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CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Abstract

CPD stands for Continuing Professional Development. The term is generally used to mean a physical folder or portfolio documenting your development as a professional. Some organizations use it to mean a training or development plan, which I would argue is not strictly accurate. This article is about CPD as a process of recording and reflecting on learning and development. Its function is to help you record, review and reflect on what you learn. It's not a tick-box document recording the training you have completed. It's broader than that.

Introduction

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a process by which individuals take control of their own learning and development, by engaging in an on-going process of reflection and action. This process is empowering and exciting and can stimulate people to achieve their aspiration and move towards their dreams.

CPD provides the opportunity to soar like an eagle or a helicopter and look at our career progress from a wider prospective. It challenges us to make time for regular personal reflection and review. It reminds us that we have the responsibility for developing ourselves rather than pushing the onus on to our manager or others in the organization.

Remember the old saying, 'You can take a horse to water but you can't make it drink'? Our response to that is to say that CPD is about becoming thirsty- thirsty for new knowledge, thirsty for new skills and thirsty for new experiences.

The Need for CPD

The need for CPD arises because security for individuals no longer lies in the job or organization we work for but in the skills, knowledge and experience that we have within ourselves.

Authoritative reports (Institute for Employment Studies – Tamkin et al., 1995; Industrial Relations Services, 1998; Income Data Services, 1999) highlighted CPD as a major intervention that we can make into our own development.

Core Concepts of CPD

What makes CPD different from other types of training and development?

1. The learner is in control- CPD starts from the learner's dream.
2. CPD is a holistic process and can address all aspects of life and the balance between them.
3. Regular looking forward to how we want to be, reflecting on how we are, and working from our present position towards the future direction, helps in achieving CPD's purposes and adds zest and direction to work and learning.
4. CPD works if you have the support and financial backing of your employer, and it also works even if the employer is indifferent and hostile.
5. CPD is not a panacea- like anything else it must be looked at in relation to the rest of the individual's life, the organizational context and wider work environment.

Stakeholders Involved in CPD

There are at several parties with an interest or stake in CPD. Centrally, there were many researches said that CPD works for individuals and it makes complete sense to engage with the process whether you are under pressure to do it from others or not.

Others are also arguing that CPD is very important for us. Many employers see it as crucial to development. They used CPD as means of giving power and focus to a range of HRD interventions.

Universities and colleges are also use CPD to help learners link their curriculum to the relevant and often pressing concerns of current work, or their future carrier. Academic institution also develops CPD in response to the requirements of professional bodies. These bodies advocate it as a way of supporting their members and as a means to underpin individual charter membership.

The Benefits of CPD for Individuals

As individuals, many of us may not have had appropriate careers advice when young or may have jumped at the first job on offer. In the rush of our day-to-day existence we may not have given ourselves the chance to reflect and consider whether we are getting what we want in our professional lives.

Every experience is an opportunity. However, we may need to walk around it for some time and look at it from all angles to appreciate this. Curiosity, reflection and questioning are important elements of CPD, and are essential precursors to change.

The Benefits of CPD for employers

Employers are increasingly concerned that employees under take CPD, first as the contributes to staff keeping their skills, knowledge and experience up to date. Second, many employers like staff to take responsibility for their own development and CPD provides the envelope in which a diverse range of development strands may be held together and leveraged for maximum benefits. Third, CPD help with succession planning. For some organization in highly competitive sectors, CPD is means of retaining staff. Staff vote with their feet – if the organization is not committed to their professional development they go elsewhere.

The Benefits of CPD for Colleges and Universities

Colleges and universities need to ensure that the content of their courses is relevant to the needs of their students while they are studying and also as they are planning their future careers. This is particularly pressing when the students are part-time and have an agenda of concerns and challenges at work that they would like help in addressing. Discussion of CPD in tutorials or learning sets established for this purpose is a powerful way of linking this individual work-based agenda to the curriculum of the course. In recent years professionals bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) have begun to lay a requirement on colleges to address CPD as a core part of the curriculum.

The Benefits of CPD for the CIPD

The CIPD has a double agenda. First as a professional body it has made clear that it expects all its members to complete a CPD plan and record at least annually. It sets this expectation because this will mean that its member keep themselves learning and therefore able to deliver more effectively than those outside membership who do not have to push to keep up with their CPD. This will mean that the qualification will be worth more as a differentiator, thus benefiting both the institution in making it more attractive to members, and the members in giving us more of a case to make to employers.

Second, the CIPD has a specific interest as a chartered body in that it makes undertakings to the Privy Council in Britain that its members will meet certain standards in order to be claiming their charter status. These undertakings Centre on members committing to CPD.

Key Principles of CPD

Professional standards are important to every employee. We are going to use the CIPD's description

of the key principles of CPD to explore why it is so important to us, as professionals.

The CIPD's key principles of CPD are:

1. Professional development is a continuous process that applies throughout a practitioner's working life.
2. Individuals are responsible for controlling and managing their own development.
3. Individuals should decide for themselves their learning needs and how to fulfill them.
4. Learning targets should be clearly articulated and should reflect the needs of employers and clients as well as practitioner's individual goals.
5. Learning is more effective when it is acknowledged as an integral part of all work activity rather than an individual burden.

We shall explore each of these principles briefly here and then focus on them.

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