. In this respect it has many of the similarities of a football team going for the Championship or an athlete going for gold at the Olympics.

'Mutually accountable' – Each member of the team feels equally committed to the team's success and considers themselves mutually accountable for any failure. This will apply even when their overall contribution is a minor one.

Point out that this last point often proves to be the most crucial factor in effective teamworking. Without the wholehearted, almost selfless commitment of the individual members, the team's efforts may fail.

Allow about 15 minutes for this introduction to the activity.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEAMS

Ask the participants to spend a few minutes thinking about groups they are (or have been) members of that qualify as teams from our definition. Tell them to write a list of these teams and then make a note of some of the common factors they experienced which help to determine their team's success (the plus factors) or failure (the minus factors).

When they have finished, divide the participants into groups of about six. Allocate each to a separate area and ask them to spend the first 10 minutes of the next phase discussing their notes and writing a list of the most common factors on the flipchart paper provided.

Get them under way. Check occasionally that they are still focused on the task.

Tell them that when they are satisfied with their list they should fix it on a wall where it can be seen by all the group as they work on the next phase. This phase will be a team exercise which will give them the opportunity to try out the factors on their list.

After 10 minutes, check that they have completed this task and then ask each group to nominate one member to return to the main room to be briefed on the next phase.

BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER WYE

When you have a representative from each group start your briefing verbally. Don't give them a copy of the brief unless they ask for it, as clarity of communication can be a key teaching point for teamworking.

Distribute Handout 11.6
Bridge over the River Wye

TRAINER'S TIP

It's a good idea to have extra supplies of beer available. This can be used to top-up supplies during the preparation time if there is an accidental spillage. Any left over can be used in a post-activity celebration.

When you have answered their questions, get the activity under way. Don't wander around the groups. The instructions clearly stated that they should come to you with questions. If you have to disqualify an attempt because they have broken the ground rules then that will be a valuable learning experience. Take care, however, that you are open-minded and allow any creative solutions that fall within their remit.

Tell them when they have 5 minutes left of the planning time, and then call a halt after exactly 30 minutes. Reconvene the teams at the 'building area'. This could be any suitable room of sufficient size, preferably with a wipeable surface. (Alternatively the exercise can be run out of doors in such areas as a car park, tennis court or lawn.) The river is represented by fixing two lengths of Sellotape® 4 metres apart. Point out that these represent the river bank, and remind the participants that they may build up to the edge of the bank but no equipment can stand in the river.

Check that all items have been dis-assembled from the preparation phase and when both teams are ready get them under way.

Move between the teams and check that they are keeping within the constraints. Don't make any suggestions on how they can improve their performance or get out of any difficulties at this stage.

Call a halt after 15 minutes (record the precise completion time if the teams finish earlier). Measure the beer, record the finish time and declare a winner. (Don't let them drink the beer yet – keep it until the end of the session when all the activities have finished.)

REVIEW OF TEAMWORK EXERCISE

When you have finished, address the whole group. Tell them that one of the characteristics of effective teams is that they review their progress, towards their goal and take stock of how they are working as a team.

Whilst many teams will do this after failure, it is equally important to do so after success. Point out that this involves them in going around the well established learning cycle.

Show prepared Flipchart 11.1
The Learning Cycle

Point out that this is a simple technique they can use both as individual team members and as a whole team to enable them to grow in confidence and aim for continuous improvement.

This model can be used in conjunction with another on how effective teams work.

Show OHT 11.3
Three strands of team activity

Discuss the OHT with the group. Inform them that the most successful teams are those who pay attention to all three strands simultaneously during any activity.

Content: This is concerned with the task in hand and revolves around issues that directly relate to the problem or project. Most teams spend a lot of time talking about the content. Typical examples from the last exercise would be about issues such as what type of structure they will use to bridge the river.

Structure: This is concerned with the stages the team goes through to complete the task. It covers the issues involved in how they are going to organise themselves to carry out the project. Typical examples would include developing a time schedule, allocating roles and nominating a leader to co-ordinate. Many teams discuss this for the building phase but it is often overlooked during the planning phase – usually to their detriment.

Process: This is concerned with how the group interact with each other as they work through the task in hand. It covers the key interpersonal skills for building team-spirit. Most groups pay little attention to their process issues until they start interfering with the team's overall effectiveness – by which time it may be too late to repair the damage. Typical examples are one person dominating the group, sulking, sub-groups doing their own thing, lack of open communication, etc.

Tell the participants that when considering how well they have performed you are less interested in the content issues (what sort of set-up was used to get the beer across the river) but are more interested in how they worked together as a team to address the structure and process issues. To help them review these aspects they will find the next handout useful.

Distribute Handout 11.7
Key questions for working teams

Point out that the discussion stimulated by this list of questions about how well they operated as a group, is even more important than winning the competition. They may have succeeded in their task but at what cost to effective and harmonious teamwork?

Ask the teams to return to their groups to consider the questions you have provided. Tell them they have 15 minutes to discuss and report back on the following:

1. What did we do well?
2. What was less effective or missed out completely?
3. What do we now consider to be the essential ingredients for effective teamworking?

Issue them with sheets of blank acetate and some suitable marker pens to help them record their answers, and get them under way.

Move between the groups to make sure they are on track. Remind them to keep focused – you are less interested in the content of their bridge building activity than their operating structure and group processes.

Review their conclusions

After 15 minutes check that both teams have finished. Reconvene into the large group and ask one of the teams to go first and lead the plenary review. Ask them to relate their comments to specific instances from the recent activity. When they have finished, ask the other team to present their findings.

Now lead a discussion on the similarities in the items they have listed for effective teamworking. It is important that each group feels committed to its own list, but point out that they should always be interested to learn from others, which includes their opponents.

You will probably find a number of similar items appearing on both teams' lists. Tell the group that there has been a great deal of research into this area. The general conclusions indicate that certain key points are present in effective teams.

Show OHT 11.4
Ingredients for successful teamwork

Talk through the points and then issue the handout to reinforce the points.

Distribute Handout 11.8
Ingredients for successful teamwork

Encourage participants to add any items from the other team's list or from your handout which they consider appropriate for their own project teams.

STAGES OF TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Point out that project teams rarely become effective overnight. They usually go through various stages of development. Four distinct stages have been identified.

Show OHT 11.5
Stages of team development

Discuss each of the four stages.

Stage one – forming

At this stage the group are still a collection of individuals. Ask the participants to recall how they felt at the start of this training event. During this stage individuals are coming to terms with what behaviours are acceptable as each attempts to manage the transition to being a team member.

Ask the participants to identify typical behaviours they can identify from this stage. Write their suggestions on a flipchart. They will probably include:

- participation is spasmodic and often hesitant
- discussions focus on peripheral symptoms or problems rather than central issues
- members stick to safe ground and use tried and tested remedies
- the ‘organisation’ usually becomes the focus of any complaints, not the team itself
- there is suspicion and anxiety about the new situation
- people are not open about their feelings
- minimal and often low-quality work is accomplished
- members are looking for a sense of belonging.

Stage two – storming

The next stage follows when teams are better acquainted and the thin veneer of civilisation starts to wear off. This stage is marked by conflict in which team members become hostile and challenge ideas. A lot of personal agendas come to the surface and a certain amount of interpersonal hostility is inevitable.

Again chart participants’ suggestions on typical behaviours during this stage. They should include:

- disunity, tension and jealousy
- polarisation of team members into cliques
- confusion about boundaries of members’ roles
- infighting, defensiveness and competition within the team
- point-scoring and put-downs
- setting unrealistic goals and then criticising others for not achieving them
- resistance to the team’s needs because they clash with personal needs
- certain members try to establish a pecking order in which they are ‘top dog’.

Point out that many teams can fall apart at this stage, but, if handled well it can be turned around to a new and more realistic setting of norms and goals for the team. This stage is called ‘norming’.

Stage three – norming

The team will be ready to move on when they become frustrated with the atmosphere and lack of progress of Stage two. They will endeavour to establish workable team rules and practices. These will include how the team should work together and what sort of behaviours it expects from its members. At this stage there will need to be some experimentation to find out what works. The team will need encouragement and reassurance as they attempt to move forward. Typical behaviours you can expect to chart here will include:

- patching up previously conflicting relationships
- attempts to achieve harmony and manage conflict
- developing intimacy by sharing personal concerns
- objective reviews of team performance
- expressing of own feelings more skilfully and constructively
- establishing and maintaining team boundaries
- greater participation and genuine listening
- the development of a cohesive team spirit.

Point out that as the last point starts to emerge, the group will start to develop towards maturity and be fully productive. This is called 'performing'.

Stage four – performing

At this stage the team becomes self-determining. It will be capable of diagnosing and resolving both technical and emotional problems. It should be able to make informed decisions about difficult issues and a great deal of highly productive work is accomplished. Typical behaviours your participants may have seen will include:

- a well-developed insight into their own behaviour and that of other team members
- constructive feedback given and received
- resourceful, creative and effective problem solving
- differences of opinion seen as constructive, not a personal attack
- close and supportive of each other and the team
- wholehearted commitment to achieving the common goal

- great confidence in themselves and in how the team operates.

Ask the participants to identify at which stage of development are their current teams at work. Check with the group, by show of hands, how many rate their teams in each category. Allocate the participants into small groups. Ideally you should have one participant in each group who is currently experiencing each stage.

Ask that participant to explain the reasons behind their rating to their group. Ask the other members to help them identify some key actions each member could take to help them move their project team to the next stage. Tell them they have 20 minutes for this exercise.

When they have finished, reconvene and lead a plenary review. Taking a stage at a time, list their ideas for action on a flipchart. Typical examples should include:

Stage one – forming
- Make sure team members get acquainted
- Be sensitive to their needs
- Provide clear direction and information
- Provide information on how teams work together
- Start to openly discuss establishing a contract for how people should behave in the team.

Stage two – storming
- Continue to be positive and supportive
- Provide information on the task, and constraints
- Reassure the team that current conflict is normal
- Deal openly with conflict
- Arrange training on team building
- Debate risky issues and chair meetings effectively
- Listen actively and give constructive feedback
- Be sure to act as a good role model
- Delegate and give the team greater responsibility for its own actions.

Stage three – norming

- Give the team even more responsibility
- Provide less structure as team matures
- Make sure that the team does not become over reliant on your expertise
- Share your own doubts and weaknesses
- Continue to provide more coaching and training in teamworking skills
- Give constructive feedback reflecting the team's and individuals' progress to date.

Stage four – performing

- Encourage team to take greater responsibility for its own development
- Continue to train and coach individual members
- Reduce involvement as team grows and matures
- Delegate and give recognition for team's achievements
- Make the group aware of any dysfunctional behaviours, for example, 'group-think'
- Make sure that the team celebrates its success.

LEARNING REVIEW

At the end of the session, ask participants to take 5 minutes to think back over the session and then to make notes on the key learning points that have emerged, and how they may apply these to their work. They should note these points are in their Learning review diary, if they are using this approach to recording their learning (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii).

When they have finished, lead a brief review by asking for some examples of the key things people will take away and try to implement.

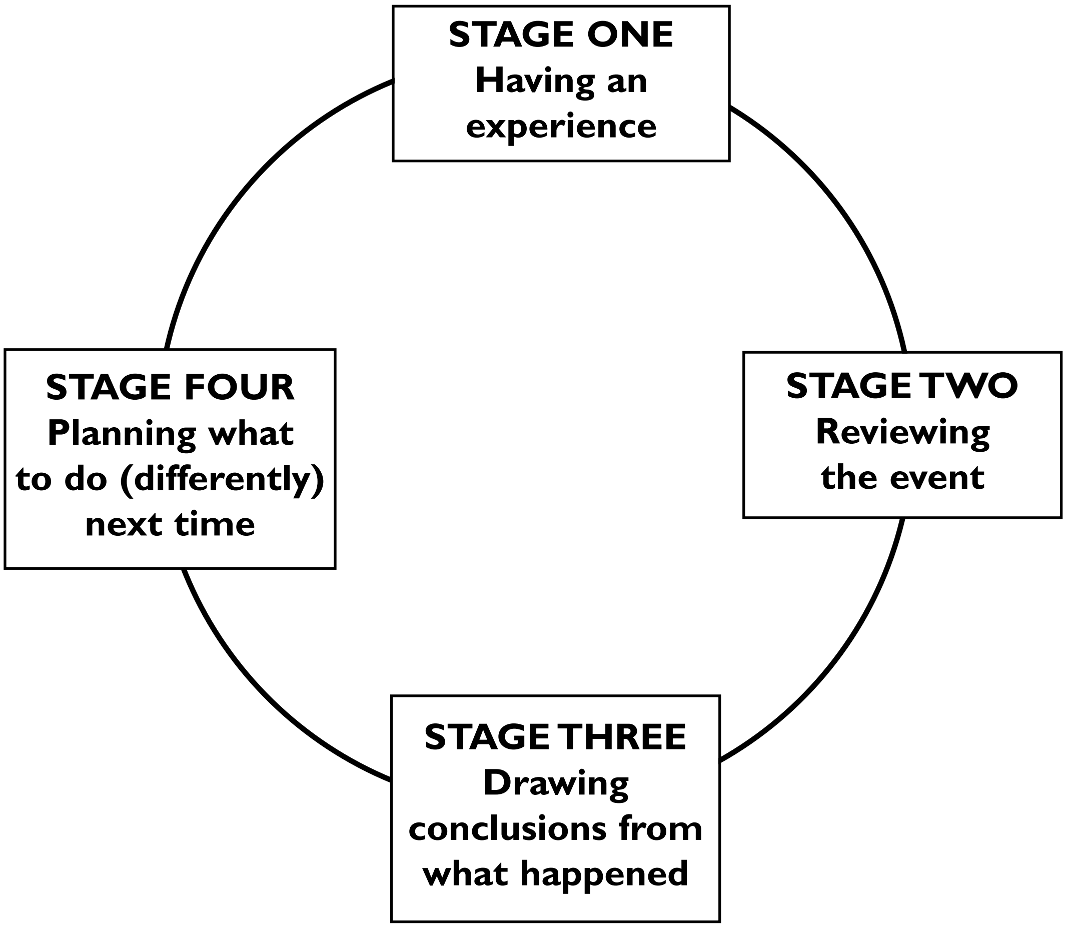
When everyone who wants to contribute has had the opportunity, thank them for all their work. Close the session and open the beer!

TRAINER'S TIP

Before asking the participants to do them, always try out exercises yourself. This will give you added credibility and an insight into the problems you are posing the teams.

If you want to find out more about the behaviour of teams we can recommend 'Development sequences in small groups' by B. W. Tuckman in *Psychological Bulletin,* Volume 63, 1965, in which he introduced the idea of the four stages of group development which were adapted for use in this activity.

The Learning Cycle



OK TO COPY

What is a team?

A team is a number of people with complementary skills, who are united in achieving a common goal for which they are mutually accountable.

Three strands of team activity

CONTENT

STRUCTURE

PROCESS

Ingredients for successful teamwork

PURPOSE

TIME PLANNING

PREPARATION

UNDERSTANDING

FOCUS

PARTICIPATION

CREATIVITY

ANALYSIS

CONFLICT

REFLECT

Stages of team development

Stage one – Forming

Stage two – Storming

Stage three – Norming

Stage four – Performing

Bridge over the River Wye

Your team are part of a group who are on a trek through the Welsh Mountains during the early spring.

One of the highlights of the week is the end-of-trek campfire; an evening of songs, stories, laughter and much eating and drinking. You and your team have been challenged to bring back a large supply of beer to enable the evening to go with a swing. The trek co-ordinator thought it would be an interesting exercise to set the same task to two separate teams. This has the advantage of providing some stimulating competition – and making sure that at least some beer gets back to camp.

You are currently making your way back to the campsite carrying your precious supplies when you come across an obstacle.

The wooden bridge you have planned to cross on your return journey is swaying under the impact of one of the many flash floods they have here in the spring. You will have sufficient time to get some of your team over before the bridge collapses but it is not strong enough for them to take the beer with them. Unfortunately the river banks are too far apart to be able to throw articles across.

You want to rise to the challenge to beat the other team and make sure your comrades at the campfire get their drinks on time. This is the only direct footpath available, the alternative route will take too long and there is no guarantee that it will be open in these weather conditions.

Fortunately, from a nearby allotment you have been able to find some materials that you can use to help achieve your task. The materials you have available are:

1 x 500 ml can of beer (open)
1 x pint glass or jug
12 x 2 metre bamboo canes
1 x roll of parcel string
1 x reel of cotton
4 x plastic cups

Continued …

Bridge over the River Wye

… continued

1 x box paper clips
1 x box rubber bands
1 x roll Sellotape®
1 x scissors
1 x small Stanley knife
1 x expanding metal tape

Constraints
Please remember you have the following constraints:

- The banks of the river are 4 metres apart
- Once your team members have crossed the river they cannot return
- No items of equipment may be thrown across the river once building has started
- Whatever set-up of equipment is used, it must be free-standing
- No team member may enter the river once the building has started
- You may build up to the edge of the bank but no equipment can stand in the river
- Equipment dropped into the river is irretrievable unless a retaining rope is attached
- All the equipment must be used
- No equipment can be pre-built during the planning phase for subsequent use on the crossing
- No equipment other than what is supplied can be used
- The umpire's judgement on what is permissible is final.

You have the next 30 minutes to plan the task and then 15 minutes to execute your plan. The competition will be won by the team who gets the most beer across the river in the allotted time. If both teams get the same amount across, the team that finishes first will win.

Please remember that I am here to answer any questions you may have at any time. My decisions will be consistent and final. Are there any points you want me to clarify at this stage?

Good luck and may the best team win.

11.7

Key questions for working teams

- Did the team set realistic goals?
- Was there agreement and commitment to these goals?
- Was all the information made available to the group?
- Did they get beneath the surface issues in discussion?
- Was maximum use made of both individual and combined team skills and resources?
- Did the team's climate encourage collaboration rather than competition between team members?
- Were individuals free to express their true feelings and emotions during the activity?
- Did they deal with emotional as well as intellectual disagreements?
- Were they aware of how well they were functioning as a team?
- Did they relate to the points they had listed earlier which identified key teamworking issues?
- What steps did they take to correct any ineffective behaviour as it was occurring?

Ingredients for successful teamwork

Purpose	Know what your goals are. Communicate those goals clearly to everyone. Have a clear plan of action.
Time planning	Schedule time to discuss important issues. Discourage time wasting. Keep your time productive.
Preparation	Allow time for preparation. Know what you are attempting to do. Try it out and revise where necessary.
Understanding	Make certain everyone knows what is happening. Clarify each individual's role. Ensure two-way communication between the team members and the leader. Ask them to raise issues and concerns. Listen and show you understand.
Focus	Keep the group on track. Avoid red herrings. Stick to your agenda. Be alert to going over the same ground needlessly.
Participation	Encourage all to participate. Use the full range of skills and resources within the team. Keep the vocal from overtalking the quiet members.
Creativity	Stimulate ideas and team creativity. Build on others' ideas. Explore all possibilities. Record all suggestions on flipcharts.

Continued …

Ingredients for successful teamwork

… continued

Analysis	Sift out unworkable ideas. Decide on the most suitable approach given the circumstances. Make everyone part of the solution. Check to see in what ways it could fail.
Conflict	Encourage disagreement on technical issues. Don't allow arguments to become personal. Resolve conflicts, don't allow them to fester. Use conflicts of opinion to generate creative solutions. Compromise if it is the best solution for the project in hand. Always aim for a win–win outcome.
Reflect	Look back at what you have done. Encourage individual and team review. Learn from both your mistakes and successes. Celebrate your growing maturity as a team.

Activity 12 Project leadership style

Purpose

To make participants aware of the key differences between management and leadership. To introduce them to the essential ingredients for developing an effective leadership style. To give them the opportunity to rate their current levels of leadership and to identify ways they can build on and develop these qualities.

Activity 12
Project leadership style

How do I develop an effective project leadership style?

Purpose

To make participants aware of the key differences between management and leadership. To introduce them to the essential ingredients for developing an effective leadership style. To give them the opportunity to rate their current levels of leadership and to identify ways they can build on and develop these qualities.

Application

This activity should be used on any training programme that aims at developing the all round skills of a project manager. It offers flexibility as to when it is introduced being equally applicable to the beginning, middle or concluding stages of the training programme.

The activity covers many attributes that are common to all leaders regardless of discipline, organisation or sector. It can therefore be applied to training events where the focus is on developing: senior or middle managers; team leaders; organisational development; managing change; or performance appraisal.

What happens

You start the session with a brainstorming session which uses word association to identify attributes of managers and leaders and the identity of people who fit these profiles.

Having discussed what is meant by leadership and how it differs from management, you introduce the concept of styles of leadership. The participants have the opportunity to rate their dominant style and discuss their rating with a partner.

You next introduce the group to the three main forces that affect the choice of a leadership style, and give them an opportunity to relate these to examples of their own teamwork.

During the final activities in the session you introduce the factors that are involved in effective leadership. Following your discussion the participants have an opportunity to assess their leadership strengths and then review this rating with a partner.

You close the session by giving them the opportunity to review their learning and develop an action plan for applying the key points to their project teams back at their workplace. Participants are encouraged to fill in their Learning review diary.

Time

Overall time available: 2 hours 40 minutes.

- Introduction: 15 minutes
- Let's define the terms: 15 minutes
- Styles of leadership: 30 minutes
- Choosing a leadership style: 20 minutes
- What's involved in effective leadership: 15 minutes
- Assess your leadership strengths: 45 minutes
- Learning review: 20 minutes.

Materials & resources

- 7 OHT Masters:
  - **12.1** *Management – definition*
  - **12.2** *Leadership – definition*
  - **12.3** *Continuum of leadership styles*
  - **12.4** *Forces influencing leadership styles*
  - **12.5** *What's involved in effective leadership?*
  - **12.6** *Groucho Marx anecdote*

- 3 Handout masters:
  - **12.7** *Different styles of leadership*
  - **12.8** *Forces influencing leadership style*
  - **12.9** *Team leader assessment sheet* (extra copies if you follow the Trainer's tip on page 12–15)

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper

- Marker pens for trainer
- Flipchart paper and coloured marker pens for participants
- Tape, Blu-Tack® or pins
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)

In preparation

Before you start, place a flipchart stand in each corner of the room. Make sure it is fitted with a fresh pad and a set of suitable marker pens is available. Draw a line down the middle of the paper and label one column 'Management' and the other 'Leadership'. Cover up the charts so that the participants don't think about these topics too early.

Also, draw a copy of *OHT 12.3 Continuum of leadership styles* on a separate flipchart sheet, for later use.

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

Inform the group that you are going to start the session with a short word association test.
This is the type where, when a word is mentioned a number of associations spring to mind.
For example:

Laurel ⟶ Hardy
bacon ⟶ eggs

Tell them that you want them to divide into four groups – one for each flipchart.

When they are ready, ask them to turn over the page to reveal the headings prepared earlier. Tell them that they have 5 minutes to write up as many words that spring to mind in association with these two concepts.

Check that every participant has a pen and then get them under way.

After 5 minutes have elapsed, tell them to stay by their charts. They now have another 5 minutes to write up the names of characters, based on either fact or fiction, living or dead, whom they think epitomise the words used in each column.

Call time after the 5 minutes and ask the groups to stop writing. Ask them to move around the room and look at the lists and names the other groups have generated.

When they have finished, reconvene as a whole group. Ask each group to bring their flipchart pages with them and fix it at the front of the training room so that all the sheets are clearly visible.

Look at the lists. You will probably find a broad similarity between the groups, but there will be some areas of overlap, where a term or person appears in the management list for one group and in the leadership list of another. Point out these contrasts to the participants. Tell them that any such clashes are to be expected because it is often difficult to distinguish between the two and in practice most project managers have to fulfil both roles simultaneously.

Allow 15 minutes for this introduction to the activity.

LET'S DEFINE THE TERMS

Point out that over the years there have been a number of attempts to define both management and leadership, and to identify the qualities that are involved in both.

The popular opinion is that 'to manage' comes from the Latin *manus* which can be translated as 'to take something in hand'. This approach was adopted by the French, whose word *manège* was applied to the rigours of dressage exercises, taking a horse in hand, controlling and instilling discipline and obedience. This has led to a common definition of management.

Show OHT 12.1
Management – definition

Many ideas about management developed during the Victorian era and are strongly based on the classical military model of command and control.

Move around the flipcharts and highlight the number of times words like these appear under the management heading:

- planning
- organising
- directing
- controlling
- disciplining.

Management is about ensuring order and predictability and will involve the project managers in many useful aspects of work as they strive to get the project completed on time. It is about developing plans and allocating resources, preventing things going wrong and exercising control over people and processes.

Point out to the participants that these are all good techniques for project managers to perfect, but they will be greatly enhanced by developing complementary leadership skills. Combining leadership and management skills will greatly increase your chances of completing your project successfully.

Inform them that the term 'leadership' is reputed to come from an ancient Anglo-Saxon word which means a road or a way ahead. Its common usage is about giving a sense of purpose and direction.

Show OHT 12.2
Leadership – definition

Point out that the key difference between the two approaches is that the team who are well led give their services voluntarily. They will put in extra effort, and be inspired to come up with creative solutions, because they want to. People who are being managed comply with their manager's wishes because they have to, even if they have very little enthusiasm to carry those orders out.

Leadership does not produce order and predictability like management; it is about creating a dynamic force for creativity and change. It sets a direction and aims to promote a positive outcome by empowering people to do even more than their best.

Turn once again to the flipcharts and highlight some of the terms that have been associated with modern leadership:

- empowers
- facilitate
- energise
- guide
- communicate
- support.

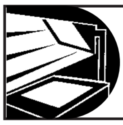
When these characteristics are in place the team will really respond well and strive to make the project a success.

Point out that in the modern business world they will probably have to combine the qualities of both manager and leader. This will mean choosing an appropriate leadership style.

Spend about 15 minutes on defining the terms.

STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

Point out that, as history has shown, there are number of styles a leader can adopt.



Show OHT 12.3
Continuum of leadership styles

Explain to the participants that positions A, B and C refer to the styles that research has shown typify three common approaches of different types of leaders. The diagram represents three major components which reflect their style:

1. The amount of talking time used by both.
2. How power is used.
3. Who takes the decisions.

Describe the leader who tends to work from position A, the **Autocrat**. Explain that this approach is the *leader-centred style*. It is noticeable that they are self-centred and allow the project team members to contribute little. They can seem overbearing and domineering in their approach.

Typically they act as judge and jury. They don't listen to their team's views, and tell them how to behave. If there are any difficulties such leaders state the problem as they see it and impose their own solution. Their underlying approach to problem-solving seems to be summed up in the phrase 'Don't confuse me with the facts, my mind's made up!' They usually ride roughshod over everyone and everything. They tend to see people as either for them or against them and are ruthless in removing people who are 'not one of us'.

Look for some examples on the flipcharts of past leaders who exemplify this approach. Unfortunately there may be many. Examples could be Hitler, Stalin or even Margaret Thatcher.

Ask the participants if this fixed pen picture reminds them of anyone in their organisation, perhaps themselves! Probe to discover how they feel about working for an individual who constantly uses this approach … 'undervalued', 'resentful', 'treated like a child', 'demotivated' are typical responses.

How do they respond to this approach to leadership? 'With disagreement', 'compliance without conviction', 'withdrawal of support', even 'direct sabotage' are frequent answers. Use their answers to demonstrate that this approach discourages open communication, perpetuates poor organisational practices and saps self-confidence and self-development.

In some situations, however, an autocratic approach can be effective. Ask the group for some suggestions of when this approach may be appropriate. They could give as examples:

- an emergency when things have to be done quickly
- where a complex task is being carried out by an expert
- when the team is made up of junior and inexperienced staff.

Point out that the problems arise when the project leader adopts this approach for most of the time with most of the staff, regardless of the situation.

Now turn to leader C, the **Abdicrat**. Explain that, taken to extremes, this leader's style is marked by lack of involvement. They don't seem interested in any in-depth exploration of the problem, and are likely to accept the first solution the project team puts forward. They are poor at giving feedback or direction and give the general impression that they want to get the whole thing over with as soon as possible. This is fine for the experienced employee who knows the job inside out and who is mainly concerned with obtaining approval to go ahead with their original problem-solving idea. Unfortunately, these leaders are often supreme buck-passers; team members will quickly be blamed if solutions go wrong and these leaders are also inclined to rapid changes of mind if more senior managers go against the ideas.

Again ask the group to identify individuals from their flipcharts who portray these characteristics. There may not be that many as these characters are often not viewed as successful leaders, but examples could include: Nero, Neville Chamberlain or John Major (but point out that history may have been hard on all three).

Ask participants how they feel about working for a leader with this approach. They will probably answer: …'frustrated', 'uncertain', 'disillusioned', ‘insecure’. Again use their responses to draw out the effects of those feelings …‘uninvolved’, ‘wary’, ‘frustrated’ and ‘not committed’.

Ask if there are any circumstances when this *group-centred style* can be effective.

Typical suggestions are:
- Team are self-directing and don’t need to be led
- A very expert group working to a clear plan
- It involves a straightforward, routine task with few consequences for getting it wrong.

Now direct their attention to leader B, the **Democrat**. Point out that this approach is marked by considerable participation and involvement by both parties in the process. The leader actively seeks information about the problem situation, its causes and effects. They guide, encourage and support the team members to explore possible solutions. They provide information based on their own experience and fully value the input from their team. Their approach could be described as that of a catalyst, diagnostician or facilitator. When a decision is reached it is arrived at through consensus and not imposed on the team members.

Ask the participants who have experienced this approach for their reactions. They will usually report feeling valued, involved and challenged.
As a result their approach to the project was enthusiastic, participative, committed.

Point out that this approach strengthens relationships. Both benefit from the exchange, and new ideas, approaches, and attitudes are encouraged and developed.

Again ask the group to identify the individuals from their list whom they feel have demonstrated this approach. Typically these will include:
Nelson Mandela, John F. Kennedy, Jesus and possibly Tony Blair.

Tell the participants that this approach embodies a *balanced style*. It is an effective approach on most projects. If handled skilfully, it encourages two-way communication, invites active participation, encourages positive and constructive approaches and encourages the leader and the team to work together to assess problems and identify appropriate solutions.

Distribute Handout 12.7
Different styles of leadership

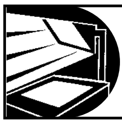
Which style do you use most?
Use the flipchart copy of *OHT 12.3 Continuum of leadership styles*, which you prepared earlier. Ask the participants to give you their immediate reaction on where they'd each place their dominant style. Make a note, by writing their names or initials at the appropriate spot on the chart. Ask them to spend 5 minutes in conversation with a partner discussing the reasons behind their judgement.

Stop them after 5 minutes and ask them to reverse roles to give the other person an opportunity to talk about their style.

Allow about 30 minutes in total for this section on styles of leadership.

CHOOSING A LEADERSHIP STYLE

Point out to the group that whatever you are attempting to do as a leader is basically the same no matter what your style. You are trying to achieve the project's goal in the most efficient, effective and economical way possible. The success of the project could depend on which approach you adopt. But as we have just discussed, there are a number of forces that will have an impact on the project leader's choice of style.



Show OHT 12.4
Forces influencing leadership style

Discuss the three circles model and issue the handout to reinforce your discussion.

Distribute Handout 12.8
Forces influencing leadership style

The effective leader is one who is sensitive to the various forces that should influence their behaviour on a particular project. They should be able to behave comfortably along the whole range of the continuum and change their style to accommodate the demands of the situation.

Ask the participants if they have ever felt frustrated with a leader who continues to behave in a particular way, even though it is obvious to all concerned that a more effective and workable approach is called for. Ask them to recall a time when they adopted an approach to leading a team that did not work.

Give them a further 5 minutes to discuss with a partner how these factors have had an impact on real project teams in which they have been involved. When they have finished, ask for some volunteers to briefly outline the forces and their impact on real team behaviours.

Ask them what they would do differently as a result of this experience.

Point out to the group that whilst the balanced style is generally the most effective, there may be occasions when moving to another style is necessary to produce the results.

This part of the activity should take about 20 minutes.

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP?

Inform the participants that in order to be an effective leader you need to be able to communicate.

Show OHT 12.5
What's involved in effective leadership?

Discuss the items on the OHT, using examples based on your own experience.

Communicate your attitude
Explain to the participants that three underlying attitudes have been identified as a prerequisite of success.

Show OHT 12.6
Groucho Marx anecdote

Tell the group that this humourous quote is *not* meant to be taken seriously.

Point out that if the project leader is manipulative and merely seen to be going through the motions of consultation whilst their mind is already made up, then an experienced team will quickly see that their approach is not genuine.

Being **genuine** implies a basic straightness in the leader. They do not play tricks, games or adopt false roles. Being open and inspiring trust are two aspects of this quality.

Respect means acceptance of team members as individuals with a right to their own point of view, whether the leader agrees with it or not.

Empathy is the ability to understand the situation from the other person's point of view; to put themselves into the other's shoes. The leader may possess many technical skills but these are worthless without the right attitudes.

In addition to these basic attitudes there are other areas in which the team leader must excel.

Communicate your vision

Re-show OHT 12.2
Leadership – definition

Remind the group that our definition of a leader requires people to want to follow them.
A compelling vision needs to be communicated in a form with which people can identify.

