



# Self managed development

Learning guide

# Self managed development

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## Introduction

Today's ever changing business environment demands that managers are well-rounded, multi-talented people able to handle a wide variety of roles. With this in mind, individuals are increasingly taking responsibility for their own development.

This learning guide gives you an overview of the topic, directs you to resources which may be of interest and suggests some basic exercises to get started.

## Where to start?

The fact that you are reading this learning guide suggests that you have already started on the process of self managed development. The most important issue for success in this area is to ensure that you have a very clear focus of what you want to achieve and some ideas of how you are going to achieve them. So some sort of personal development plan is vital.

If you have less than an hour, browse the development activities and workbook and read the overview. If you have longer, start on some of the exercises or look at a video which seems relevant to your interest. Recommended resources are listed on p2-6.

## Resources

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### Videos

Watching videos can be a little passive. Hence, active note taking whilst viewing is recommended.

*Management Self Development* (1989), TV Choice, 20 mins.

Discussing how managers might learn without the need for formal training, this video emphasises that self development is all about taking part rather than sitting and listening. The film offers a number of approaches to any individual who wishes to develop as a manager through a clearer understanding of him/herself. These include keeping an open mind when listening to colleagues, breaking out of dull routines and letting your subconscious do some of the work!

*A Practical guide to Management Self development* (1990), 20 mins, TV Choice.

It is a well known fact in business that managerial mistakes can result in lost time, wasted effort and not a small amount of distress and frustration. This video on self development is about managers taking charge of their own learning; finding out about their strengths and weaknesses, learning to understand other people, remaining open to change, and keeping an eye on new management techniques.

### Audio cassettes

*Getting things done: An Action Plan to Put You in Control* (1991), Careertrack.

Productivity expert Ed Bliss explains the techniques proven to help people make the most of every hour and accomplish top priorities. The programme looks at areas such as the difference between 'urgent' and 'important' tasks; how to reduce paperwork and delegations.

*How to find your mission in life* (1995), Ten Speed Press.

An audio edition of the book 'What Colour is Your Parachute' read by the author, Richard N. Bolles.

## Journal articles

Dent, F (1994), *The Self Managed Alternative*, Management Training, February, p21–23.

Dent, F (1995), *10 Steps for Managing your Own Development*, Management Training, May, p17.

Dubois, David (2000), *The 7 Stages of One's Career*, Training & Development, December, Vol. 54(12), p45.

Falconer, H (1995), *Putting Staff in the Driving Seat*, Training, a Personnel Today supplement, July, p6–8.

Heritage, Annette (2001), *Career Management: from Ladders To Wings*, Training Journal, March, p16.

Pickard, Jane (1995), *Concerted Efforts*, People Management, Vol 1(24), November, p20.

## Information files

There are information files containing a number of newspaper and journal articles on the following subject areas:

- action plans
- self managed development

## Books

\*\* Books marked with asterisks are available for sale from the LRC Bookshop.  
Mail order service available. Tel: +44 (0)1442 841159. Fax: +44 (0)1442 841211  
Email [celia.tucker@ashridge.org.uk](mailto:celia.tucker@ashridge.org.uk)

Bolles, Richard Nelson (1999), *The 1999 What Colour is Your Parachute?*  
Ten Speed Press.  
Ashridge shelf reference: **JMHP (BOL)\*\***

For nearly 30 years, What Color Is Your Parachute? Has been the guiding light for those in pursuit of satisfying and fulfilling employment. The 1999 edition has been completely revised and rewritten and is designed to work in conjunction with the book's Web site. At the heart of Bolles's formula for finding the right job are two questions: What do you want to do? Where do you want to do it?

Covey, Stephen (1993), *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Simon & Schuster.  
Ashridge shelf reference: **APH (COV)\*\***

This book is a step by step guide to achieving those essential characteristics that create success. Covey presents a dynamic self help model for solving personal and professional problems.

Dent, Fiona (1999), *The Self Managed Development Pocketbook*, Management Pocketbooks.  
Ashridge shelf reference: **APA (DEN)\*\***

Self-managed development is all about taking responsibility and reflecting, both before and after action. This book presents a pocketful of tips, techniques and useful tools to further your development and put you in charge of your career and your life.

Ditzler, Jinny (1994), *Your Best Year Yet*, Thorsons.

Ashridge shelf reference: **APA (DIT)\*\***

After answering the Ten Best Yet Questions you will have a simple one-page plan for the next 12 months.

Francis, D and Woodcock, M (1996), *The Unblocked Manager: A Practical Guide to Self Development*, Wildwood House.

Ashridge shelf reference: **JM (WOO)\*\***

This guide, a substantially revised version of "The Unblocked Manager", is designed to help managers improve their effectiveness, pinpoints 12 potential "blockages" that stand in the way of managerial competence. Each blockage is explained and ideas and materials for tackling the problem are provided, forming a comprehensive framework for self-directed development.

Hayden, Paul (1999), *The Personal Success Pocketbook*, Management Pocketbooks.

Ashridge shelf reference: **AKG (HAY)**

The Personal Success Pocketbook presents a pocketful of tips, tools and techniques to help you give your life direction, achieve your personal definition of success and enrich your life. From planning to persistence, from motivation to goal setting, from managing change to a proven success toolkit this useful book of self-discovery explains the basic truths behind personal success.

Hopson, Brian and Scally, Mike (1991), *Build Your Own Rainbow: a Workbook for Career and Life Management*, Lifeskills Publishing Group.

