

# How To Develop Your Managers In The 21st Century

By

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## “HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR MANAGERS IN THE 21ST CENTURY”

Developing your managers is one of the most rewarding activities that any company can undertake.

The thing is, your managers, or should I say, leaders, are the driving force behind your company. They manage, motivate and lead your staff but what does management development actually mean in your business?

Over the years we have been into hundreds of businesses and we have seen the good, the bad and the ugly of management development! We have seen those organisations that have the processes, systems, resources and support in place for their leaders that makes failure almost impossible through to businesses who think management development is when they give their leaders a pat on the back and a cream bun! (Honestly).

What was once seen as an activity where you just sent your manager on a course, modern management development methods now include a variety of blended learning techniques and strategies.

The modern manager needs far more than just process skills. Instead, they need to be able to be like “small business owners” – running their own team or department like it was their own.

Terms like “Entrepreneurial leadership” and “Super leadership” are now doing the rounds as the modern manager needs a firm understanding of a whole series of hard and soft skills just to get by never mind to excel at their role!

### **In the old days...**

Historically, management development methods included mainly workshops and on the job training – if you received any at all that is!

Whilst we have “Pay as you go” phones today, then it really was a case of “Learn as you go” and whilst this is still a very productive way of learning it should not be the only solution.

Instead, as your manager’s experience and knowledge increases it should be complemented with various different development methods like elearning, management development programmes, 121 training, simulations, coaching, assignments, action learning sets, emotional intelligence, personality assessments – the list goes on.

Let’s take a look at some of the alternative methods of management development:

**Workshops** – these are ad-hoc training courses either run in-house (at your own premises) or taken as an open course (public course) with managers from other companies.

**Modular Based Learning Sessions** - these are normally 1 or 2 day classroom based workshops spread throughout the duration of a programme at regular intervals. For example, if it is a 6 month programme your managers might attend one classroom event per month on various topics such as "Leading For Success", "Change Management", "Building High Performing Teams", "Coaching & Giving Feedback" etc

**Personal 1 on 1 Business Coaching** - with this, each manager receives face to face or telephone coaching sessions with a fully qualified business coach. Together they tackle some of the major issues that are holding the manager back at work and they put action plans in place to improve them.

**Personality & Behavioural Profiling** - each manager can take a number of assessments and exercises and then they will receive detailed reports and profiles on their preferences and what makes them the person that they are. Understanding oneself is very important in the development process. Each manager receives their feedback from a fully qualified expert with full explanations as to the application and practical considerations of the information.

**Personal 1 on 1 Life Coaching** - each manager receives face to face or telephone coaching from a fully qualified life coach. The aims of these sessions are to create balance in the manager's life between work, rest and play and to act as support for any personal or confidence related issues.

**Work Based Assignments & Projects** - applying learning into the workplace is a critical activity. With work based assignments, the managers have case studies to work through having to apply what they have learned on a course or in their work. Each assignment is based upon a "real life" scenario that the company has or could face in the future and the manager is left responsible for tackling the situation and heading up the team that ultimately has to provide solutions and a way forward for it.

**Team Building Events** - these can be on or offsite where the group as a whole or in smaller teams are set challenging events and activities to promote cross functional working and the elements of building high performing teams.

**E-Learning Modules** - some information and learning can be conducted through computer designed training sessions. Here, the manager accesses a programme through their computer and works through the course themselves. At various points throughout the ecourse there will be mini tests and assessments to confirm their understanding of the topics covered.

**Simulations** - with a simulation, groups of managers are "placed" into a real life scenario and it is up to them as a team to create a positive outcome. For example, "A flood has just wiped out your manufacturing capability, what are you going to do to resume business ASAP?" or "You are in charge of creating a new product to achieve xyz. What is your new product? What will it do? How will you market it? What considerations will you need to plan for in the workplace - training, comms etc?" ....and of course we as trainers throw obstacles in along the way to test their planning, organisation, team and self-control skills!

**Distance Learning** - modules and course content can be covered through self-study manuals, DVD's, CD's and CD ROMs. The managers will be required to complete the modules themselves and send in their answers and coursework to their designated personal tutor who then provides feedback to them.

**Action Learning Sets** - these are normally half day sessions based on the relationship between reflection and action, where the focus is on the issues and problems that the managers bring to the group, and planning future action with the structured attention and support of that group. A major advantage of Action Learning is that participants are able to look at the real problems that concern them, rather than considering hypothetical ones, and they are responsible for the selection of the topic(s) or problem(s) discussed.

Those are some of the alternative ways of developing your staff and another vital ingredient is the style of delivery for each method.

The use of accelerated learning, emotional intelligence and NLP techniques are commonplace in today's modern learning environments. Long gone are the days of chalk and talk in a seminar format!

### **Putting it all together...**

We as organisations ultimately want highly motivated and inspirational leaders so that our businesses can be highly competitive in today's modern business environment.

The question we must ask ourselves is "What are we actually doing to ensure that this happens?"

As a performance enhancing, motivational and retention tool, developing our managers is a vital all-round activity that has many benefits for both the manager and the company.

Managing the process and keeping up to date with the latest product knowledge and new initiatives of our companies is challenging enough. Couple this with the need to be excellent man managers and the job as a 21st Century Manager is becoming all the more difficult.


It is our role to help, support and develop our managers to lead through the "today" as well as the "tomorrow". Not only do we need to develop the managers we have in their existing roles but we also need to think of who will be the managers of tomorrow and plan for that as well.

Today's modern organisation, just to survive, has to have an aggressive change agenda to manage and it is through the qualities of your managers that your ultimate destiny as a company will be shaped.

Now is the time to dust down our training and development plans and give them a spring clean to ensure that our managers are equipped to face the demands of a 21st century business.

Thanks again and take care



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Sean McPheat is the **Chief Executive Officer** of the multi-award winning **MTD Training Group**.

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