Communicate by example
People believe very little of what you tell them. They are much more convinced by what you *do*. There is no point is adopting an approach which follows the maxim ‘Don’t do as I do, do as I say’. The leader needs to behave in the manner they want the team members to behave. They have to act as a good role model and project the vision and the values they are putting forward. This will lead to our next point.

Communicate with confidence
You can only communicate with real confidence by having a strong conviction of the rightness of work the team is involved in; confidence in the approach and values you are adopting; and confidence in your own ability to lead the team.

The more confident the team leader is in their team the higher the standards the team will set themselves and the greater will be their eventual success.

When the team leader shows the right attitudes, sets a challenging vision, leads by example and demonstrates confidence in the project, in themselves and in their team, the result will be a highly effective team with high morale.

Allow 15 minutes for this examination of effective leadership.

ASSESS YOUR LEADERSHIP STRENGTHS

Distribute Handout 12.9
Team leader assessment sheet

Ask the participants to rate themselves as a team leader using the five-point scale for each item. Ask them to think of recent teams they have worked with and rate themselves as they actually behaved and not as they'd like others to think they behaved.

Tell the group that they have 5 minutes to rate their abilities as team leaders using this form.

Tell them you then want them to break into pairs and share their ratings with their partner. When they are listening to their partner's ratings they should probe for clarification and evidence.

If appropriate they can give feedback on how they see their partner in comparison with their self-rating. Ask them to point out any inconsistency between the ratings in this exercise and the ratings displayed on the flipchart 'Continuum of leadership styles' (pages 12–3 and 12–10).

Inform the group that they have 15 minutes each for this activity.

Move around the group, answer any questions and make sure they keep focused on the topic. Call time after 15 minutes and ask them to change roles. This will make sure that both partners get an equal review time.

When the time has elapsed and the pairs have finished, reconvene into the large group and lead a plenary review. Ask for volunteers to briefly describe both their ratings and any surprises or new insights they gained from the paired discussions.

Allow a total of 45 minutes for this assessment of leadership strength.

LEARNING REVIEW

When all who want to have contributed, ask the participants to spend 15 minutes considering the session as a whole and making a note in their Learning review diary on the key points that have emerged and how they may transpose these back to work (see 'How to use this resource' page xii).

Answer any final questions they may have about the content of the session.

When they have all finished thank them for their contribution and close the session.

TRAINER'S TIP

An interesting follow-up to this exercise is to issue each participant with a fresh *Handout 12.9 Team leader assessment sheet*. Point out that we sometimes, unintentionally, fool ourselves, but it is very difficult to fool our team. A trend in many progressive organisations is to introduce upward feedback and appraisal. Suggest to the participants that it would be interesting to repeat the final exercise when they are back at work with their teams. Point out that this needs sensitive and careful handling, but can often produce a new insight into their approach to team leadership.

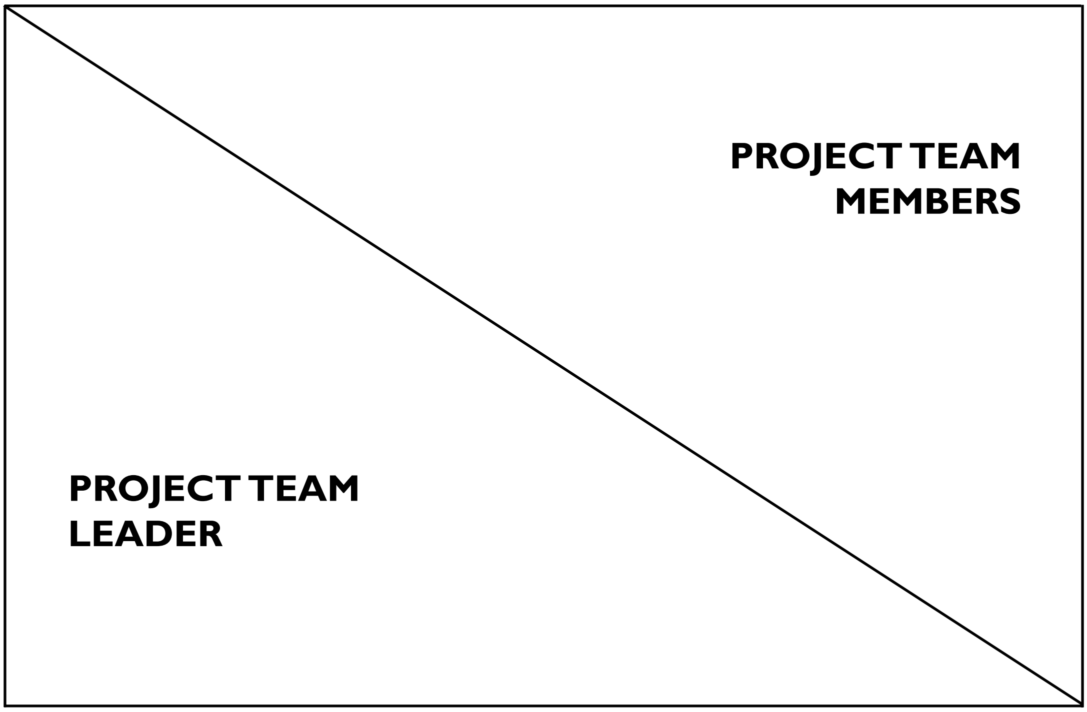
Management – definition

The efficient and effective use of resources to achieve results with and through the efforts of other people.

Leadership – definition

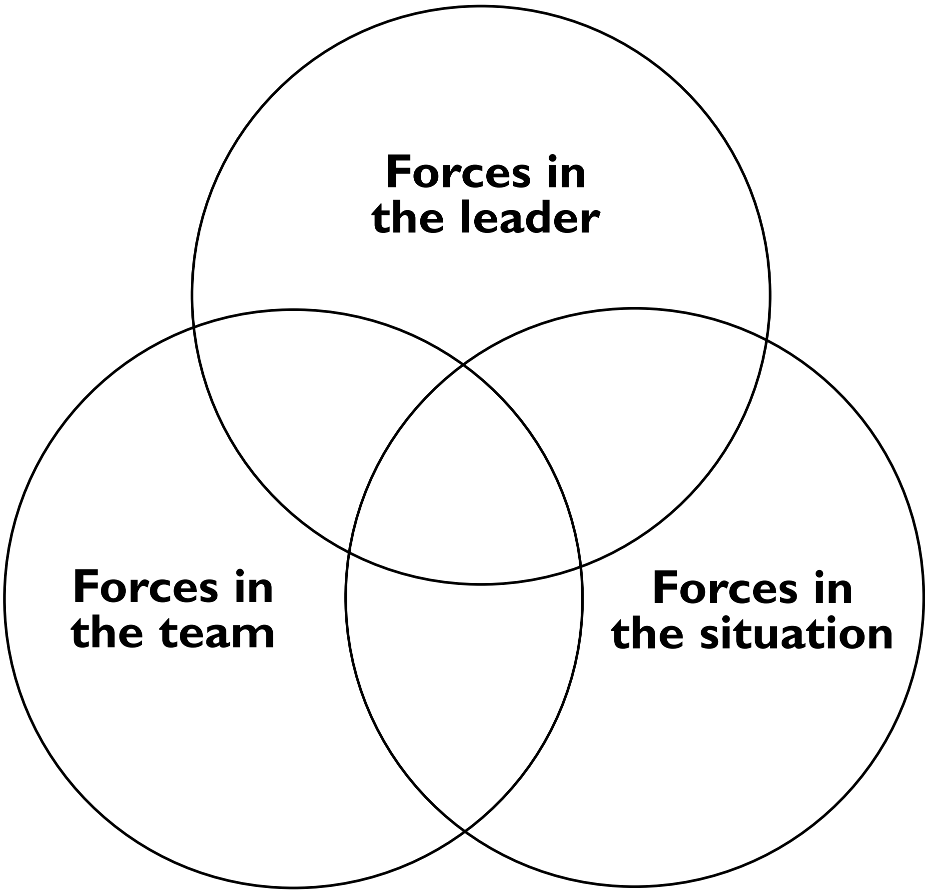
Inspiring others to follow your lead by creating a compelling vision of the future.

Continuum of leadership styles



(– A –)	(– B –)	(– C –)
Autocrat	**Democrat**	**Abdicrat**

Forces influencing leadership styles



What's involved in effective leadership?

Communicate your attitude

Communicate your vision

Communicate by example

Communicate with confidence

Groucho Marx anecdote

The secret of good leadership is Genuineness, Respect and Empathy.

When you can fake that you've got it made.

Different styles of leadership

A The Autocrat – a leader-centred style

- Task oriented
- Only one way of doing things
- Leader often feared by team members
- Constant supervision
- Interferes with others' tasks
- Critical of team members
- No discussion on key issues
- Work allocated by leader
- Lack of creative thinking, problem-solving
- Low team morale and job satisfaction.

B The Democrat – a balanced style

- Discusses problems and involves the team
- Approachable leader
- Work practices left to the individual
- Joint problem-solving and decision-making
- All abilities and potential used
- Creative thinking flourishes
- Work done well and effectively with little supervision
- Combines concern for task with concern for people
- People feel as if they are valued
- High team morale and job satisfaction.

C The Abdicrat – the group-centred style

- Inconsistent leadership
- Team members left to fend for themselves
- Leader difficult to pin down
- A blame and pass-the-buck culture
- Leader not trusted by the group
- Concerned about self rather than task or people
- Work not co-ordinated or completed
- Leader seen as irresponsible
- Little consultation or decision making
- Relies heavily on formal bureaucratic channels of communication
- Low team morale and job satisfaction.

Forces influencing leadership style

Forces in the leader

- Past leadership role models
- Views of authority and position
- Comfort with the different styles
- Experience of the different styles
- Their system of values
- Tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty
- Assessment of own ability
- Assessment of team's competence.

Forces in the team

- Experience of leadership styles
- Need for dependency or independence
- Readiness to assume responsibility
- Knowledge and experience of tasks involved
- Interest in the project
- Extent to which they identify with the goals of the rest of the project team
- Expectations of work style and satisfactions
- Tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty.

Forces in the situation

- Predominant leadership style in organisation
- Type of team: size, level of experience and qualifications
- Complexity of the task
- Pressures of time and cost
- Degree of flexibility about how project is carried out
- Certainty of outcome.

Team leader assessment sheet

1. The goals I set for my team are:

very challenging			not at all challenging	
1	2	3	4	5

2. My team can always look to my behaviour as an example:

always				rarely
1	2	3	4	5

3. My team know I have full confidence in them:

always				rarely
1	2	3	4	5

4. My team perform to a high standard:

always				rarely
1	2	3	4	5

5. My team share my vision of the way we should work together:

always				rarely
1	2	3	4	5

6. Morale in my team is:

high				low
1	2	3	4	5

Continued …

12.9

Team leader assessment sheet

… continued

7. Each member of my team knows what is expected of them:

always				rarely
1	2	3	4	5

8. I know what is important to my individual team members:

all of them				none of them
1	2	3	4	5

9. I give feedback and recognise good work:

always				rarely
1	2	3	4	5

10. My team trust me:

always				rarely
1	2	3	4	5

Activity 13 Motivating your project team

Purpose

To enable participants to understand what is involved in motivating individuals in a project team. To help them establish what methods they are currently using at work and to assist them in developing action plans to increase future motivation and job satisfaction.

Activity 13
Motivating your project team

How can I get my project team to work hard and effectively?

Purpose

To enable participants to understand what is involved in motivating individuals in a project team. To help them establish what methods they are currently using at work and to assist them in developing action plans to increase future motivation and job satisfaction.

Application

This activity can be used at all training events that are designed to improve the skills of the project manager. It may be easily adapted for wider use on any team or leader development programmes, management development and self-development courses.

This activity can stand alone and need not be linked to any other activity in this pack.

13

What happens

You start the activity by asking the participants why they work, establishing that money is one of the most popular reasons given. You then go on to explore why we want the money (because it helps us satisfy a number of psychological and physical needs).

You review the cycle of motivation and introduce the participants to the views of three leading motivational theorists (Maslow, Herzberg and Adams) which cast doubt on managers using only money as their main motivational tool.

The theories are used to explore other motivational factors and the group establish an individual action plan they can use to motivate either their individual team members or the whole project team.

You conclude the session by facilitating a learning review during which the participants identify the key points from the session and how they will apply them back at work. They are encouraged to fill in their Learning review diary.

Time

Overall time available: 2 hours 50 minutes.

- Introduction: 15 minutes
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: 1 hour
- What about money?: 20 minutes
- Motivating individual team members:
  - Option one: 1 hour
  - Option two: 1 hour
- Learning review: 15 minutes.

Materials & resources

- 3 OHT masters:
  - **13.1** *The cycle of motivation*
  - **13.2** *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*
  - **13.3** *Herzberg's Two-factor Theory of Motivation*

- 2 Handout masters:
  - **13.4** *How do we apply Maslow's Hierarchy?*
  - **13.5** *Motivating my project team*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- Flipchart paper and coloured marker pens for participants
- Tape, Blu-Tack® or pins
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)

In preparation

You will need to prepare a flipchart sheet with the heading 'Why work?' for the introductory part of the activity.

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

Start the session off by revealing a prepared flipchart which shows a large heading 'Why work?'

Ask the participants to call out some of the reasons why they work. Write all their suggestions on the flipchart.

Stop when you have a good variety. Now highlight the word 'money' (this will probably be the first reason offered). Ask the group why they want money. Participants will usually identify that they want the money to spend on a variety of things including: food, drink, mortgage, a car, holidays, sports and social clubs, hobbies and interests, and so on.

Point out that as they have demonstrated from their list, apart from Midas, misers and coin collectors, most people are interested in money because of what it can do for them.

Economists classify money as **'a common means of exchange acceptable in payment for goods and services and the settlement of debt'**, but in this session we will look at money from the viewpoint of motivation. Does it inspire us to work harder, to give that extra effort?

Tell the group that one of the main reasons we pursue money is that we can use it to satisfy our needs.

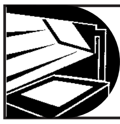
Show OHT 13.1
The cycle of motivation

Explain the cycle to the group. Many psychologists who have studied the complex area of motivation have identified that an individual's needs act as an impetus to create the effort required for performance. The goal of this performance is to achieve rewards which in turn lead to the satisfaction of those needs.

Allow 15 minutes for this introduction.

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Inform the participants that Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has had a strong influence on motivation theory. He suggested that we have different levels of needs arranged in a hierarchy. Individuals progress up to the next level when they have satisfied the lower-order needs.



Show OHT 13.2
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Briefly describe to the group what Maslow meant by these terms:

Physical: the need for food, drink, air, and body warmth, and so on.

Safety: the need for security and protection, freedom from threats from the environment, animals or other people.

Social: the need to belong, for friendship, affection and other positive relationships with people.

Esteem: the need for a sense of worth based on the recognition of others, for prestige and status.

Self-actualisation: the need for personal growth, for developing your capability to the fullest potential.

Maslow states that the first two sets of needs are essential to human existence. If they are not satisfied, we die. If they are under threat, then individuals will usually concentrate on satisfying those needs to the exclusion of the rest.

A need does not become an effective motivator until the needs below it are satisfied. Once satisfied, the need ceases to be a motivator and the individual moves on to seek satisfaction at the next level until that is also satiated. If, for example, you feel well-fed and safe, you cease to be preoccupied with food and shelter, but once these are threatened or you are deprived of them they become dominant again.

To illustrate this point, ask the group if any of them have been threatened by redundancy in their career. Point out that one of the underlying fears triggered (by redundancy) is that we will lose our homes and may not be able to adequately feed ourselves or our family.

Maslow did point out, however, that the experiences of past success or failure in trying to satisfy a need can affect an individual's thinking so that their behaviour becomes fixed on satisfying that level above all the others. This explains why some people get 'hooked' on security or prestige, even when it seems apparent to others that they are adequately covered at that level.

He also proposes that the experience of self-actualisation does not get satiated, but stimulates the desire for more. Because this level cannot be satisfied in the way that other needs can, it is the level usually identified for long-lasting and effective motivation of people at work.

Distribute Handout 13.4
How do we apply Maslow's Hierarchy?

Tell the group that you want them to make notes on their own ideas for 5 minutes and then work in small groups to share and build on those ideas.

Divide the participants into small groups. Provide each with flipchart paper and suitable marker pens. Tell them that they have 20 minutes to collectively identify the items they currently use to meet needs at each level.

When the time is up, reconvene and lead a plenary review for about 15 minutes. Either ask for contributions from each group in turn, or alternatively ask a separate group to lead on each level, the other groups contributing until all ideas have been exhausted.

Typical suggestions you can expect will cover such areas as the following:

Physical

- good working conditions
- attractive wage or salary
- subsidised housing
- drinks machine
- subsidised canteen
- luncheon vouchers.

Safety

- safe working environment
- health and safety committee
- training in safety issues
- many first-aiders
- on-site clinic
- private health scheme
- pension scheme
- a no-redundancy policy.

Social

- sports and social clubs
- regular works outings
- encouraging staff to take tea breaks together
- leaving ceremonies
- inviting back those who have left
- open, regular communication
- chatty items in company newspaper.

Esteem

- promotion from within
- prestigious job titles
- employee-of-the-month awards
- photographs in company newspaper
- positive feedback of results
- congratulations for a job well done
- meetings to celebrate success.

Self-actualisation

- challenging assignments
- discretion over how work is done
- self-managing teams
- collaborative goal setting
- encouraging creativity
- release to study for professional diplomas
- accountability for own business unit
- training in new skills
- opportunity to take risks.

This work on Maslow's theory should take about 1 hour in total.

WHAT ABOUT MONEY?

'Money can't buy you love – but it sure helps'
Anon

Re-show OHT 13.2
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Ask the group: 'Which of the various needs does the pursuit of money fulfil?'

They should answer along the lines that as a means to an end it can help satisfy all levels of the hierarchy.

Point out that over-reliance on money as a motivator can lead to project leaders finding that they are increasing their budgets, but not getting any enduring boost to performance. Money is often used as a substitute by managers because what really motivates sustained performance is more difficult to pin down.

Ask how many are inspired by the arrival of their monthly salary to pull out all the stops. Usually, very few participants will admit to this being a great motivator. We are more likely to think of our pay cheque as an entitlement rather than as a reward.

One reason for this can be explained by looking at the work of Frederick Herzberg. Salary was one of his 'Hygiene Factors'.

Show OHT 13.3
Herzberg's Two-factor Theory of Motivation

Cover up the Motivators so that only the Hygiene Factors are displayed.

Herzberg identified that there are aspects of work which make us feel dissatisfied if they are not there, or if they are going wrong and interfering with our everyday work. Because we otherwise take them for granted we do not attach importance unless we are deprived of them. Herzberg called these 'Hygiene Factors' because they help prevent dissatisfaction but in themselves never provide real motivation.

Draw the participants' attention to salary on the OHT. Point out that it may initially have attracted you to the job but most people soon start to take it for granted. It will, however, cause you dissatisfaction if your finance department contacts you to say they are paying you late this month, or the Chief Executive announces an intention to cut your pay.

Is it equitable?

Another factor that can affect your view of your salary can be found in the approach of another motivational theorist, J. S. Adams. In his work he has identified the **'Equity Theory of Motivation'**, and salary is often a prime dissatisfier here also.

Adams pointed out that we frequently compare ourselves with other people, for example, with others doing the same type of work, or who have the same level of skills, qualifications and experience. If another member of the organisation you consider as an equal gets a bigger salary rise, you will not focus on your own increase of £500 but will instead focus on their increase of £750. You may well become more frustrated by what you see as 'minus £250' than motivated by the initial 'plus £500'.

If you find that compared with others you seem to be losing out, you are experiencing what Adams calls 'inequity'.

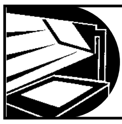
Adams' approach looks at how people compare themselves not only with others but with their own situation at another time. You may compare the work that you do now with what you did a year ago, and wonder if you are not being adequately rewarded for the extra effort you are putting in. Again the result is dissatisfaction which could lead to grumbling about your pay, looking for a new job, withdrawal of co-operation or restricting your output and involvement to what you consider to be a fair level.

If, however, you feel the work you do and the rewards you get for it are comparable both with what you used to do, and with the efforts and rewards paid to others, you will experience what Adams calls 'a feeling of equity'. You are likely to be satisfied with your situation, and whatever is currently providing your motivation to work will continue to do so. But point out to the group that this status quo may still motivate you to work even harder and perform more productively.

Motivational factors

Tell the group that to really motivate their project team they need to recognise that there are other aspects of work which should be present because they add something extra to the job. Herzberg called these 'Motivators'; they coincide with Maslow's higher needs of Self-actualisation and Self-esteem.

They come directly from the work itself and result from the individuals concerned being responsible, thinking for themselves and striving to realise their full potential.



Re-show OHT 13.2
Herzberg's Two-factor Theory of Motivation

This time uncover the second half of the OHT so that the whole of the diagram is visible.

Ask the group to compare their suggestions in the 'Hierarchy' exercise with Herzberg's Motivators. They will quickly spot the similarity between the OHT and their own ideas for the higher-level motivators.

This work on money should take about 20 minutes in total.

MOTIVATING INDIVIDUAL TEAM MEMBERS

Point out that one of the problems with motivational theories is that people treat them as a panacea to cure all ills. They give a good general picture but will not have the desired effect if you start applying them universally.

Motivation is individual and complex. What motivates one person will not motivate another. As we have seen, an individual's motivation changes over time. It will also be subject to the influences that occur outside work. For example, the acquisition of a new family, or the change in personal circumstances when children leave home, can have a profound effect.

Many people use work as a means to an end and find their real motivation comes outside work. It can be hard to motivate someone to stay behind at work when Tuesday night is their yoga class, or to work at weekends when they always do a soup-run for the homeless.

Point out that you need to get to know your staff and find out what motivates each of them. In the examples above, for instance, they could be motivated by extra time off to pursue their outside interests.

No single prescription can help you motivate all your team. One effective method is to ask them. If you have created an open, supportive and trusting environment they may tell you. But remember you have got to keep on working at it so that the motivators remain fresh.

TRAINER'S TIPS

At this stage you have two options. Which one you choose could depend on whether or not the participants in the training group are all members of the same team. If you are working with a 'stranger' group, try option one. Use option two if you are working with a real team.

Option one

Distribute Handout 13.5
Motivating my project team

Ask the group to work on their own to identify steps they can take to motivate all the individual members of their team. After about 10 minutes (depending on the size of the teams they lead, you may want to give them more time), ask them to work in groups of three. They then have a further 10 minutes each (30 minutes in total), during which they share their ideas with the other members of their group and explore what practical steps they can take to deliver these motivational factors.

Get the participants under way and at the appropriate stage ask them to form into threes. (As individuals work at different rates, you can put the groups together whenever you have three people who have finished their lists.)

Move between the groups, keep them focused on the task and answer any points they want to raise.

When all the groups have finished their discussion, reconvene the whole group and lead a plenary discussion.

Ask for volunteers to share their ideas and action points with the rest of the group. Encourage questions that help to check out the viability of their ideas. Don't forget to point out that if you like the sound of someone else's idea, you can use it with your own team.

When all who wish to contribute have done so, move on to the learning review.

Option two

Divide the participants into two groups with about six members in each. Provide each group with flipchart paper and ask them to brainstorm ideas on one of two topics.

One group should brainstorm 'Dissatisfiers'. Here they should write things that have happened over the last few months that are currently getting in the way of team motivation.

Tell the other group you want them to identify 'Motivators'. Here they should write some of the key actions that the team are currently finding motivating.

Tell them they have 10 minutes to work on their list, by which time you want them to identify about 20 items.

Get them under way. Make sure they keep focused on the task.

After the 10 minutes have elapsed, ask the groups to exchange lists. They now have 5 minutes to add any items to the ideas produced by the other group.

When they have completed this, tell both groups that you now want them to work independently to each produce a third list. This should be headed 'Actions'. They have 10 minutes to record their suggestions for practical action that the team should take to reduce the dissatisfiers and increase the use of the motivators.

After 10 minutes, when both groups have finished, reconvene the whole group and lead a plenary review of what happened. Get each group to display their final 'Action' list and discuss the points, showing what original cause inspired that item.

Lead a general discussion on how applicable – will it really work and lead to increased motivation? – and how feasible these ideas really are. Are there both the resources and will-power to get them into place?

When you have covered all the items, ask the group to identify the top item in their 'Actions' list. Now ask for a volunteer who is going to take responsibility for introducing the action.

Establish what would be a reasonable timescale to achieve their goal.

Now work through the second and third items on the list, and so on, until each member has taken responsibility for its implementation. Don't let any single participant hog all the action points – you want this to be a full team effort.

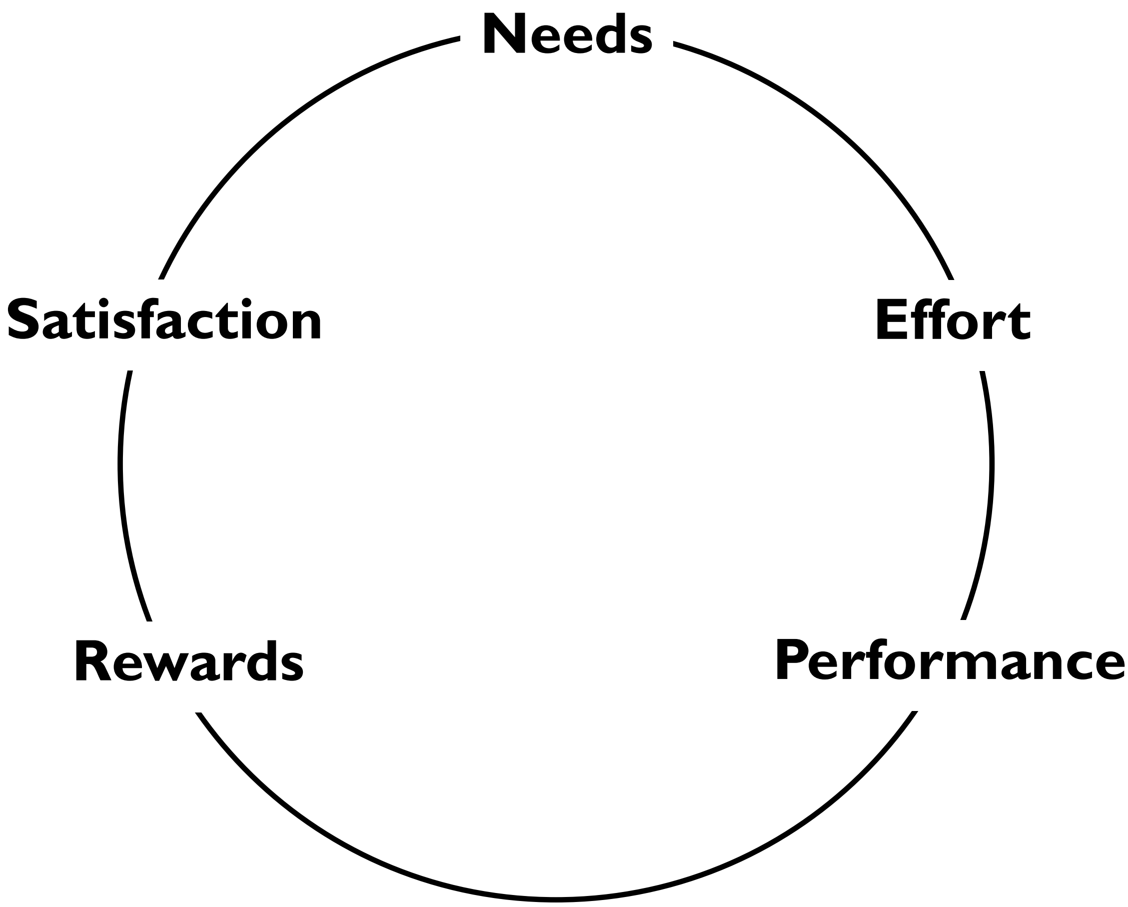
When you have a 'champion' and a timescale for each idea, move on to the learning review.

LEARNING REVIEW

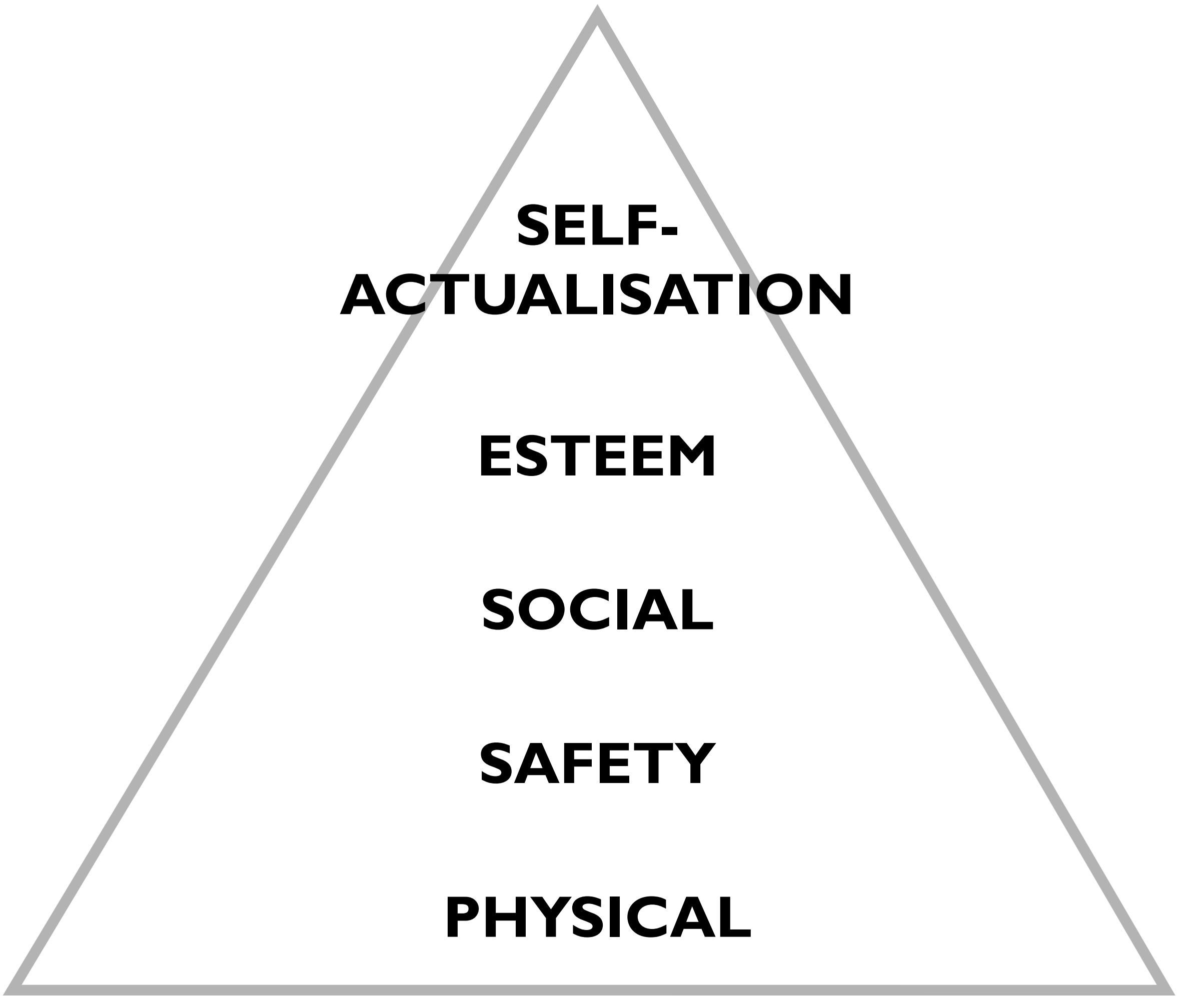
Ask the participants to think back over the whole session. They should make notes in their Learning review diary on the key learning points that have emerged for them from the session, and identify what steps they will take to put these into practical application within their own project teams (see 'How to use this resource', page xii).

When they have finished writing, ask for some volunteers to share their key learning experiences with the rest of the group. When all who want to have contributed, thank everyone for their efforts and close the session.