Ashridge shelf reference: **AP (HOP)\*\***

This book consists of a number of exercise designees to help you analyse and develop your personal skills, aptitudes and ambitions. It provides the key to a number of essential career development skills, including: knowing yourself, learning from experience, research skills, setting objectives and making action plans, making decisions, looking after yourself, communicating.

Mulligan, Eileen (1999), *Life Coaching: Change your life in 7 days*, BCA.  
Ashridge shelf reference: JMC (MUL).

Using questionnaires, checklists and action plans Life Coaching shows you how to devise your own personal life programme and fulfil you're every ambition. The book will help readers discover how to: identify and achieve your goals; overcome the blocks and problems that have held you back; improve your relationships; do the work you want to do; build your confidence and self-esteem; and enjoy wellbeing and contentment in all aspects of your life.

Norton, Bob and Kelly, Andrea (1997), *Managing Self Development*, Institute of Management Foundation.  
Ashridge shelf reference: JMB (NOR).

In order to compete in the marketplace, organisations need to encourage employees to develop their full working potential. This guide looks at employee development from the perspectives of both organisations and individuals.

Pedler, Mike et al (2001), *A Manager's Guide to Self Development*, McGraw-Hill.  
Shelved APA (PED).

This expanded and updated edition details a self-development programme aimed at helping readers improve their managerial performance, advance their careers and realise their full potential. There is a framework of eleven key managerial qualities and diagnostic activities to help discover your strengths and weaknesses, and identify your own goals for self-development. Fifty-four practical activities are included to assist the development of your skills and abilities, such as decision-making, fitness, creativity, networking.

## Overview

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### What is self managed development?

*"The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them."*

George Bernard Shaw

Self managed development is the process whereby you take responsibility for your own development. You may be motivated to do this for a variety of reasons – for instance:

- to manage your career more effectively
- to develop new skills or knowledge
- to improve your ability in your current job
- to manage a life change to greatest effect
- to be effective in a new project area.

Effective self managed development requires:

- a personal commitment to development
- a needs analysis to identify:
  - personal needs and wants
  - organisational requirements
  - skills deficienciesand then to set learning objectives
- knowledge of your preferred learning style
- knowledge of the techniques, opportunities and facilities available to you to help in the learning process.

Many organisations are incorporating self managed development into their human resources strategy by giving people more responsibility for their own development. This does not mean that organisations are shirking their

responsibilities for the development of their people, rather they are encouraging them to take a more active role in the whole process. There is also a movement away from the theory that a training course is the only way to satisfy development needs. Many other avenues are open to both individuals and organisations.

## Personal commitment

Ask yourself four questions:

- are you capable of dissatisfaction with your current performance, skills, knowledge, etc?
- do you accept that you can learn and develop by planned direction as well as by accident?
- do you recognise that managerial activity may have more than one purpose?
- will your boss (or organisation) support or reward your efforts?

If you answer 'yes' to at least three out of four of the above questions then you are part way there – a general acceptance that more development is possible.

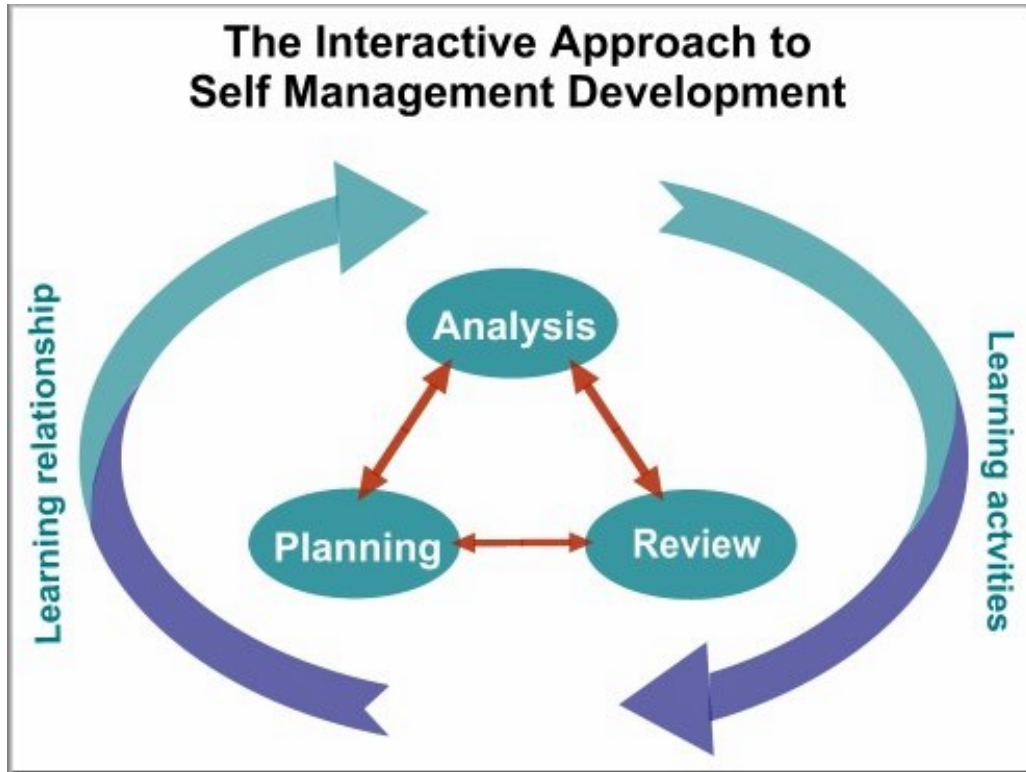
However, in terms of self managed development it is up to you – you have the freedom to choose!

