Managers
as Developers of Others

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Report 407

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This report is the product of a study supported by the IES Research Networks, through which Members finance, and often participate in, applied research on employment issues. Full information on Membership is available from IES on request, or at www.employment-studies.co.uk/networks/

Acknowledgements

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Summary: A practical framework for managers

This summary outlines how managers can improve their effectiveness in developing others, and covers setting the climate, building a developmental relationship, feedback and focus, delivering development and active career development.

The summary also outlines what managers should not do when developing others.
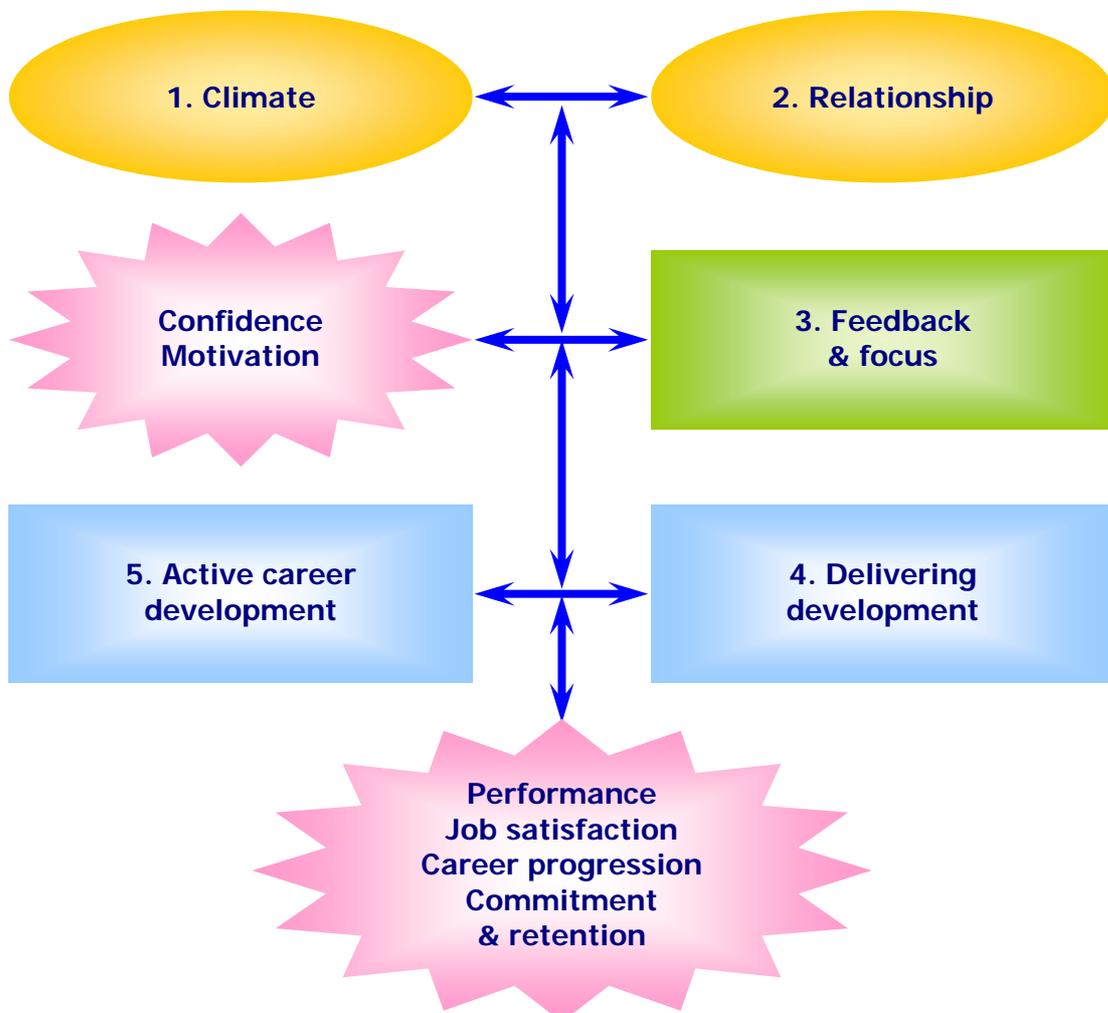
1. Climate

2. Relationship

Confidence
Motivation

3. Feedback
& focus

5. Active career
development

4. Delivering
development

Performance
Job satisfaction
Career progression
Commitment
& retention

What to do to improve your effectiveness in developing others:

Setting the climate

Find time for people whenever they need help, and make them welcome.