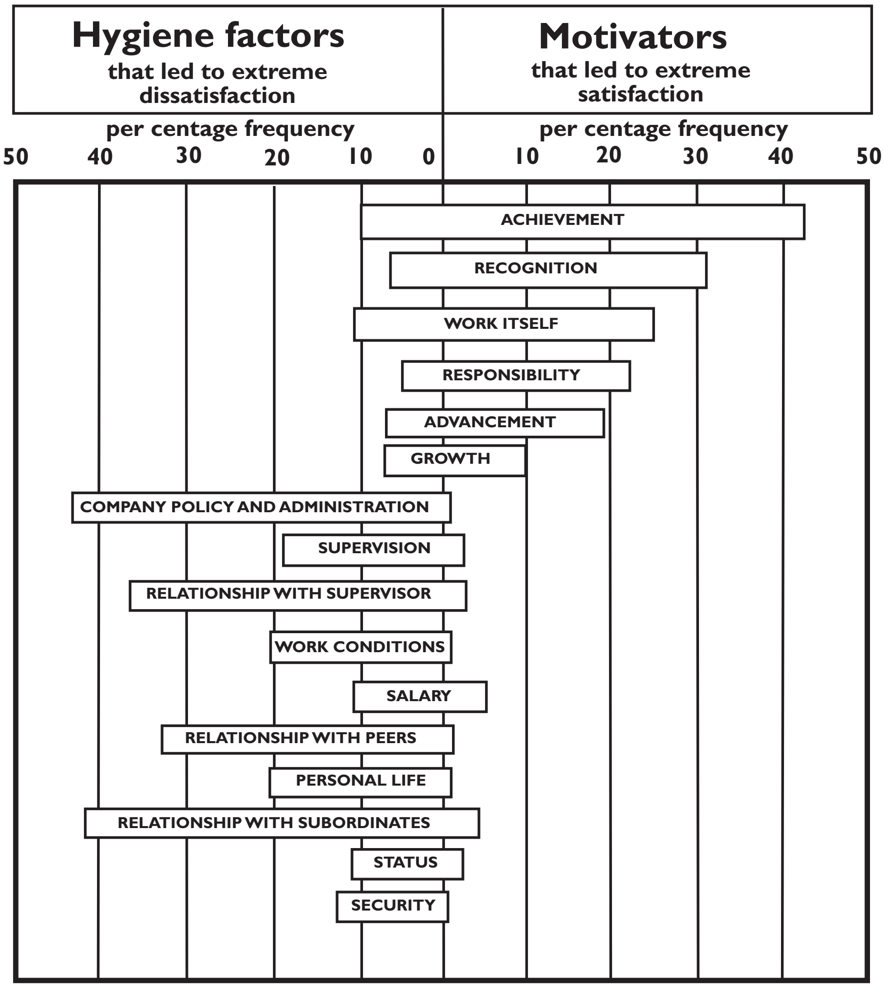
The cycle of motivation



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Herzberg's Two-factor Theory of Motivation



13.4

How do we apply Maslow's Hierarchy?

Maslow's needs	What we currently do in our organisation
Physical	
Safety	
Social	
Esteem	
Self-actualisation	

OK TO COPY

Motivating my project team

Team member	Possible motivators
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

Activity 14
Oral communication skills

Purpose

To introduce participants to the essential skills they need to carry out effective face-to-face project management discussions. To give them the opportunity to practise and develop those skills.

14

Activity 14
Oral communication skills

How can I communicate effectively with others involved in the project?

Purpose

To introduce participants to the essential skills they need to carry out effective face-to-face project management discussions. To give them the opportunity to practise and develop those skills.

Application

This activity can be used at the foundation stage of any event designed to improve the communication skills of project managers. It is equally applicable as a refresher for experienced project managers or as an introduction for new entrants to the specialism.

Communication skills underpin all aspects of managerial performance. The activity can also be used on a variety of other management development events such as: Introduction to Management; Team and Leadership Skills; Assertiveness; Negotiation Skills; Developing Sales Staff; and Interviewing Skills courses of all types.

14

What happens

You introduce the session by establishing that communication is a central part of any project manager's role. This is reinforced by a short exercise in which the participants chart the network of contacts with whom they are in regular contact.

By the use of an exercise involving the whole group, you then go on to establish that communication as it is generally practised by managers – that is, largely one way with little feedback – is not the most effective.

You introduce the group to the three aspects of communication they need to master if they want to develop effectiveness in this area: questioning technique, body language, and responding skills.

Through a variety of small-group exercises you enable the participants to recognise and develop each of these.

The session ends with each member identifying a key area they can easily apply to either their work or their home life which will have an immediate impact on developing their communication skills. Participants are encouraged to fill in their Learning review diary.

Time

Overall time available: 2 hours 45 minutes.

- Introduction: 20 minutes
- Communication exercise: 30 minutes
- Effective communicators: 5 minutes
- Questioning technique: 20 minutes
- Body language: 30 minutes
- Responding skills: 50 minutes
- Action planning: 10 minutes.

Materials & resources

- 2 Flipchart masters
  14.1 *Communication web*
  14.2 *Three components of communication*

- 9 OHT masters:
  14.3 *Fayol's Wheel*
  14.4 *Communication – definition*
  14.5 *Dominic's dominoes*
  14.6 *Effective communicators*
  14.7 *Using questions*
  14.8 *Three components of communication*
  14.9 *SOLER power*
  14.10 *Key responding techniques*
  14.11 *Are you actively listening?*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- Flipchart paper and coloured marker pens for participants
- Paper and pens for participants
- Tape, Blu-Tack® or pins

In preparation

You will need to draw a copy of Flipchart 14.2 Three components of communication, on a separate flipchart sheet before you start the session.
Also draw up a list of controversial topics for possible discussion later in the activity.

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

Show OHT 14.3
Fayol's Wheel

Inform participants that Henri Fayol identified these essential functions of management as long ago as 1916 when he published his studies on distinguished successful managers in the French coalfields. Point out that although the processes involved in mining engineering have changed, these classic functions have not. They are equally applicable to the modern project manager.

Show Flipchart 14.1
Communication web

Ask the participants to copy this diagram on to a sheet of flipchart paper. Tell them that they have 10 minutes to complete the web by putting in the names or titles of each of the contacts with whom they communicate as part of their role as project managers.

When they have finished, ask them to fix their pictures on the wall (using Blu-Tack® or similar fixing material). Take a few minutes to move around the room to look at their finished versions. They should by now appreciate how central the skill of communication is to the effective performance of their job.

Defining communication

Show OHT 14.4
Communication – definition

Inform the participants that this is a useful working definition of what's involved in communication for a project manager. It stresses that for communication to be effective it should involve both parties establishing the facts, actively listening to each other and not jumping to conclusions until they have heard the full story. Then, clear action can be taken based on a true understanding of the matter under discussion.

Point out that one of the main problems many managers have is that they think they are omnipotent. How often have the participants seen their managers displaying an attitude of 'Don't confuse me with the facts – my mind's made up!'?

Allow 20 minutes for this introduction to the activity.

COMMUNICATION EXERCISE

Tell the group that you want to illustrate the power of two-way communication by involving them in a simple exercise. Ask for a volunteer to play the role of the manager. When you have a volunteer invite them out to the front of the training room and give them a paper copy of OHT 14.5 Dominic's dominoes.

Tell the volunteer that their task is to communicate the pattern to the rest of the training group, who will write down exactly what they are told. Point out that as the manager they must not show the picture to the group. They can only use words to describe what they see. Hand gestures, using other objects or any other means of communication are banned.

Tell the group that they have to follow the instructions exactly. They cannot ask questions, look at how others are doing or show their pictures to the speaker. Ask them to try to remain neutral in their expression and body language so that the speaker has no feedback about how they are feeling about the exercise.

Check that everyone understands the ground rules and then get the exercise under way. Whilst the 'manager' is speaking, act as a referee and ensure that the rules are strictly followed.

When the manager has finished speaking, ask the participants to show their pictures. It will be very unusual for anyone to have an exact match (with the speaker's) – usually they don't even come close.

Lead a plenary review during which you ask the whole group to comment on the difficulties of one way communication. They will usually report that they were frustrated, fed-up and many actually give up and abandon the picture. They may report they couldn't understand the terms used by the speaker. This could be due to jargon, or because the 'manager' has assumed that the group are on the same wavelength and have a common understanding of such terms as 'north north-west'.

Ask the group what they thought the speaker did well, and for suggestions for improvements.

Ask the volunteer if they would like to try again, but this time they can use two-way communication. The only ground rules you will apply are that the speaker can't show the group the picture and vice versa.

Make sure everyone has a fresh sheet of paper and then get them under way. Again act as the referee but encourage the group and the speaker to make it a two-way process.

When the speaker has finished, ask the group to reveal their new pictures. You will usually find that the accuracy rate has risen to well over 80 per cent.

Ask the group for their suggestions as to how you could achieve 100 per cent. They should come up with the suggestion that each participant could have been given their own picture and asked to draw it, or alternatively it could be turned into an OHT.

Show OHT 14.5
Dominic's dominoes

Remind the group of the old saying,'A picture is worth a thousand words'. Point out that choosing the best medium is an important part of relaying the message.

Allow 30 minutes for the communication exercise.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

Tell the group that research into what makes individuals effective communicators in a variety of fields has consistently identified three important ingredients.

Show OHT 14.6
Effective communicators

Tell the group that they will now have the opportunity to participate in a series of mini-exercises that will help develop each skill.

QUESTIONING TECHNIQUE

Ask the group for their suggestions on why project managers need to ask effective questions. They should be able to identify that questions can be used for a large number of purposes. These will include:

- gather information
- stimulate thought and discussion
- explore attitudes and ideas
- solve problems
- clarify your own or someone else's thinking
- inform an individual or group.

Point out that one of the problems faced in developing communication skills is that, because we communicate constantly, we think we are good at it. Effective communication is a conscious skill where good practice needs to be identified and used.

Inform participants that you are about to conduct a short exercise which will demonstrate the pitfalls for the unwary.

Sit in a chair in the middle of the room, facing the participants. Tell them that for the next 5 minutes you want them to ask you questions about your past work and career as if, for example, this was a job interview.

Answer each question honestly but don't give lengthy answers – the purpose of the activity is to enable them to ask as many different types of questions during the time.

When the 5 minutes has finished, or when you are satisfied that you have enough types of questions to comment on, end this part of the session.

Lead a plenary review focusing on the types of questions used. Ask the group which were the most effective questions and which were the least effective. They should be able to identify that questions typically fall into three bands.

Show OHT 14.7
Using questions

Discuss each of the major types of questions with the group. Wherever possible use examples from the previous exercise to illustrate their use.

Band one – questions best avoided

Multiple or marathon questions: tend to confuse the receiver who either doesn't know which part of the question to answer or sometimes even that they have actually been asked one.

Leading questions: tend to direct the receiver into responding in a particular way, usually in the direction that the questioner wants to hear.

Band two – questions to use with care

Closed questions: can be useful for fact finding and confirming but, if over-used, will break the discussion into an interrogation. The questioner will only receive answers on the topic that they want.
It leaves little room for the receiver to feel they are jointly contributing to the conversation.

Hypothetical questions: useful for exploring potential scenarios and identifying difficulties before they occur. You can get bogged down, however, and lose touch with reality. At their worst they can produce 'paralysis from over-analysis'.

Band three – questions to use frequently

Open questions: here the length and nature of the response depends on the receiver. They are used to explore facts and gather information without an outcome predetermined by the questioner. It gives the receiver an opportunity to raise any concerns they may have.

Probing questions: are used to follow on from open questions and explore a particular area in more detail. They can be used to check information and are excellent to get the receiver talking about how they feel about a subject.

BODY LANGUAGE

'It ain't what you say …'
Tell the group that we have established that people need to take great care with what they say if they want effective communication with their project team. But there are other areas they also need to master.

Turn to the prepared Flipchart 14.2 Three components of communication.

Show Flipchart 14.2
The three components of communication

Ask the group to suggest what figures should be used to complete the sum. Write some of their suggestions on the flipchart.

The answer may come as a surprise.

Show OHT 14.8
Three components of communication

Inform them that these results of US-based research (*The Skilled Helper,* Gerard Egan) don't deny the importance of the words used but rather highlight the importance of the non-verbal elements being compatible with what you are saying. Ask the group if they have experienced a 'mixed message' where they have been told something – for example, 'That's very interesting. As soon as I'm back in the office I'll start work on it right away' – but the message has been said in a voice tone accompanied by body language signals that clearly gave the opposite indication.

Effective communicators need to synchronise their non-verbal communication so that it reinforces their message. How can they do that? Tell the participants you will give them an opportunity to develop their skill, but first you want them to focus on what *not* to do.

Ask them to write down the types of actions people use that demonstrate they are *not* listening. These work best if they are based on their own recent experience. When they have each compiled a list, ask them to work with a partner from the group.

Inform them that they are to take it in turns talking about an interesting topic they will find easy to recall, for example, 'My favourite holiday destination'. The first member of each pair talks for 2 minutes and during this time their partner demonstrates the non-listening behaviour they have identified earlier.

Stop the exercise after 2 minutes and ask them to exchange roles. The former listener now talks for 2 minutes and is faced by the non-listening tactics of their partner.

Lead a brief review of the exercise. What types of behaviour were demonstrated? What effect did this have on the talker? How accurately was the listener able to follow the discussion when they were not physically attending?

Most groups will report that this is a very frustrating exercise (which often does not last the 2 minutes each way). Unfortunately, most will readily recognise the behaviour displayed, although it is not usually done this deliberately.

Using SOLER power

There has also been research into what behaviour is displayed by effective communicators. This is usually the conscious application of the opposite of what the group have just been demonstrating, and is summed up by the acronym SOLER.

Show OHT 14.9
SOLER power

Explain each item to the participants.

S – Sit up and face the individual
You won't convey interest in what they are saying if you are slumped over facing away.

O – Open posture
This demonstrates that you are open to their ideas and haven't put up any mental barriers.

L – Lean forward
Leaning slightly forward, without invading their personal space, will signify interest.

E – Eye contact
Maintain comfortable eye contact without fixing them with a frightening stare.

R – Relax
Avoid distracting behaviours such as fidgeting, thumbing through papers, playing with paper-clips, and so on.

Discuss each item, giving examples of good practice. When the group are able to identify what's involved, ask them to return to their previous pairs. When they repeat the exercise this time they are to pay attention using the SOLER approach. Give them a few minutes longer before asking them to exchange roles.

When everyone has finished, lead a plenary review. How did this exercise compare with the previous one? How do the talkers feel now? How much information can the listeners recall in comparison with last time? The experiences reported back will invariably be more positive than for the earlier exercise.

'Are you really listening?'

Tell the group that one of the factors that underpins effective communication is to be able to run the discussion without manipulating the other person. Point out that it is still possible to physically attend to what the other person is telling you without really listening. You may nod, smile, and so on, but don't agree because your mind is already made up. In effect you have stopped listening and will only tune in to the facts that agree with your argument.

Point out that the problem with this approach is that we rarely find out anything useful and often run into difficulties when we attempt to impose our solution on the other person. It is easier to get someone to change their opinion if you can first show them that you have fully understood and appreciated their point of view. If you suspend your judgement until they have finished, you may find there is a better way forward, one on which you can both agree.

Allow 30 minutes in total for this work on body language.

RESPONDING SKILLS

Point out that the other special ingredient for effective communication is called 'Responding techniques'.

Show OHT 14.10
Key responding techniques

Discuss the key points, using illustrations of the behaviour involved.

Paraphrase: restate in your own words the basic ideas involved in what they have been saying.
For example: 'So what you are saying is …'
'If I understand correctly your main argument is that …'.

Reflect: put back to the person that you have picked up how they are feeling about what's happening.
For example: 'Sounds like you are really angry about this?'
'My guess is that you were upset by his approach?'

Summarise: pull together all the facts and ideas that have been covered so far in the discussion.
For example: 'So what we've identified so far are three main reasons for the systems failure. One …'.

Focus: make a decision together on the future stages of the discussion.
For example: 'Shall we deal with the present problems first and then cover the long-term ones?'
'The plumbing seems to be top priority on your list – shall we start with that?'

Responding exercise
Ask the participants to divide into groups of three. Tell them that again they are going to play, in turn, one of three roles.

Show OHT 14.11
Are you actively listening?

Brief the participants on their roles.

Role A: The speaker
Ask them to think of a controversial topic on which they have strong feelings. The choice is up to them but it should be one that has an equally strong opposing point of view, for example, abortion, contraception, compulsory religious instruction in schools, capital punishment, re-introducing conscription, castration for sex offenders, home rule, and so on.

Ask for suggestions and write these up on a flipchart sheet. Add any of your own that you have identified before the session.

Role B: The listener
The purpose of this role is not to get the speaker to change their mind, but to accurately understand their position on the chosen topic.

The listener may ask questions but not give their own views. Ask them to pay attention through using SOLER, and encourage the flow of the discussion by paraphrasing and reflecting feelings.

Tell them that after about 5 minutes they should sum up the speaker's position by giving a summary which covers their main argument.

Role C: The observer
Point out that in this role they do not participate in the discussion until it has finished. It is their job to judge the accuracy of the final summary. Ask them to note if the listener's summary is free from the listener's values and not an attempt to establish their own views. Tell them to be prepared to give feedback to the listener on how well they were able to stay neutral; the range and phrasing of their questions; how appropriate was their body language (did they suggest frustration or disapproval in tone

or movement?); and how regularly and accurately they paraphrased and reflected.

Inform the group that this exercise works best if they can find a range of topics where there is a genuine difference of opinion within each sub-group. This makes suspending judgement and really listening that much harder. Give them a few minutes to identify suitable topics, individual standpoints, and who will play what role in the activity. When they have decided on these, put each group of three in a separate room or area where they can conduct the exercise without being disturbed or distracted.

Move between the groups to check that they are keeping focused on the task. It is all too easy to want to continue the debate but remind them that we are only interested in the process of how they manage the discussion, not the content of their arguments.

Remind the participants that when one phase has been completed they then exchange roles until all the group have participated as speaker, listener and observer.

Plenary review

When all the groups have finished, lead a plenary review. Ask the participants to comment on this particular approach to communication. How similar is it to their natural or most frequently used style? What difficulties emerged from the activity? What skills were most readily used? Which proved to be more difficult? What do they see as the main benefits and disadvantages of this approach?

They should be able to identify that, despite the difficulties (which are mainly associated with a lack of familiarity and experience of communicating in this way), the active listening approach overcomes many common barriers to effective communication which would otherwise prevent the project manager gaining a complete and accurate picture of what is happening.

Allow a total of 50 minutes for this section on responding skills.

ACTION PLANNING

Point out that effective communication is a life skill as well as a work skill. Ask the participants to think back over the various parts of the session and identify at least one area they can develop further either at work or at home. Tell them you want them to select a single facet – for example, checking with recipients that they have understood; asking a probing question to find out more relevant information; nodding and maintaining eye contact – which they need to develop and which they will have many opportunities to use on a daily basis.

They should note these points in their Learning review diary, if they are using this approach to record their learning (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii).

When they have all thought of one, ask each participant to declare the key area that they will implement immediately to improve their performance as communicators.

Thank them for their contributions and close the session.

Communication web

14.2

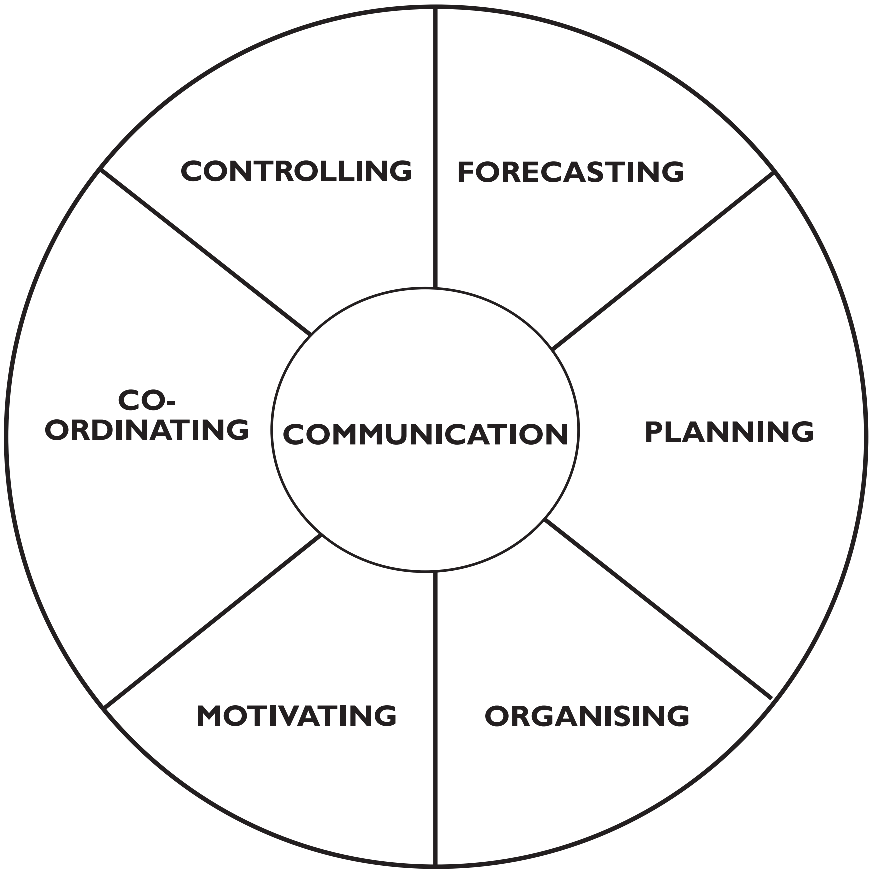
Flip

Three components of communication

Words	**……**
Tone of voice	**……**
Body language	**……**
TOTAL	**100%**

OK TO COPY

Fayol's Wheel

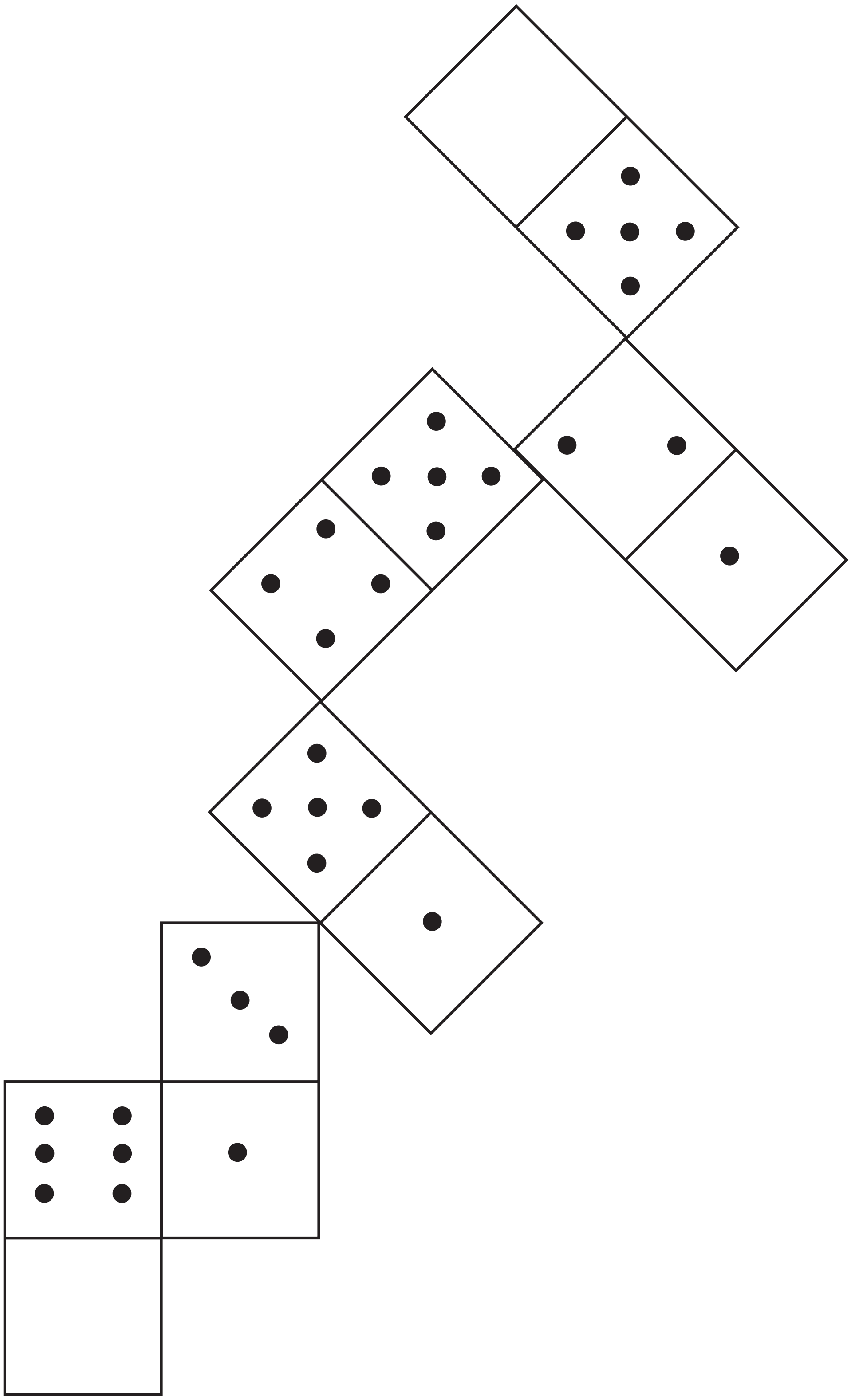


14.4

Communication – definition

A two-way process which allows the interchange of information for the purpose of determining future courses of action.

Dominic's dominoes



Effective communicators

1. Ask questions.

2. Use positive body language.

3. Listen actively.

Using questions

Band One – Questions best avoided
Multiple or marathon questions
'So what's more important, having a plan or taking the team with you? How can you ensure you keep on track, and what problems have you encountered with awkward team members?'

Leading questions
'You don't believe this is the right way to tackle this problem, do you?'

Band Two – Questions to use with care
Closed questions
'Have you ever conducted an appraisal interview with any members of your team?'

Hypothetical questions
'Here's a situation you may face. Say three out of your seven team members are off on holiday. One of the remaining members rings in sick. What will you do?'

Band Three – Questions to use frequently
Open questions
'What do you think are the main weaknesses of your current project team?'

Probing questions
'Why do you think that working relationships in the team are so difficult at present?'

Three components of communication

Words	**10%**
Tone of voice	**40%**
Body language	**50%**
TOTAL	**100%**

SOLER power

S – Sit up and face the individual.

O – Open posture.

L – Lean forward.

E – Eye contact.

R – Relax.

Key responding techniques

PARAPHRASE: Restate in your own words the basic ideas involved in what they have been saying.

REFLECT: Put back to the person what you have picked up about what they are feeling about what's going on.

SUMMARISE: Pull together all the facts and ideas that have been covered so far in the discussion.

FOCUS: Make a decision together on the future stages of the discussion.

Are you actively listening?

Work in threes taking turns to play each of the following:

A – SPEAKER
Put forward your own views of a controversial topic.

B – LISTENER
Clarify the speaker's position.
Ask questions, but don't give your views.
Pay attention, using S O L E R.
Encourage by paraphrasing and reflecting.
When finished, summarise their position.

C – OBSERVER
Don't get involved in the discussion.
Judge the accuracy of the final summary.
Give feedback to the listener on their:

- Question technique
- Body language
- Active listening skills.

Activity 15
Writing project reports

Purpose

To enable participants to express themselves clearly when writing project reports.

Activity 15 Writing project reports

How can I express myself clearly when writing?

Purpose

To enable participants to express themselves clearly when writing project reports.

Application

Writing skills should be a foundation skill included on all training events for project managers. Although it tends to be overlooked in favour of more technical skills, it nevertheless represents a key component of the project manager's competency portfolio.

The ground rules are common to all types of writing and similar structures will apply for other types of report. This session could also be used on written skills courses and general events aimed at improving the overall skills of managers.

What happens

You start the session by establishing that communication has many pitfalls. Developing an awareness of these and identifying good practice will enable us to become more effective written communicators.

You introduce the group to the Fog Test: a simple test with which they can check the accessibility of their current report writing. This introduction ends with you establishing the three key components of report writing.

Each of these components is then explored in turn. For each there is an initial review of the ground rules associated with that component. The participants are then given an opportunity to practise these ground rules and receive feedback aimed at developing their skills.

The session ends with the production of a real life project report which the participants can use on their return to work. Their overall learning will be reinforced when they identify a key aspect they want to try to incorporate into their next report. They are encouraged to fill in their Learning review diary.

Time

Overall time required: 4 hours.

- Introduction: 30 minutes
- Identify your content: Input – 15 minutes
  Exercise one – 30 minutes
- Structure your report: Input – 30 minutes
  Exercise two – 45 minutes
- Review your style: Input – 30 minutes
  Exercise three – 30 minutes
- Plenary review: 30 minutes.

Materials & resources

- 1 Flipchart master:
  15.1 *Communication*

- 6 OHT masters:
  15.2 *Margaret Thatcher quote*
  15.3 *The Fog Index*
  15.4 *Three components of report writing*
  15.5 *Planning your content*
  15.6 *Structure your report*
  15.7 *The principles of clear writing*

- 4 Handout masters:
  15.8 *The Fog Index*
  15.9 *Planning your content*
  15.10 *Structure your report*
  15.11 *The principles of clear writing*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- Paper and pens for participants
- Sample copies of published reports
- Sample copies of reports in house style (if appropriate)

- Calculators (for Fog Index exercise)
- Access to a word processor for each participant would be useful but is not essential.

In preparation

Prepare a flipchart sheet as on Flipchart *15.1 Communication.*

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

Start the session by revealing a prepared copy of Flipchart *15.1 Communication.*

> **Show Flipchart 15.1**
> *Communication*

Inform the participants that communication is supposed to be a straightforward process. What should happen is that A sends a message to B who then becomes informed, inspired or instructed to act. The arrow indicates the direction of the message, from A to B:

A ⟶ B
Sender Receiver

Point out that in reality this simple picture is difficult to achieve. A number of barriers can get in the way of clear and accurate communication which leave the recipient uncertain, confused or bemused.

Reinforce this message to the group by drawing in a barrier on the arrow and identifying other possible outcomes:

⟶ B2 – alternative outcome
A ⟶ B1 – sender's intention
⟶ B3 – alternative outcome

Inform the participants that in this session we will be examining the barriers to communication created by bad writing (for information on how to communicate effectively face-to-face please refer to *Activity 14 Oral communication skills*).

Point out that as project managers they will spend much of their working day either writing themselves or reading what others have written. Far too often barriers get in the way and prevent a clear written message from achieving its aim.

Show OHT 15.2
Margaret Thatcher quote

How dense are your reports?

Point out that few of us will admit to being bad drivers, bad lovers or bad communicators. Ask the group how often they have puzzled over what someone else has written. How many complain that reports they have to read are unintelligible, confusing or boring? Now ask how many of them are certain that something they have written isn't being looked at in a similar vein.

Let's put this to the test.

Divide the participants into small groups. Ask them to exchange, among the groups, the reports they were asked to bring along to the event. (These should be examples of reports that the participants have written at work.) Each group should now have a sample of reports written by other course members not in their sub-group.

Tell them that you want them to analyse each report using 'The Fog Index'.

Distribute Handout 15.18
The Fog Index

Ask them to browse through the report and pick out a couple of passages which they feel closely represent the style of the whole report.
They should then apply the following guidelines.

1. Count the number of words in your chosen sample (200 words usually gives a fair guide).

2. Calculate the average sentence length by dividing the number of words by the number of sentences, (**a**).

3. Count the number of words with three or more syllables.

4. Calculate the percentage of long words by dividing this number by the total number of words and multiplying by 100, (**b**).

5. To find the Fog Index add together your two calculated figures (**a** + **b**), and multiply by 0.4.

Check with the groups to see if they need any help – providing a calculator for the mathematically challenged can be useful.

When all the groups have finished, ask them to call out their scores and write the list up on a flipchart. You may be lucky and have a number of scores around the ideal range of 10–12. Too many will usually score in the difficult to unacceptable range 13–17. If you have a group that usually write heavy academic papers then scores over 20 will often be recorded.

Show OHT 15.3
The Fog Index

Inform the participants that the Fog Index was first devised by Robert Gunning as a means of analysing the complexity of written work. It is not meant to be slavishly followed but can give us an indicator of how dense our writing is and the demands that we are placing on our readers.

Gunning's idea was that heavy writing 'fogs' up the content. When writing you should express yourself as simply as possible. His Fog Index identifies the number of years of formal education a reader of average intelligence would need in order to understand writing at that density.

Point out that one of the challenges is to write complex and difficult material in such a way that the ideas you are trying to express are accessible to all. Then your reader can spend their time digesting your report and understanding the information, rather than getting lost in a battle with your words.

Three components of report writing
Tell the group that the Fog Index gives them valuable insight into the report's style – one of the three main components of writing an effective report. These are content, structure and style.

Show OHT 15.4
Three components of report writing

Each of these components is equally important. You may have developed a wonderful project but if the information is poorly presented and your writing is indigestible you will risk having your proposal misunderstood and rejected.

Allow about 30 minutes for this introduction to the activity.

IDENTIFY YOUR CONTENT

The secret of writing effective content lies in effective preparation. You must gather together all the information needed before you begin to write. You can't write clearly until you have thought it out clearly.

Show OHT 15.5
Planning your content

Discuss each of the points with the group.
Use examples to illustrate based on your own experience of report writing.

Define
You should find out exactly what you have been asked to report on. Reports are meant for action. They are usually requested by senior management in

response to some perceived problem. If you have been asked to make an investigation you need to establish your terms of reference. These should be as specific as possible. Identify your boundaries and constraints as well as your scope for making recommendations.

Gather

Gather together all the information that you could put into your project report. Collect all your facts and ideas by asking other people, from personal observation, consulting existing records or using questionnaires and surveys.

Gather as much information as you can – it is better to have too much at this stage rather than too little. Check your facts for accuracy and make a note of all sources and references as these may need to be included in the written report.

Drawing up a Mind Map of all your ideas on a single page is a good way of gaining an overview.

Select

Having gathered all your information you should now look critically at what should be included. Keeping your terms of reference in mind you should be able to decide what *must* go in, what *should* go in and what *could* go in. Take care with this last category – avoid the temptation to pad out the report simply to show how clever you have been.

Discard any irrelevant information, include only the essential or desirable facts.

Group

Once you have completed the selection process, review all the information that has survived and group together linked information. Give each group of facts a sub-heading for easy reference later.

A useful technique can be to write each of your sub-headings on a separate Post-it® Note. This will help the final phase of your preparation.