Most managers admit, with hindsight, that they learned most from experiences on-the-job, yet find difficulty planning to use work for learning experiences. Don't separate learning from management duties.

No one has so much interest in you and your success as YOU. So it is up to you to get started. (But, how can you identify where you should focus your learning needs?)

The problem for many individuals is actually getting started and then focusing on the right issues. The interactive approach to self managed development aims to provide individuals with an approach and ideas for getting started on their own self development.

## The interactive approach to self managed development



## The interactive approach to self management development explained

There are five main processes that individuals are constantly involved in with their own development.

### *Analysis*

This is any process that involves a method of analysing your current range of abilities/strengths/weaknesses/needs/wants/desires, etc.

This will require an honest review of performance against standards for current needs as well as some 'stargazing' for future needs.

There are many techniques, and people who can help you. These include:

- completion of a diagnostic questionnaire – this helps to focus the mind on the range of skills/competences you have used in your managerial role and how effectively you use them!
- performance appraisal – this can provide many pointers in terms of development needs, both formal and informal
- discussions with colleagues
  - the boss
  - peers
  - subordinatesAny or all of these people can help you to identify needs
- exploration of the business needs, now and for the future
- exploration of your own career plans both within and outside the organisation
- examination of your job description.

List your strengths/weaknesses and plan how to build on strengths and reduce your weaknesses.

### *Review*

A form of evaluative process you take part in, in order to reflect on information collected and to distil and make sense of data about your development. For instance, asking yourself and/or discussing some thought provoking questions, such as:

- Where do I want to go now?
- What do I want to do next?
- What do I need to develop in order to get there?

Typically part of the review process will involve the help of others in a learning relationship. The important thing is that it is a reflective process where the outcome will be an improved sense of direction in terms of your future development needs.

### *Planning*

An active process whereby individuals think about where they wish to get to and how they are going to get there. This can either be general or detailed, strategic or tactical, and may focus on either the long or short term. Developing some sort of action planning sheet helps here. (See later in this overview.)

These three processes form the basis of the interactive approach and if you work through each of the stages it will almost certainly help you get started. However, there are two other important elements to the approach:

### *Learning activities*

Any event or experience either planned or spontaneous which provides you with an opportunity to develop. For instance:

#### *On job experience*

- encourage your boss to delegate
- look for opportunities for personal growth in your job
- project work
- secondment.

#### *Discussion*

- with experienced colleagues
- at professional institutes
- with technical experts
- at conferences.

#### *Training courses*

- necessary to develop certain skills
- interpersonal
- management

- new skills.

### ***Reading***

- trade and professional journals
- books
- videos (+ interactive videos)
- learning packages
- audio tapes.

And probably many more.

### ***Learning relationships***

This involves creating and developing relationships with others who can help you to learn. Apart from individual relationships with mentors, coaches and counsellors, a key relationship will be with the organisation. Self managed development can be successful without the commitment of the organisation, but it is a much more powerful process if the organisation actively encourages and supports people to take more responsibility for, and control of, their own development.

## **Action planning**

Let us look at a variety of techniques for action planning, including contingency planning and coping strategies. We also suggest some tips for keeping on track with your self managed development.

The whole process of self managed development hinges to a large extent on your own motivation to move forward and plan the way ahead. The process of getting started involves you in thinking about and exploring who are you, what you have done, how you learned and where you are going.

If you are to take advantage of the discoveries you have made regarding your self managed development the next phase of the process of self managed development is vital: action planning.

However, action planning is very much a personal issue dependent on our own

idiosyncratic ways of working. In terms of how we go about this stage, much will depend upon the individual.

If, for example, we are planning a car journey to a previously unvisited destination, most of us will need to refer to a road atlas. For some of us this reference will simply be a quick look to ascertain the general direction in which to travel and to get an idea of the location of our destination. Having this information we can then follow the relevant road signs and use our own intuitive sense of direction. At the other end of the spectrum, others will spend many hours poring over the atlas planning the journey in detail, possibly even writing down the road numbers on which they intend to travel. In both cases the journey may involve detours and the unexpected. In the former these detours will be treated as events to be dealt with along the way. In the latter the detours will have been planned into the journey in order to make it more worth while, and should anything unexpected happen, for instance a traffic jam, the plan is likely to be so exact that an alternative route will be easily taken.

So, by analogy, just as you all have your own approaches to learning, you all have your own approach to planning. Some of you will like to have lots of detail in your plan and even make contingency plans just in case! Others of you will simply wish to set an objective, perhaps with some indication of time or quality standards, but little detail of the route you are going to take along the way.

## **My self managed development objectives**

In order to focus your mind you may wish to start by summarising the key objectives you have set yourself so far. So start by listing your objectives and deciding whether they are short, medium, or long term objectives. This will help you later on in the actual process of action planning.

<i>My self managed development objectives</i>	<i>Timescale: S/M/L</i>

As we said at the beginning of this overview the important thing for us is that you take responsibility for your own development. Part of this involves believing in and then adopting your own approach. We also believe that in order to move forward a vital element of your approach is having a well-defined plan. Someone once said, 'If you aim at nothing you will sure as hell hit it!' For us, having a plan gives you something clear to aim at and while you may not always hit the bull's-eye, you should at least hit the target!