Make development part of your team atmosphere by encouraging team members to help each other and share information in team meetings.

Acknowledge your own need for improvement and development.

Set work objectives with your staff and team which build in development, adjusting job design if appropriate.

Work on staff development within your own natural management style.

Allow yourself to take pleasure in developing others. Treat it as a business priority.

Building a developmental relationship

Get to know your staff well through frequent, informal conversations about their work and how things are going.

Listen carefully to their concerns. See the work situation from the individual's point of view, and tailor your response to their particular needs.

Offer positive support, and build trust through an open, honest and considerate approach.

Be pro-active and persistent in the development of staff, but try to give employees as much control over their own development as possible.

Be alert to the extra development needs people have when they are new in a job or when they are outgrowing their job. Signs of stress or poor motivation can also show the need for extra development support.

Adjust each developmental relationship over time, giving people more space as their skills and confidence grow.

Be open to supporting other employees who do not work for you directly.

Feedback and focussing development

Be explicit about the standards of work and behaviour required.

Achieve a sound understanding of the individual's performance and skills through conversation, and also through direct observation and review of specific tasks.

Review performance and development progress in frequent one-to-one meetings.

Be open and honest in giving feedback. Give praise wherever you can, and use positive feedback to build confidence. Make any criticism specific and constructive.

Listen carefully to how the individual sees themselves, and challenge this if necessary.

Try to agree a few development priorities, based on a clear, objective, and shared assessment of their needs - sometimes just one thing is best.

Track development activity and progress consistently, keeping notes if this helps.

Delivering development

Make sure that agreed development priorities are actively pursued.

If you are coaching the individual yourself, be focused and take the time to explain things thoroughly, preferably through using real work examples.

Invite the individual to rehearse important tasks or to share ideas before executing them. Review such tasks afterwards and help the individual learn from them.

Give employees a wider understanding of the business, including how it operates politically.

Pull in others to help with development. Choose them for the skills they have and work experiences they can offer, but also pick people who are effective developers.

Make the best use of the formal training your organisation can offer, where this meets the development needs you have identified. Talk to the individual before and after any training course.

Look for direct experiences outside the normal job which can deliver development *eg* projects, working groups, job swaps, secondments, external activities *etc*. Use delegation consciously to develop others.

If personal problems are affecting an employee's work performance or development, try and work with them to solve the problem in a supportive but objective fashion. Be flexible in your approach. Pull in expert help if needed.

Active career development

See a person's current job performance in the context of what they have done before, and what they may go on to do. See their work and career in the context of their life outside work, and remember that people's circumstances are always changing.

If you think someone has potential beyond their current job, or would do better in a different kind of job, talk to them. Be prepared to gently push them to extend their career aspirations if they under-estimate their own ability. Sometimes, the reverse is needed for people who over-estimate their own skills or abilities.

If an individual is thinking about a career move, help them obtain a realistic view of the possible new job role, and whether they have the skills it requires.

Support staff through the processes of job change or promotion. Make sure they understand how these processes work, and coach them if necessary on the application documents they have to complete, or for interviews or presentations.

What NOT to do in developing others:

We could write a long list, but here are some of the negative behaviours that individuals in the IES research project mentioned most frequently:

- Blaming work objectives or targets set from above for not developing your staff.

- Making yourself inaccessible or being aggressive when people ask you for help.

- Criticising your staff or your team in front of other people.

- Showing an erratic or inconsistent attitude to staff development.

- Using negative feedback to undermine people, or hurt them personally.

- Giving someone a job you know they can't do and leaving them to sink or swim.

- Trying to keep someone in a job you know they have outgrown.

- Ignoring a personal problem which is clearly affecting someone's work.

- Losing touch with what your staff are doing, and how well they are doing it.

- Only talking about development once a year in formal appraisal. Agreeing a Personal Development Plan and then putting it in a drawer.

- Seeing development only in terms of sending staff on courses.

- Being uninterested, not exploring performance and not helping the individual think ahead.

