

## Engaging Employees through Innovative Learning Strategies

**Lorraine Denny, Deb Tetley**  
*University of Wollongong*

*Together Lorraine and Deb have over 30 years' experience in learning and development. Currently Lorraine is the Manager and Deb the Organisational Development Consultant in Professional and Organisational Development Services (PODS) team at the University of Wollongong. PODS is responsible for providing a comprehensive range of organisational and professional development initiatives across the University.*

*They both have a passion for helping others learn new skills they can apply in their workplace and life and providing leaders with the skills and understanding needed to get the most out of their staff. Lorraine has a particular interest in emotional intelligence whilst Deb's specific interest is in developing others in delivering exceptional customer service.*

Providing relevant and timely professional development opportunities is a key factor in staff attraction and employee engagement. Engaged employees display enthusiasm and passion, do more with less, give better service, are easier to lead, promote the organisation, create improvements, are less stressed and stick around.

Traditionally the majority of professional development opportunities have been provided through face to face training programs. However it has become increasingly difficult for professional and organizational development units within the tertiary sector to:

- meet the specific training and development needs of a diverse group of staff
- provide training and development at a time convenient to staff
- ensure transfer of learning from activities to the workplace.

Research has indicated that the percentage of training's potential for changing performance on the job is somewhere between 10% and 20% (Brinkerhoff & Gill, Baldwin & Ford).

So how can we overcome these challenges and engage our workforce through professional development opportunities that are sustainable in the workplace, tailored to the needs of staff, delivered at a time convenient to them and in a cost effective manner?

This presentation will examine the implementation of a range of innovative learning initiatives that provide tailored and sustainable professional development opportunities to staff.

These initiatives include building internal organisational coaching capability, creating partnerships with other units on campus, supporting peer learning groups, implementing sustainable mentoring programs and developing learning elements that can be accessed by staff at a time convenient to them.