Order

With all your facts sorted you can now arrange them into the most appropriate order as they should appear in the main body of your report. If you have a list of facts under one sub-heading, break them down into further sub-headings.

Distribute Handout 15.9
Planning your content

With all your main points arranged into a logical order your report is now ready to be written up.

This explanation on planning the content should take about 15 minutes. Check with the participants that they have understood all the points covered to date. Answer any questions they may have before starting them on an exercise which consolidates your input to date.

Exercise one – prepare your own report

Ask the participants to prepare a report of their choice using the techniques described above. They may find it easier to work in pairs or small groups, particularly where they have shared a common project.

Move between the participants as they work, offering help and advice where necessary.

Take some time to review their progress. When they have all finished, lead a plenary review to discuss the advantages and any difficulties they found in adopting this approach.

The activity and discussion should take a total time of 30 minutes.

STRUCTURE YOUR REPORT

Point out that whilst there is no format that works best for all reports, there are some well established guidelines which participants can tailor to suit their own particular project.

Show OHT 15.6
Structure your report

Issue the sample reports you assembled before the session. Ask the group to review these against the guidelines on *OHT 15.6 Structure your report*. They will then see actual examples of the points under discussion.

TRAINER'S TIP

If you are running this event in an organisation that has its own house style for report writing, then the example reports you use and the guidelines will be adapted to match that style.

Discuss each of the points on the OHT using your sample reports as illustrations.

Title
This should readily identify the subject. It should be short but convey the theme of the report.

Table of contents
This will identify the main sections and sub-sections, the paragraph numbers (if used) and the pages on which to find them. A table of contents is essential if your report is a long one.

Executive summary
This is an encapsulated version of the whole report. It allows the busy reader to quickly identify the problem and how you arrived at your conclusions. Try to keep it to 200–300 words on one page.
It should allow the reader to decide whether or not they need to read the whole report.

Introduction

This should give the reader the essential background information leading to why the report was written. It should include details of the terms of reference (the reasons for doing the work). Identify who wrote the report or the department or organisation which made the initial investigation. The time and date of the investigation should also be included.

Main body

This is the main part of the report in which you describe all your work and reasoning in full detail. If it runs into more than two pages, break it into sections with separate sub-headings. For most reports the following sections can apply.

- *Initial problem:* a description of the situation, accident or event that led to the investigation.

- *Form of investigation:* this shows how your information was obtained, for example, surveys, observation, other people consulted, and so on.

- *Facts and findings:* this is the section of the report where you state your results. The facts are analysed and possible causes of the problem identified.

Conclusion

This is a statement of the findings that can be drawn from the facts in the main text of your report. The reader should be able to follow the development of your conclusion from the previous section. You should not introduce new facts at this stage. Where a number of different conclusions can be drawn from the same set of facts you should record them all to avoid displaying bias.

Recommendations

You may have been briefed to investigate and report the facts from which others will determine the next steps, or your terms of reference may entitle you to suggest future courses of action based on your findings. Again there may be a number of alternative courses of action. Identify each of these, point out their benefits and the possible effects of each solution. Your final recommendation should be soundly based, clearly showing your reasoning for adopting them.

When making recommendations try to be specific, clearly stating who will be responsible for what action within what timescale.

Appendices
These can be used for reference to explain or illustrate complicated detail and statistical analysis. It should contain the information that is of secondary importance to the report – usually information you identified as 'could go in' in your earlier sift. Other information often included in appendices are:

- *Glossary:* this can be used to explain technical jargon and abbreviations.

- *Bibliography:* essential when writing academic reports, can provide a ready reference to your sources of data.

- *Distribution list:* useful when the report is to be circulated to several people or organisations.

Point out that you don't write the report in this order. Report writing is like an inverse pyramid. You write the main body first then write the preliminary sections. You should write the conclusion, recommendations and executive summary last. This ordering will help you with your main thinking and ensure that the preliminary sections reflect the main body.

Distribute Handout 15.10
Structure your report

Allow about 30 minutes for this explanation of how to structure a report.

Exercise two – write your own report
Check again that all the participants understand the points discussed. When you are satisfied that they do, ask them to start the next practical activity. Having prepared their reports earlier they are now in a position to write the first draft of their report.

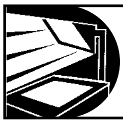
Make sure that they have a plentiful supply of pens and paper to allow for re-drafts. (If you are fortunate enough to have a computer laboratory, this would be a good opportunity to transfer the participants to enable them to use the facilities there.) You can again make the decision on how to divide the participants, for example, pairs, groups, working alone or a combination depending on the background and experience of your participants.

Move around the participants as they are writing. Answer any questions and keep them focused on the task.

When they have all finished, reconvene into the main group. Lead a brief plenary review identifying any difficulties encountered in deciding what to put where.

Allow 45 minutes for this exercise.

REVIEW YOUR STYLE



Re-show OHT 15.4
Three components of report writing

Remind the participants that the third element in the three components is style. Style in writing is often hard to define. The term covers the technique the author uses to convey their message to the reader. A heavy approach, as we saw earlier with the 'Fog Index', will result in making it difficult for our readers. Too easy and they may feel insulted and patronised, and dismiss the report as trivial.
To come to our aid there are a number of common ground rules we can apply.

Show OHT 15.7
The principles of clear writing

Explain each item by referring to the sample reports. Key points to make are as follows:

Put yourself in the readers' shoes
Keep your audience in mind at all times. What information do they need, what language will they understand?

Arrange the ideas in logical order
Organise your writing to help your reader. Establish a plan and stick to it. Leave out information that is not essential to your message.

Keep sentences short and simple
Aim for an average of 15–20 words per sentence. If you write a long sentence, try to rearrange the ideas to form two short ones. Each sentence should be devoted to one major idea.

Use clear, familiar words
Aim to make your writing quicker to read and easy to understand. Don't write 'sufficient' if you could write 'enough', use 'letters' rather than 'correspondence', 'pay' for 'reimburse', and so on.

Use punctuation to aid understanding
Make sure your sentences are complete.
Use semi-colons and commas to mark out your major and minor pauses.

Use a paragraph for each idea
Break up your writing into digestible chunks. Paragraphs give your reader a break. Paragraphs are made up of sentences with a common theme. When the theme changes, so should the paragraph.

Prefer the active to the passive
Active verbs are much clearer and easier to understand. Unlike passive verbs, they tend to reflect how we speak. The trick is to put the 'doer' before the 'done to'. For example: 'The committee decided' rather than 'It was decided by the committee'.

Use verbs, not nouns created from verbs
Too many reports are full of these grand sounding noun phrases. For example, write 'use' instead of 'the utilisation of'.

Use a conversational style
This will help you to write as you speak.
For example, 'I think that' rather than 'It is the opinion of this author that'.

Avoid 'officialese'
Avoid the artificial language that officials use to give an air of authority. You'll only sound pompous.
For example, don't write 'The duly executed forms should be submitted to the undersigned on completion'; try 'Please return the signed forms to me when you have finished them'.

Avoid clichés like the plague – they're old hat
They can be useful to let your sense of humour and personal style come through in your writing, but they can easily be misinterpreted and give the wrong impression.

Explain your terminology
The jargon of one area of work will not necessarily be understood in another area. If you need to use a jargon term whose meaning is not self-evident, think how you can write it another way. If you can't think of an alternative, treat it like an abbreviation and explain it the first time you use it.

Make full use of visual layout
Make the layout helpful and easy on the eye.
Use a lot of white space by putting extra line-breaks between topics. Indent areas to give extra emphasis. Make full use of capitals, bold type and italics to highlight separate areas. Illustrations, pie charts and histograms are an excellent way of conveying complex information in an easy-to-understand form.

Distribute Handout 15.11
The principles of clear writing

Allow about 30 minutes to work through this first part of reviewing style.

Exercise three – review your style
Point out that this final exercise should also be conducted when participants are writing reports at work. Because you have written the report you may well have become immune to mistakes and difficulties. You know exactly what you mean to say because you spent ages searching for the right word. It is now time to pass it to a colleague to check.

Ask your colleague to act as a proof-reader and copy-editor. They will invariably pick up on spelling mistakes that you and the 'spell-check' have missed, and if they can't understand what you are trying to say then neither will the end user.

Ask the participants to exchange the reports they drafted in Exercise Two of this session. Each person or group is responsible for checking the style of someone else's report. Ask them to highlight areas that are confusing or over-wordy and ask them to suggest sharper and shorter alternatives.

Move between the participants, giving help and advice where appropriate.

When all have finished, ask them to return their edited reports to their original authors. Tell them they now have 10 minutes to re-read and approve the changes. If they don't like the alterations then they should identify another choice.

Plenary view
When all the participants have completed their revisions and are happy with their re-draft, reconvene and lead a plenary review. Identify areas that presented particular pitfalls for the group. How did they overcome them? What areas were they stronger in?

Ask the group to consider the session as a whole. What are the key learning points that they are taking away and which they will incorporate into the next project report they write at work? They should note these points in their Learning review diary, if they are using this approach to recording their learning (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii).

Ask for a volunteer to talk briefly about a key point and how they intend to action it.

When all those who wish to speak have done so, thank them all for their participation and hard work and close the session.

TRAINER'S TIP

If you feel the need for a more in-depth session on the principles of clear writing then I can recommend the Fenman Trainer's Activity Pack *Business English* or *The Business Writing Toolkit* both by Joanna Gutmann and published by Fenman Limited.

Communication

A ⟶ **B**

Sender **Receiver**

Margaret Thatcher quote

‘When communicating in writing the scope for misunderstanding is enormous. Too often clarity and simplicity are overwhelmed by pompous words, long sentences and endless paragraphs.’

Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister, February 1988, *Making It Plain* Cabinet Office Leaflet, 1988

The Fog Index

Score	**18+**	**Virtually unreadable**
	16	**Difficult**
	14	**Acceptable**
	12	**Ideal**
	10	**Acceptable**
	8	**Childlike**
	6	**Unacceptable**

Adapted from R. Gunning *The Technique of Clear Writing* McGraw-Hill, 1968.

Three components of report writing

CONTENT

STRUCTURE

STYLE

Planning your content

DEFINE

GATHER

SELECT

GROUP

ORDER

15.6

Structure your report

TITLE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

MAIN BODY

CONCLUSION

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPENDICES

The principles of clear writing

- Put yourself in your readers' shoes.
- Arrange the ideas in logical order.
- Keep sentences short and simple.
- Use clear familiar words.
- Use punctuation to aid understanding.
- Use a paragraph for each idea.
- Prefer the active to the passive.
- Use verbs, not nouns created from verbs.
- Use a conversational style.
- Avoid 'officialese'.
- Avoid clichés like the plague – they're old hat.
- Explain your terminology.
- Make full use of visual layout.

Fog Index

1. Count the number of words in your chosen sample (200 words usually gives a fair guide).

2. Calculate the average sentence length by dividing the number of words by the number of sentences, (**a**).

3. Count the number of words with three or more syllables.

4. Calculate the percentage of long words by dividing this number by the total number of words and multiplying by 100, (**b**).

5. To find the Fog Index add together your two calculated figures (**a** + **b**), and multiply by 0.4.

Adapted from R. Gunning, *The Technique of Clear Writing*, McGraw-Hill, 1968.

Planning your content

Define
You should find out exactly what you have been asked to report on. Reports are meant for action. They are usually requested by senior management in response to some perceived problem. If you have been asked to make an investigation you need to establish your terms of reference. These should be as specific as possible. Identify your boundaries and constraints as well as your scope for making recommendations.

Gather
Gather together all the information that you could put into your project report. Collect all your facts and ideas by asking other people, from personal observation, consulting existing records or using questionnaires and surveys.

Gather as much information as you can – it is better to have too much at this stage rather than too little. Check your facts for accuracy and make a note of all sources and references as these may need to be included in the written report.

Drawing up a 'mind-map' of all your ideas on a single page is a good way of gaining an overview.

Select
Having gathered all your information you should now look critically at what should be included. Keeping your terms of reference in mind you should be able to decide what *must* go in, what *should* go in and what *could* go in. Take care with this last category – avoid the temptation to pad out the report simply to show how clever you have been.

Discard any irrelevant information; include only the essential or desirable facts.

Continued …

Planning your content

… continued

Group
Once you have completed the selection process, review all the information that has survived and group together linked information. Give each group of facts a sub-heading for easy reference later.

A useful technique can be to write each of your sub-headings on a separate Post-it® Note. This will help the final phase of your preparation.

Order
With all your facts sorted you can now arrange them into the most appropriate order as they should appear in the main body of your report. If you have a list of facts under one sub-heading, break them down into further sub-headings.

Structure your report

Title
This should readily identify the subject. It should be short but convey the theme of the report.

Table of contents
This will identify the main sections and sub-sections, the paragraph numbers (if used) and the pages on which to find them. A table of contents is essential if your report is a long one.

Executive summary
This is an encapsulated version of the whole report. It allows the busy reader to quickly identify the problem and how you arrived at your conclusions. Try to keep it to 200–300 words on one page. It should allow the reader to decide whether or not they need to read the whole report.

Introduction
This should give the reader the essential background information leading to why the report was written. It should include details of the terms of reference (the reasons for doing the work). Identify who wrote the report or the department or organisation which made the initial investigation. The time and date of the investigation should also be included.

Main body
This is the main part of the report in which you describe all your work and reasoning in full detail. If it runs into more than two pages, break it into sections with separate sub-headings. For most reports the following sections can apply:

- *Initial problem:* a description of the situation, accident or event that led to the investigation.

- *Form of investigation:* this shows how your information was obtained, for example, surveys, observation, other people consulted, etc.

- *Facts and findings:* this is the section of the report where you state your results. The facts are analysed and possible causes of the problem identified.

Continued …

Structure your report

… continued

Conclusion
This is a statement of the findings that can be drawn from the facts in the main text of your report. The reader should be able to follow the development of your conclusion from the previous section. You should not introduce new facts at this stage. Where a number of different conclusions can be drawn from the same set of facts you should record them all to avoid displaying bias.

Recommendations
You may have been briefed to investigate and report the facts from which others will determine the next steps, or your terms of reference may entitle you to suggest future courses of action based on your findings. Again there may be a number of alternative courses of action. Identify each of these, point out their benefits and the possible effects of each solution. Your final recommendation should be soundly based, clearly showing your reasoning for adopting them.

When making recommendations try to be specific, clearly stating who will be responsible for what action within what time-scale.

Appendices
These can be used for reference to explain or illustrate complicated detail and statistical analysis. It should contain the information that is of secondary importance to the report – usually information you identified as 'could go in' in your earlier sift. Other information often included in appendices are:

- *Glossary:* this can be used to explain technical jargon and abbreviations.
- *Bibliography:* essential with academic reports, can provide a ready reference to your sources of data.
- *Distribution list:* useful when the report is to be circulated to several people or organisations.

The principles of clear writing

Put yourself in the readers' shoes
Keep your audience in mind at all times. What information do they need, what language will they understand?

Put it into logical order
Organise your writing to help your readers. Establish a plan and stick to it. Leave out information that is not essential to your message.

Keep sentences short and simple
Aim for an average of 15–20 words per sentence. If you write a long sentence, try to rearrange the ideas to form two short ones.
Each sentence should be devoted to one major idea.

Use clear, familiar words
Aim to make your writing quicker to read and easy to understand.
Don't write 'sufficient' if you could write 'enough', use 'letters' rather than 'correspondence', 'pay' for 'reimburse', and so on.

Use punctuation to aid understanding
Make sure your sentences are complete. Use semi-colons and commas to mark out your major and minor pauses.

Use a paragraph for each idea
Break up your writing into digestible chunks. Paragraphs give your reader a break. Paragraphs are made up of sentences with a common theme. When the theme changes, so should the paragraph.

Prefer the active to the passive
Active verbs are much clearer and easier to understand. Unlike passive verbs, they tend to reflect how we speak. The trick is to put the 'doer' before the 'done to'. For example: 'The committee decided' rather than 'It was decided by the committee'.

Continued …

The principles of clear writing

… continued

Use verbs, not nouns created from verbs
Too many reports are full of these grand sounding noun phrases. For example, write ‘use’ instead of ‘the utilisation of’.

Use a conversational style
This will help you to write as you speak. For example, ‘I think that’ rather than ‘It is the opinion of this author that’.

Avoid ‘officialese’
Avoid the artificial language that officials use to give an air of authority. You’ll only sound pompous. For example, don’t write ‘The duly executed forms should be submitted to the undersigned on completion’; try ‘Please return the signed forms to me when you have finished them’.

Avoid clichés like the plague – they’re old hat
They can be useful to let your sense of humour and personal style come through in your writing, but they can easily be misinterpreted and give the wrong impression.

Explain your terminology
The jargon of one area of work will not necessarily be understood in another area. If you need to use a jargon term whose meaning is not self-evident, think how you can write it another way. If you can’t think of an alternative, treat it like an abbreviation and explain it the first time you use it.

Make full use of visual layout
Make the layout helpful and easy on the eye. Use a lot of white space by putting extra line-breaks between topics. Indent areas to give extra emphasis. Make full use of capitals, bold type and italics to highlight separate areas. Illustrations, pie charts and histograms are an excellent way of conveying complex information in an easy-to-understand form.

Activity 16
Managing performance

Purpose

To introduce participants to a five-stage process which will ensure that their project staff perform the essential activities to an agreed standard.

Activity 16
Managing performance

How can I ensure that my project team members are working effectively?

Purpose

To introduce participants to a five-stage process which will ensure that their project staff perform the essential activities to an agreed standard.

Application

This activity is appropriate on any training event aimed at project managers who have responsibility for members of a project team.

The techniques described are common to many management positions and the activity would be equally appropriate for events aimed at developing general management skills, team leadership or performance appraisal courses.

What happens

You start the session with a discussion which establishes that as the project manager the participants have responsibility to achieve results through their project team. The project manager should aim to ensure commitment, but also identify the minimum standards with which team members should comply.

Five key questions that should be answered by the project manager and their team members are identified. Each of these questions is explored in turn in a number of activities. A series of exercises reinforces the content and gives the participants an opportunity to practise.

The session ends with a consolidation exercise during which each participant prepares an action plan aimed at developing their expertise in managing performance. They are encouraged to fill in their Learning review diary.

Time

Overall time available: 2 hours 40 minutes.

- Introduction: 15 minutes
- Why am I here?: 15 minutes
- What am I trying to achieve?: 15 minutes
- How will I do it?: 30 minutes
- How am I doing?: 30 minutes
- How will I know if I was successful?: 45 minutes
- Learning review: 10 minutes

Materials & resources

- 9 OHT masters:
  16.1 *Management – definition*
  16.2 *How do we improve performance?*
  a *Questions*
  b *Answers*
  16.3 *Set performance objectives*
  16.4 *Effective performance objectives*
  16.5 *Properties of effective objectives*
  16.6 *The control loop*
  16.7 *Giving effective feedback*
  16.8 *Running review discussions*

- 2 Handout masters:
  16.9 *Running review discussions*
  16.10 *Improving project performance*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- Flipchart paper and coloured marker pens for participants
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

Start the session by asking the participants to define the term ‘management’. Write their suggestions on a flipchart until they have volunteered enough suggestions for your purpose.

Tell the group that whilst there are many definitions of management, there is a general consensus that management is about achieving results. (If the participants have previously completed *Activity 12 Project leadership style* they should be able to recall the definition used in that session.)

Show OHT 16.1
Management – definition

If relevant, point out that this definition complements the material covered in *Activity 12*. That session focused on developing their *commitment* by adopting an appropriate leadership style. This session will focus on ensuring *compliance* – how to get your project staff to do the job you want.

Point out that compliance is at the heart of all contracts. If you fail to carry out an action in accordance with what has been agreed, you are in breach of that contract. Being in breach, as far as employment law is concerned, could lead to the person being dismissed.

One of the arts of a good project manager is to harness both compliance and commitment.
Staff who grudgingly do as they are told are often ineffective, but, as the project manager, you are responsible for achieving the project goal. This will involve you working with your staff to establish the minimum standards for expected performance.

Re-show OHT 16.1
Management – definition

Ask the group to tell you the difference between 'efficiency' and 'effectiveness'.

The answers you are looking for are something like:

Efficiency = doing things well

Effectiveness = doing the right thing.

This means that your staff need to know what they should be spending their time on, and how they should perform their duties.

In order to achieve a continuing level of high performance, both the project manager and their staff need to be able to answer certain questions.

Show OHT 16.2
How do we improve performance?

TRAINER'S TIP

Use the 'show and reveal method' for maximum impact. Show *OHT 16.2a (Questions)* first, and reveal each question one at a time. Then lay *OHT 16.2b (Answers)* on top of *16.2a*, revealing each answer one at a time.

Having revealed the *OHT 16.2*, discuss each of the items with the group.

This introduction should take about 15 minutes.

WHY AM I HERE?

All projects have a purpose. One of the early roles of the project manager is to clarify the aim of the project, agree the terms of reference and identify any constraints. This will enable you to clearly identify the project goal – the clear destination you are heading for.

Once the purpose of the project is clearly defined you need to ask yourself 'Do my staff know where they fit in?' To work effectively they need to know how their job contributes to the overall jigsaw which comes together in order to help you achieve the project goal.

Each member of your project team should be able to answer such questions as:

- Why does my job exist?
- What am I here to achieve?
- How does my job contribute towards the overall project?

Exercise one

Ask the participants to write down, in one or two sentences, a statement of their job purpose. Point out that it is important to state what they are doing as distinct from their staff or line manager. Some examples of what you are expecting are:

Contracts Manager

'To prepare, negotiate and monitor contracts to make sure we receive value for money from suppliers.'

Training Manager

'To run profitable training courses that equip the participants with the skills and knowledge to improve their job performance.'

When they have finished their first draft, ask the participants to share their notes with another member of the group. Ask for a few volunteers to write up their purpose on a flipchart. This will enable the whole group to review their efforts.

Allow about 15 minutes to deal with this first question.

16

WHAT AM I TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

Inform the group that to answer this question they have to identify their *Key Areas of Responsibility*.

These are the areas where they have personal responsibility for achieving results. They should be able to identify the main areas where personal failure on their part would adversely affect the project team's performance.

Tell the group to use the '80/20 Rule'. This rule of thumb was identified by an Italian engineer, economist and sociologist, Wilfredo Pareto

(1848–1923). He identified that in any range of items it was often the vital few (the 20%) that had the greatest value in achieving the target (they contributed 80% to the overall effort).

Most people will have between four and six main responsibilities for their post. They will perform other activities, but these are the critical ones. Typical examples include:

Contracts Manager
- Prepare contract specifications
- Manage the tendering process
- Scrutinise bids
- Negotiate price
- Review procedures.

Training Manager
- Conduct training needs analysis
- Specify learning outcomes
- Design training event(s)
- Deliver training
- Evaluate the outcome.

Exercise two
Ask the participants to identify the key areas of their posts. Point out that this shouldn't be a full job description but is used to highlight the priorities for their job.

When they have finished, ask them to review with another group member. Ask for different volunteers to write their ideas on the flipchart for all to review. When you are satisfied that they have mastered what is required, move on to the next question.

Allow 15 minutes for this part of the activity.

HOW WILL I DO IT?

The next step is to agree at least one objective and specify what standard of performance you expect for each key area.

Point out that a common mistake at this point is to list all the tasks the individual needs to do, but to leave out the expected performance standards.

Remind the group that we want to establish not only what we want them to do (effectiveness) but also how well we want the job done (efficiency).

Show OHT 16.3
Set performance objectives

Point out that while this example is typical, it is not what you are after. Ask the participants to criticise it. They should identify that it isn't specific, it is difficult to measure, you won't know if you have been successful or not, and it is generally a negative rather than a positive statement of intent.

Ask them to compare it with the next example.

Show OHT 16.4
Effective performance objectives

Ask the participants to compare the two objectives on OHT 16.3 and OHT 16.4. They should recognise that the second has the properties that have been identified for effective objectives.

Show OHT 16.5
Properties of effective objectives

Exercise three

Ask the participants to write down an objective for at least two of their key areas.

When they have finished, ask them to review what they have written with a partner. When they are conducting the review remind them they should be checking that the draft objective meets the S M A R T E R criteria (see page 3–4). Encourage them to make revisions after this constructive criticism.

When all have finished, ask for further volunteers to write their revised objectives on a flipchart for review by the whole group.

Allow about 30 minutes for this part of the activity.

HOW AM I DOING?

Ask the participants for suggestions of the benefits to both the project manager and their staff for the process they have followed to date. They should reply along the lines of:

- focuses attention
- gives a sense of direction
- aids time management and prioritising
- gives a measure of performance
- identifies quality as well as quantity
- provides the basis for action
- allows feedback on achievement.

Point out that once the objectives have been clarified and agreed between the project manager and their staff they should review progress on a regular basis. Precisely when will be determined by the timescale of the objective (ideally once a month and certainly every three months).

Ask the participants for suggestions of typical questions you should seek answers to at any review. Their suggestions should cover such areas as the following:

- To what extent have I achieved my objectives?
- Are there any factors blocking my achievement?
- Have circumstances changed which mean my objectives should be changed?
- Have new priorities emerged which mean that this objective could be better replaced by another?
- Have I exceeded any of my objectives?
- What are the implications for others if I exceed my objectives?
- What help has my project manager given me to help my achievement?
- What additional help would I like?
- How much feedback and information am I getting that can help monitor progress?

Point out that, as with setting objectives, this monitoring process will work best if it is a two-way process. Remind the group that people work best when they have commitment as well as the guidelines with which they must comply.

Inform the group that there are three options if there is a shortfall between the objectives and their project staff's performance.

Show OHT 16.6
The central loop

No surprises
Point out to the participants that they need to give regular feedback to their staff about individuals' progress around this loop. In this way each staff member will have an early opportunity to correct their mistakes, to work on weaknesses, to continue to work as they are or to identify ways in which they can improve. One of the keys to successful performance improvement is regular feedback to staff. That way there will be no surprises at the review.

Exercise Four
Ask the group to think of their own past work experiences and identify times when they received particularly useful feedback. When they have thought of an appropriate incident(s), ask them to work in pairs, sharing their experiences and identifying the common ground rules for giving effective feedback.

When the participants have finished their discussions, lead a plenary review. Ask each pair to provide one suggestion. Write them on a flipchart for the whole group to review.

Among the suggestions you can expect to find are the following:

Encourage self-criticism – People are more willing to accept the criticism when they have recognised their own strengths and weaknesses. Start by encouraging them to appraise themselves and then build on their own insights.

Be helpful rather than critical – They need information on where they are failing but negative feedback can destroy their confidence and motivation. Balance out and keep a sense of perspective.

Be specific – Whether you are criticising or praising, detailed information, rather than vague or woolly statements, is more likely to reinforce what happened.

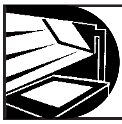
Describe actual behaviour – Don't remark on the individual, their personality or attitudes. Focus on what they actually said or did and avoid your own personal idiosyncrasies in judging performance.

Focus on areas they can do something about – It is frustrating to be reminded of something over which you have no control.

Be selective – Give as much information as they can use. Too many examples or points will dilute the feedback and could lead to complacency or defensiveness.

Be forward looking – Constructive comments that offer alternatives on what could be done differently in the future are more helpful than destructive criticism of past actions.

Discuss it – Don't give the feedback and run. Stay to explore the topic in more detail. Have they taken it on board? Do they want to discuss future action plans in more detail?



Show OHT 16.7
Get effective feedback

Encourage the participants to add any of these items to their list.

Allow 30 minutes for this part of the activity.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF I WAS SUCCESSFUL?

Point out that if the process has been well managed so far then there will be little to fear from the final performance review. Agreed objectives that have measurable standards which are backed up by regular feedback and monitoring should ensure the project is completed successfully with each individual performing as required.

Why bother with a formal review?
Point out that just as it is good practice for the project manager to formally review both successful and unsuccessful projects, then it is also good practice to review the project staff.

Ask the group for the advantages of holding a formal review. You should get some or all of the following answers:

- a formal record of the individual's performance
- a chance to learn from the past
- an opportunity to give thanks and praise
- a forum for two-way communication
- time to establish new objectives and performance standards
- chance to establish current training needs
- opportunity to discuss long-term development
- you can learn a lot about your performance as a project manager.

Point out that when performance has been so poor that you consider the individual to be inefficient, most organisations make a formal review mandatory. There are sound legal reasons for this, which are explored in *Activity 17 Managing conflict.*

Tell the group that this formal review is greatly enhanced if both the project manager and the job holder do some preliminary thinking before the meeting.

Adopt a positive attitude
Point out that if the project manager has been conducting regular and focused review discussions

throughout the project, then the end of project review should progress smoothly.

The key to running an effective review discussion can be determined by the manager's attitude. Tell the group that the manager should encourage the behaviour outlined on the next OHT.

Show OHT 16.8
Running review discussions

Discuss each item on the overhead.

Encourage substantial interviewee participation – The more the job holder participates in the process the more likely they are to be satisfied with the interview and its outcome.

Emphasise performance not personality – Personality is notoriously difficult to define or alter. Focus on facts and concentrate on the job holder's performance; this is the best way to achieve sustained improvement.

Adopt a joint problem solving style – The more time you spend analysing and identifying the nature of problems together, the more likely it is that changes in behaviour and performance will occur.

Be a positive and supportive interviewer – Adopt a style that promotes a climate of openness and trust. If you aim for constructive criticism rather than blaming, you are more likely to produce a favourable response to the discussion and commitment to the actions agreed.

Collaborate in goal setting – Set specific goals which the job holder can strive to achieve. This will have a powerful effect on subsequent performance. Again the greater the participation the greater the sense of ownership and commitment to achievement.

Exercise five – consolidate your learning

Ask the participants to work in pairs. One person plays the role of the discussion leader. Their task is to help their partner review how effectively they are managing the performance of their project team.

When playing the discussion leader you should aim to use the approach listed in *Handout 16.9 Running review discussions*.

Distribute Handout 16.9
Running review discussions

When playing the project manager, be prepared to discuss, with examples, how effectively you followed the process outlined in *Handout 16.10 Improving project performance*.

Distribute Handout 16.10
Improving project performance

After you have completed the discussion, change roles. The exercise should end when both participants have developed an action plan for their own continued development in this topic area.

Get them under way. Move between the pairs as they work. Keep them on track and answer any questions they have where appropriate.

When all the pairs have finished, reconvene and hold a plenary review. What were the main points that emerged for the participants from the exercise? What areas were difficult and which less so?

Allow 45 minutes for this final section of the activity.

LEARNING REVIEW

Ask participants to record their major learning points from the session in their Learning review diary (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii).

Ask for some volunteers to discuss their action plan with the rest of the group. Check that their action plans meet the SMARTER criteria.

When all who want to have spoken, thank the participants and close the session.

Management – definition

Management is the *efficient* and *effective* use of resources to achieve results with and through the efforts of other people.

How do we improve performance?

QUESTIONS:

Why am I here?

What am I trying to achieve?

How will I do it?

How am I doing?

How will I know if I was successful?

How do we improve performance?

ANSWERS:

- **Project plan: Job purpose**
- **Key areas of responsibility**
- **Objectives and performance standards**
- **Monitor feedback**
- **Review report**

Set performance objectives

A typical objective:

Reduce the delay in submission of project management reports and minutes of cost control meetings.

Effective performance objectives

To ensure that monthly project meetings are efficiently planned and organised:

- **agenda sent out five days before meeting**
- **accommodation checked one hour before meeting**
  - **(for furniture, equipment and refreshments)**
- **minutes are distributed within three working days**
  - **in agreed format and layout**
  - **with action points showing who will do what by when**
- **all managers on circulation list receive management reports by 21st of each month.**

Properties of effective objectives

S – SPECIFIC
Clear and unambiguous
end product

M – MEASURABLE
Observable outcomes
of performance
Quantity, Quality, Cost, Time

A – ACHIEVABLE
Realistic within the capabilities and constraints

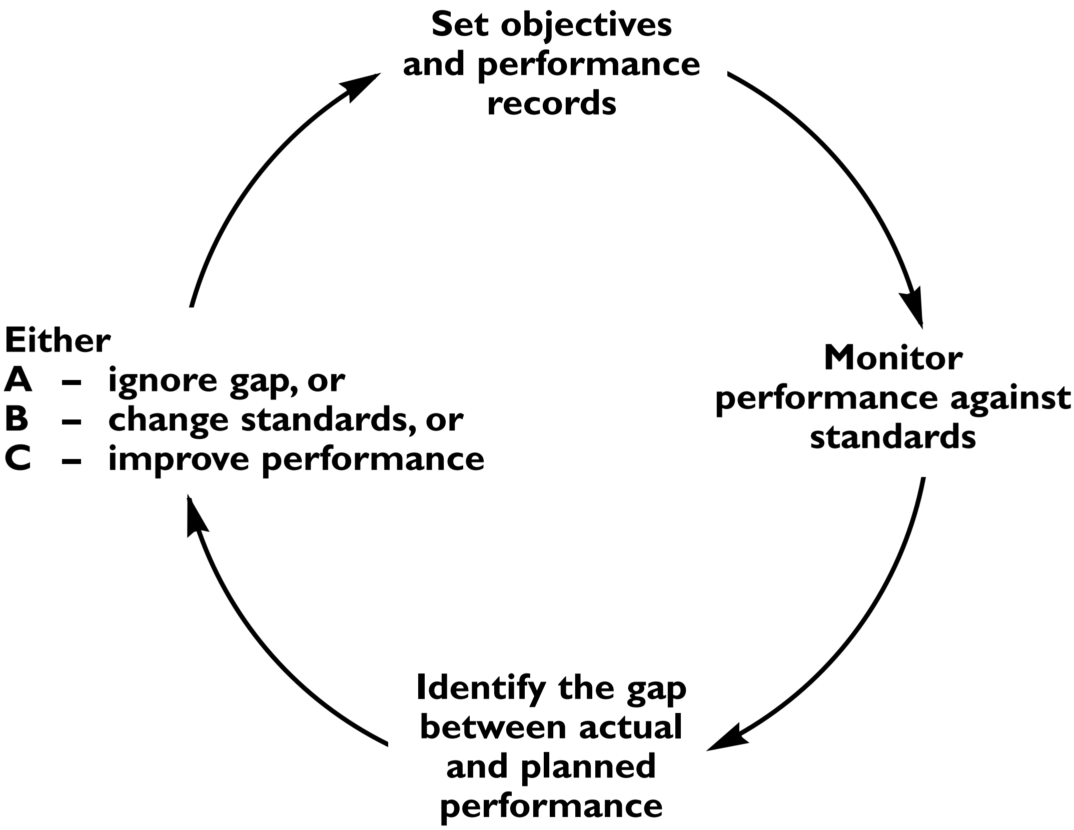
R – RELEVANT
Address a significant need
of the organisation

T – TIMEBOUND
You have a target date for completion
Now is an opportune time to undertake the project

E – EXCITING
Project will stimulate all concerned to action

R – RECORDED
Written down for clarity, communication and review

The control loop



Giving effective feedback

- Encourage self-criticism
- Be helpful rather than critical
- Be specific
- Describe actual behaviour
- Focus on areas they can do something about
- Be selective
- Be forward looking
- Discuss it.