1. **Introduction**

This report presents the main findings of a study by the Institute for Employment Studies. The study investigated the behaviour of managers who are good at developing other people in the workplace.

Organisations are now placing heavy emphasis on the role of the manager as coach, and on the workplace as a learning environment. Some managers take on other formal development roles, *eg* as mentors. Some find themselves offering more informal support to staff who may not work for them directly. All these managers need a practical idea of how to 'develop others' effectively.

This research set out with the specific aim of generating some vivid and detailed evidence of what good (and bad) development by managers really looks like.

Chapter 2 presents a literature review of ideas about managers as developers of others.

Chapter 3 presents the IES research findings, including a framework for managers.

Chapter 4 presents some of the narrative accounts which were collected. We hope that these will prove useful to HR managers, trainers, line managers and employees in gaining a richer understanding of the nature of development support.

2. Literature review

This chapter looks at published research and ideas on the role of the line manager as a developer of others. It covers:

1. the growing role of the line manager in development

2. managers as career developers

3. managers as mentors and coaches for staff

4. the business importance of managers as developers

5. developing the competency to develop others

6. barriers to staff development

7. relationship to management theories and formal frameworks

8. a summary of the literature.

2.1 The growing role of the line manager in development

Developing people devolved to line managers

In recent years, it has become apparent that, in many organisations, the responsibility for employee development is being devolved to line managers (Hyman and Cunningham, 1998). Salaman (1995) contends that the pivotal role of today's managers is to '*support the management of performance or the management of learning.*' So managers are under increasing pressure to manage the learning process for other employees. A recent training and development survey by CIPD (2003) gauged the extent to which line managers themselves are now driving development activities. Indeed, this study demonstrated that there has been a considerable devolution of responsibility for staff development to line managers in all sectors.

What managers need in order to develop others

IES' own research has surveyed organisational views concerning the particular competencies that managers require to manage effectively. These include: the ability to plan ahead, to see the bigger picture and to manage relationships. More specifically, there has been a shift from the role of the 'manager as a controller' to that of a coach or mentor, of which developing employees is a

major part (Tamkin *et al.*, 2003). Despite this, there has been little empirical research that specifically deals with the role of managers as developers of other staff. In terms of a definition, developing others is a managerial competency that relates to helping employees gain knowledge and skills, developing more effective procedures, and overcoming barriers that hinder performance:

Table 2.1: Managerial skills/behaviours that facilitate and inhibit employee development

	Category	Skills/Behaviours
Facilitative:	Caring	Supporting
		Encouraging
		Being approachable
		Reassuring
		Being committed/involved
		Empathising
	Informing	Sharing knowledge
	Being professional	Role Modelling
		Standard-setting
		Planning & preparing
	Advising	Instructing
		Coaching
		Guiding
		Counselling
	Assessing	Providing feedback and recognition
		Identifying development needs
	Thinking	Reflective or Prospective Thinking
		Clarifying
	Empowering	Delegating
		Trusting
	Developing developers	Developing developers
	Challenging	Challenging
Inhibitory:	Not giving time	Spending insufficient time on development
	Being dogmatic	Prescribing way to carry out tasks
	Controlling	Not letting go
		Not delegating
	Not thinking	Being overly directive
		Not Clarifying
	Being task-orientated	Not focusing on development
	Being unassertive	Not listening
		Not encouraging
		Being aggressive
	Withholding information	Transmitting incomplete information
		Limiting exposure to new experiences
	Not assessing	Failing to recognise needs
		Failing to provide feedback

