

## **How to develop when there is no training budget?**

In tough economic times, one of the first budgets to be squeezed is the training budget. The company is concerned about “today” and tends not to invest in the “tomorrow” issues. But that is not to say that you need to give up on your personal development and it needn’t cost “real money”!! Michelle Lucas our resident Executive Coach shares her ideas on developing yourself without a budget.

Before you start you must ensure you are clear about your career goals and your development needs, so that you are finding activities that will add value rather than just keeping you busy. Once you know what it is that you want to learn you can think about the following:

- Find yourself a mentor, perhaps someone who has the job you would like and start to build a relationship with them. If you can arrange regular sessions you can share your challenges and your ideas with them, get their feedback and learn from their experiences
- Organise a job swap. It’s most helpful to provide your organisation with a solution – so seek out someone who is willing to swap with you. It may be difficult to take on a more senior role, but certainly it should be possible for broadening your skills
- Set up a “peer-support” group that get together over a coffee or a sandwich at lunch. This can be a confidential environment where you share knowledge and experience and problem solve together
- Organise some inter-team information sharing – find out what other teams do and if it works well consider some “continuous improvement” discussions which look at how you could work better together.
- Develop a reading list for yourself – there might be some books that you hear people refer to but have never read, you could use the internet to find out about articles and books on your chosen topic and you can actively talk to people at work about titles they would recommend.
- If you can, talk to your suppliers at work – some of them are happy to put on product training free of charge, agencies will similarly offer key advice sessions free of charge – so be bold, ask the question about what they can do and you may be pleasantly surprised !

Finally, however you choose to develop yourself, try to keep a learning log so that you capture what it is that you have gained. This helps you build your CV, may help demonstrate Continuous Professional Development for some professions and will help you demonstrate to your manager just what benefit you are gaining.

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