Running review discussions

- Encourage substantial interviewee participation
- Emphasise performance not personality
- Adopt a joint problem-solving style
- Be a positive and supportive interviewer
- Collaborate in goal setting.

Running review discussions

- Encourage substantial interviewee participation
- Emphasise performance not personality
- Adopt a joint problem-solving style
- Be a positive and supportive interviewer
- Collaborate in goal setting.

Encourage substantial interviewee participation – The more the job holder participates in the process the more likely they are to be satisfied with the interview and its outcome.

Emphasise performance not personality – Personality is notoriously difficult to define or alter. Focus on facts and concentrate on the job holder's performance; this is the best way to achieve sustained improvement.

Adopt a joint problem-solving style – The more time you spend analysing and identifying the nature of problems together, the more likely it is that changes in behaviour and performance will occur.

Be a positive and supportive interviewer – Adopt a style that promotes a climate of openness and trust. If you aim for constructive criticism rather than blaming, you are more likely to produce a favourable response to the discussion and commitment to the actions agreed.

Collaborate in goal setting – Set specific goals which the job holder can strive to achieve. This will have a powerful effect on subsequent performance. Again the greater the participation the greater the sense of ownership and commitment to achievement.

Improving project performance

- Project plan: job purpose
- Key areas of responsibility
- Objectives and performance standards
- Monitor feedback
- Review report.

Activity 17
Managing conflict

Purpose

To introduce the participants to the strategy and style necessary to run a discussion with a job holder who is not performing to the required standard.

Activity 17
Managing conflict

How do I constructively confront a poor performer?

Purpose

To introduce the participants to the strategy and style necessary to run a discussion with a job holder who is not performing to the required standard.

Application

This activity is applicable on a training event for all project managers who have responsibility for people – whether direct reports, consultants or others.

The session covers material that is also applicable to any line manager who has responsibility for people. It could be used on courses such as Introduction to Management, Team Leadership, Disciplinary Skills or Performance Appraisal.

What happens

You start the session by establishing that the people are the project manager's most vital and usually most expensive asset. You next discuss the need to take timely action to correct poor performance.

The participants then define what they understand by the term 'Discipline'. You stress that it has a positive aspect that is often overlooked. At this point a seven-step approach to overcoming poor performance is introduced.

The styles of behaviour that the project manager uses for the approach are discussed. Three main types of behaviour and four predominant styles for handling conflict are discussed. The benefits of an assertive style are identified.

The participants are then given the opportunity to try out the approach and style in a series of mini role-play exercises using real work-based incidents they have experienced.

The session ends with a plenary review following which participants identify how they can transfer their learning back to their work. Where appropriate, they fill in their Learning review diary.

Time

Overall time required: 2 hours 15 minutes.

- Introduction: 30 minutes
- Disciplining employees: 30 minutes
- What's your usual conflict style?: 30 minutes
- Putting it into practice: 30 minutes
- Review and action plan: 15 minutes.

Materials & resources

- 1 Flipchart master:
  17.1 *Resources*

- 5 OHT masters:
  17.2 *ACAS Disciplinary Code of Practice*
  17.3 *Overcoming poor performance*
  17.4 *Ingredients of a performance discussion*
  17.5 *Conflict-handling styles*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)

In preparation

You will need to draw a copy of *Flipchart 17.1* on a flipchart sheet.

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

Start the activity by showing the prepared flipchart.

Show Flipchart 17.1
Resources

Tell the group that as project managers they are responsible for getting the best out of many resources to achieve the ultimate goals of their project.

Ask them to name the most significant resources that project managers control. Write their suggestions on the flipchart in the segments of the circle as they call them out. These should include:

- money
- materials
- machinery
- premises
- time
- methods
- people (*Write PEOPLE in the centre circle*).

Ask the participants why you have placed 'People' in such a central position. They should be able to identify that people are an organisation's most vital asset.

Ask the group if they know how much of the organisation's costs are people costs? Point out that when you add National Insurance contributions, pensions and other benefits to basic salary, many organisations find that people are also their most expensive asset.

Turn to a fresh sheet of flipchart paper. Write 'Asset' on the top. Then in the lower half of the sheet write 'Liability'.

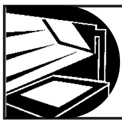
Point out that one of the key roles of a project manager is to control their staff to ensure that they are working both *efficiently* and *effectively*. Remind participants that they examined these two terms in *Activity 16 Managing performance* (see page 16–3). Can they now define the difference between *efficient* and *effective?*

You may have the best machinery operating the best system on which no expense has been spared – but if your staff are not performing at their optimum then it can all fall apart.

Ask the group for some examples of incidents where human behaviour has led to poor performance. They could tell you about local incidents based on their own experience, or recall some of the major disasters, such as aeroplane crashes or oil-tanker incidents which have been put down to pilot error.

Tell the group that it is important to keep a sense of perspective when we start to look at poor workplace performance. Provided that the project manager has given clear guidance and supplies the essential resources and training, the vast majority of their staff will perform to an appropriate standard.

Remind the participants of the steps they need to take by re-showing OHT 16.6 The control loop.



Show OHT 16.6
The control loop

But what about the staff who fail to perform to standard? What action should be taken and by whom?

Ask the participants how many have a Personnel or Human Resources Department. What role does this department have in regulating the day to day work of the project team? If they have one, the answers will usually indicate that taking action to establish and improve performance is the project manager's role. In most organisations the Personnel team provide a back-up consultancy service to ensure that established procedures are followed and carried out lawfully.

Don't ignore it
Ask the group which of the two following options they would choose when a member of their project team is either making repeated serious mistakes, or consistently turning up late for work. Would they:

A. Ignore the issue? Avoid any possible confrontation and hope that the problem will correct itself?

B. Confront the issue? Take whatever steps are necessary to overcome the problem and make sure performance returns to standard as quickly as possible?

Faced with this simple choice, most participants will opt for option B. Most will, however, admit to also taking option A at some time.

Point out that project management is like much of human behaviour – it calls on us to make judgements, and different people will act in different ways in the same circumstances. As with many things, choosing the right behaviour at the right time will depend on a number of factors.

Tell the participants that you don't want to teach them to be a bunch of ogres, who jump on even the smallest misdemeanour – indeed there is much management literature that points out that this autocratic style can be far from productive in the long term. What you do want them to consider is the implications of taking too long before going down route B.

Ask the groups to draw on their own experience of some of the likely outcomes when managers fail to take timely action. They should come up with suggestions such as:

- a poor example to other staff
- demotivation and decline in productivity
- affects costs and profitability
- difficult to rectify an established pattern
- lack of credibility for organisation's procedures
- lack of credibility for manager
- loss of any subsequent legal case.

Point out that timely intervention by the project manager is in most cases sufficient to alert the worker concerned that they need to change their behaviour. An informal approach can usually head off the necessity to go down a more formal discipline route.

Allow a total time of 30 minutes for this introduction to the activity.

DISCIPLINING EMPLOYEES

Ask the participants what words they associate with the term ‘Discipline’. They will usually reply along the lines of:

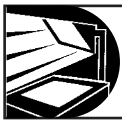
- punishment
- castigation
- chastisement
- correction
- penalty
- reprimand.

Point out that whilst these are all words they will find in any good dictionary or thesaurus, if they look carefully they will find another set of (more positive) meanings:

- exercise
- training
- self-control
- regulation
- branch of knowledge
- instruction.

Point out that if managers adopted a positive approach which focused on these meanings, they might be less reluctant to confront their staff.

Different organisations have different procedures to managing problem staff at work. Most of these procedures reflect the advice given in the ACAS Code of Practice.



Show OHT 17.2
ACAS Disciplinary Code of Practice

Remind the group that as the procedures of all organisations could ultimately lead to dismissal of the employee, they should be followed through accurately, with managers taking the advice of personnel specialists at the appropriate time.

Overcoming poor performance

Inform the participants that to achieve an improvement in an individual's performance they will need to follow a seven-step process.

Show OHT 17.3
Overcoming poor performance

Discuss each of the steps with the group

Step one: Establish what they should be doing

The first step in correcting poor performance is to establish a benchmark of what you are looking for. This should be set down in writing and communicated to the employee. Point out to participants (or remind them if they have previously undertaken *Activity 16 Managing performance*) that the best form of communication is two-way. This gives the employee the opportunity to clarify what's required and a chance to identify items of concern.

Step two: Regular monitoring and review

If you don't meet regularly with your project team you will not be able to observe whether they are adhering to the established performance standards. Do not store up all your feedback for an end-of-project review. Deal with the issues as they occur. This will mean that you have to adopt a management approach called 'Management By Walking About'. MBWA gives you the opportunity to praise your staff as well as spot poor performance before it escalates.

Your regular monitoring and review should give you an early warning signal of performance problems. It has the added advantage of setting up regular discussions which focus on these issues. This will enable you to talk about the shortfall between their expected performance and what they are actually delivering without having to call a special meeting.

Step three: Clarify the gap

Part one: Describe the unacceptable behaviour

Describe exactly what the individual is doing that is causing you concern. Be as specific as possible, and stick to the facts rather than voice opinions. Relate what you are saying to the performance standards that have been agreed. Briefly outline the evidence you have accumulated.

Part two: Identify the impact

How does their behaviour affect what you are trying to achieve? Their behaviour will have some impact elsewhere on the project. This could include the time you are having to devote to sorting out the problem. Time you could both spend more productively elsewhere.

Part three: Establish the change needed

Specify what they have to do to get back to the standards required. Identify the behaviour or performance targets they should be reaching to meet the agreed specification. If you have previously established what you are after there should be little difficulty in clarifying the difference.

Step four: Communicate about the problem

Before jumping to a conclusion and imposing a solution you need to take time to establish why the situation has occurred. If it is a performance problem, do they have the necessary skills and equipment to enable them to do the job? Are they clear about the standards and the expectations this creates? If it is a behaviour problem – such as poor attitude or attendance – are there any underlying issues and how are they contributing to the situation? Too often a manager will jump in to solve a problem without establishing its underlying cause.

Step five: Commit to a solution

If you have followed the previous steps it will be more likely that you can move to a solution that you can both agree to. You need to establish what help, training or resources the employee may need to overcome the problem. Whilst you need compliance over standards at work, the best long-term solutions are the ones that you are both committed to implement. Without this commitment the problem is likely to resurface at another time or in another way. Having agreed the next steps it is important to write up your joint-action plan. Both parties will know precisely what will happen next and what is expected from them.

Step six: Point out the consequences
This is a stage that is often left out, but is essential if your disciplinary procedures are to have any teeth. This is your opportunity to warn the job holder of the consequences that continued poor performance or misconduct will bring. Procedures for most organisations rely on a succession of firmer and more formal warnings. Make sure that the employee leaves the discussion under no illusion that this was a warning, and aware of what will happen next if they fail to reach the standard in the specified time; for example, 'oral warning', 'written warning', etc.

Point out to the group that this approach may seem blunt, but if it is put over in a collaborative style the employee will be in a better position to improve their performance to the desired level.

Step seven: Follow up your action plan
This is a key step in the whole process. This is when you carry out what you have decided at Step five. People believe very little of what you tell them unless it is accompanied by the promised action. Point out that once again your credibility and the legality of the procedures will be under threat if you don't carry through the plan of action, and monitor your employee to ensure they deliver their side of your agreement.

Ingredients of a performance discussion

Show OHT 17.4
Ingredients of a performance discussion

Point out that when running a performance discussion, in common with so many management activities, three strands of activity are operating at the same time.

The *content* usually takes most attention as this focuses on the behaviour or lack of performance that you want to use at the core of your discussion. The seven-step plan outlined above will give you a *structure*. This provides a useful route map which you can use to navigate your way through the discussion.

With these two in place the success or failure of the discussion will come down to how well you manage the process – what *style* you will adopt.

This section on disciplining employees should take a total of about 30 minutes.

WHAT'S YOUR USUAL CONFLICT STYLE?

Inform the group that the style we use to deal with situations that have the potential for conflict will usually depend on our habitual behaviour. Social scientists have identified three main types of behaviour and these are closely related to conflict handling styles:

Aggressive, passive or assertive.

- **Being aggressive**
  Tell the group that being aggressive means getting your own way at the expense of other people. It often involves putting them down, making them feel small, incompetent, foolish or worthless. It does not necessarily mean being confrontational all of the time – sarcastic humour can be very aggressive. A key feature involves manipulating other people for your own ends.

- **Being passive**
  Being passive can be defined as failing to stand up for your rights or doing so in such a way that others can disregard them.

  Point out that being passive usually means putting up with a situation you feel uncomfortable with rather than being honest about what you really think or feel. It involves being apologetic about your own views rather than expressing them positively.

- **Being assertive**
  This is usually defined as standing up for your own rights in such a way that does not violate the rights of others.

  Inform the group that being assertive means being honest with yourself and others, putting forward your own views and stating clearly and honestly what you want, think and feel. It involves being self-confident and positive but not dogmatic. When you are behaving assertively you aim to understand the other person's point of view and are capable of negotiating to reach a workable compromise. The assertive style is the one that should, wherever possible, be adopted.

  Assertive individuals can also be firm in expressing their point of view. This approach is sometimes misinterpreted by others as being aggressive.

Divide the participants into three groups. Give each group a separate behaviour and ask them to report back in 10 minutes with their view of the typical behaviour and body language they associate with that type.

Reconvene and lead a plenary review. You can expect the following suggestions from each group.

Typical aggressive behaviour:
- domineering
- opinionated
- sarcastic
- angry
- self-righteous
- loud
- threatening
- verbally/physically abusive
- interrupting.

Body language

- glaring eye contact
- clenched fists
- pointing finger
- rigid stance
- leaning forward, intimidating
- arms crossed
- raised eyebrows.

Typical passive behaviour

- deferring
- withdrawn
- apologetic
- helpless
- anxious
- guilty
- ashamed
- insignificant
- confused.

Body language

- downcast eyes
- nervous gestures, hand-wringing, etc.
- submissive smile
- quiet voice
- drops end of sentences
- hunched shoulders
- arms crossed in protection
- clears throat frequently.

Typical assertive behaviour

- self-assured
- confident
- sensitive to others
- accepts responsibility
- calm
- open
- respectful
- trusting
- problem-solving.

Body language

- direct eye contact
- firm, clear voice
- upright, but not stiff, posture

- confident hand movements
- open gestures
- smiles (when pleased)
- frowns (when displeased/angry).

Tell the group that assertive behaviour is very difficult to resist. If it is used skilfully and for long enough, it will usually prompt the other person to start to think and act in the same way.

Point out that some managers are more locked in to their particular behaviour patterns. They find it more difficult to change and will resist the assertive approach, and when facing conflict they usually respond in a less appropriate way.

Behaviour and conflict styles

Your regular behaviour will have a direct impact on your usual conflict-handling style. Inform the group that four clear styles have been identified.

Show OHT 17.5
Conflict-handling styles

1. *The collaborative style*
   This style portrays someone who is high in competition and co-operation. Their aim is for both parties to get as much as possible from the situation. Their assertive behaviour usually leads to an 'I win – you win' outcome. When operating from this particular style you will tend to be positive and optimistic about yourself and other people.

Ask the group for suggestions on how this person may approach conflict and confrontation at work. Their answers should include:

- welcomes and gives constructive criticism
- consults others
- trusts people
- seeks clarification
- aims to resolve problems mutually
- open approach to communication

- collaboration and mutual respect
- assertive in achieving their aims
- actively seeks a workable compromise.

2. The accommodating style

This style is marked by people who are high in co-operation but low in competition. They don't stand up for themselves and are always putting other people's needs before their own. They often view themselves as inferior or powerless in relation to other people. Because of their passive behaviour, the 'I lose – you win' outcome is the usual. They often put themselves down, undervalue what they have to offer and frequently withdraw from difficult situations.

The behaviour the group should be able to identify will include:

- concedes too readily
- doubts self and own ability
- worries about appearances
- conforms to the rest of the group
- places little value on own contributions
- relies on others to make decisions
- neglects own concerns to satisfy the other party.

3. The competing style

Individuals who operate from this position see other people as incompetent, unworthy and inferior. They view confrontation as a competition in which there will only be one winner – themselves. Because of their aggressive behaviour they have very low ratings for co-operation as they see no need to help others. 'I win – you lose' is the usual outcome.

Typical behaviours the group should identify include:

- placing the blame on others
- rejecting ideas they haven't thought of
- putting down and sneering at people
- suspicious and distrustful of compliments
- aggressively pursuing their own concerns
- win at all costs

- use status, economic sanctions, etc. to win arguments.

4. The avoiding style

This style mainly relies on the individual avoiding confronting difficult situations as their main way of handling conflict. They are not concerned with achieving their own goals or those of the other party. The attitude of these people is 'Why bother?' and they spend a great deal of their time withdrawing and refusing to accept any responsibility. This style also attracts people with a passive nature. 'I lose – you lose' is a typical outcome.

Typical behaviours from this category will include:

- withdrawing from situations
- refusing to come to a decision
- passing the buck elsewhere
- apathetic to any suggestions
- asks you to put instructions in writing
- responds half-heartedly to any direction
- prefers not to be around other people.

On a flipchart draw a grid that reflects *OHT 17.5 Conflict-handling styles.* Ask the participants to identify which is the style they use most often to manage conflict and difficult situations at work.

Ask them to spend a couple of minutes with a partner from within the group reflecting on the implications that this style will have on how they manage conflict at work.

Allow 30 minutes for this section on conflict styles.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Ask the participants to think of situations in work where they have had to confront someone over poor performance. Tell them they have 5 minutes to write out enough detail to enable someone in the group to role-play that person.

When they have finished, ask them to work in threes, playing in turn the roles of the project manager, the job holder and the observer. During the role-play they will have the opportunity to apply Steps three to six in the seven-step approach described in *OHT 17.3 Overcoming poor performance*. Remind the participants that these are not meant to be full performance reviews but brief encounters that will enable them to practise the skills.

When the manager is confronting the job holder, the third member of the trio observes and gives feedback to the manager on what they did well and on which areas they could improve. Did they follow the appropriate part of the seven-step structure? Did they adopt the best conflict-handling style for this encounter?

When you are sure everyone understands what is required, allocate each group of three to a separate room and get them under way. Move between the groups as they conduct the mini-interview. Answer any questions and give advice on their approach when appropriate.

This practice exercise should take a total of about 30 minutes.

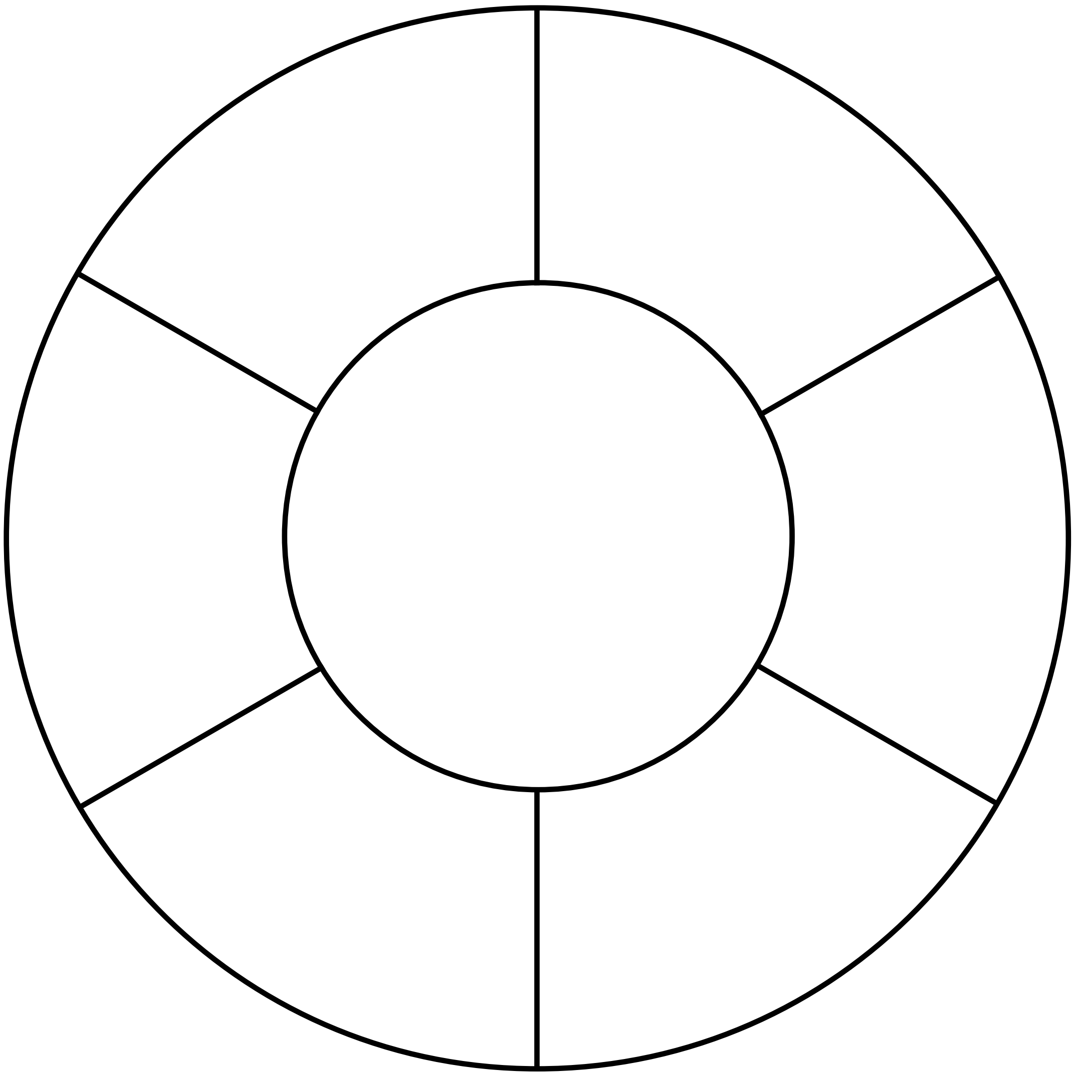
REVIEW AND ACTION PLAN

The groups will have finished when all the participants have had the opportunity to play all three roles.

Reconvene the group and hold a plenary review. Focus on the skills that were displayed in the exercise. What did the participants do well? What was less effective?
When you have finished the review, ask the participants to make a note of their key learning from the session. Ask them to fill in their Learning review diary (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii) which will help them identify how they will make the transition in applying the skills back at work.

When all the participants have completed their review, thank them for their work and close the session.

Resources



ACAS Disciplinary Code of Practice

Disciplinary procedures should not be viewed primarily as a means of imposing sanctions. They should be designed to emphasise and encourage improvements in individual conduct.

Para 9 *'Disciplinary Practice and Procedures in Employment'* 1977 ACAS Code of Practice No 1

Overcoming poor performance

A seven-step approach

Step one:	**Establish what they should be doing.**
Step two:	**Regular monitoring and review.**
Step three:	**Clarify the gap.**
Step four:	**Communicate about the problem.**
Step five:	**Commit to a solution.**
Step six:	**Point out the consequences.**
Step seven:	**Follow up your action plan.**

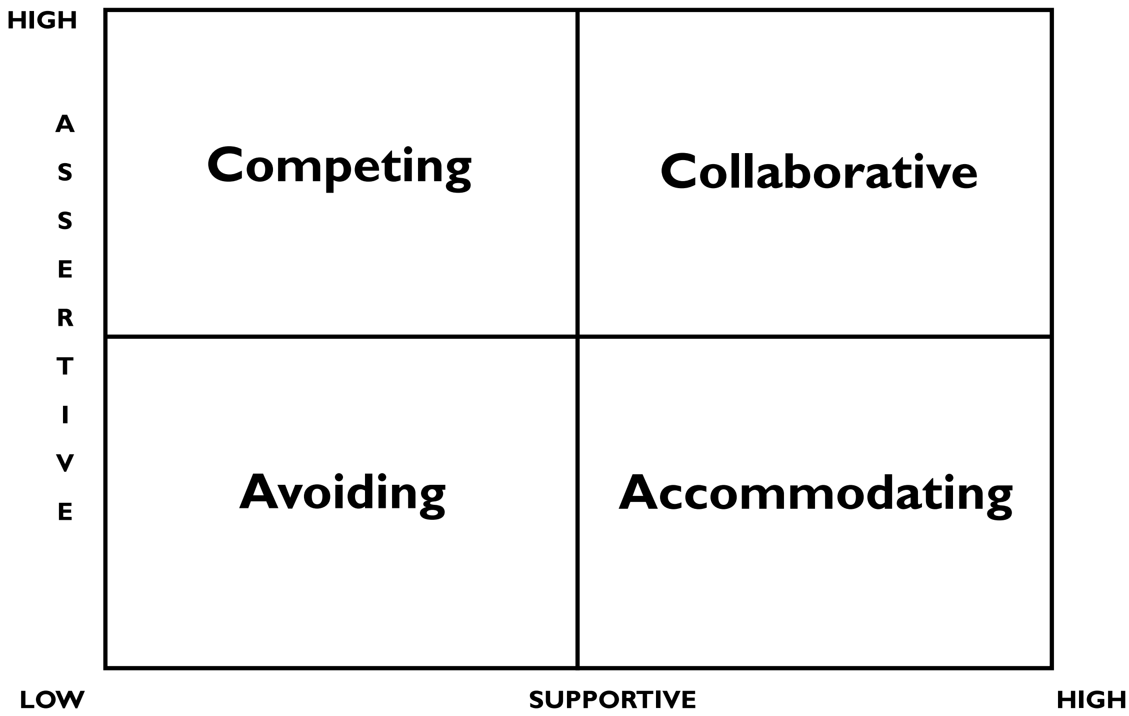
Ingredients of a performance discussion

CONTENT

STRUCTURE

PROCESS

Conflict-handling styles



Activity 18
Negotiation skills

Purpose

To introduce project managers to the skills and techniques required to negotiate successfully.
To give them an opportunity to try out and develop their skills in this area.

Activity 18
Negotiation skills

How can I achieve a win–win outcome to my negotiations?

Purpose

To introduce project managers to the skills and techniques required to negotiate successfully.
To give them an opportunity to try out and develop their skills in this area.

Application

Negotiating is an essential skill for all project managers. Even people who have complete autonomy over their project will have to influence others. This module is a core ingredient of all courses and developmental activities which set out to improve the skills of the project manager.

It can also be used on other events that focus on developing the participants' influencing skills, for example, Assertiveness Training, General Management Development, Sales and Purchasing Development, Team Building, and Interviewing Skills courses.

What happens

You start the session be getting the participants to consider the underlying principle of negotiation; to reach an agreement. Various outcomes of negotiating are considered and the advantages of a 'win–win' approach are identified. Participants are asked to identify the range of people with whom they negotiate and to identify the usual outcomes of these meetings.

You then move on to look at what is involved in planning a negotiation. The participants are introduced to a technique – the expectation test – and discuss the type of information they need to complete it. You then give them an opportunity to develop the approach in a group exercise during which they prepare for a negotiating exercise.

The participants then consider how they will manage their overall strategy, before making their final preparations for the negotiating exercise.

After the final exercise you lead a plenary review during which you relate the behaviours displayed to those that have been noted as effective and ineffective negotiators.

At the end of the session participants are given time to review their own learning, to fill in their Learning review diary, and make plans for improving their negotiation skills at work.

Time

Overall time required: 3 hours.

- Introduction: 15 minutes
- With whom do you negotiate?: 15 minutes
- Outcomes of negotiation: 20 minutes
- Planning negotiations: 30 minutes
- Prepare your team and your strategy: 30 minutes
- Negotiating exercise: 30 minutes
- Review: 20 minutes
- Drawing up an action plan: 20 minutes.

Materials & resources

- 3 OHT masters:
  18.1 *Negotiation – definition*
  18.2 *The expectation test*
  18.3 *Face-to-face negotiating behaviours*

- 5 Handout masters:
  18.4 *My range of negotiation contacts*
  18.5 *The expectation test*
  18.6 *The hotel conference*
  Part one – the organiser's brief
  18.7 *The hotel conference*
  Part two – the hotel management brief
  18.8 *Prepare your team and your strategy*
  18.9 *Face-to-face negotiating behaviours*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- Flipchart paper and coloured marker pens for participants
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

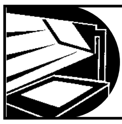
Start the session by writing the word NEGOTIATING on a flipchart. Ask the participants to call out the words that they associate with the term ‘negotiating’.

List their suggestions on the chart as they call them out. When they have come up with about a dozen, stop and review their ideas.

Take a coloured marker pen and highlight the words ‘persuasion’ and ‘compromise’ (you may have to probe the group until they volunteer these or something similar).

Lead a discussion focusing on why these are the two central features of negotiating. Point out that in a typical encounter where we are trying to influence the other person, we will first try to persuade them to adopt our point of view. They are similarly trying to persuade us that we cannot maintain our original position.

Point out that there comes a crucial point in any discussion when you realise that in order to break the impasse, one of you needs to compromise and change position. What distinguishes negotiation from other types of persuasion is that both parties are prepared to move from the status quo. If you are truly negotiating, both parties must be prepared to move from their original position, conceding issues to the other person.



Show OHT 18.1
Negotiation – definition

Point out that for a negotiation to be successful, the negotiators must freely reach a viable agreement or compromise. A viable negotiating agreement is reached when both parties can agree on what has been agreed, are fully bound by the terms of the agreement and can implement the agreement in their own section or organisation.

Allow 15 minutes for this introduction to negotiating.

WITH WHOM DO YOU NEGOTIATE?

Point out that we are all involved in negotiating as part of our day-to-day activities. It is not just an activity for politicians, captains of industry or trade unions, but should be considered a life skill. Ask if there are any members of the group who are parents. Point out that it doesn't matter what age their children are, they are probably already involved in constant negotiations with them. Ask for some typical examples and they should provide you with such issues as homework, helping with household chores, bedtime, coming home after a night out, and so on

The participants will readily identify that their children are skilled negotiators. Ask them to identify some of the qualities their children display (even if they don't have any of their own then most participants will be able to join in with suggestions based on their own observations, or on their own behaviour as children).

List their ideas on the flipchart. Typical suggestions will include:

- persistence
- not taking 'no' for an answer
- using a variety of tactics
- creative in developing suggestions to break the impasse
- conjuring up a wide selection of benefits to you for agreeing their proposals
- manipulation and moral blackmail.

Whilst we are not suggesting that all of these are effective, they certainly make it difficult for the parent not to give way and move from their original position.

Distribute Handout 18.4
My range of negotiation contacts

Advise the group that you would like them to fill in the first two columns (headed 'People' and 'Issues') and to ignore the 'Outcome' column at this stage.

Tell them that you want them to think of their regular contacts both at work and in their social and domestic life. Can they identify the individuals (or organisations) with whom they negotiate regularly? Ask them to list these contacts in column one and in column two they should list the range of issues they negotiate about.

Give participants between 5 and 10 minutes to complete this task. When they have finished, ask them to tell you briefly about some of the people and issues that appear on their lists. Their examples will help establish the wide-ranging application of negotiating to all aspects of their work and life.

OUTCOMES OF NEGOTIATION

Return to the original list of words generated about negotiation. This will usually contain words such as 'winners' and 'losers'. Point out that whilst this is often true, the professional negotiator will try to leave the other party feeling satisfied with the deal. They aim for a 'win–win' outcome.

Move to the flipchart and on a clean sheet draw a cross dividing the flipchart paper into quarters. Write up the title 'OUTCOMES OF NEGOTIATIONS' and then write 'I win – You win' in one quarter. Ask the group to help you fill in the other three squares. They should be able to identify that the other three outcomes are: 'I win – you lose', 'I lose – you win' and 'I lose – you lose'.