So, we will look at various ways of action planning aiming to leave you ready to start developing.

We will also examine contingency plans or coping strategies. No matter how organised you are it is almost inevitable that from time to time *'the best laid plans of mice and men gang aft a'glee'* (Burns).

Finally, we will look at different ways of keeping track of where you are going.

## Planning

As we have already stated, there are many different approaches to action planning, and finding the right one for you is the most important issue. We believe that by taking more responsibility for your own development and by taking control, the next stage is to commit yourself to doing something. Often by writing something down the commitment is more solid than if it were simply

committed to memory. For instance, how many times have you said something like this to yourself, 'I must brush up on my French before I go on my summer holidays' and the day before you go you are still packing the phrase book and still thinking, 'I really should have spent some time brushing up!'

We are not suggesting that simply by writing something down you *will* do it but if you are truly committed to self managed development and you have seriously thought through where you want to go then having an action plan should help you continue your journey.

You may also wish to consider at this stage the number of different action plans you can tackle at any one time. You may wish to split them into short, medium, and long term plans – perhaps with more detailed plans for the short term – but over time, the medium- and long-term plans will become the short and medium term plans, thus perpetuating the 'never ending journey' concept.

So, in the action planning phase of self managed development there are a number of questions you may want to ask yourself before deciding the particular approach you wish to take at any one time:

- How easy or difficult will the goals be to achieve?
- How detailed does my plan have to be?
- Is this plan for short, medium, or long term objectives?
- Are other people involved in my plan?
- How likely am I to reach roadblocks and detours along the way?
- How knowledgeable am I of the subject area?
- Do I need to share my plan with anyone else?
- How clear are the goals?
- How motivated am I to achieve the goals?

In trying to determine which goals to focus on first, or indeed which are the most important to focus on, you may find it useful to examine some of the above questions diagrammatically and in terms of two axes. It is possible to take two questions at a time, apply them to each goal and plot your answer on a chart – thus giving yourself the opportunity to compare and contrast several

goals at one time before making final decisions about your priorities for action planning.

For instance, you may like to compare goal clarity with motivation to achieve (see table 1 below).

### Goal clarity vs motivation

You should now consider each of your goals and plot them (using a code to identify each one) on the chart (see table 1 below). In making your decision regarding priority, those goals located in the top right-hand box are probably the most important to focus on in the first instance. Those in the bottom right hand box are also important but might require a little more work to ensure greater clarity.

**Table 1:**

High goal clarity			
Low motivation			High motivation
Low goal clarity			

### Others' involvement vs ability to achieve

You may also wish to compare ease of achievement with ability to achieve alone, or with others' assistance (see table 2 below). In examining this chart you may wish to ask yourself whether or not the relevant people are available to help you. Sometimes it helps motivation if you first tackle something easy

which you are in full control of, to get some success under your belt, before moving on to more difficult and complex issues.

These two-by-two boxes are very easy to create, and now that you are familiar with how to use them, you should create them to assist you in determining your goal priority list.

**Table 2:**

<b>Achieved alone</b>			
<b>Easy</b>			<b>Difficult</b>
<b>Need others</b>			

All these questions together with your own natural preferences in terms of action planning approach will have a bearing on the type of action plan you choose.

At its simplest you may choose to adopt a 'to do list' (see table 3 overleaf) that can help you meet your needs in achieving a short term goal where very little detail is needed and where you are relatively knowledgeable of the subject area.

**Table 3: action plan 1**

Things to do	Deadline date

For instance, an example of a 'to do list' type of action plan might look like table 4 below.

**Table 4: action plan 1 (example 1)**

Things to do	Deadline date
Learn new computer system	January 2000
Write an article on self-managed development	July 2000
Get more experience working overseas	Ongoing
Gain experience working with other business units	December 1999
Get fit and lose weight	Ongoing
Learn holiday Spanish	June 2000

Another simple action plan that involves three stages (see table 5) may be most appropriate for plans for which you require very little detail, possibly long term plans or those where you are fairly knowledgeable of the topic area.

**Table 5: action plan 2**

Objective	Steps to take	Timescale

At the other end of the spectrum a more detailed action plan (table 6) for the more complex objectives – perhaps where more people are involved in the process, or where your knowledge of the area is scant, thus requiring you to be more detailed in your planning process – might take this format.

**Table 6: action plan 3**

Objective and timescale	Things going for me	Things going against me
People involved	Resources necessary	Steps to take

In your approach to action planning there may well be a place for each of the above types of action planning.

Action plan 1 (table 3) could be used to list all your objectives over a fairly long period as a checklist of your achievements. Or it could be used as a very simple action plan in meeting *one* of your objectives, for instance as in table 7.

**Table 7: action plan 1 (example 2)**

Things to do	Deadline Date
Learn new computer system	
enquire about training programmes	January
select most appropriate programme	January
enrol on programme	February
practise keyboard skills	March
work through various exercises	April
begin to integrate with real work	June
explore advanced techniques	September

Action plan 2 (table 8 below) could be used where to meet one large objective you need to meet a variety of smaller objectives. You may fill up one sheet just by listing all the smaller objectives that you need to meet in order to fulfil your main objective.

**Table 8: action plan 2 (example)**

Objective	Steps to take	Timescale
Keep fit	Swim (20 lengths)	Weekly
	Aerobic exercise (30 mins)	Twice a week
	Walk up stairs at office	All the time
	Cycle to paper shop	Sundays
Lose weight (target weight 10 stone)	Find suitable diet	End of week
	Cut out chocolate bars	All the time
	Eat less fat and dairy product	All the time
	Weigh self	Fortnightly

Action plan 3 (table 9) would be used in order to get to grips with an objective that requires more detailed planning, where you have little knowledge or skill of the area in question.