Source: Adapted from Beattie , 2002

'Managers who are good at developing their employees try to place them in situations that challenge them and that will lead to improvement. They help employees identify strengths and weaknesses, and compel them to plan about how to improve their weaknesses and develop their strengths. The best developers invest fully in their employees' success. They give accurate feedback and help people overcome their barriers.' (Zwell, 1999)
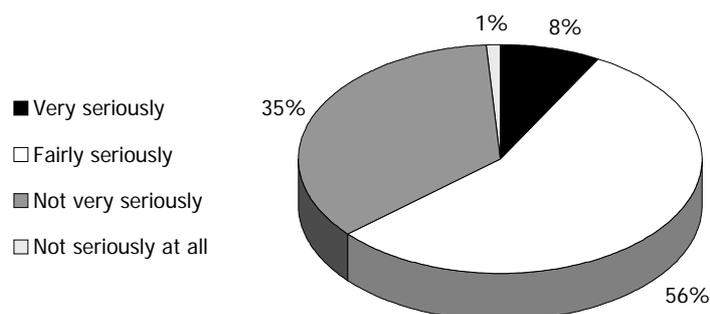
In a recent qualitative investigation by Beattie (2002), semi-structured interviews and analysis of critical incidents were used to identify managerial behaviours that either facilitated or inhibited the development of other employees (see Table 2.1 above). These skills/behaviours identified by Beattie provide a general overview of what makes an effective, or ineffective, developer of others.

How do line managers respond to this responsibility?

With a shift in development responsibility to line managers, it would be expected that this would also be reflected in the attitudes of line managers towards training and development. Indeed, evidence — at least from HR people — suggests that line managers seem serious in their approach to training and development (CIPD, 2003). Figure 2.1 illustrates how seriously line managers took staff development, as perceived by the CIPD respondents, who were HR people. Over 35 per cent of participants reported that line managers take training and development very seriously, whereas only nine per cent are either not very serious or not serious at all. The majority of respondents (56 per cent) reported that line managers took training and development fairly seriously.

However, despite line managers' generally positive attitudes towards training and development as shown above, only 12 per cent of the HR respondents felt that line managers were sufficiently involved with training and development activities. Taken together, this evidence suggests that the positive attitudes espoused by line managers themselves may not be adequately reflected in their own practice.

Figure 2.1: How seriously do line managers take staff development?

Very seriously
Fairly seriously
Not very seriously
Not seriously at all

1%   8%
35%
56%

Source: CIPD, 2003

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2.2 Managers as career developers

The role of managers as developers is not only limited to the short-term development of staff in their current jobs. Some authors have argued that employees also require information and advice regarding their careers in order to manage their own development effectively. For example, Hirsh *et al.* (2001) demonstrated that effective career discussions often lead to practical actions and can be highly motivating for employees. More specifically, their examination of 250 particular career development conversations in five major employing organisations showed that not only did the majority of discussions take place outside of any formal HR processes, but that only 20 per cent of these career conversations were with their direct line manager. The majority of the discussions took place with other managers within the organisation.

The same study also found that 'practical action' resulted from about three-quarters of positive career discussions, *eg* a job move or development activity. The four main types of impact of the effective career discussions were:

- a clearer future career direction
- self-insight
- information about career opportunities
- psychological benefit, *ie* generally feeling good.

In terms of what makes the career discussion effective, in general, the most important requirements for providers were:

- the provider's personal qualities (employees valued managers being frank and honest, particularly in giving constructive feedback about skills and potential)
- challenging the receiver and offering advice where appropriate
- using interpersonal skills to facilitate the discussion
- providing information about opportunities.

The most experienced providers of career support saw career discussion as part of developing the potential of employees (*ie* maximising their business contribution over time) but even more as an essential component of a motivational style of leadership (*ie* maximising their engagement). They believed that the motivational impact of being attentive to employees' concerns about their careers had a powerful business benefit.

2.3 Managers as mentors and coaches for staff

The role of line managers in both the skills development and career development of staff is widely discussed in the very large research literature on mentoring and coaching.

Clutterbuck (1998) suggests that high performing organisations retain their competitive advantage by the way in which they balance the 'soft' and 'hard' sides of people management. Clutterbuck refers to this as '*challenge versus nurturing*', that is, the combination of demanding targets with a high degree of emotional support. Challenge is closely related to the intellectual values of organisations, and nurturing to the emotional values:

> *'The ability to manage both the intellectual and the emotional interpretation and reaction to external stimuli is a defining characteristic of functional excellence.'* (Clutterbuck, 1998)

In terms of individual relationships within the learning process, Clutterbuck suggests that the challenging-nurturing dimension can be combined with a measure of '*directive vs. non-directive*' behaviours. Directive behaviours, for example, would involve a more experienced manager setting learning goals and plans to achieve them, and giving feedback. In contrast, non-directive behaviours give responsibility for development to the learners themselves. In practice, effective development relationships function between these dimensions (see Figure 2.2). Each quadrant of the model defines a different form of learning relationship.

