

Professional Development for Professional Staff

**Managers' perspective on the allocation of
resources: Australia, Canada and New
Zealand**

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**THE UNIVERSITY
OF AUCKLAND**

NEW ZEALAND

Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau

Themes from Literature

1. Organisational Control vs Freedom
2. Performance and development evaluation
3. Power and relationships
4. Identity and social dynamics
5. Psychological contract
6. Decision making processes....

Organisational influences on decisions

Mindset	Framing	Evaluation	Behaviour
Managerial	Unlimited freedom Acting autonomous	Pros & cons as to organisation needs	Open
Political	Limited freedom, constrained by others' power	Risks and gains as to personal needs	Loyalty
Value driven	Limited freedom, constrained by personal values/beliefs	Truncated process, consistent with personal values	Voice
Bureaucratic	No freedom, lacking power/accountability	No analysis	Obedience

Liedtka (1991)

'Resilience' or 'Resistance'

Resilience Requires	Resistance Requires
Skills and knowledge development for current and future roles	Stagnated knowledge and skills
Organisational commitment	Focus outside organisation
Trust in others	Negative perceptions of others
High level of self esteem	Negative social comparison
Internal locus of control	External locus of control
Ability to solve problems	Unable to make decisions
Takes responsibility for own errors and learns from mistakes	Blame others and seeks manager reassurance
Happiness	Fear/trepidation

Questionnaire: Process

Process	%	Constraints	%	Purpose	%
Formal	50	Budgets	14	Growth/future	14
Discussion	19	Time	3	Relevance	11
Observation	10	Relevance	2	Aspiration	6
Self/Online	10	No comment	81	Allocation set	4
Skills	10			No comment	65
Measurements	3				
	100		100		100

Statements:

- “I strongly suspect that an admission by individuals that they need upskilling to do their current work is viewed by many as a confession of being inappropriate for their role, and thus first step towards retrenchment.’
- “...funding for PD has been cut to the point where people feel it pointless to apply as they know that they will not be funded, nor in view of staff cuts will the office be able to release them. PD has become a wish list rather than a practical proposition.”

Questionnaire: Need

Most Need	%	Least Need	%
Upskilling for job/tech skills	24	Basic IT skills	18
Change/higher thinking	15	Customer service	6.5
Communication	14	Team work	5.5
Leadership	12.5	Sensitivity awareness	4.5
Customer service	10	Various one-offs	22.5
Intra-personal awareness	8.5	No comment	43
Time management	8.5		
Career/qualifications	7.5		
	100		100

Questionnaire: Expectations

Manager Expectations	%	Expectations Met?	%
Report/present learning	40	Met Expectations	67
Performance/competence	36	Some do, some don't	20
Apply learning to job	17.5	Not met expectations	12.5
Self assessment of goals and learning	6.5	No comment	6.5
	100		100

Questionnaire: Outcomes

Positive Outcomes	%	Negative Outcomes	%
Satisfaction/motivation	22	Time/burden on others	28
Competence/productivity	20	Poor alignment to need	21
Career/promotion	16	Cost/budget availability	14.5
Valued by organisation	12	Unrealistic expectations of staff	9
Skills and qualifications	9	Inequity/unfair/jealousy	9
Value added to team	7	Exit/organisation unable to change	6
	100		100

Questionnaire: Summary

Question	Priorities	%
Process	Formal and discussions	70%
Most Need	Competence, Higher Thinking, Communication, Leadership	65.5%
Least Need	Basic IT software skills	18%
Outcomes – Positive	Motivation, Competence, Career	58%
Outcomes – Negative	Time Burden, Poor Alignment, Budget constraints	63.5%



INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Quality of system:

- Generic systems too complex and doesn't meet needs
- Not all managers interested – waste of time
- Resources are inconsistently allocated
- Process not supported by rewards or career pathway
- Expectation of taking internal programmes only
- Dependent on desire and ability of manager to manipulate organisational system or introduce own
- DID provide opportunity for discussions
- Proactive staff benefit through career progression

Comments

“People tend to do it because they have to, not because they want to” and “there’s no heart in it – it’s just compliance.”