(If the participants have completed *Activity 17 Managing conflict*, ask them to relate their conflict-handling ratings with how they fare in negotiations. There is usually a strong similarity in the outcomes.)

Why not 'win–lose'?
Ask the participants to think about a time when they have been on the winning side in a negotiation.

How did they feel after the event? They are likely to identify such feelings as: 'triumphant', 'ecstatic', 'extremely confident', 'on-top-of-the-world'. Point out that there is a fine line which when crossed can make winners feel arrogant and untouchable.

Now ask the participants to remember a time when they have been on the losing side ('I lose – you win'). The feelings associated with losing are invariably negative; 'cheated', 'humiliated', 'foolish' and 'angry'.

Ask them what they felt about their next encounter with the 'winner'. Most participants in this situation will readily agree that they couldn't wait to get their own back on the victor, usually driving an extra hard bargain on the next occasion they were in a similar situation.

Prefer 'win–win'
Professional negotiators know that they will have to return and do business with their adversary at some time in the future. The climate for that encounter will have been set by their past experience.
The professional will always leave their opponent thinking they have got a good deal. Even if the opponent hasn't made substantial gains there must always be an element of 'win–win' which could be essential if they are to save face when they return to their own work environment.

Ask the participants to suggest some benefits of adopting a negotiating strategy that sets out to achieve 'win–win' from the outset. List their ideas on the flipchart. They should identify such suggestions as:

- it meets the needs of both parties
- long-term relationships are developed
- the decision is acceptable to both parties
- it emphasises a flexible approach
- it develops two-way communication
- it avoids personality clashes and other destructive behaviour
- both parties may gain more from a collaborative approach than when one is out to win by putting the other down.

What results do you get?

Now ask the participants to return to *Handout 18.4 My range of negotiation contacts*. Tell them to fill in the final column marked 'Outcomes' to show how they fared in negotiating over the 'Issues' they identified. They should record whether they felt they won or lost and also note the outcome for the other party they were negotiating with.

Give them 5 minutes for this task. When they have finished, ask them to review their overall ratings. Ask them what this exercise has shown them about their habitual negotiating style.

Conclude this part of the session by asking them to call out the style that has occurred most frequently. Note their name down in the appropriate quarter of the flipchart. When you have a contribution from each member of the course, put the chart on a wall. You now have a visual display of the group's style which you can refer to throughout the session.

TRAINER'S TIP

This chart can be used to balance up the groups for the practical negotiating exercise that they will be participating in later.

Allow a total of 20 minutes for this section on the outcomes of negotiation.

PLANNING YOUR NEGOTIATIONS

Point out that negotiations, in common with many other management activities, benefit from taking time to plan before taking part in the activity.

Show OHT 18.2
The expectation test

Explain to the group that the first stage is to brainstorm a list of all the issues that could be used by either party to the negotiation. Tell them that the

more issues they can identify the better.
They will not be thrown by any surprises from their protagonist and may well identify several issues that may otherwise have been overlooked.

Warn the group that in any negotiation it is very easy to get bogged down with price. Point out that it is important to consider what you are getting for your money. Developing a checklist of all the issues will help you determine the overall value of the package you will eventually accept.

The next step after identifying the key issues is to consider what you want to achieve for each one. By setting your objectives before the negotiations, you will be able to judge progress and know when you are closing on a satisfactory deal.

What's your bottom line?
The process of setting objectives for each of the issues involves identifying three separate items:

1. What you must gain – your *fallback* position which represents your bottom line.
2. What you'd like to gain – your *realistic* settlement point.
3. What is the best possible outcome for you on this negotiating point – your *ideal* settlement point.

Identifying these different levels gives you an opportunity to move your position in the negotiating discussion – one of the prime requirements if you are to reach a workable compromise.

Point out that too many negotiations don't get off the ground because an impasse is set up by one of the parties starting with the bottom line, leaving no room for manoeuvre.

Among the dilemmas faced by any negotiator is where to pitch their opening bid, how far to move and how long to hold out for a settlement. The expectation test can provide some useful information but the precise starting point is always down to the judgement of the individual negotiators.

Forewarned is forearmed

The negotiator's next step involves them in making an estimate of their opponent's likely position on each of the identified issues.

To help them identify the need to do this, discuss a common example with the group. Ask the group who has ever bought a second-hand car. There are usually several in every group. Ask them what type of research they did before starting to buy the car of their choice.

Typical answers will include that they studied the 'For Sale' pages of their local papers to identify what price was being asked for models of different makes. Probe to find out why. They will answer that they needed to build up market research on what car (year, model, engine size, finish, accessories, and so on) was being offered at what price.

Most will also have checked out what their local dealers were offering by studying the display adverts and reading one of the many guides to used car prices showing levels they could expect to pay for cars in exceptional, good and average condition and what car dealers would offer as a trade-in price.

The last figure will generally give them the seller's bottom line, as private sellers will expect to get as a minimum a figure they could have been offered hassle-free by their local garage.

They may complain that this is relatively easy when you are dealing with buying a car where a lot of good information is readily available. Ask the group for ideas on how they can go about gathering information for other less public transactions. List their ideas on a flipchart.

Typical suggestions should include:

- Read the professional and trade publications of the organisations or speciality you are going to be dealing with.
- Talk to others who may have previously used the firm to supply goods or services. If you don't know any, many firms will supply you with lists of their past clients.
- Read their published annual company report and any other relevant company literature.
- Consumer organisations publish surveys with recommendations of 'best buys' and details on features, reliability and questions to ask suppliers.
- If they belong to a professional body or association, what guidelines do these have on terms of business? Many publish recommended rates and detail what their members should include in their package of services.
- Talk to other suppliers of similar services. Depending on what you are negotiating about there may be a local or national market rate.
- Talk to an agent or broker. Many organisations deal with agents as well as directly with their customers. Brokers such as travel agents, exhibition and conference organisers can give you valuable information about what you can expect for your money.

Distribute Handout 18.5
The expectation test

Tell the participants that they will now have the opportunity to develop an expectation test which they will use in preparation for a practical negotiation exercise later in the session.

Divide them into two groups and issue each group with the appropriate handout.

Distribute Handout 18.6
The hotel conference, part one – the organiser's brief

or

Distribute Handout 18.6
The hotel conference, part two – the hotel management brief

Inform them that at this stage you want each group to concentrate on developing an expectation test as preparation for the coming practical negotiation exercise.

Tell the participants that you want them to work as a group developing a common expectation test. This will enable you all to compare results of how each negotiating team has fared from identical information.

PREPARE YOUR TEAM AND YOUR STRATEGY

Put the groups into separate rooms so that they cannot listen to each other's deliberations. Inform them they have 30 minutes for this activity. Move between the groups and, if requested, provide any further information you may have.

Allow a total of 30 minutes for the whole of this planning section.

When the participants have finished preparing their expectation tests, reconvene into the main group. Lead a discussion focusing on what else the participants could do to prepare themselves to negotiate successfully. Typical ideas they should identify should include those listed on Handout 18.8.

Distribute Handout 18.8
Prepare your team and your strategy

Discuss each item on the handout. Point out that this will act as a useful aide during the coming practical exercise.

The preparation exercise and discussion should take a total of about 45 minutes.

NEGOTIATING EXERCISE

When you have finished the discussion, divide each of the two groups into separate negotiating teams. Try to put them into teams of three. One plays the negotiator, one the recorder and one the analyst. If you don't have enough participants then try pairs, with one person playing a joint role of analyser/recorder. You can either ask the participants to decide for themselves or allocate their roles based on the information in the 'win–win' matrix.

Give them 15 minutes to prepare in their negotiating teams. Move between the groups giving whatever advice and information they need.

Check that they are ready and arrange for each negotiating team to set up in an area where they can work without being disturbed by the other teams.

Whilst the negotiations are under way move between the groups to check progress. Make notes on specific instances of effective and ineffective negotiating behaviour, to provide useful illustrations for use during the review period.

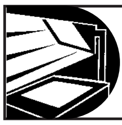
REVIEW

When all the teams have finished (hopefully when they have reached a viable agreement), ask each to record the final outcome of their negotiations on a flipchart.

Reconvene the teams back into the main group and lead a plenary discussion on what happened. Start by asking each team to display their 'Outcome' flipchart and to give a brief summary of what took place.

It will be interesting to note the different outcomes achieved by teams operating from identical information and expectations. Explore why this happened. These differences serve to emphasise that negotiating is an art. Like all art forms you can apply method, structure and discipline but you cannot prescribe the outcome.

When each team has reviewed their own performance show OHT 18.3.



Show OHT 18.3
Face-to-face negotiating behaviours

As you discuss each of the items, ask the group to come up with some examples from the last exercise. Add your own examples from the behaviours you observed when you moved between the groups.

Distribute Handout 18.9
Face-to-face negotiating behaviours

This handout will act as a reminder for the participants.

Allow 20 minutes for this review.

DRAWING UP AN ACTION PLAN

Divide the participants into pairs. Ask them to discuss the next negotiation they will become involved with at work. What are the key points they will incorporate into their preparation and conduct of that negotiation, based on their experiences in today's exercise? They should note these points in their Learning review diary, if they are using this approach to recording their learning (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii).

When they have drawn up their individual plans, finish this activity by reconvening the group and asking each individual to tell you about one of the key points they will act upon during their next negotiation.

When they have all identified a key learning point, thank them for their participation and close the session.

TRAINER'S TIP

The practical negotiating exercise can be managed in alternative ways.

Alternative one: Half the group participate whilst the other half observe.

Allocate each observer to a negotiator and give them the *Handout 18.9 Face-to-face negotiating behaviours*. When the exercise has finished, the observers have 10 minutes to give feedback to the individual they have been studying. Follow this with a plenary review in which all observers and negotiators review what happened and what face-to-face behaviours were on display.

Alternative two: Make a video recording.

If you have access to a video camera you could record the whole encounter. Make a note of interesting behaviours (most videos will have a counter or clock that helps with this). When the exercise has finished, lead a review using the video recording to illustrate the key teaching points you want to discuss.

Fenman Limited publish a Trainer's Activity Pack *Negotiating Skills* by Dave Clarke, Ian Steers and David Simmonds which provides further examples of negotiation role-plays.

Negotiation – definition

To confer with another with a view to compromise and agreement.

18.2

The expectation test

Topic				
		Settlement points		
Issues		Fallback	Realistic	Ideal
1.	Ours			
	Theirs			
2.	Ours			
	Theirs			
3.	Ours			
	Theirs			
4.	Ours			
	Theirs			
5.	Ours			
	Theirs			
6.	Ours			
	Theirs			

OK TO COPY

Face-to-face negotiating behaviours

Behaviour avoided by effective negotiators

- Using irritators
- Making counter-proposals
- Attacking and defending
- Woolly proposals
- Too many points in their arguments.

Behaviour used by effective negotiators

- Labelling their behaviour
- Asking questions
- Testing understanding
- Summarising
- Building on other's ideas
- Expressing feelings.

My range of negotiation contacts

People	Issues	Outcome

The expectation test

Topic			
	Settlement points		
Issues	Fallback	Realistic	Ideal
1. Ours			
Theirs			
2. Ours			
Theirs			
3. Ours			
Theirs			
4. Ours			
Theirs			
5. Ours			
Theirs			
6. Ours			
Theirs			

18.6

The hotel conference

Part one – The organiser's brief

You have been delegated by your firm to organise a team-building event. This will involve the whole team staying at a good-quality hotel which offers the type of facilities needed for the event. The precise details haven't yet been fixed but the pattern of previous events has included the following:

Day one – The group assemble in the evening for a short welcome and keynote speech from one of the senior managers. This is followed by an informal dinner, the main purpose of which is to get the team to relax and develop informal contacts.

Day two – The senior manager leaves and you are joined by an external facilitator who will help orchestrate the day. This will involve all the participants taking part in a variety of small-group activities, each of which ends by reporting back to the whole group for a plenary review.

Among the activities there will be the showing of a video message from the CEO detailing the organisation's direction. The Marketing Director will attend the final session before dinner to show and discuss your latest television commercials. The Marketing Director will stay for the night and join you for a full evening meal. After dinner you plan to hold a light-hearted event which will allow people to relax but continue to build up team camaraderie.

Day three – The final day will involve the team working in groups to summarise the key points from the previous day and working out a development plan for return to work. This is a half-day and will finish with lunch, after which people will disperse. There are no additional people attending on the final day.

You are about to meet the Conference Manager of a hotel that may be able to meet your requirements. No one in your team or organisation has used this hotel in the past but they have been recommended by the Tourist Board Advisory Service. You are keen to negotiate a good price for the event, but even more important, you must make sure that it is a memorable event that leaves the participants feeling positive about the organisation.

Continued …

The hotel conference

… continued

What are your needs?

Accommodation

Accommodation is needed for 20 team members for two nights. They will arrive around 6 p.m. on day one and leave after lunch on day three. They each need an en-suite room for the duration of the event.

Accommodation is also needed for the following participants:

- Senior Manager – 1 night, leaving after breakfast on day two
- Facilitator – 1 night, arrives morning of second day, leaves after lunch on day three
- Marketing Manager – 1 night, arrives mid-afternoon on day two, leaves after breakfast on day three.

Breakfast for all overnight stays each morning.
Evening meal for 21 on day one and 22 on day two.
Lunch for 21 on two days.
Refreshments mid-morning and mid-afternoon on appropriate days.
Your preference is for a buffet lunch on both days and for formal, three-course, evening meals.

Meeting room

A large meeting room that will seat all participants in a horseshoe format is required. You will need this for the duration of the event.
On days two and three you will also need three syndicate rooms, each capable of holding seven people sitting boardroom-style around a table.

Equipment

The main room should have an OHP and screen, and two flipcharts, equipped with pads and marker pens. A whiteboard and an area to fix group's flipchart paper would also be useful. Each syndicate room should be equipped with a separate flipchart, pad and pens and both the main room and syndicate rooms will need A4 writing paper and pens for participants' own notes.

You need a colour television and video player on day two.

continued …

The hotel conference

… continued

Transport
Half of the participants will arrive by car, the other half will arrive on two separate trains on day one. The three guests will all be arriving by train. As the hotel is several miles from the station you would ideally like the hotel to arrange transport for all concerned.

Evening activity
You are looking for suggestions about a suitable event to meet your remit for the second evening. This should be light-hearted and continue the theme of team building.

Price
You have made some preliminary enquiries from the Tourist Board which gave a price range of £100–£175 for a 24 hour delegate rate and £35–£65 per delegate for a non-residential day. They have pointed out that you will need to check what is included in the rate as packages for conferences vary from hotel to hotel.

You know that hotel Conference Managers have a great deal of discretion on what to charge for 'extras' to any package. These typically include the provision of conference equipment, especially TV and video, syndicate rooms and extra flipcharts, food with refreshments, and transport arrangements. You are also aware that the conference market is highly competitive at the moment.

Budget
You have the authority to spend up to £5000 for the whole package but would prefer to settle for a lower figure. A conference that met its aims and came in under budget would impress your bosses and undoubtedly improve your career prospects.

The hotel conference

Part two – The hotel management brief

You are the Conference Manager of a three star hotel. Your job involves building up the conference trade to supplement the hotel's income, during the quiet periods of the year. You have been approached by a representative of a national organisation who wants to discuss holding a short conference at your hotel in the next few months. You are keen to secure this business as you think that if they have a successful conference, there will be the possibility of other sections of their organisation using you. Having them as a client could also impress other national organisations and would be useful for your advertising material.

The hotel has a schedule of conference rates but you have considerable discretion about fixing the precise rate and package for each event. Many of your costs are fixed costs and you will benefit from having revenue at a non-peak time of your year. It is important, however, that you at least break even. As this is essentially a one-off conference, with no guarantee of further bookings, you cannot allow it to run at a loss.

Price

The range of rates offered by your rivals is £100–£175 per delegate for a 24-hour residential package and £35–£65 per delegate for a non-residential package. Your current standard package is in the middle of this range at £135 per 24-hour delegate and £50 for non-residential delegates.

The 24-hour package includes:

- overnight accommodation in standard en-suite bedroom (you have six deluxe rooms available at a supplement of £25 per night)
- morning coffee with biscuits
- afternoon tea with biscuits
- finger-buffet lunch in conference room
- three course *table d'hôte* dinner in restaurant
- hire of Conference Room
- flipcharts, OHP and screen
- conference room stationery.

Continued …

The hotel conference

… continued

A 25 per cent discount is available on the standard package if the conference is held on a Saturday or Sunday.

Additional items

- Danish pastries and fruit with breaks – £1.50 per head per break
- Unlimited tea, coffee all day – £1.50 per head
- Syndicate rooms – £50 per room per day
- Additional flipcharts, pads and pens – £10 each per day
- Television and video – £45 per day
- Carousel projector – £30 per day
- Hot/cold buffet lunch – £5 per head supplement
- Five course 'special' dinner (agreed selection of items from *à la carte* menu) – £10 per head supplement.

The hotel has a small, fully equipped leisure centre. This closes after 20.00 hours. After this time it can be hired for private parties at £50 per night (£150 Saturday and Sunday). You also have extensive contacts with local organisations such as a bowling alley, golf driving range, clay pigeon shooting, a laser maze and a go-kart track. You have agreed an inclusive fee of £100 per party (£200 Saturday and Sunday) with each of these organisations.

The hotel has a 12-seater minibus which is available at short notice at no additional cost to the users.

One of your staff is a former Butlin's Redcoat. Previous conferences have hired him to provide an entertaining speech and/or organise amusing activities. You usually leave this to the individual organiser to arrange, but know he charges about £100 for the evening.

Prepare your team and your strategy

- **Identify what type of negotiation it will be** – If both parties' settlement points are close together it should be easier to reach a settlement that will be beneficial to both.

- **Prioritise your needs and set your objectives** – It can be a useful tactic to concede points that are of less importance to you in order to gain your major goals.

- **What points are non-negotiable?** – This is usually where all expectation test points are identical. A typical example could be a fixed date for a conference.

- **Decide your strategy** – Think of putting together a number of items to form a package rather than single issues. This will give you room for manoeuvre and helps you avoid entrenched positions.

- **What items form a natural link?** – 'I'll give you this if you'll give me that.'

- **Identify items that will be cheap for you to concede** – but valuable for *them* to have.

- **Identify areas of common ground** – These can be used to build a climate of mutual trust and co-operation.

- **Decide what roles the members of your team will play** – It can be confusing if you all try to join in. Most teams require members to play one of three roles

  1. *The negotiator* who does most of the talking, bargaining and making counter proposals.

  2. *The analyst* who takes a back seat as far as direct contribution goes. This detachment helps them evaluate the opponent's case, spot underlying weaknesses and pick up on signals.

Continued …

Prepare your team and your strategy

… continued

3. *The recorder* who is similar to the minute-taker in a meeting. Often there are so many proposals flying around that you need someone to make a note of what has been offered and what has been accepted.

- **Decide on your opening** – A perpetual dilemma for all negotiators is deciding where they should open, when and how far to move and how long to hold out for a settlement. The Expectation Test will help them work this out.

- **Focus on a 'win–win' outcome** – What voice tone will you adopt? What body language? What will you say to build up their confidence so that you can do business together successfully?

Face-to-face negotiating behaviours

Behaviour avoided by effective negotiators

- **Using irritators**
  Avoid words or phrases that are likely to provoke an emotional reaction from your antagonist.

- **Making counter-proposals**
  Immediate counter-proposals could suggest you haven't really considered or understood what the other person is suggesting.

- **Attacking and defending**
  Attacking the other party on an emotional level is likely to escalate the conflict and produce a reciprocal attack once they have defended their position.

- **Woolly proposals**
  Don't be vague or ambiguous in what you are putting forward. Unless your ideas are clear and specific they are likely to be misunderstood.

- **Too many points in their arguments**
  It is rare for all the points supporting your case to be of equal value. An astute opponent will pick up on these and weaken the credibility of your case.

Continued …

18.9

Face-to-face negotiating behaviours

… continued

Behaviour used by effective negotiators

- **Labelling their behaviour**
  This gives you the opportunity to draw the listener to the behaviour you are about to undertake.

- **Asking questions**
  Finding out as much as you can about their position will help you identify common ground.

- **Testing understanding**
  Check out that you have accurately understood their position, problems and constraints.

- **Summarising**
  Frequent summarising shows you have been paying attention and listening accurately.

- **Building on other's ideas**
  Instead of knocking down their ideas, look for areas where you can build on their suggestions to mutual advantage.

- **Expressing feelings**
  Be open and honest about how you are feeling about how the negotiations are progressing. When this is seen as being genuine it will promote honest understanding and reciprocal behaviour.

Activity 19
Time management

Purpose

To enable participants to appreciate the importance of managing time as a resource for project managers. To introduce them to some of the techniques associated with effective time management and give them the opportunity to develop them.

Activity 19
Time management

How do I plan my day and then work my plan?

Purpose

To enable participants to appreciate the importance of managing time as a resource for project managers. To introduce them to some of the techniques associated with effective time management and give them the opportunity to develop them.

Application

This activity covers a core skill for all project managers, regardless of the size or complexity of their project.

It could also form an integral part of any training programme that aims to develop time management skills. It is applicable to a wide range of management and supervisory skills programmes,
for example, Time Management, Stress Management, Assertion and Personal Effectiveness.

The activity can stand-alone but will be more effective when used in conjunction with *Activities 4 and 5 The power of planning – parts one and two*. Some of the early material overlaps with items included in *Activity 16 Managing performance* and *Activity 17 Managing conflict*.

What happens

You start the session by leading a discussion which identifies that time management is a key resource that is central to the role of the project manager. The unusual nature and difficulties associated with managing time are established.

You next introduce the participants to a five-step approach which will enable them to manage their time effectively. These steps are discussed and the participants develop their skills through five linked exercises.

The session ends with the opportunity for the participants to review and make an action plan for using the key points at work. They complete their Learning review diary, where appropriate.

Time

Overall time required: 2 hours 40 minutes.

- Introduction: 20 minutes
- Step one – Establish your goals: 15 minutes
- Step two – Set your priorities: 15 minutes
- Step three – Make your plan: 40 minutes
- Step four – Monitor your activity: 15 minutes
- Step five – Protect your plan: 40 minutes
- Review and action plan: 15 minutes.

Materials & resources

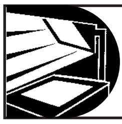
- 5 OHT masters:
  19.1 *A typical day?*
  19.2 *Typical management resources*
  19.3 *Management – definition*
  19.4 *Managing your time*
  19.5 *Determining priorities*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- Paper and pens for participants
- OHT acetates
- OHT acetate marker pens

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION

Open the session by asking the participants if they recognise the character in OHT 19.1.



Show OHT 19.1
A typical day?

Point out that it is quite easy to empathise with his plight. Most of us have probably felt like this at some time in our jobs.

Remind the group that we have discussed in other activities how a project manager has to manage a number of resources.

Either

Show OHT 19.2
Typical management resources

or

Return to the flipchart you drew in *Activity 17 Managing conflict* (page 17–19).

Tell the group that there are a number of reasons that our cartoon character could have got into such a state. The one we want to concentrate on in this session is the most frequent underlying cause.

Ask the group for their opinion of what this is; they will probably reply, 'Poor time management'.

Point out that time is notoriously difficult to manage. Of all the resources it tends to be unique in that there is a fixed amount for everyone. It is one resource over which – in one way – we have no control. Regardless of our job, seniority or experience there are still only 24 hours in a day. We tend to act as though we can create it, save it or get ahead of it. What we can do is look to see how well we are using it. For many managers, like our cartoon figure, they don't manage time, it manages them.

One of the reasons for the emphasis on time management for project managers is that all projects have a unique start and finish point. Point out that we discussed in previous activities that the completion date is often fixed through your project plan (see *Activities 4* and *5 The power of planning*). Many projects have a penalty clause built in which means the project manager's organisation will have to pay financial compensation to their client if the project falls behind the agreed dates. Time represents a clear measure of effectiveness, and everyone will be using the same calendar.

Point out a common definition of management. (This definition is used several times in this pack so only show the OHT if the participants have not covered this before.)

Show OHT 19.3
Management – definition

Ask the group to help you distinguish between efficiency and effectiveness. Can you be efficient and yet not be effective?

The answers you are looking for are that in time management terms, *effectiveness* means using your time to achieve the results or performance required in your job. *Efficiency* means using your time to maximise its productivity. You can perform your tasks efficiently, i.e. you are doing things well, but to be effective you need to focus on doing the things that really need to be done.

What's involved in managing your time?
To be an effective time manager you need to master the following steps.

Show OHT 19.4
Managing your time

Show the OHT as an overview and then discuss what's involved in each step with the participants.

Allow 20 minutes for this introduction.

STEP ONE – ESTABLISH YOUR GOALS

All jobs exist for a purpose. The project manager's role is usually easier to define than many other management positions. If you have documented a goal or goals for the project then achieving that goal(s) should become the purpose of your job. Others in the project team will need to review what their job contributes to the overall project.

Exercise One
Ask the participants to write down, in one or two sentences, a statement of their job purpose. Point out that it is important to state what they are doing as distinct from what their staff or own manager is doing.

Allow 15 minutes for Step one.

STEP TWO – SET YOUR PRIORITIES

Having established your goal or goals, the next step involves identifying the priority activities that you *must* achieve if you are to meet that goal. You should be able to identify the main areas where personal failure on your part would adversely affect the project team's performance.

Tell the group to use the 80/20 Rule – this rule of thumb was identified by an Italian economist, Wilfredo Pareto. He identified that in any range of items it was often the vital few (the 20 per cent) which had the greatest value in achieving the target (they contributed 80 per cent to the overall effort).

Most people will have between four and six main responsibilities for their post. They will perform other activities, but these are the critical ones.
To be effective you must perform these priority items on time.

Exercise two
Ask the participants to identify the key areas of their posts. Point out that this shouldn't be a full job description but is used to highlight the priorities for their job.

Allow 15 minutes for Step two.

STEP THREE – MAKE YOUR PLAN

Long-term planning
Knowing what your priorities are will help you plan your work. These milestones will give you something to focus on and develop plans of action well in

advance to meet them. Long-term plans need not show the detail but are used to identify your major activities and objectives.

Activity 5 The power of planning – part two describes how to construct a Gantt chart (page 5–8). This will help you identify bottle-necks and conflicts. Where problems are identified you might be able to:

- bring forward the start date of activities
- secure additional resources
- drop certain activities
- postpone other activities.

Short-term planning

Remind the group that Prime Minister Harold Wilson once said 'A week is a long time in politics'. This can also be true when managing a project. If you let the time slip by you will not have made the most effective use of your day.

The first step in using your day effectively is to work out what you want to do with it. This will involve you in establishing a daily 'To do' list.

Ask the participants to indicate which of them already adopt this approach. For those who use it and stick to it, it becomes an invaluable aid to time management.

Exercise three

Hand a blank sheet of A4 paper to each participant and ask them to make a list of all the tasks they have to do when they return to work. The list should contain all the activities they need to complete for that day. Remind them to include telephone calls, meetings, individuals they need to speak to and all the other small jobs they could get involved in.

Tell them not to try to think of any priority order but simply write them down as they come to mind. They will find that once they start writing they will start to remember more and more items.

Give them about 5 minutes to generate their lists. When they have finished listing all the tasks, they can begin to prioritise them.

Urgent or important work

Tell the participants that the next step is to determine, for each possible task they have identified, its importance or urgency in relation to their key priorities and work schedule. Ask them to review the items and decide if they are urgent or important tasks.

Important tasks – those tasks that will lead to the accomplishment of an important objective or worsen it if they are not completed successfully.

Urgent tasks – those that have to be done in a very short timescale.

Point out that at work there is often a constant pull on our time between the two. The problem with important tasks is that they often do not have to be done straight away, whereas urgent tasks call for immediate action. As a result we seem to be busy but often wonder at the end of the day 'Where has my time gone? What exactly have I achieved today?'

This means that at the start of each day, having generated a list of possible tasks we must stop to ask ourselves several questions.

Show OHT 19.5
Determining priorities

Point out that the last question on the list shows that identifying priorities is not an easy task as it involves balancing many factors. As well as balancing urgency and importance they will have to bear in mind the relationship of each task to other matters, as well as human and political considerations.

Exercise four

Ask the group to look through their list of tasks and identify whether each is A, B or C.

A = Priority tasks. Must be done by me today.
B = Important tasks. Could be done by me or one of my team.
C = Low priority tasks. An item we can postpone until another time.

Tell the participants that using this discipline they can then schedule their daily planner. Point out that this approach has a number of advantages:

- You clearly establish your priorities and build them into your day
- You can identify what you can delegate to your staff
- You can see how much time you can devote to non-priority items
- You don't lose track of those items that have the potential to be dangerous if they are ignored completely
- You can turn down inappropriate requests and book appointments in relation to your schedule.

Allow 40 minutes in total for Step three.

STEP FOUR – MONITOR YOUR ACTIVITY

Ask the participants who use a 'To do' list what are the main problems they encounter that prevent them using it effectively. There are two common problems.

1. Starting at the wrong end

Rather than starting with the priorities they often start the day by doing a few trivial items from yesterday's list.

This may give some satisfaction but quickly becomes unproductive. Point out that the 'To do' list needs to be drawn up at the start of each day (last thing before you leave the office is the only viable alternative). Any 'C' items are then re-evaluated. Have they moved up the rating scale, or can they safely be postponed again without any repercussions?

2. Constant interruptions

One of our problems that can come from over-scheduling is that we then have no slack in the day to handle the items we haven't planned but which need our attention. Do not overfill your day. Keep some time in reserve. Items invariably take longer that anticipated and there are always going to be unforeseen interruptions to your day.

A useful technique for gauging interruptions is to keep a simple time-log. This should show you who is interrupting about what and for how long. Keep this alongside your daily schedule and you will soon spot how much time is being diverted from your key priorities.

Keep an eye open for any discernible patterns. Are you prone to be interrupted at a particular time? Is it about a similar topic area? Are you being interrupted by the same person or the same types of people? Having this information will help you to achieve the next step.

Allow 15 minutes for Step four.

STEP FIVE – PROTECT YOUR PLAN

Point out that before you can resolve any problem you have to work out what you want to change. Monitoring your time will give you clear ideas about where the interruptions are coming from. Now we need a strategy either to prevent them from happening, or to manage them in order to minimise the disruption.

Exercise five

Divide the participants into two groups. Issue each group with blank sheets of acetate and suitable marker pens. Tell them that they have 15 minutes to come up with at least twenty ideas for preventing or managing interruptions. Point out that these ideas can be as creative as they like – we can often find a practical application for even the most outrageous suggestion.

Get the groups under way. Give them a time check and make sure they are keeping on track and have enough material.

When they have finished, reconvene and lead a plenary review. Clarify the thinking behind the ideas displayed on the first group's acetate. Now show and discuss the second group's list. Suggest items based on your own experience. Ask the groups if they want to add the other group's ideas to their own lists.

The following are some typical ideas:

- Have 'open door' access only at certain times – let other people know when you will be available.
- Have a 'closed door' period – when your door is shut *no one* interrupts you.
- Insist on all callers having an appointment.
- Go and hide somewhere – library, boardroom, and so on.
- Work from home – during office hours of course.
- Have your telephone calls screened by your secretary/assistant – give them a copy of your schedule.
- Use 'call divert' – but do inform the person you've diverted the calls to.
- Put your answerphone on – record a short message and then turn the sound down. The caller can still hear your message but you won't hear their recording.
- If you know someone is coming, try to intercept them outside your office.
- Stand up when they come in, and remain standing; if they sit down, sit on the edge of you desk.
- Walk gradually to the door and hold it open for them.
- If they ask 'Can you spare a minute?' say no, but arrange a time to meet later.
- Adopt a brief but businesslike manner – keep chat to a minimum.
- If they want to talk about social/sporting events, arrange to meet after work.
- If your interruptions are from the same people, ask why. Do they lack confidence? Do they need

training? Are you giving them clear briefing about what you want them to do?

- Issue clear written guidance on what's required.
- Call a meeting. You can talk to a great number of people at one time. Two-way communication will allow all their questions to be answered.
- In an open-plan office put up a barrier (pot plant, hat stand, etc.) that will stop casual callers dropping in as they pass.
- Stick up a large, humourous sign or use some other signal to show that you're busy (one colleague wore a jester's hat – a 'thinking cap' – which showed they were not to be disturbed. This drew initial attention but other staff soon got the message).

Photocopy the group's OHT sheets and issue these as a supplementary handout.

Allow 40 minutes for completing Step five.

REVIEW AND ACTION PLAN

Ask the participants to consider all the suggestions on view. Which are most applicable to their current situation?

After they have made their choice, lead a review of the whole session. Ask them to consider which items they would like to highlight for immediate use when they return to work on their projects.

Give them some time to fill in their Learning review diary (see 'How to use this resource' page xii).

Ask for some volunteers to disclose what they will be attempting to incorporate after the course.