**Table 9: action plan 3 (example)**

<b>Objective and timescale</b>	<b>Things going for me</b>	<b>Things going against me</b>
Gain experience working overseas by December 2000	The organisation's international reputation Previous experience Opportunities available	Lack of time Competitive marketing No foreign languages
<b>People involved</b>	<b>Resources necessary</b>	<b>Steps to take</b>
Boss Colleagues Clients Family	Contacts Budget Information about countries and events	Identify possible opportunity Discuss with relevant people Market self Plan into diary

You may of course already have a well-designed, tried and tested approach to your own action planning that can be easily adapted for self managed development. In line with earlier messages the important thing is for you to find an approach that suits you and then to use it!

While many organisations are encouraging self managed development and many individuals see the benefits of being more involved in their own development, in the final analysis it is down to you to get started on the process and to begin the journey of discovery!

The following development activities and workbook on p21-37 include some exercises to help you get started.

## Development activities

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The following development activities are designed to help you get started on the path of self development and learning. You may choose to work through the 10 steps in sequence; alternatively you may select only some of the steps to work on. Either way these ideas should help you to take responsibility and control for your own development and learning and to plan your future direction. The self managed development workbook on p24-37 will help you with these activities.

- **CREATE A DEVELOPMENT LOG** - develop a system for recording your thoughts, ideas and plans - a notebook, section in your diary or possibly a file in your computer.
- **FOCUS ON YOUR OBJECTIVES** - it is always best to have a reason to develop so start by asking yourself why - career, life, development of a specific skill etc. Note this down in your development log - regular review of your objective is necessary because this will change as you develop!
- **DEVELOP A PERSONAL PROFILE** - get to know yourself, ask yourself questions like the following, and note the answers in your learning log (see p24).
  - What words or phrases would you use to describe yourself?
  - What have you excelled at in your life so far?
  - What experiences have you avoided in life so far?
  - What aspects of work/life do you enjoy?
  - What aspects of work/life do you dislike?
  - What types of people do you like to develop relationships with?
  - What types of people do you avoid developing relationships with?
  - What might be your personal motto for life?
  - Adding some pertinent questions of your own is highly beneficial.
- **DO A PERSONAL SWOT ANALYSIS** - split a page of your log into four boxes and label the boxes each with a heading - STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS (see p27). Complete each of the boxes focusing on both work and life situations. Strengths and

weaknesses are those things personal to you, and opportunities and threats are those external things which may have an effect upon your life or work.

- **COMPLETE A COMPETENCE INVENTORY** - many organisations have their own frameworks and inventories and there are also many generic inventories on the market. Alternatively use the inventory included in this guide on p28-35.
- **LIST YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS** - reflect back on your life and note down descriptions of those experiences and events you consider to be achievements of which you are proud. Note when it happened, who was involved and why you are proud of it.
- **LIST SIGNIFICANT LEARNING EXPERIENCES** - we all learn in different ways and through different experiences - think back through your life and again reflect on experiences which you consider to be significant learning experiences for you. Note down a description of the event, why it was significant, how it happened, who was involved and what it taught you (see p25-26).
- **ASK OTHERS** - getting feedback from others is always of great value. It is always worthwhile asking people you trust and people you know well enough to add value to comment on their perceptions of your strengths and weaknesses or words and phrases they would use to describe you or things you should stop, start or develop. The important thing in asking others for feedback is to be clear what you want feedback on and get various views from different people - bosses, colleagues, subordinates, friends, etc.
- **FOCUS ON THE PRESENT** - take some time to note down what is happening in your life at the moment- the roles you have in life, your job and the important people in your life, your current skills, abilities and attributes, your short term plans, areas you need to develop to meet your plans and the people who can help you.

- **FOCUS ON THE FUTURE** - think ahead about your life, career, interests, hobbies, etc, ask yourself where you want to be, how you are going to get there, who can help you, what skills and abilities you will need and how you will know when you have reached your goal.
- **PLAN YOUR SELF DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY** - refer back to all the notes, thoughts and ideas you have in your development log and set your self some goals for your future self development and learning (see p37).

