

# Inspire Continuous Learning in Your Workplace

The how-to guide for anyone helping others develop



River Park is a learning and development consultancy. We give organisations the skills and knowledge they need to increase productivity, improve performance and facilitate personal and professional growth. Inspiring a culture of continuous learning in the workplace. Our mix of in-house training, on-line courses and consultancy offers bite-sized, actionable learning and expert guidance built around your needs. Helping your employees to develop their skills and strengthen their capabilities is our speciality.

This guide has been created to help you inspire continuous learning in your own workplace. Whether you're a L&D Manager, HR Manager or have another title, but are informally known as the person that'll help people develop, this ebook will give you ideas and tips to inspire the people in your workplace to continuously learn and develop.

## What is Continuous Workplace Learning?

Years ago, it was the norm that you would get a job 'for life', so you would turn up on the first day, get some training, then start work. After that, you'd probably not get any further formal training, other than maybe some mandatory Health & Safety training. Nowadays, the norm is that you will change jobs several times throughout your career.

It's more than that though, the computers we use and the systems we adopt are constantly changing and organisations need to adapt to customers' increasingly demanding expectations. That, coupled with the constant pressure to be more productive and profitable, means that the highest performing businesses are the ones who are continuously learning, developing and improving.

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*Organisations with a strong learning culture  
perform better.*  
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Organisations with a strong learning culture, that is a culture where learning and improving is the norm, perform better. All people, even those working in the most senior positions aren't finished with learning – they're constantly learning new things and developing their skills.

What this learning looks like in practice can be very different depending on the organisation. It might be that there is constant access to training opportunities, or it might be that there is a more informal approach to sharing experiences and learning from each other. It needn't be expensive – it's much more about establishing a culture where learning is a positive, normal part of work and is never seen as a sign of weakness.

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*"The only thing worse than training your  
employees and having them leave is not training  
them and having them stay." – Henry Ford*  
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## Why is Continuous Workplace Learning Important?

My guess is, that since you've already downloaded this, you believe that it's important to inspire continuous learning in your workplace. However, if you still need a reason, or want some text to copy into your business case, then read on.

### *It's cheaper to keep existing employees*

As your organisation grows or changes, you'll need people with different knowledge, skills and experience. It might be tempting to recruit new people into these new positions, but it's usually cheaper and more effective to recruit from within. Recruiting someone new usually involves advertising costs, agency fees and time sifting through applications. Recruiting internally means posting something on your intranet or staff room noticeboard. If you believe (or are told) that there is no budget for training, do some sums to compare the cost of recruiting externally vs internally and you'll have a budget just sitting waiting to be spent! Use this to upskill your existing employees so that when an opportunity does arise, they're fully equipped to step up.

### *Your people will be more productive*

When people learn new ways to do things and are up to date on the developments within their profession or industry, they become more innovative and will want to find the best way to do something. They'll become more productive because they'll be looking for the shortcuts and will have heard about other best practices that they want to try. They'll be more open to change and will welcome challenges. When your computer systems change, people that are used to learning will be much more open to the new system.

### *Workplace engagement will rise*

When employees are given ample opportunity to learn and develop, they are happier at work and are therefore more likely to stay with you for longer. They're also more likely to put in more effort, help other colleagues and serve your customers better. What's more, it's contagious. So, an engaged, motivated employee will likely 'rub off' on the others and will encourage everyone to get more involved.

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*“An investment in knowledge pays the best dividends.” – Benjamin Franklin*

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We might be fooled into thinking that employees want perks such as beanbags, pinball machines and free snacks, but what they really want is opportunities to learn. Offering training and development can provide your employees with opportunities to challenge themselves. Most people love a challenge! Especially if it's done in the right way, with plenty of support and encouragement. By providing these opportunities you're showing that you're willing to invest in your employees and care about their development needs and interests.

## How can you inspire continuous learning?

There are so many ways to inspire continuous learning in your workplace that it could take up a whole bookshelf! I'm sure you've already thought of some things you could do in your own organisation, but regardless of the ideas you have, it really boils down to three things:

Make learning opportunities available

Make time for learning

Role model continuous learning

### *Make learning opportunities available*

Firstly, make sure that there are opportunities for people to learn. Make sure to communicate these opportunities so that everyone knows what is available to them. Make training open to all – not just a select group and certainly not just for those who ask for it. Really make it open to all though! Have workshops at different times of the day, make notes or recordings available and make training easy to access. If some of your people work on mobile devices, make sure any elearnings or webinars will work on mobile. If some of your people work shifts, make sure that training is available when they work.

### *Make time for learning*

You're busy. Everyone's busy. No one has time for luxuries like training! Oh yes you do! Training doesn't need to be in a classroom. Informal training, such as from reading, social media or learning from colleagues, or digital training, such as virtual workshops or elearning, can be just as effective (if not more so) than classroom training. Try encouraging employees to share what they learn with others. Make it easy for them to do this. Encourage employees to spend some time reflecting on their contributions to a project before moving on to the next one.

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### *Make time*

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Make learning a priority. Make time and budget for it. You know it's important and you know that it will have a positive effect on your employees, your business and your customers. Remember it doesn't need to mean days away at courses and you don't need to spend thousands of pounds - but it does need to be a priority.

It might make sense to allocate time specifically for learning. Google famously has their 20% rule which allows employees to spend 20% of their working time on their own projects. You could dedicate a specific time slot each week for internal workshops, have drop in sessions at lunchtimes or use your intranet or communication platform to promote training. Make it the norm that when someone has some downtime, they can fill it with learning. Make it clear that (unless there's something really pressing that needs done), it's perfectly acceptable to spend some time learning (as long as it's relevant).

### **Role model continuous learning**

Above all, embrace it yourself. Demonstrate that you are continuously learning and developing your own knowledge and skills and encourage other senior colleagues to do the same. This can be the most effective way of encouraging a learning culture in your workplace. Talk to people about what you're learning and how you're doing it.

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*“An organisation’s ability to learn, and translate that learning into action rapidly is the ultimate competitive advantage.” – Jack Welch*

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Talk about great courses you've taken, videos you've watched or books you've read. Talk about how you find the time to make your learning a priority. Talk about how you draw on your network to learn about what's happening in your profession. Talk about the journals you're reading to keep up to date with your industry.

Own up to mistakes and be transparent about how you've learned from them. Share your experiences and outcomes with others. You could do this through your internal social network (if you have one), a presentation, or by email.

## **What now?**

Why not spend a few minutes answering the questions below to help you build an action plan that will really make a difference to your organisation?

What learning opportunities could you make available?

How can you ensure they are truly available to everyone?

How can you help your people make time to learn?

How can you role model continuous learning?

What's the first thing you can do to inspire continuous learning in your workplace?

For more ideas about how to inspire continuous learning in your workplace, let's [schedule a call](#).

Jennifer Lindsay-Finan, founded River Park in 2013 to provide businesses with training that was quick, practical and easy to put into practise straight away.

Jennifer specialises in using technology to provide relevant, effective and affordable training that's engaging and interactive.

Let's talk about how we can work together to inspire continuous learning in your workplace.

Schedule a call: [river-park.bookafy.com](http://river-park.bookafy.com)

Email: [jennifer@river-park.co.uk](mailto:jennifer@river-park.co.uk)