Coach: The coach gives the employee a task, observes and gives feedback. Although modern approaches emphasise communi-cation and ownership of the *issue* by the learner, the learner does not own or manage the *process*. This depends on the observational and questioning role of the coach.

Figure 2.2: Dimensions of mentoring

Source: Clutterbuck, 1998

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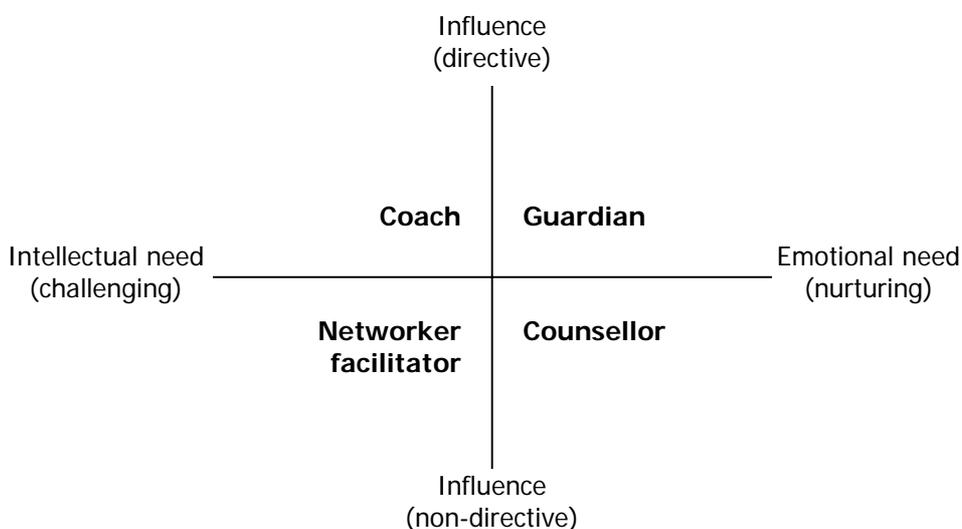
Table 2.2: Coaching versus mentoring

Coaching	Mentoring
Concerned with task	Concerned with implications beyond the task
Focuses on skills and performance	Focuses on capability and potential
Primarily a line manager role	Works best off-line
Agenda set by or with the coach	Agenda set by the learner
Emphasises feedback to the learner	Emphasises feedback and reflection by the learner
Typically addresses a short-term need	Typically a longer-term relationship, often for life
Feedback and discussion primarily explicit	Feedback and discussion primarily about implicit, intuitive issues and behaviours.

Source: Clutterbuck, 1998

Guardian: This is someone of superiority who facilitates learning by ensuring that employees are included on high-profile, high-learning exposure projects. More typically, the guardian will be a source of advice, a role model, and a general guide through the political and practical aspects of learning.

Counsellor: Counselling is a learner-centred method of giving support. People learn best when they have the right environment and the right frame of mind. Counselling supports the learning process by helping people examine and come to terms with their own fears, motivations, and blocks to progress.

Networker/Facilitator: The aim of the networker/facilitator is to make the learner self-reliant in the shortest time possible. The networker side of the role helps the learners to expand their breadth of information. The facilitator side of the role helps them think through how to manage their own development.

The role of mentor is seen as represented by the entire model — a mentor can draw on any or all of these learning relationships.

There is much discussion of the relationship between coaching and mentoring. Coaching is often confused with mentoring, Table 2.2 above emphasises the essential differences between the two roles. The main point to be aware of is that coaching is typically short-term, with a task focus, whereas mentoring is typically long-term with the focus placed on the individual.

2.4 The business importance of managers as developers

In the 1980s it was argued that poor organisational performance was due to both the poor educational attainments of managers and their low levels of training and development (Handy, 1987). As Hyman and Cunningham (1998) contend, in the 1990s, considerable attempts were made by the government and management institutions to persuade employers to systematically

train and develop their managers. The message was that investment in HRM gives rise to increased business performance and flexibility.

