

TRAINING & LEARNING

MANAGERS MUST STAY CURIOUS

“LIFELONG LEARNING” Ring any bells? You must remember when that was the buzz phrase on everybody’s lips, sadly nowadays, rather than excitement, it seems to induce a gentle snoring in the ranks. However, it remains one of the most important challenges for L&D managers’

No matter what your favourite fad, *continuous learning* is still for everyone. This is particularly important for managers to understand not only for themselves but also for their teams.

Some managers rest on their laurels, feeling as though they don’t need to constantly improve. But that sort of thinking can lead to disastrous results for your company and your professional life.

If you’re the leader of a group or functional team in a business, you need to take the initiative to instil a culture of continuous learning. And that means taking the time to learn new skills, attend webinars and gain new certifications to expand your skillset. With that in mind, here are five ways managers can stay curious.

1. Learn in Small Chunks

Learning doesn’t have to be a ‘time-suck’. You don’t need to travel to conferences, attend hour long webinars or complete time-consuming courses in the evening to show your employees that learning is important.

Being a continuous learner can be as simple as reading an article or blog post once a week or listening to a webinar while you eat your lunch. There’s always opportunity to take advantage of your down time.

2. Share Opportunities with Your Team

Once you start taking advantage of that time, share it with your team!

One helpful method is creating a group message or channel on a workplace messaging platform for learning initiatives. Share interesting articles you found, webinars you plan to attend or useful certifications you think your team will benefit from.

If they see their manager making time to improve, they'll take the time to improve as well.

3. Keep Learning Positive

Make learning opportunities a focus of weekly check-ins with your direct reports as well. Help them to make time for each opportunity and offer support where you can. This will give them a sense of confidence around what they need to do and keep the experience positive.

Avoid framing a learning opportunity as a way to fill a skill gap. This is a negative approach that can discourage people. It puts the focus on what your employees lack instead of what they can gain. Be positive, and you'll see positive results.

4. Stay Employee-focused

Continuous learning offers many benefits for a company. But what matters most is your employees. Let's face it, you might not work with your company for the rest of your life, and your employees probably won't work for you for the rest of their lives. So don't limit their skills. Help them reach professional goals even if they benefit the employee more than the company.

5. Be Wary of Complacency

Don't forget that all these efforts can be undone if you or your people get complacent. If you aren't interested in improving anymore, your team will mirror that behaviour and senior management will notice which in turn may cause them to lose confidence in your leadership. Successful teams aren't led by "experts" with nothing left to learn. They're led by curious learners, always looking to improve.

Conclusion

Learning and development doesn't stop!

You set the tone for your team, and when you show that you are always trying to learn and improve, that effect trickles down. Creating a structured focus on learning benefits everyone. It not only helps you and your team gain skills and qualifications, but it also makes you more marketable as a professional. More critically, it's what makes organisational growth possible, helping you and your team deliver better results.