## Self managed development – a workbook

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### My general profile

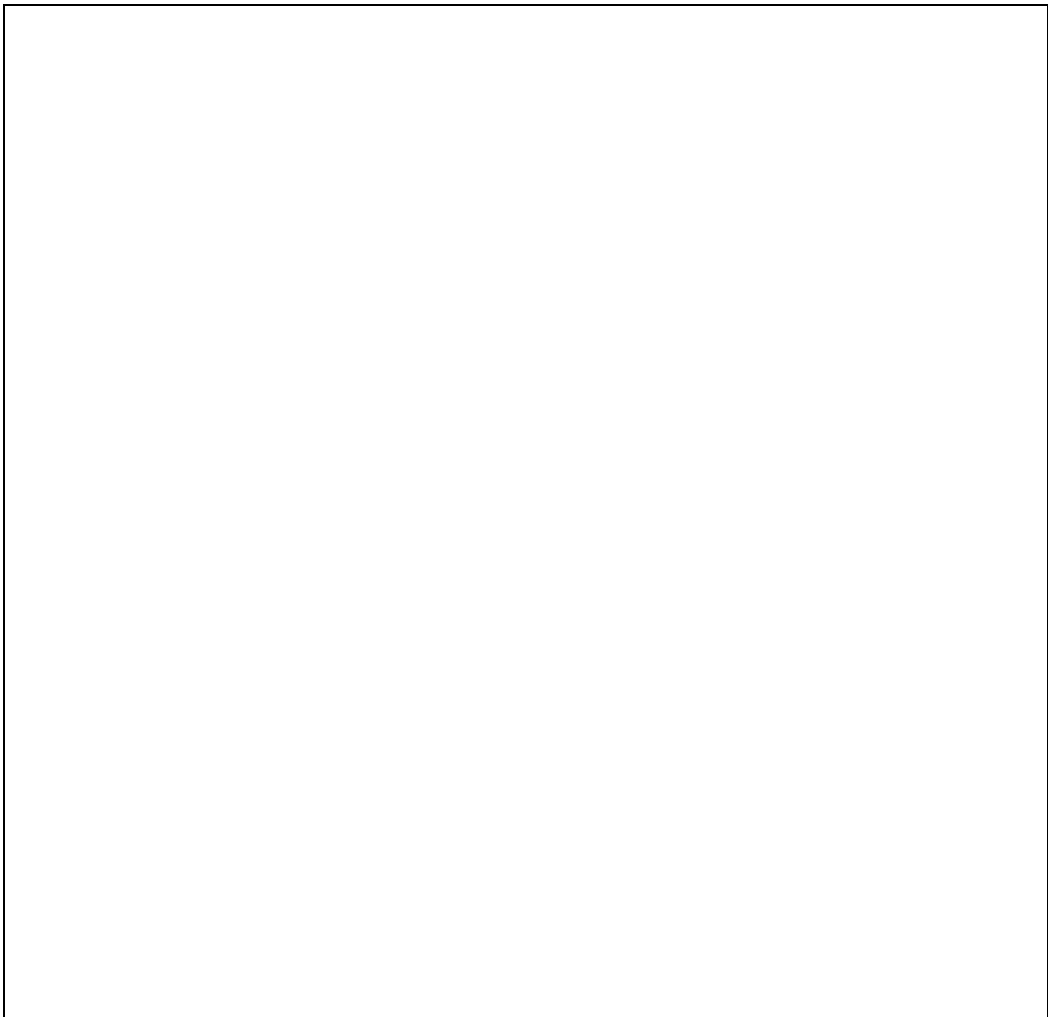
What are the key words or phrases that best describe you as a person?	
In considering your life as a whole what have you excelled at?	
What have you not excelled at?	
In terms of work, what do you like doing best?	
Similarly what do you like doing least?	
How would you describe the people with whom you relate best?	
How would you describe the people with whom you find it difficult to relate?	
How would you like to develop and improve in the future?	
Any additional notes.	

## Significant learning experiences

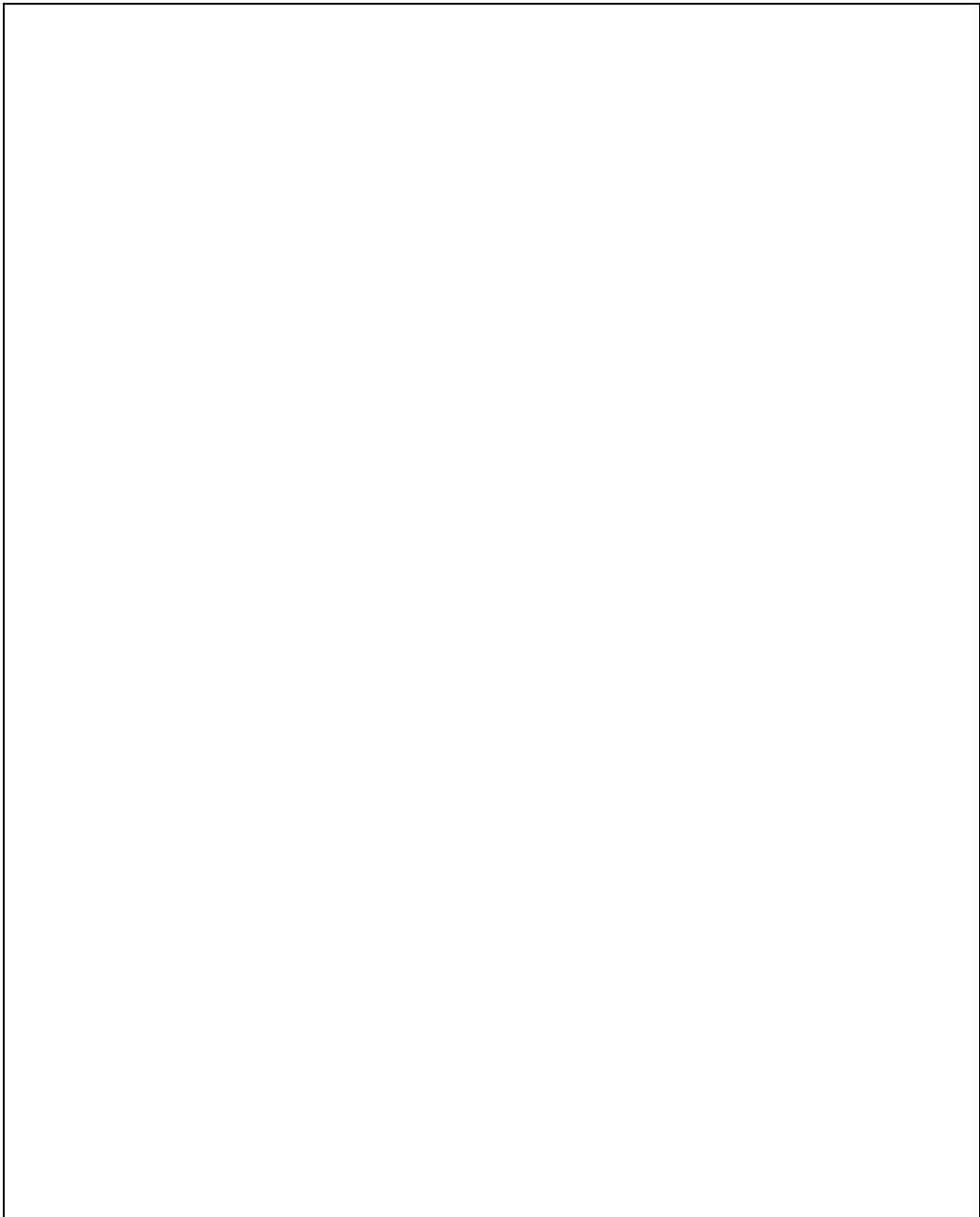
Firstly, work individually to reflect back through your life and recall an event or events which you would describe as a significant learning experience for you.