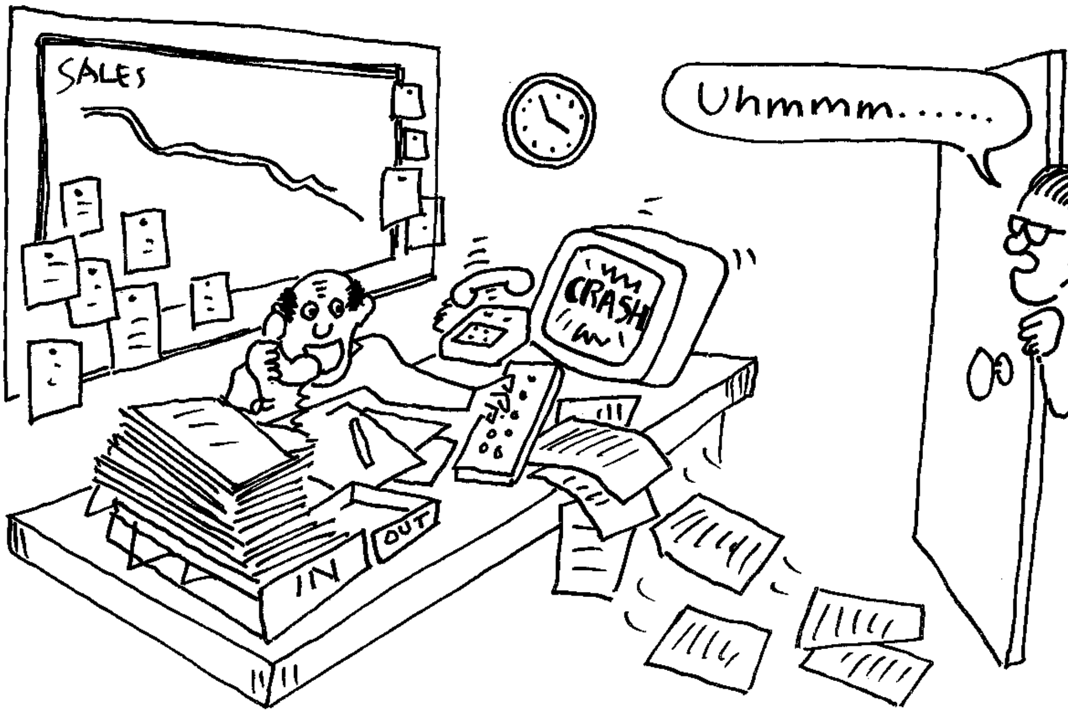
When all who wish to contribute have done so, thank them all for their work and close the session.

TRAINER'S TIP

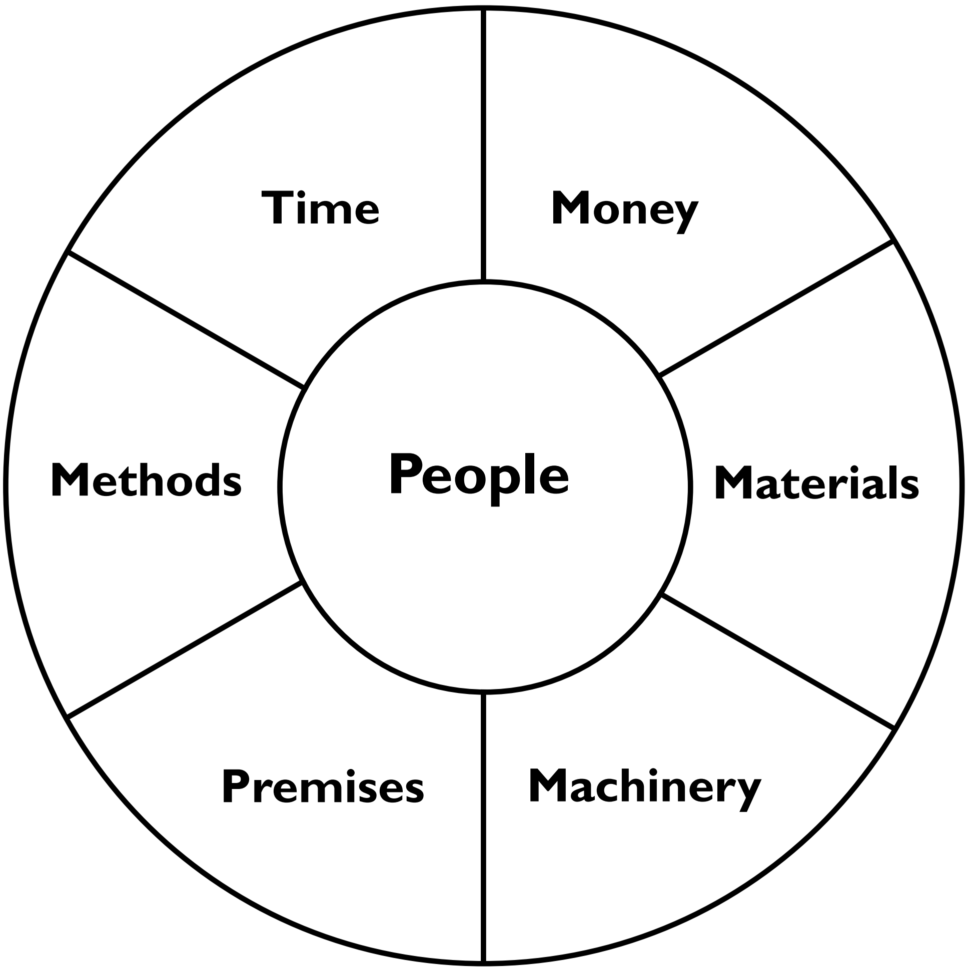
Fenman Limited also produce the following materials on this area:
Setting Objectives training video (1994)
Time to be Effective Trainer's Activity Pack

If you incorporate either in the session you will need to adjust the timings accordingly.

A typical day?



Typical management resources



Management – definition

Management is the *efficient* and *effective* use of resources to achieve results with and through the efforts of other people.

Managing your time

Step one – Establish your goals

Step two – Set your priorities

Step three – Make your plan

Step four – Monitor your activity

Step five – Protect your plan

Determining priorities

- Do I have to do this work today?
- Do I have to do this work now?
- Do I have to do this work at all?
- If I do this work, what would I have to delay or abandon?
- Who else could do this work?
- What would happen if no one did this work?
- How does this work relate to my key tasks and objectives?
- Who else is involved or affected by this task?
- How important are they to me?

Activity 20
Managing project meetings

Purpose

To show participants what they can do to improve the structure and process of meetings in order to make them more effective.

Activity 20
Managing project meetings

How do I ensure that my project meetings are productive?

Purpose

To show participants what they can do to improve the structure and process of meetings in order to make them more effective.

Application

Managing meetings is a core skill for all project managers. The activity would be useful for participants who are members of project teams even where they do not have direct responsibility for convening and running a meeting.

This activity works well as a follow-on to *Activity 9 Making a project presentation*. The participants can then practise their persuasive presentation skills in the context of a competitive meeting.

It can also be used on broader-based management training events such as Introduction to Management, Assertiveness, and Team Leadership Skills, or form the foundation of a more detailed course on Managing Meetings.

What happens

You lead a discussion which enables the participants to identify the reasons why many of the meetings they have attended are not effective.

The participants then work in two groups and draw up a checklist of key points that need to be considered before and during the meeting to ensure its success. Their views are reinforced by two handouts detailing seven steps to success.

You then provide an opportunity for the participants to try out these key points by participating in two linked exercises. The first is a preparatory meeting for the second one.

The second meeting is carried out by the whole group. The Chair and Secretary are selected from among the participants.

The activity ends with a review of the exercise which allows the key learning points to be identified and turned into an action plan for each participant's continued development at work. They fill in their Learning review diary (if appropriate).

Time

Overall time available: 4 hours.

- Introduction: 20 minutes
- Keys for effective meetings: 30 minutes
- Practical exercise – the management meeting
  Part one – The regional meeting:
  1 hour 15 minutes
  Part two – The project review board meeting:
  1 hour 15 minutes
- Review: 30 minutes
- Action plan: 10 minutes.

Material & resources

- 3 OHT masters:
  20.1 *A typical attitude to meetings*
  20.2 *Seven steps for setting up effective meetings*
  20.3 *Seven steps for managing effective meetings*

- 4 Handout masters:
  20.4 *Seven steps for setting up effective meetings*
  20.5 *Seven steps for managing effective meetings*
  20.6 *The management meeting*
  20.7 *Reaching a decision by consensus*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- Flipchart paper and coloured marker pens for participants
- OHT acetates
- OHT acetate marker pens
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)
- Photocopying facilities for groups to use

In preparation

Before the session, ask the participants to identify an appropriate problem from their own work area which might benefit from being discussed by managers from a wider range of backgrounds.

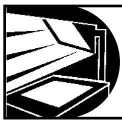
Tell them that they should be prepared to discuss the following points:

- identification of the problem
- their perception of the major issues involved
- an outline of any action already attempted
- some suggestions for alternative courses of action.

They should bring brief background data, papers, visual aids, and so on. These may be copied to help give the other course members an insight into the problem area.

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION



Show OHT 20.1
A typical attitude to meetings

Tell the participants that most managers spend a large proportion of their time in meetings. Unfortunately, most meetings are regarded as time wasters. Ask the group to think of meetings they have attended that they felt were a total waste of time. Now ask them to tell you what contributed towards that viewpoint. Write their answers on a flipchart sheet. They should identify such issues as:

- there are too many meetings
- nothing is ever decided
- no agenda beforehand
- the meeting drifts off the point
- they last too long
- they lack focus
- one individual dominates
- people are allowed to drone on without coming to the point
- you aren't allowed to make the points you want
- decisions are taken by a cabal before the meeting
- we never start on time and always run late

- key speakers don't arrive
- their deputies are unprepared
- we were asked to make a decision on the spot on information we had only just seen
- conflict always breaks out between the same groups of people
- no one listens, they just want to talk
- we come away saying 'What was the point of that?'
- no minutes are circulated, or
- we only get the minutes of the last meeting when we arrive at the next
- no one is assigned responsibility so there is usually no action between one meeting and the next.

Point out that this sorry state of affairs usually reflects the fact that many meetings are poorly organised and controlled. The fault usually lies with the people rather than the meeting. Allow 20 minutes for this introduction to the activity.

KEYS FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Divide the group into two sub-groups, A and B. Inform them that they will both shortly be participating in a meeting. Ask them to draw up a checklist of key points that need to be considered:

Group A – Before the meeting
Group B – During the meeting

Issue each group with blank sheets of acetate and a set of suitable marker pens. Check that they understand what's expected from them. Inform them they have 15 minutes to complete the exercise, and get them started.

When the groups have finished, reconvene and lead a plenary review. Ask group A to go first, show their transparency and discuss the points shown.

The type of suggestions you should expect to see included are:

- **Check you need a meeting** – Only call a meeting when it is really necessary. Could some other method of communication achieve the purpose more effectively?

- **Establish the purpose** – It is important to have a clear idea of why the meeting has been called. Is it to inform, to collect information, to make a decision, to solve a problem? If they know what's expected of them, participants can be prepared.

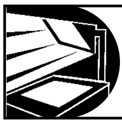
- **Issue an agenda** – This will be your route map for the meeting. It should show clearly what items are going to be discussed in what order. Structure the items logically and give each an approximate time.

- **Check the timing** – Make sure that there are not too many items for the topics and purpose of the meeting. Overcrowding will mean that later items are rushed or not covered at all.

- **Decide who to invite** – Be selective and invite only those who will contribute. Too many people will make it difficult for all to have a say. Too few may not produce enough ideas or real consensus.

- **Help them to prepare** – As well as the agenda, what other information do they need to help them prepare thoroughly before the meeting?

- **Book a venue** – Where will the meeting take place? Make sure the room is the right size with the right equipment and furniture to suit your purpose. Book the refreshments and any other services you need.



Show OHT 20.2
Seven steps for setting up effective meetings

Distribute Handout 20.4
Seven steps for setting up effective meetings

Encourage the participants to combine their notes with the ideas in the handout.

Now ask group B to report back using the same approach as group A. Typical suggestions they should volunteer include:

- **Start on time** – Do not wait for latecomers. Even if you are the only one there on time, as Chairperson begin!

- **Stick to the agenda** – It has been placed in order of urgency, importance and the relationship between items. Don't divert from this unless it is vital.

- **Keep on track** – Stick to the time allocated for each item. The best way to do this is to keep your focus and stick to the topic under discussion.

- **Control the discussion** – You need to encourage participation without letting individuals dominate the discussion. Make sure that you have a balance of contributions from all present.

- **Work for consensus** – If the group are committed to a decision they are most likely to implement it. Imposed decisions may save time but are likely to be resisted in the long term.

- **Summarise decisions** – Sum up after each action point. Ensure that all members know precisely what they have been assigned to do, and by when.

- **Finish on time** – End the meeting promptly when all your objectives have been achieved. Close with a full summary of everything that has been agreed. Agree a time when the minutes will be circulated and when any follow-up meeting will take place.

Show OHT 20.3
Seven steps for managing effective meetings

Distribute Handout 20.4
Seven steps for managing effective meetings

This work on key points should take about 30 minutes.

PRACTICAL EXERCISE – THE MANAGEMENT MEETING

Inform the group that they are all members of Fenscape Consulting – a nationwide organisation that specialises in helping companies to manage projects and problems.

The exercise will take place in two sections.

Part one – The regional meeting
The participants will work in small regional groups. Members of your group are consultants representing a region of the country – either North, South, East or West. The purpose of the regional meeting is to discuss the problems identified by the individual group members.

Each member should be given the opportunity to:
- identify the problem
- give their perception of the major issues involved
- outline any action already attempted.

The rest of the group then discuss:
- alternative courses of action
- preferred option(s) for the future.

At the end of the preliminary meeting you should decide which of the proposals your region will support and present for approval to the project review board meeting. Work cannot start on your regional solution unless it has main board support.

During the board meeting your group must be ready to introduce your proposed choice of action in order to seek overall approval to proceed. Each presentation should last no longer than 10 minutes. The other members of your group must be ready to contribute to the subsequent discussion.

Fenscape Consulting has established a reputation in the marketplace for high-quality, cost-effective solutions that really work. Any resolution will only be passed by the board after a rigorous examination to ensure that it will maintain the firm's high standards.

An OHP, flipchart and photocopier are available to help each group to put over their case.

Each group is to appoint a Chairperson whose role is to run the preliminary meeting along the guidelines identified earlier. Each group should also appoint a Secretary to liaise with the board meeting Secretary.

Distribute Handout 20.6
The management meeting

Choose a Chairperson and a Secretary for the board meeting

Before allocating participants to the groups, ask for volunteers to chair and to act as Secretary of the board meeting. Neither of these people will participate in the regional group meetings. The Chairperson will be responsible for setting up and running the board meeting. The Secretary will assist in setting up the board meeting, will liaise with the Secretaries of the regional groups and collect (and re-issue as appropriate) the paperwork prepared before the board meeting. They will also take the minutes of the action points from the main meeting.

Check if the participants have any questions about what is required of them. Allocate them to groups.

(You should aim to have at least four participants in each group.) Tell them they have 1 hour to finish their preliminary meeting. Get them under way and then brief the Chairperson and Secretary for the board meeting.

Tell the Secretary that their main jobs at this stage are to liaise with the Secretaries of the regional groups, to help determine their contribution to the main meeting. They are also to help the Chairperson set up the meeting using the guidelines discussed previously.

During the meeting the Secretary will have a dual role – to keep the minutes and to observe how the Chairperson conducts the meeting. Tell the Chairperson and Secretary that while the regional groups are planning for the board meeting they should both discuss the art of chairing meetings and agree on how this particular meeting will be conducted (as outlined in Handout 20.4 Seven steps for setting up effective meetings).

Move between the regional groups giving any help and advice requested. Try not to contribute to the content of their discussion, but make sure they keep focused and on time. Provide any support materials they will need to make their presentation to the main board meeting.

When the regional groups have finished, give the Chairperson and Secretary for the board meeting 15 minutes to draw up and circulate the final agenda together with any background information they think necessary. When all participants have read the material it is time to start the main board meeting.

This first part of the practical exercise should take about 1 hour 15 minutes.

Part two – The project review board meeting
Each regional group comes to the board meeting to present their case and to listen to and make decisions on the proposals put forward by the other regions.

Inform the group that the meeting is to be viewed as an exercise in group decision making. They are to aim for a consensus on whether they should accept a regional proposal. This means that every member must agree with a substantial part of the decision before it is approved.

Distribute Handout 20.7
Reaching a decision by consensus

Discuss the points on the handout, and when everyone understands the approach, get the meeting under way.

During the proceedings the trainer's role is to be a 'fly-on-the-wall'. Try not to intervene on either the content or process of the meeting. Make notes on both effective and ineffective behaviour, from the Chairperson, the Secretary and participants (you will find the three previous handouts a good guide as to what to look out for).

The meeting finishes when the Chairperson declares it closed – which may be some time after the agenda indicates.

Give the Secretary 15 minutes to finish the final minutes and to issue a copy to all concerned.

Part two of the practical exercise should take about 1 hour 15 minutes.

REVIEW

Start the review by agreeing the minutes as a true and accurate record of the decisions taken and actions allocated by the meeting.

Now lead a discussion which explores how well the exercise was handled. You could start with each of the regional groups. Ask them for their opinion on how well they managed the preliminary meeting. Probe for specific evidence behind their ideas.
Ask them to identify one area where they did really well and one area they could improve next time.

Add any comments based on your own observations at the time.

Now move on to reviewing the main board meeting. Start by asking the Chairperson for their views on how the meeting unfolded. Probe to find out their opinion on how well they managed the event as well as the contribution of the group members. Ask them what their main objectives were. How close did they come to achieving them?

Now invite the Secretary to contribute from their viewpoint. How did they feel they performed this role? What were the problems they had in liaising with the regional groups? How well did they think the Chairperson ran the meeting?

You can now throw the discussion open. What did the participants feel about the main board meeting? Ask for comments on the performances of the Chairperson and the Secretary. Make sure that any criticisms are constructive and backed by specific examples.

Finally, provide any outstanding feedback based on your own observations. Much may confirm what the participants have contributed. Express this, as it can be useful confirmatory evidence for them.
If you have any fresh points, express them constructively based on specific and observed behaviour.

Allow 30 minutes for the review.

ACTION PLAN

When everyone has had the opportunity to contribute, you have finished the review discussion. Ask the participants to spend some time reflecting back on the whole activity. What key learning points have emerged? Ask them to think of their next project meetings at work. What actions will they take to transfer their learning and improve the effectiveness of their meetings?

If you are using a Learning review diary (see 'How to use this resource', page xii) ask the participants to complete the appropriate section.

When they have finished their individual reflections, reconvene and ask for volunteers to tell the group briefly what are the key learning points for them, and what action they intend to take.

When all who wish to speak have done so, thank them for their work and close the session.

TRAINER'S TIP

From experience, the practical exercise is less effective if the Chairperson and Secretary of the board meeting participate as members of the regional groups. They do not have enough time to carry out their duties fully. You may be forced to 'double-up' because of a lack of numbers, but be aware that you will be criticised for advocating thorough planning and then not giving them the time to put your advice into practice.

Using video recording

Using video recording to review the final meeting can be an interesting process. This will, however, considerably lengthen the time for the feedback. When using the video, make a note on the counter to help locate incidents of significant behaviour. You can then use this selectively to reinforce any feedback. The participants can be offered the option of viewing the whole video or even be issued with a copy if you have the facilities. Video can be a strong medium for convincing the sceptical that they did in fact say, do and act in a particular way.

If you wish to illustrate good meetings behaviour before the groups break into regional groups, there are a number of excellent products on the market.

A typical attitude to meetings

Not all of our meetings are a waste of time – some of them are cancelled!

Seven steps for setting up effective meetings

- **Check you need a meeting.**
- **Establish the purpose.**
- **Issue an agenda.**
- **Check the timing.**
- **Decide who to invite.**
- **Help them to prepare.**
- **Book a venue.**

Seven steps for managing effective meetings

- **Start on time.**
- **Stick to the agenda.**
- **Keep on track.**
- **Control the discussion.**
- **Work for consensus.**
- **Summarise decisions.**
- **Finish on time.**

Seven steps for setting up effective meetings

- **Check you need a meeting** – Only call a meeting when it is really necessary. Could some other method of communication achieve the purpose more effectively?

- **Establish the purpose** – It is important to have a clear idea of why the meeting has been called. Is it to inform, to collect information, to make a decision, to solve a problem? If they know what's expected of them, participants can come prepared.

- **Issue an agenda** – This will be your route map for the meeting. It should show clearly what items are going to be discussed in what order. Structure the items logically and give each an approximate time.

- **Check the timing** – Make sure that there are not too many items for the topics and purpose of the meeting. Overcrowding will mean that later items are rushed or not covered at all.

- **Decide who to invite** – Be selective and invite only those who will contribute. Too many people will make it difficult for all to have a say. Too few and you may not produce enough ideas or real consensus.

- **Help them to prepare** – In addition to the agenda, what other information do they need to help them prepare thoroughly before the meeting?

- **Book a venue** – Where will the meeting take place? Make sure the room is the right size with the right equipment and furniture to suit your purpose. Book the refreshments and any other services you need.

Seven steps for managing effective meetings

- **Start on time** – Do not wait for latecomers. Even if you are the only one there on time, as Chairperson begin!
- **Stick to the agenda** – It has been placed in order of urgency, importance and the relationship between items. Don't divert from this unless it is vital.
- **Keep on track** – Stick to the time allocated for each item. The best way to do this is to keep your focus and stick to the topic under discussion.
- **Control the discussion** – You need to encourage participation without letting individuals dominate the discussion. Make sure that you have a balance of contributions from all present.
- **Work for consensus** – If the group are committed to a decision they are most likely to implement it. Imposed decisions may save time but are likely to be resisted in the long term.
- **Summarise decisions** – Sum up after each action point. Ensure that all members know precisely what they have been assigned to do, and by when.
- **Finish on time** – End the meeting promptly when all your objectives have been achieved. Close with a full summary of everything that has been agreed. Agree a time when the minutes will be circulated and when any follow up meeting will take place.

The management meeting

You are all members of Fenscape Consulting – a nationwide organisation that specialises in helping companies to manage projects and problems.

The exercise will take place in two sections.

Part one – The regional meeting
Your group are consultants representing a region of the country – either North, South, East or West. The purpose of your regional meeting is to discuss the problems identified by the individual group members.

Each member should be given the opportunity to:

- identify a problem they have encountered at work
- give their perception of the major issues involved
- outline any action already attempted.

The rest of the group then discuss:

- alternative courses of action
- preferred option(s) for the future.

At the end of the preliminary meeting the group should decide which of the proposals your region will support and present for approval to the project review board meeting. Work cannot start on your regional solution unless it has main board support.

During the board meeting your group must be ready to present their proposed choice of action in order to seek overall approval.
Each presentation should last no longer than 10 minutes. The other members of your group must be ready to contribute to the subsequent discussion.

Fenscape Consulting has established a reputation in the marketplace for high-quality, cost-effective solutions that really work. Any resolution will only be passed by the board after a rigorous examination to ensure that it will maintain the firm's high standards.

Continued …

The management meeting

… continued

An OHP, flipchart and photocopier are available to help you to put over your case.

The group should appoint a Chairperson whose vote is to run the preliminary meeting along the guidelines identified earlier. You should also appoint a Secretary to liaise with the board meeting Secretary.

Part two – The project review board meeting
Each regional group comes to the board meeting to present their case and to listen to and make decisions on the proposals put forward by the other regions.

Reaching a decision by consensus

- Approach the subject with an open mind.
- Avoid conflict-reducing techniques such as a majority vote or trading when reaching your decision.
- Avoid arguing for the sake of argument; base your approach on logic.
- Seek clarification on areas you are uncertain about.
- Avoid changing your mind simply to reach agreement.
- Do change your mind if you are convinced by the arguments put forward.
- View differences of opinion as helpful rather than as a hindrance.
- If you agree with a proposal, say so and explain why.
- Contribute any information you have which may help others come to an agreed solution.

Activity 21
Problem solving

Purpose

To introduce participants to a systematic approach to problem solving. To give them an opportunity to practise the skills involved in using the approach on a real work-based problem.

Activity 21
Problem solving

How do I resolve the problems which arise when I implement my project plan?

Purpose

To introduce participants to a systematic approach to problem solving. To give them an opportunity to practise the skills involved in using the approach on a real work-based problem.

Application

The ability to solve problems effectively is a core skill for all project managers. This activity should be included on any foundation course that aims to develop project management skills.

Problem solving is both a general management and a life skill. This activity is equally applicable to a wide variety of other training events. It has been used successfully on Introduction to Management, Team Leadership and Team Development, Counselling and Personal Problem Solving, Assertiveness, Time and Stress Management, and Meetings Skills courses.

What happens

You introduce the session by establishing that all managers have to deal with problems – it's a central part of their role. You ask the participants to identify how they currently approach problem solving at work. They then compare and contrast this with a systematic approach to problem solving, a well established seven-step approach.

Each of the seven steps is discussed and explored in some detail. You spend considerable time on Step four, introducing the participants to brainstorming and setting an exercise that requires two participants to identify a real current problem suitable for use in the exercise.

You complete the systematic approach and the session by getting the participants to monitor and review their learning. They compile their Learning review diary, if appropriate. They then make action plans to use the new skills and knowledge back at their workplace.

Time

Overall time available: 3 hours 15 minutes.

- Introduction: 30 minutes
- Step one – Recognise the problem: 10 minutes
- Step two – Specify the problem: 10 minutes
- Step three – Identify the cause: 10 minutes
- Step four – Develop possible solutions: 45 minutes
- Step five – Evaluate solutions: 30 minutes
- Step six – Implement the best solution: 30 minutes
- Step seven – Monitor and review: 30 minutes.

Materials & resources

- 8 OHT masters:
  21.1 *We've got a problem!*
  21.2 *Systematic approach to problem solving*
  21.3 *Sherlock Holmes quote*
  21.4 *The problem pit*
  21.5 *Think outside the box*
  21.6 *Brainstorming – definition*
  21.7 *Brainstorming – the ground rules*
  21.8 *Choosing solutions*

- 4 Handout masters:
  21.9 *Brainstorming – the ground rules*
  21.10 *Tips for brainstorming facilitators*
  21.11 *Action planning format*
  21.12 *The review process*

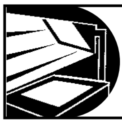
- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- Flipchart paper and coloured marker pens for participants
- OHT acetates
- OHT acetate marker pens
- Tape, Blu-Tack® or pins
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)

In preparation

Before beginning the session, it will be helpful to prepare some suitable topics for brainstorming as a contingency should the group fail to identify any suitable subject.

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION



Show OHT 21.1
We've got a problem!

Ask the participants if any of them have encountered any problems on their past projects. A show of hands should reveal that most of them have encountered at least one major problem in the past.

Point out that this does not mean they are poor project managers. Projects are complex, and unpredictable events will occur regardless of how thoroughly you have planned. Remind them of the Robert Burns' quote:

> *'The best laid plans of mice and men*
> *Often go astray'*

Any plan is only an estimate of what we think may happen in the future. We weigh up past events, estimate probabilities and forecast what we think will happen in the future.

Draw a line on a flipchart sheet.

Our Plan

A ⟶ **B**

Where we are now — Where we aim to be

What happens, however, is C – some unanticipated event. Show on the flipchart sheet how C diverts our plan.

A ⟶ **C** ⟶ **B** What should be happening

└⟶ What is actually happening

Tell the group that the first thing to do in problem solving is:

DON'T PANIC

Try not to worry about the word 'problem'. Try instead to see it as a challenge, as an opportunity to make progress. Point out that if everything ran smoothly there would be little need for project managers.

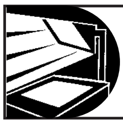
What's your current approach?

Ask the group to think about how they approached solving a recent problem. Give them 5 minutes to make a note of their approach. Now ask them to work in small groups (three or four in each is ideal). Tell them that you want them to discuss their approaches and identify the common ingredients. You then want them to record their recommended approach to problem solving, covering all their ideas. Issue them with blank sheets of acetate and suitable marker pens.

Inform them they have 20 minutes to have their discussion and to write their recommendations on their acetate.

When the participants have finished the exercise, reconvene and lead a plenary review. Ask each group to show their completed acetate and talk through the approach they advocate. You will probably find that later groups cover similar ground to earlier ones. Ask the later groups to report back only on new approaches.

When you have reviewed all the groups' suggestions, ask them to compare and contrast their ideas with the systematic approach to problem solving.



Show OHT 21.2
Systematic approach to problem solving

You will hopefully find that most of the participants are already using some of this in their own approaches. Inform them that in the rest of this session we will examine what's involved in the various steps to make them more efficient.

Allow 30 minutes for this introduction to the activity.

STEP ONE – RECOGNISE THE PROBLEM

Your problem management will be helped if you have some sort of early warning system that alerts you to the fact that there is a problem. Ask the participants for suggestions based on what they currently do. You can anticipate ideas such as:

- regular monitoring of current plan
- management by walking about – gives an opportunity to spot for yourself
- feedback mechanisms, triggered automatically when, for example, supplies are running low
- being approachable – your team are usually able to spot the problem at an early stage; make it easy for them to come and tell you
- look after your customers – make it easy for them to complain.

Point out that the definition of the problem may be vague to start with. The true or exact nature of the problem will only become apparent as more information is acquired. This leads us to Step two.

Allow about 10 minutes for Step one.

STEP TWO – SPECIFY THE PROBLEM

Point out that you need to obtain all the facts relevant to the problem. How far from your anticipated plan has the actual performance shifted? If the gap is small, you may decide that it falls within an acceptable margin of error and decide to do nothing about it. Ask for suggestions of what we can do to specify. Typical answers will include:

- gather all relevant facts
- speak to people operating the system
- speak to people affected by the system
- take samples from other batches to identify the scale of contamination

- talk to others involved in similar projects – are they experiencing similar difficulties?
- use a computer simulation model that can predict the extent of eventual damage if the problem is not eradicated.

When you have gathered the relevant information, you can now examine the facts critically. This leads to Step three.

Allow about 10 minutes for Step two.

STEP THREE – IDENTIFY THE CAUSE

Inform the group that it is far too easy to address the symptoms and not really identify the cause. The presenting problem may then go away but the problem still remains. Ask the group for some examples of when they have fallen into this trap. One typical example:

- A plumber clears an air lock in the water system but doesn't diagnose the faulty ball valve that is the heart of the problem. They then have to make repeated visits as the air lock continues to be a problem.

Tell the participants that it is often a process of elimination. Remind the group of Sherlock Holmes's approach.

Show OHT 21.3
Sherlock Holmes quote

One technique that is used to identify the cause of a problem is called 'the fishbone technique'. This approach recognises that we know the effect of a problem so we can work backwards to identify probable causes. We then eliminate those that are not causing the problem and are left with the real issues we can work on. Because of this the fishbone approach is sometimes called a 'cause-and-effect' diagram. (You will find further information and a description of other uses of the fishbone technique in *Activity 4 The power of planning – part one*.)

Having identified the cause you are now ready to move on to the next step.

Allow 10 minutes for Step three.

STEP FOUR – DEVELOP POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

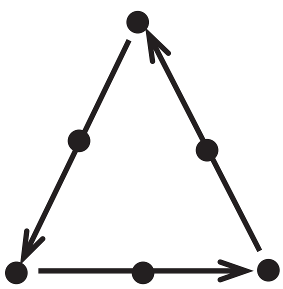
Inform the group that they need to try to generate as many potential solutions as possible, rather than concentrating on the first one that presents itself. Project managers are busy people and there will always be a temptation to seize the first expedient solution and try to implement it. If they persevere they may find a better solution that will be quicker, easier and more efficient at solving the problem.

Show OHT 21.4
The problem pit

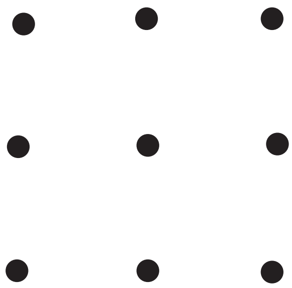
Point out that one of the problems we face as managers is that we are stuck in a problem pit of our own making. We cannot see beyond the self-imposed barriers or restraints that we apply to ourselves. Ask the group to participate in an exercise to demonstrate what you mean.

Ask the participants to arrange six dots in the shape of a triangle on their notepads. Instruct them to join all six dots with three consecutive straight lines, without taking their pens off the paper.

Check to see that they have all completed this simple task:



Now ask them to draw nine dots arranged in a square:



Ask them to join all nine dots by using four consecutive straight lines without taking their pens off the paper.

After a few minutes check to see if anyone has the answer. Point out how they have preconditioned themselves to stay within the boundaries from the first drawing.

Reveal the answer or draw the answer yourself on the flipchart.

Show OHT 21.5
Think outside the box

Tell the group that you will now introduce them to a technique that will help them widen their choices and develop creative answers to their project problems. The technique is called brainstorming.

Explain that it has been around since the 1930s and was first written about by Alex Osbourne, a Madison Avenue advertising executive. Brainstorming is a technique that you can use to move into more fertile and creative ground and discover that there are a number of different, alternative routes you can use to solve your problems.

Show OHT 21.6
Brainstorming – definition

Point out that the definition contains some of the key attributes of brainstorming:

A range of ideas – these are not all good ideas, you are going for quantity not quality.

A group of people – aim for between four and nine participants. It will work best if you mix your group by age, gender, experience, department, background, discipline, and so on.

In a short time – sessions should be quick and fun. Set a target that includes both time and number of ideas, for example, 100 ideas in 20 minutes.