The Institute of Management studies by Mabey and Thomson (2000), continued the series of reports started by Constable and McCormick (1987) and the Handy report (1987). The Mabey and Thomson report, on a series of surveys, highlighted that there has been:

> '… significant progress in both the quantity and quality of management development in UK organisations since the mid 1980s.'
> (Mabey and Thomson, 2000)

Mabey and Thomson argue that staff development has been a relatively neglected aspect of the managerial role:

> 'Organisations would benefit from reviewing their informal development of managers, giving special attention to the abilities of line/project managers to manage the development of their staff.'
> (Mabey and Thomson, 2000)

Related research by Miller *et al.* (2001) found that managers who report higher levels, and more sophisticated processes and systems of management development also report higher business performance relative to their competitors. Despite this, however, only one-half of the 500 managers surveyed reported that their organisations were either pursuing, or had secured, Investors in People (IiP) accreditation, and 63 per cent confirmed a commitment to NVQs. Only 14 per cent mentioned a commitment to the National Management Standards. Given that developing others is now an established managerial competency in IiP, NVQs and Management Standards, this may appear disappointing. However, many organisations with their own internal frameworks of managerial competencies also put a strong emphasis on people management skills, including people development.

2.5 Developing the competency to develop others

In a study of 17 large UK organisations, Kettley and Strebler (1997) concluded that the uncertain external environment demands managers who are flexible, adaptable, and possess particular soft skills. Highlighting the efficacy of the more personal aspects of management, one key soft skill they identified was 'developing people.' However, even though many line managers may be aware of the importance of training and development, some authors have commented as to whether line managers are adequately prepared to conduct this role effectively.

In the CIPD Training and Development Survey (2003), only 21 per cent of participants reported that all line managers in the organisation were trained to support learning and development. Over one-third felt that only a minority of their line managers

were so trained. In relation to this, with regard to the abilities and skills of line managers to support learning, over one-quarter reported that their line managers had a great deal of ability, whereas the majority thought that line managers had only some ability. Research such as this suggests that organisations have much to do in developing line management capability in this area.

Coaching for managers

So how can these skills be developed? Just as we earlier discussed the role of the manager as mentor or coach, so coaching is being used in some organisations to help managers develop the skills they need to coach others.

Coaching can be thought of as an interactive process that is designed to help individuals to develop rapidly, and focuses on improving performance or behaviour (Carter, 2001). As mentioned above, there is increasing demand for managers with soft skills, and yet many standard development programmes have failed to instil the kinds of approaches necessary for the development of these soft skills. Research into a range of management programmes provided by organisations (Tamkin and Barber, 1998) concludes that learning programmes that have an emphasis on feedback and learning support, such as coaching and mentoring, are best placed to create managers with soft skills.

Indeed, Carrington (2001) notes how some organisations are beginning to introduce coaching skills and techniques into line management. For example, some organisations have brought in coaching firms to help their managers to become coaches. The rationale for doing so is not to give the manager the same expertise in coaching as the coach themselves, but enough to equip them with some effective coaching techniques. For example, managers may be coached to give quality feedback, and make candid observations, that motivate employees to change their behaviour. In addition, Bianco-Mathis *et al.* (2002) examine the 'leader as coach' and suggest useful exercises for leaders or managers wishing to develop their own coaching skills. They not only consider the coaching relationship with individuals, but also, more unusually, how this links with coaching a team and the wider support for coaching in the whole organisation.

However, Carter (2001) suggests greater clarity is needed in what is meant by managers as coaches. She views 'manager as coach' as a management style aiming to help managers get more from their employees. Whereas, 'coaching a manager' emphasises what is important to the manager in their organisation. Whatever the case, there is clear evidence to indicate an increasing interest in developing the coaching skills of line managers. We are still some way, however, from being confident that we know the best way of achieving this capability.