Make notes in the box about:

- why it was a significant event
- how it happened
- what it taught you
- who was involved
- how you learned, what you learned and what you liked and disliked about it.



Now, work in a small group to share your experience and note any similarities, differences, and interesting issues about significant learning experiences in the box below.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write their responses to the prompt above.

## Personal SWOT analysis

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This exercise encourages you to examine your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to your personal development and/or career development

<b>STRENGTHS</b> (Things you are good at)	<b>WEAKNESSES</b> (Things you do not handle well or cannot handle)
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> (Any changes that will effect you positively)	<b>THREATS</b> (Any changes that will affect you adversely)

# Competence inventory

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## Introduction

One way of deciding on how you want to develop is to examine yourself from a competence perspective. My definition of competence is 'specific knowledge or skill displayed and put into practice appropriately.' The following inventory has been developed in order to examine your competences and help you to get started on the process of self-managed development.

## Instructions

### Competence review

Think about each competence in terms of situations that occur across the major areas of your life, particularly work. Rate yourself using the following five point scale:

1. *Not competent*  
— an unused or untested area, or where you are totally lacking
2. *Some competence*  
— a slight ability demonstrated in this area
3. *Fairly competent*  
— an average ability demonstrated in this area
4. *Very competent*  
— an above average ability demonstrated in this area
5. *Extremely competent*  
— regarded as an expert in this area

## Job importance review

Think about your job, now take each competence in turn and assess how important these are for success in your job (or life!).

1. *Not important*

— no ability necessary for success or effectiveness

2. *Some importance*

—some ability necessary to be successful and effective

3. *Fairly important*

—an average ability necessary to be successful and effective

4. *Very important*

—an above average ability necessary to be successful and effective

5. *Extremely important*

—must be an expert in this area for success and effectiveness.

Now turn to the inventory and work through it scoring yourself in each of the two areas.

## Competence inventory

COMPETENCE DESCRIPTION	COMPETENCE REVIEW					JOB IMPORTANCE REVIEW				
	Not Competent	Some Competence	Fairly Competent	Very Competent	Extremely Competent	Not Important	Some Importance	Fairly Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
<b>INDIVIDUAL SKILLS</b>										
<b>Controlling and managing yourself</b> – organising yourself and channelling your energy towards productive ends. Keeping calm in stressful situations	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Logical and critical thinking</b> – structuring your thoughts into rational frameworks, then using these for critical evaluation and analysing your own and others' ideas	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Managing time</b> – allocating priorities, thinking through and making productive use of time available	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Managing uncertainty and ambiguity</b> – being prepared to move away from familiar ways of thinking and working, and dealing with uncertain situations comfortably	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Creativity</b> – having a sense of originality and being able to input new ideas. Arriving at new solutions to old problems	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Self confidence and assertiveness</b> – demonstrating a belief in yourself, being able to express what you feel is right in social and work situations. Ultimately being able to say no when others want you to say yes	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Communication – spoken and written</b> – expressing yourself clearly when talking to people, speaking at meetings making formal and fluent presentations and writing effectively	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Listening</b> – being attentive to people's views and ideas. Giving time and being patient in order to understand their concerns, feelings and interpretations on issues	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Problem solving and decision making</b> – being able to think through and work with the diverse elements of a problem, then integrating the elements and making a decision	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Self development and learning</b> – taking responsibility and control for your own development and learning. Planning your future direction	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS</b>											
<b>Performance management</b> – agreeing, monitoring and achieving performance standards and targets in key result areas	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Networking</b> – identifying and building a cluster of mutually beneficial relationship and developing a wide range of contacts	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Delegating</b> – developing others by passing on some of your authority and responsibility for tasks in a systematic way, thus giving you time to take on more challenging tasks from your boss	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Influencing</b> – adapting behaviour and communication style to influence and gain commitment from people in a wide range of areas and at all levels	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Handling others' difficulties</b> – helping others by acting as a counsellor, mentor and coach in order to assist in working through their personal difficulties	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Interviewing</b> – identifying the purpose of and collecting relevant data to enable effective exchange of information in a planned, systematic and sensitive manner	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Motivating</b> – understanding and empathising with the needs of others in order to tap into their motivational drives to ensure optimal contribution	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Team working</b> – developing synergistic working relationships built on trust, sharing and openness	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5