“It’s perceived as a process that’s painful and ‘lets get it out of the way’ – its not seen as valuable.”

“It is very satisfying to see proactive people develop and succeed in promotions.”

Managers' own behaviour

- Conscious of positive attitude
- Consistency of approach very important
- Expectations, relationships and trust
- Significant energy to creating positive environment
- Noted lack of career structure was difficult to deal with
- New managers need to build confidence in dealing with resistance
- Notable resistance from other managers

Manager perceptions of staff behaviour

- Initially, manager positive behaviour reflected in staff
- Significant need to change cynical attitudes and perceptions
- Guessing/assumptions why staff are resistance
 - Internalised historic experiences / past negative managers
 - Age, Gen Y, just want to go home at end of day, don't know
- Preference to expend energy on engaged staff
- Good number of staff happy and motivated to participate, and are proactive

Mangers' own satisfaction

- Medium to high level of satisfaction because
 - Created own system that works
 - Acknowledging own learning and change of approach
 - Takes on board responsibility for motivating staff
 - Satisfaction seeing staff progress and learn
- On the other hand things can be difficult
 - No transparency or link to pay-rises or rewards
 - Not all staff participate seeing no relevance/purpose

Manager perceptions of staff satisfaction

- Tended to generally reflect managers own satisfaction
 - Proactive staff succeed in development
 - Staff share their learning
 - Establishing purpose and ROI helps with value
 - Not perfect, managers must stimulate process
- Not all staff are satisfied
 - Ranking/measurements de-motivates, non committal from staff
 - See it as having no relevance or purpose

Who makes the decisions

Country	Type of Activity			Resource Allocation		
	Manager	Staff	Other	Manager	Staff	Others
Australia	46%	53%	0.6%	51%	6%	43%
Canada	40%	43%	17%	90%	1%	9%
NZ	40%	60%	0%	84%	4%	12%

Recommended changes (%)

Recommendation	Australia	Canada	NZ
Relevance of training to needs	26	21	20
Organisation/manager shared understanding	17	21	50
Staff engagement/pro-activity	9	18	20
Career Pathway	18	12	
Funding / Resources	8	6	10
Barriers/Time	8	12	
Accreditation/recognition	11	4	
Change/adaption to ongoing learning	3	6	

Influences on Decision making

- Manager's degree of confidence, positive attitude and energy to implement development processes
- Degree of disengaged or resistant staff in relation to the managers experience
- The individual staff member's level of resilience (esteem, efficacy, and sense of fair play) to engage in the process
- The organisational structure or culture that determines fair and equitable resources allocation, and quality of programmes

Conclusions

- Organisations have introduced professional development systems without a shared understanding of the purpose and benefits for staff, nor the necessary training for managers
- Equitable and transparent allocation of resources is not evident as a common institution-wide practice in any of the three countries
- Internal programmes are not meeting managers' desired training needs for staff

Conclusions

- A significant cohort of managers and staff perceive the process as a control mechanism and continue to resist participation
- Purpose is weakened by the lack of organisational / professional career pathway

Resolution

1. Develop management and leadership skills
 - Create a training programme for managers on how to develop quality relationships and trust, and how to utilise development processes that are flexible, purposeful, transparent
2. Increase shared understanding and decrease resistance
 - Create discussion forums for managers (and staff) to allow debate, discussion, and the development of shared understanding of the benefits and pitfalls of the system within their institution

Resolution

- 3 Create trust in 'management' and lessen the perceptions of compliance
 - Investigate why resources are not allocated or utilised in an equitable manner across the institution
 - Create internal programmes that are relevant to evolving roles
- 4 Create a sense of value and purpose for staff to engage with the professional development programme
 - Create Career Pathway and indicative skills and experience required to progress – create purpose and meaning
 - Expose hidden expectations and validity of measurements

Recommendations for further research

- Explore the gap that appears to exist between professional development policy and reality
- Investigate the reasons staff resist the professional development process, and the broader impact these views have on manager and staff behaviour