Figure 2.3: Major barriers to effective learning

% of respondents agreeing
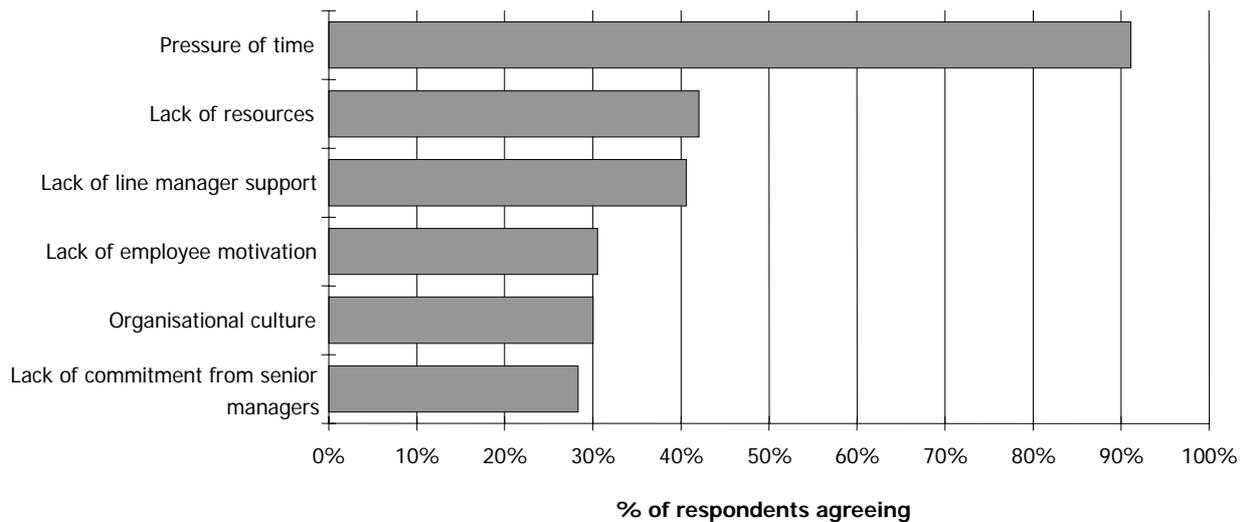
Source: CIPD, 2003

2.6 Barriers to staff development

Although line management capability in producing effective training and development for their staff is important, the efficacy of line management efforts will also be influenced by external barriers. Figure 2.3 displays the importance of barriers to training and development as reported by CIPD (2003).

This figure also illustrates that line management support for learning is still a major barrier in a number of organisations. Similarly, a lack of resources can also hinder staff development efforts. However, there was a general consensus that by far the most influential barrier was the pressure of time, which was cited by over 91 per cent of participants.

2.7 Relation to management theories and formal frameworks

Management theories

The importance of the competency of developing others is not a recent proposition. In fact, the competency is highlighted in many established management theories.

The learning organisation

The learning organisation (Senge, 1990) can be thought of as an organisation that facilitates the learning of all its employees and continually transforms itself. In relation to the idea of managers as developers of others, the principal characteristics of a learning organisation (IRS, 1993) include:

- opportunities for learning, not just in a formal sense, but also from everyday actions that are debated, reviewed and questioned

- cultures and policies that ensure that all employees feel that they are encouraged to learn and are empowered to contribute to decisions at all levels

- managers who are totally committed to facilitating learning by the adoption of open and participative approaches to decision making

- breaking down barriers between different employees and departments to encourage open communication and ways of working.

Emotional intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) (Goleman, 1998) involves aspects of behaviour or personality that have relevance to behavioural competency frameworks used by organisations, and relates to 'individuals understanding and management of the emotions of themselves and others'. Goleman *et al.* (2001) report that high levels of EI create climates in which information sharing, trust, healthy risk-taking, and learning flourish. This is particularly salient with regard to relationship management (the capacity for acting in such a way that one is able to get desired results from others and reach personal goals), of which 'developing others' is a core competence.

Empowerment

The UK's track record for training and developing managers and employees had been subject to investigation in the 1980s. Subsequently, a range of initiatives was launched aiming to enhance the quality of both managers and employees (Hyman and Cunnigham, 1998). A major initiative has taken place under the title of 'empowerment,' which maintains to offer autonomy and discretion to employees, and to provide ways in which to bring about change by training and supportive management styles. Hyman and Cunningham examined a number of organisations that have introduced empowering initiatives. They found that whilst individual line managers in empowering organisations perceive themselves better equipped to deal with employees than those in non-empowering organisations, deeper analysis reveals substantial problems in transforming these managers into developers of their employees. Managers appear to be under-trained and often not motivated to develop their staff:

> *'Managers neglect their staff because they themselves were occupationally and professionally under-developed and they lacked the skills and motivation necessary to carry out this responsibility.'*

Formal Frameworks

Miller *et al.* (2001) contend, in an analysis of 100 competency frameworks, that around half (51 per cent) of existing frameworks include some mention of *developing others*, although the way in which organisations interpreted this varied. In some organisations, the framework explicitly states that the manager concerned is expecting to become directly involved in identifying the learning needs of others, and helping to deliver training. However, in the majority of organisations, *developing others* focused mainly on creating an encouraging and supportive work environment in which employees are most likely to learn. In some organisations, the competency is essentially concerned with helping employees to accept responsibility for their own learning, creating a culture of self-development.