BUSINESS ACUMEN											
<b>Marketing awareness</b> – understanding the basic marketing principles in order to set up a system to tap into customer needs and market moves	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Statistical and analytical skill</b> – gathering, collating, interpreting and using information	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Strategic awareness</b> – determining future possibilities through the use of broad creative flexible thought and understanding	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Political sensitivity</b> – recognising and effectively balancing the interests and needs of one's own group with those of the broader organisation. Understanding the agendas and perspectives of others	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Helicoptering</b> – rising above the detail of events, seeing the 'big picture' and the wider network of forces that are usually outside your influence	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5
<b>Visioning</b> – communicating future possibilities through the use of words, pictures and imagery	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5

## Inventory analysis

You should now analyse the questionnaire and reflect on how it can help you to create your own self development plan.

You may like to ask yourself some or all of the following questions as part of this analysis:

What are your main strengths identified from the competence review?

What are the most important areas identified in the job review inventory?

What are your main weak areas identified in the competence review?

What are the least important areas identified in the job review inventory?

What does this analysis tell you so far?

Are there any significant differences between your competence review and the job importance review – what does this tell you?

What competences are necessary for you to develop for your current role?

What competences might be necessary for you to develop for success in the future?

## Personal job tree

This exercise provides you with an opportunity to analyse your current role in detail in order to assist you in the process of deciding on your development plan.

Take a sheet of A3 paper and a felt tip pen. Draw in a tree trunk and onto it write your job title. Then add to your tree trunk the main branches to represent the key elements of your job (probably about 6–8) annotating each branch accordingly, eg team management, administration, selling, etc. Next take each branch in turn and add smaller branches or twigs to elaborate on each of the key elements of your job that could be called tasks, again annotating as you go.

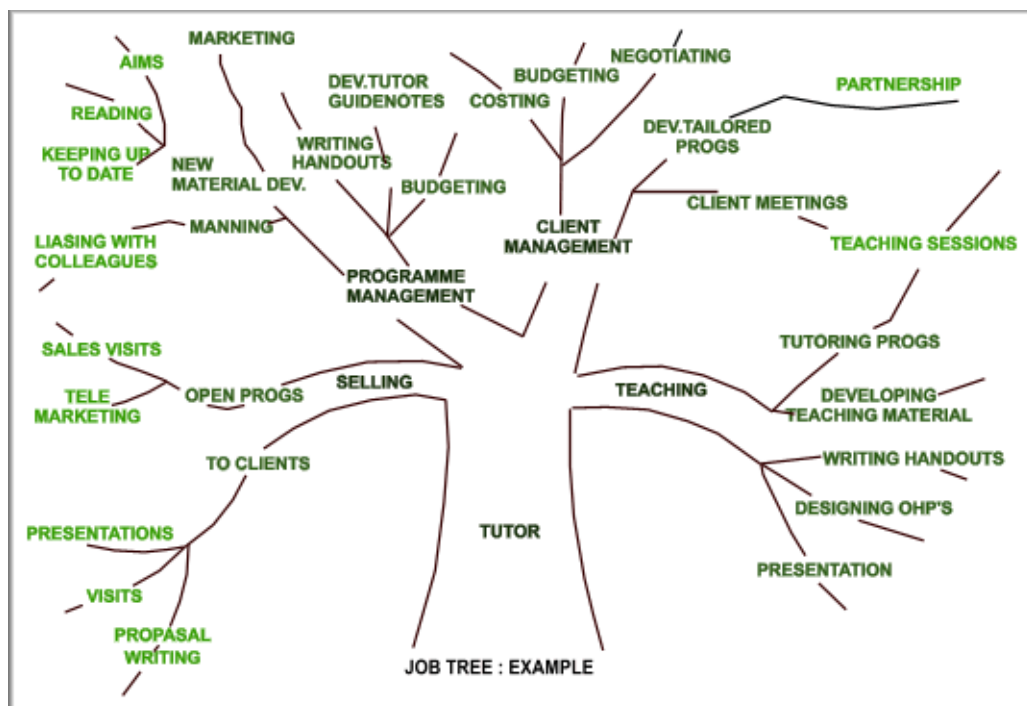
The next phase of this exercise is to analyse your job in detail by annotating your tree in response to the following instructions – you will find it useful here to use either different coloured pens or some sort of code to ensure you understand your tree when it is completed.

- Looking at each of the key elements, what percentage of time do you spend on each? Note onto your tree.
- Indicate which tasks you like and dislike – the degree of like or dislike should be indicated in some way: for instance +++ for really like; - - - for really dislike and so on.
- Indicate which tasks are regarded as being important by either the organisation or your boss, again by degree, possibly using \*\*\*.
- Now consider your own effectiveness, again by degree using a symbol.

- Now indicate where you need to develop by drawing a circle around the area.
- Finally indicate if a particular area of your job needs developing, again circle it, but in a different colour.

When you have finished creating your personal job tree you might like to ask yourself, or even share with someone you have a learning relationship with, the following questions:

- Are there any patterns emerging?
- What does it say about me? Myself, my job, my boss, my organisation?
- What development issues and ideas are emerging?



## Personal development plan

Learning objective	Steps to take	Timescale

*This learning guide was written by Fiona Dent, a client and programme director at Ashridge.*