Explain that there are a number of ground rules that they should apply at any brainstorming session to ensure its success.

Show OHT 21.7
Brainstorming – the ground rules

Discuss each of the ground rules using some examples that help emphasise the points.

Distribute Handout 21.9
Brainstorming – the ground rules

Tell the group that brainstorming is not the same as free association. Although participants are encouraged to think of wild ideas, they must always focus their attention on the problem. The focus of the activity is always on how to manage it.

To keep them on track and to stimulate their imagination to come up with creative ways of achieving your objective, Handout 21.10 offers some tips for brainstorming facilitators.

Distribute Handout 21.10
Tips for brainstorming facilitators

Brainstorming in action
Ask for two participants to briefly describe a problem that would be suitable to use for a brainstorm. When they have given an overview to the group, ask them to rephrase the problem in the form of a question the group could brainstorm.

Divide the main group into two syndicate groups and allocate a problem to each one. Tell them that they have 20 minutes to come up with around 100 possible answers.

Supply each group with flipchart paper, marker pens and Blu-Tack® or similar fixing material. Ask for a volunteer to act as facilitator (if this is the problem holder instruct them not to input suggestions, just record and facilitate the group process). Check that everyone understands what's expected and get them started.

Move between the groups. Keep them on track, making sure they observe the ground rules (remember, *no evaluation*), but do not interfere with the flow of their ideas.

When the groups have finished, ask them to leave their flipcharts on display. They can move around and have a look at each other's lists. This exchange often produces fresh ideas for both groups.

Review the exercise. How difficult was it to be creative? What were the main problems they encountered using the ground rules and techniques? What did they particularly enjoy? How could they transfer this approach to their workplace?

Allow 45 minutes to complete the whole of Step four.

STEP FIVE – EVALUATE SOLUTIONS

Having thought widely you are now in a better position to make a choice about which range of solutions you want to apply.

Explain that this next step is like using a chemical filter. The ideas are poured through a funnel which contains a number of filters. Each filter will only allow certain items through. You should return to the brainstormed ideas and 'knock out' those that don't pass certain criteria. You should identify these according to the constraints that operate within your organisation or industry. For example, in advertising anything that is not ‘legal, decent or honest’ would have to be rejected.

Inform the group that when they are considering rejecting an idea they should always be open to how it could be altered to make it acceptable. For example, if an advertisement featured naked people, it might be rejected as not being ‘decent’, however, if they were clothed it would become acceptable.

Point out that one of the criticisms levelled at creative approaches to problem solving is that it is easier to decide what needs to be done than to make it happen. One way of overcoming this problem is to take practicality into account when you are choosing solutions.

Show OHT 21.8
Choosing solutions

Ask the participants to return to their brainstormed lists. They should devise a list of suitable criteria they will use as filters. Using these they will then knock out those items that don’t comply, until they are left with a list of ‘winners’. Ask them to write the winners on a fresh flipchart sheet for ease of recognition. Tell them you would like this to be a ‘Top Ten’, in priority order if possible.

Reconvene the whole group when the smaller groups have finished this exercise. Ask each group to show their final list and to describe the process they used to arrive at their ‘Top Ten’. What criteria did they use? What difficulties did they encounter in identifying their ‘Top Ten’? How did they decide on priority items?

Allow 30 minutes for Step five.

Having reduced their options they are now ready to move to Step six.

STEP SIX – IMPLEMENT THE BEST SOLUTION

Point out that people tend to believe very little of what you tell them but believe a lot if you follow up your promises with action. What you need is an action plan.

Distribute Handout 21.11
Action planning format

Point out that when completing the action plan you should make sure of several particular points:

- Action points are specific. Describe them in clear unambiguous terms.
- No action is allocated without a firm deadline.
- The whole project team should agree that this solution is worth adopting.
- No one should be nominated for action unless they agree to it.
- People who could influence the outcome are informed about what is going on.
- Identify a clear and achievable first step, complete with start date.
- Time is built in to monitor and review progress towards the solution.

Ask the participants to return to their small groups to help the problem holders work out an achievable action plan. Ask them to write it onto acetate so that it can be reviewed by the whole group.

Issue them with some fresh acetate sheets and marker pens. Tell them they have 15 minutes to complete this exercise.

Move between groups. Give help and advice where necessary. Point out that you are not after perfection, merely the application of the key points covered.

When the groups have finished, reconvene and lead a plenary review. Ask each group to show their completed action plans. What difficulties did they have to overcome during the exercise? How will this affect their approach when they try this on one of their own problems back at work?

Allow 30 minutes for Step six.

Having worked out an action plan, the next step is to implement it. This, in turn, will lead to our final step.

STEP SEVEN – MONITOR AND REVIEW

Whilst the action is taking place you should have established milestones at which you will measure progress to date. Is what you set out to do happening? Is it making any difference? With some problems you will find out quickly if your plan of action is working. More complex problems take more time and effort. You may not be clear you have got the solution until you have implemented every step of your plan.

Point out that successful problem solving requires you to find the right solution to the right problem. At the end of the process you will need to hold a review. This will involve you in returning to the original data you generated in Step two. Use this to check that the problem has been solved. If you have only addressed a cause, the problem will still exist – although it may be in a modified form.

Tell the group they will need to cover the questions listed in Handout 21.12 as part of the review process.

Distribute Handout 21.12
The review process

Inform the participants that the final exercise in this activity will involve them in monitoring and reviewing each step covered in the session.
They need to work in pairs. Each partner explains to the other how the approach covered differs from their normal practice. Together they then identify how they can incorporate the key lessons learned

into their previous problem-solving techniques. They end their joint review by producing an action plan along the guidelines established in Step six.

Check that they understand what's required and then get them under way.

When the pairs have finished and everyone has produced an action plan, lead a plenary review of the whole group.

Ask for a volunteer to discuss their future approach to problem solving at work. Comment as appropriate on their plans.

When all who want to volunteer have spoken, thank them for their work. Ask them to fill in their Learning review diaries, if you are using this approach (see 'How to use this resource' on page xii).

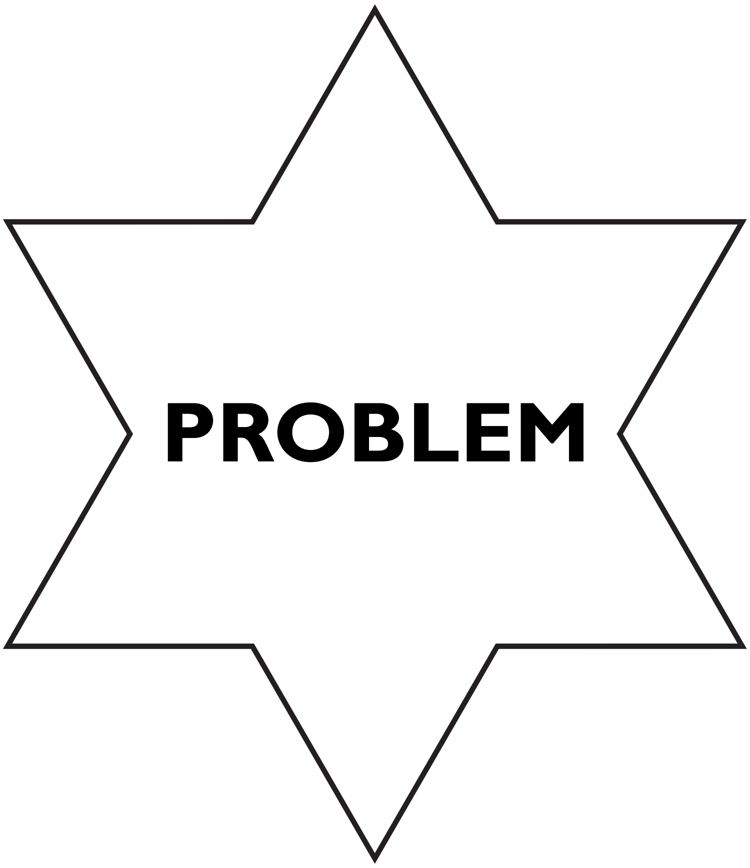
Allow 30 minutes for this monitor and review stage.

Finally close the session.

TRAINER'S TIP

Have a contingency plan in hand to use if none of the participants has a real problem to use for the brainstorming exercise (see 'In preparation', page 21–3). It's helpful to use a common management problem to which everyone can contribute, for example, 'In how many ways can we motivate a demotivated team member?'

We've got a problem!



Systematic approach to problem solving

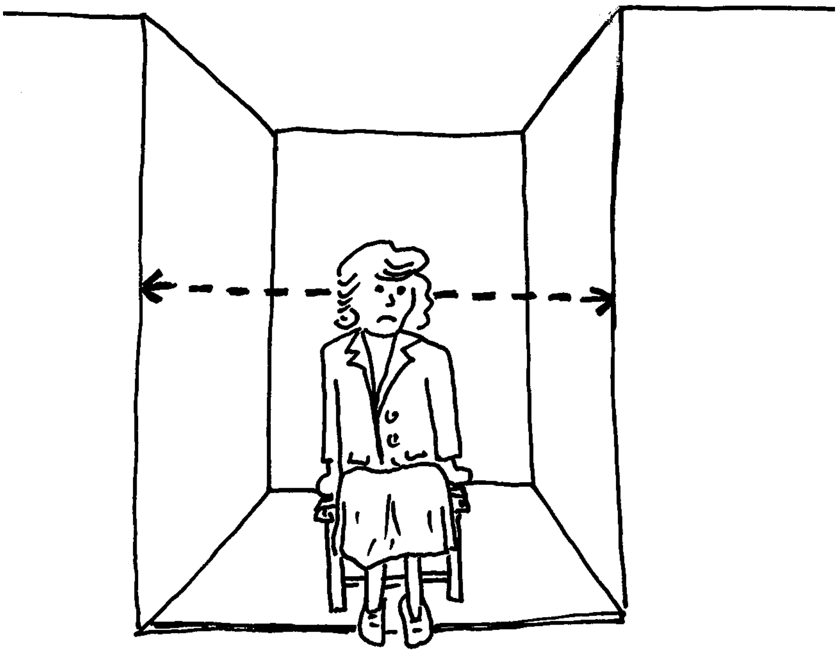
Step one	**–**	**Recognise the problem**
Step two	**–**	**Specify the problem**
Step three	**–**	**Identify the cause**
Step four	**–**	**Develop possible solutions**
Step five	**–**	**Evaluate solutions**
Step six	**–**	**Implement the best solution**
Step seven	**–**	**Monitor and review**

Sherlock Holmes quote

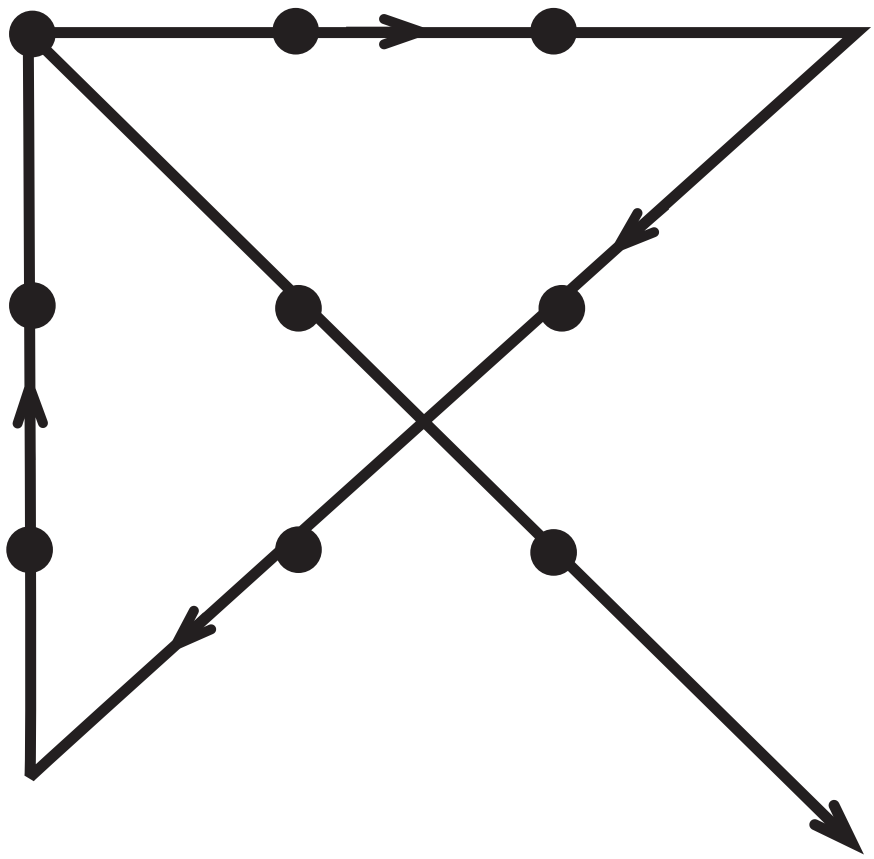
'When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.'

The Sign of Four by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The problem pit



Think outside the box



Brainstorming – definition

Brainstorming:

A technique for producing *a range of ideas* from *a group of people in a short time*.

Brainstorming – the ground rules

- Suspend judgement.
- Suspend constraints.
- Encourage quantity not quality.
- Cross-fertilise.
- Clarify and expand.
- Write them down.

Choosing solutions

- **Technically competent**
  A practicable solution that looks as if it will actually work.

- **Relevant**
  Addresses the core issues that are troubling people.

- **Politically acceptable**
  It will not be blocked by people powerful enough to stop it.

- **Cost/benefit**
  The benefits of introducing the idea will outweigh the costs involved.

- **Feasible**
  Everyone whose co-operation is needed will put it into practice.

Brainstorming – the ground rules

- **Suspend judgement** – Theirs and yours. The aim is to collect as many ideas as possible and leave evaluation until later.
- **Suspend constraints** – Encourage the participants to think of all the possibilities. Wild ideas should be positively encouraged.
- **Encourage quantity not quality** – Keep the group going until they run out of ideas.
- **Cross-fertilise** – Prompt them to combine ideas in different ways to make new options, and add some suggestions of links yourself.
- **Clarify and expand** – Help clarify without criticising, and ask the individual to expand briefly on that idea.
- **Write them down** – Creativity can be fun, exciting and fast moving, so record the ideas so that none is lost.

Tips for brainstorming facilitators

- Rephrase your problem as a question, for example, ‘How can we …?’ ‘How many ways could we …?’
- Write the question on a flipchart.
- Display a poster or OHT to show the ground rules.
- Ask for ideas to solve the problem.
- Write suggestions onto the flipchart.
- Use a large felt-tip pen.
- Number each idea.
- Print the words for legibility.
- Combine upper and lower case lettering for ease of reading.
- Alternate colours for each idea.
- Use black, blue, green or purple for recording.
- Leave red, orange, yellow for highlighting ‘winners’ later.
- Allow 2–3 inches between lines.
- When you reach the bottom, display the sheet and start a new one – don’t flip over.
- Say each idea aloud as you write it.
- Check out what they mean – but don’t evaluate.
- Clarify assumptions – you could get two ideas for the price of one.
- Use understandable shorthand, symbols, pictures, and so on, for example, MBWA for ‘management by walking about’
£££££ for ‘loads more money’.
- Get participants to abbreviate their ideas into short headlines.
- Encourage fun, laughter, noise and excitement.
- Build on people’s ideas, for example, ‘You mentioned holidays. Where could we send them?’
- Don’t try to impose any order or sequence – write them as they come.

OK TO COPY

Continued …

Tips for brainstorming facilitators

… continued

- Involve everyone. Don't let one person dominate, but don't squash them.
- Make sure everyone can see the flipchart.
- Don't be concerned about your spelling – there won't be time.

When the ideas dry up try some of the following:

- Introduce another rephrasing of the problem.
- Use quantity as a spur to more effort.
- Focus on and develop a previous idea.
- Call for a 2-minute break for some silent reflection.
- Identify the 'wildest' idea. How could it be developed into a practical solution?
- Ask the participants to imagine they are someone else, for example, how would Basil Fawlty manage the problem? What about Margaret Thatcher? Superman? and so on.
- Take a coffee break, listen to some music or a relaxation tape.

Don't give up too soon but recognise when the participants' creative powers have run dry, then …

FINISH THE SESSION.

Action planning format

Action steps	Person responsible	Completion date	Resources needed

- Action points are specific. Describe them in clear, unambiguous terms.
- No action is allocated without a firm deadline.
- The whole project team should agree that this solution is worth adopting.
- No one should be nominated for action unless they agree to it.
- People who could influence the outcome are informed about what is going on.
- Identify a clear and achievable first step, complete with start date.
- Time is built in to monitor and review progress towards the solution.

The review process

Reflect on your approach and answer the following questions:

- What caused the original problem?
- How effective was your solution?
- Is it likely to occur again?
- Has it identified a subsidiary problem that also needs to be addressed?
- How effective was your decision-making process?
- Did you have to modify your original action plan?
- Did you identify a contingency plan if your original approach was unsuccessful?
- How effectively did you work as a project team to resolve this issue?
- What will you do differently next time as a result of the experience?
- What worked well, that you'd want to repeat next time?

Activity 22 Continuing professional development

Purpose

To enable the participants to rate their progress in developing the competencies needed to be effective project managers. To provide them with options they can incorporate into an action plan for their future development.

22

Activity 22 Continuing professional development

How can I continue to develop my project management skills after this event?

Purpose

To enable the participants to rate their progress in developing the competencies needed to be effective project managers. To provide them with options they can incorporate into an action plan for their future development.

Application

This activity has been designed to use at the end of any training event that aims to improve the knowledge and skills of project managers.

It can be easily adapted to suit the end of other types of development activity. For this you will need to review the competencies and substitute a set that are more appropriate for another target audience.

What happens

You start the session by drawing a comparison between the end of a learning event and of a project; both benefit from a period of review, regardless of the outcome.

You introduce the participants to the concept of the learning cycle and describe how it can be applied to a variety of experiences.

The participants then take part in three exercises. In the first they rate their current level of competency as project managers. In the second they generate ideas for a number of opportunities they could use to develop their skills. In the third they develop an action plan to put their ideas into practical action.

The session closes with a celebration that all the events in this activity pack have been successfully completed.

Time

Overall time required: 2 hours 20 minutes.

- Introduction: 20 minutes
- Personal stocktaking: 30 minutes
- Identifying learning opportunities for development: 30 minutes
- Develop an action plan: 30 minutes
- Final plenary review: 30 minutes.

Material & resources

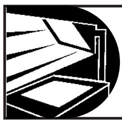
- 2 OHT masters:
  22.1 *Back to the future*
  22.2 *The learning cycle*

- 3 Handout masters:
  22.3 *Project management competencies*
  22.4 *Learning and development opportunities*
  22.5 *Action planning checklist*

- Overhead projector, or PowerPoint®-compatible laptop computer and projector, and screen
- Flipchart and stand or whiteboard
- A good supply of flipchart paper
- Marker pens for trainer
- OHT acetates
- OHT acetate marker pens
- Space for pairs or small-group work (preferably separate syndicate rooms for the small-group work or, if these are not available, you can divide the area with screens)
- Champagne (optional).

How do I do it?

INTRODUCTION



Show OHT 22.1
Back to the future

Point out that coming to the end of a training event is a bit like coming to the end of a project. You have been learning by doing it all the way but now we have come to the final activity. Just as with a project we need to spend time looking back at what happened before we can go forward to the future.

Point out that this process of stopping, and taking stock of what has happened before moving forward, is a well-documented approach to learning.
It's called The learning cycle.

Show OHT 22.2
The learning cycle

This popular model on how we learn was developed by David Kolb. He uses it to describe learning as a cycle. If the steps are followed in sequence the desired learning will be the result. This will help you ensure that you continue to develop your professional competence.

The stages involve us in doing something (**experience**); stopping to think what has happened (**reflection**); thinking how we can fit this in to a model or theory (**generalising**); and we then decide how to test our conclusions and develop a plan to improve our performance (**action planning**). This leads us back to the start of the cycle, which hopefully becomes an upward learning spiral.

Point out that it is as important to do this when our experience (of a course or practical project) has been a successful one. There is a tendency to review only when things have gone poorly. This is often associated with the difficulties of preventing the review from becoming an exercise in blame.

Point out that all experience – good, bad or indifferent – should be seen as an opportunity to learn and review. You could cite the example of top performers in golf, tennis or the performing arts who, even though they are at the top of their profession, still practise and review their performance daily.

Allow 20 minutes for the introduction to this activity.

PERSONAL STOCKTAKING

The first stage involves them in taking stock of their current level of competence as Project Managers.

Distribute Handout 22.3
Project management competencies

If the participants started the activities in this resource at *Activity 1 An introduction to project management*, they will have seen this Handout before (see *Handout 1.5 Project management competencies)*. In that activity, it was used to orientate them to the activities that were to come. Now we will use it to identify their key learning needs after all the activities have been covered.

Exercise one – Personal stocktaking
Suggest to the participants that they spend 15 minutes on their own reviewing and rating their current level of competency in light of all the activities they have undertaken on this training event.

TRAINER'S TIP

A useful way of evaluating the amount of learning gained by working through the activities in this resource is to ask the participants to compare their ratings on *Handout 22.3 Project management competencies* with their ratings from *Handout 1.5 Project management competencies.* Ask them to record on a flipchart at the side of the room areas where they have made progress.

When they have finished their self-rating, the next step is for each participant to work with a partner from the group to discuss the evidence for their ratings. This exercise works particularly well when the partners have worked with each other in the workplace. This will enable them to challenge or confirm the rating with the authority of having seen their partner in action.

Tell the pairs that at the end of the discussion you want them both to agree on their top three development needs. Point out that these could be either competencies they already do well but would like to improve further or activities where they are falling below what is required from their role.

Reconvene the participants when they have completed their rating. Ask for volunteers to share with the group what key areas they need to focus on.

When all who want to have spoken, thank them and move on to the next part of the activity.

Allow a total of 30 minutes for this section on personal stocktaking.

IDENTIFYING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Point out that far too often people view personal and professional development as something that is done by the training department, and sit patiently waiting for the arrival of the in-house brochure.

A more proactive manager looks for learning opportunities both off and on the job, and with some lateral thinking may even be able to identify a range of work activities that can help them to develop their skills.

Exercise two – Identify a range of options
Divide the group up into three smaller groups and give each an acetate sheet and a set of suitable marker pens. Tell them they have 15 minutes to come up with at least 20 activities that a project manager can use to develop their skills, knowledge and experience.

Give them a few minutes to settle into their groups and then start your stopwatch. Move around between the groups to make sure they are on track. Answer any questions about the activity but don't censor their efforts or attempt to take over.

Remember that at this stage it is *their* ideas we are interested in, not yours.

At the end of the allotted time call a halt and reconvene the groups. Ask for a volunteer to lead the feedback, showing the range of events they have identified. Hold on to the first group's acetate and make a note on it of any fresh ideas presented by the second and third groups. In this way you will build up a composite picture of all suggestions.

Complete this section by showing them the list of items described in Handout 22.4. Discuss these but only focus on the ideas the participants have not previously suggested. The combination of ideas will give them a checklist they can use to develop their own abilities.

Distribute Handout 22.4
Learning and development opportunities

Allow 30 minutes for this part of the activity.

DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

Having identified the need, and many options to satisfy it, tell the participants that we need to bring the two together and complement them with a clear plan of action.

Exercise three – Develop your action plan
Ask the participants to once again work with a partner from the group. They should first identify which of the many ideas generated they want to pursue, then work out an action plan that shows what they propose to do to meet their learning objectives.

Distribute Handout 22.5
Action planning checklist

Move around to check progress. Give advice and information where appropriate. Keep them on track and on time. Remind them to change roles so that both get an opportunity to have their action plan reviewed.

Allow 30 minutes for all participants to develop their action plan.

FINAL PLENARY REVIEW

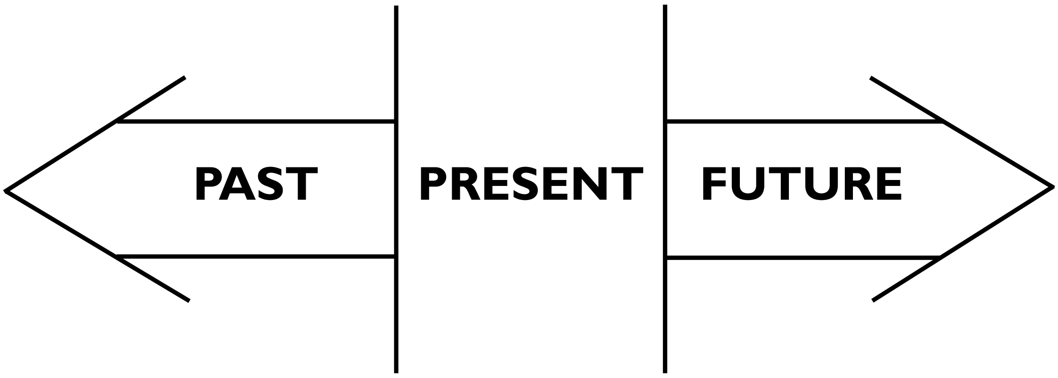
When all the pairs have finished, reconvene the group and lead a plenary review of the exercise. How did it go? Did any difficulties arise? Are there any areas that are still unresolved? Can you and the rest of the group help with suggestions to overcome them? What type of action are they going to take?

When you have finished the review process, point out that as project managers they will all, at some time, be responsible for managing a project team. Ask them about the merits of doing the exercises, they have done, together with their staff. If any want to develop their project manager's role further, we can highly recommend *The Manager as Trainer, Coach and Guide,* Eddie Davies, Fenman (1997), or *Continuing Professional Development,* Sandy McMillan, Fenman (1997).

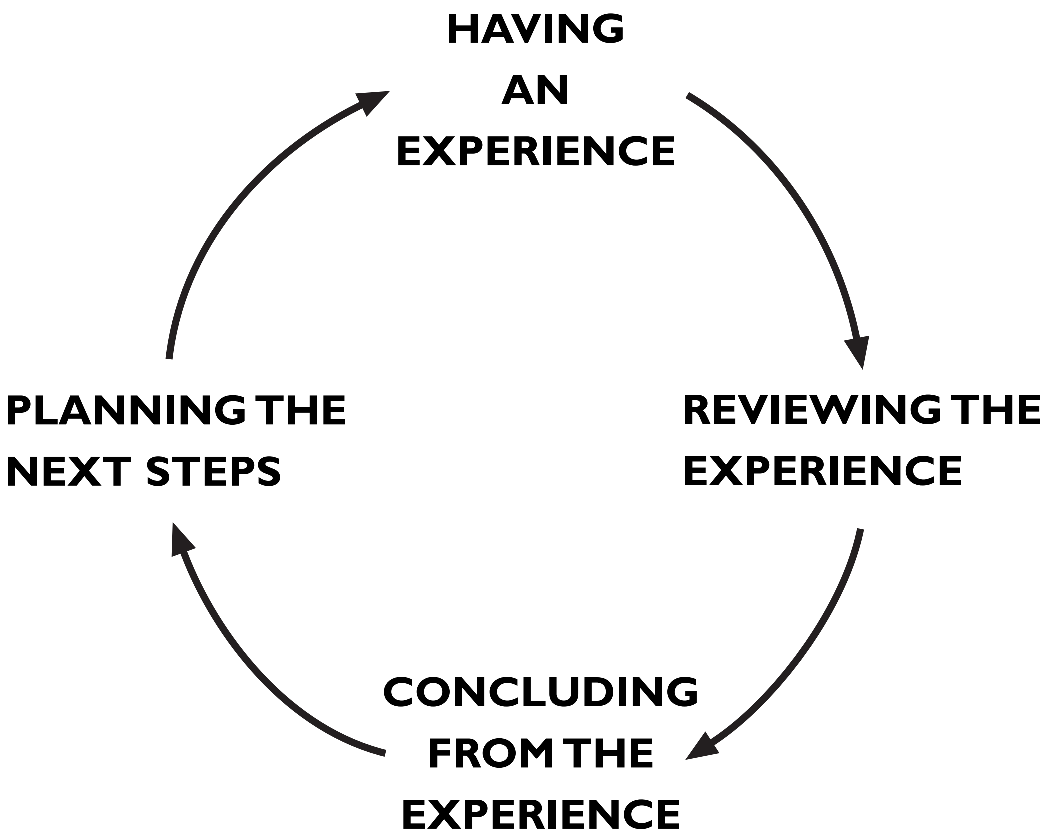
Celebrate your success!
Remind the participants that one of the items you identified for positive team working and motivation was to celebrate your achievements. Congratulate them all on completing the event and break out the champagne.

Thank them for attending and wish them all the best in developing their project management skills in the future.

Back to the future



The learning cycle



Project management competencies

For each of the following competencies rate yourself on the following scale:

E = Exceptional – You can perform this competency at a high level in all manner of circumstances.

M = Met – You can generally meet the requirements in this area. You may still have a development need in order to meet the competency in exceptionally difficult circumstances.

N = Not Met – Either there are considerable elements that require improvement or you have not had the opportunity to experience and develop this area.

Competence	Content	Rating
1. Recognising priority needs.	Define the term 'project'. Identify the key competencies. Recognise priority needs.	
2. Understanding the role of the project manager.	Define the project manager's role. Have an overview of the project life cycle.	
3. Defining the end product.	Prepare mission statements. Define project objectives. Identify constraints and terms of reference.	
4. Planning for success.	Develop a work breakdown structure. Identify resource requirements. Pinpoint sub-projects.	

Continued …

Project management competencies

… continued

Competence	Content	Rating
5. Sequencing activities.	Draw up a Responsibility Assignment Matrix. Identify the critical activities. Prepare a Gantt chart.	
6. Budgeting.	Prepare a budget. Monitor costs.	
7. Using presentation skills.	Plan your presentation. Making an effective delivery. Handle objections.	
8. Selecting your team.	Adopt a systematic approach to selection. Choose the right mix.	
9. Developing your team.	Establish the characteristics of effective teams. Outline the stages of team development.	
10. Using project leadership skills.	Understand the leadership role. Develop an effective leadership style.	
11. Motivating the project team.	Understand team members' needs. Take appropriate action to satisfy them.	
12. Using communication skills.	Ask effective questions. Listen actively. Use appropriate body language.	

continued …

Project management competencies

... continued

Competence	Content	Rating
13. Putting it in writing.	Use an appropriate form of written communication. Develop an effective style. Devise a project report layout.	
14. Controlling performance.	Set standards. Give feedback.	
15. Influencing and resolving conflict.	Take a positive approach to disagreement. Use a consensus approach. Manage the poor performer.	
16. Using negotiating skills.	Negotiation should be principled. Adopt effective behaviours. Aim for a 'win–win' outcome.	
17. Managing time.	Identify priorities. Diagnose 'time-robbers'. Plan your day.	
18. Chairing meetings.	Structure meetings for success. Lead discussions.	
19. Solving problems.	Analyse what's going wrong. Develop alternative solutions. Choose best solutions.	
20. Making a commitment to professional development.	Take stock of current level of performance. Review training and development methods. Draw up an action plan.	

Learning and development opportunities

20 work-based activities for developing your skills:

Coaching – Have the job holder act as a coach to one of their staff or colleagues.

Delegation – Remember that this involves delegating a real part of your job, not merely allocating a task they should be doing anyway.

Project work – Particularly relevant when the individual needs to develop a skill that is not part of their current job. Working in a multi-disciplinary team you can learn about other functions.

Job swaps – Can be organised informally within your section to cover for sickness, leave, and so on.

Secondments – A more structured version of job swaps, usually for a longer period and often involving other departments or outside organisations.

Deputising – Good practice for individuals in line for promotion and/or wanting to acquire management skills.

Shadowing – Accompanying and observing the manager or other team member. Can be in preparation for job swaps or deputising.

Training – Planning and running an in-house training event, either to reinforce existing skills or to learn a new subject.

Committee membership – A standing committee or special event. Gives an insight into internal procedures and politics.

Hot-line – Manning a telephone response service, giving advice on unusual or particularly difficult situations. Develops confidence and visibility.

Continued …

Learning and development opportunities

… continued

Writing reports – Involves preliminary research into a topic. Opportunity to develop analytical and communication skills.

Making presentations – A useful follow-up to report writing. Develops oral communication skills and the ability to defend your case.

External representation – Acting as an ambassador for the organisation at an external event. Could also involve making a presentation.

Product champion – The section's representative who will learn about and be responsible for implementing a new product or procedure to your department.

National representative – Representing the organisation on a national body or forums.

Professional representative – Representing your specialism on internal or professional bodies.

Trade union representative – Acting for other members at local or national meetings.

Study visits – Learning and reporting back about best practice in other organisations.

Trade exhibitions – Regional, national, specialist. Opportunity to update on new products or services.

Vocational qualification – A work-related professional course combining qualification with work-based projects.

Action planning checklist

1. **What am I going to do?**
   – Which of my priority needs am I going to develop?

2. **What steps am I going to take?**
   – What activities will help me meet my needs?

3. **How am I going to start?**
   – Work out a clear first step for each activity.

4. **When am I going to start?**
   – Commit to a specific, realistic start date.

5. **How will I achieve it?**
   – What methods will I use? What resources will I need?

6. **Who else will be affected?**
   – Who do I need to support me? How and when will I approach them?

7. **What could prevent me?**
   – Who or what might put obstacles in my way? How will I overcome them?

8. **How will I know when I've succeeded?**
   – How and when will I monitor my success?