Similarly, in an analysis of 40 competency frameworks, Rankin (2002) found that many organisations place an emphasis on individuals having a responsibility for the development of others. This was present in 33 per cent of the competency frameworks, although a further 58 per cent incorporate this activity within a more general 'people management' competency. Some organisations placed an emphasis on the development of the individual (found in 23 per cent of frameworks).

2.8 Summary of literature

It is clear that the role of the line manager in employee development is of growing importance. Managers who excel in this regard are better equipped to identify development needs and are more aware of the development opportunities available for their staff. This is true not only for the short-term, but also for longer-term career development. However, while many managers have positive attitudes towards developing their staff, this is not always reflected in practice.

In terms of developing the staff development competency in line managers, coaching and mentoring can provide rapid development of skills and techniques, which line managers can use to be more effective developers of their staff.

Organisations that manage to achieve effective staff development by line managers will be better able to engage and motivate their staff, and to increase their business contribution.

3. Summary of research findings

This chapter contains:

1. a description of the research method and sample
2. characteristics of good and bad development support
3. situations where good developers make a difference
4. what 'receivers' of development have to do
5. what motivates good developers of others
6. enablers and barriers to developing others
7. the impact of good and bad development support
8. a framework for managers as developers
9. some practical suggestions for managers
10. summary.

3.1 Research method and sample

The empirical research phase set out to find and interview employees who felt they had received effective development from one or more managers, and then to interview some of those managers. So it looked at 'good developers' from these two viewpoints.

A couple of definitions will be helpful at this stage.

'Development support' at work

We defined *effective development support*, as experienced by the individual, to be:

> ... any discussions or activities which have been of significant value to you in developing your skills, experience, or career. The support could be from any manager (not necessarily your direct boss), but we are concentrating on managers in line roles, rather than training or HR professionals. The support may be formal or informal, and could be quite recent or some years ago.

'Givers' and 'Receivers' of development support

We use the term *'giver'* or *'developer'* for the manager supporting an employee's development and the term *'receiver'* or *'individual'* for the employee themselves. We use these terms to cover all aspects of development support reported, avoiding terms like 'mentor' or 'coach' that are often used for more specific forms of development support.

The research process

This study was conducted in the UK in four large employing organisations, two in the public sector and two in the private sector. Individual participants were selected as either 'receivers' or 'givers' of good development. 'Receivers' volunteered themselves on the basis of notices posted on staff bulletin boards or Intranet systems. In some cases a specific sub-group of employees was targeted and invited to volunteer through email. The invitations included a clear definition of what we meant by 'effective development support'. If the number of volunteers exceeded the target sample in an organisation, the desired sample was randomly selected.

In the second phase of the study, a sample of 'givers' of good development was constructed from the 'receivers' and, in some cases, from objective data held by HR (*eg* through 360 degree feedback). Both 'givers' and 'receivers' had structured, confidential interviews to obtain detailed narrative accounts of specific experiences of good and bad development at work. Most of the interviews were conducted by telephone. A few participants submitted their accounts electronically.

The structured interviews of both 'givers' and 'receivers' covered: the context of specific experiences (both good and bad); behaviour and skills shown by the giver; the impact of the development support in each example; more general attitudes to development. 'Givers' were also asked what motivated them to develop staff.

The findings of this study are illustrative rather than conclusive. This study is not large enough to be representative of all managers in all situations. However, it is based on a rigorous analysis of the experiences of over 50 people in four varied organisations and nearly 100 specific narrative accounts of good or bad development support. Table 3.1 shows details of the sample. It a significant study in a field that is short of empirical evidence.

The youngest 'giver' was 25, but most were in their forties and fifties. The 'receivers' were quite evenly spread in age from their mid-twenties to late fifties. Their length of service with the organisation varied from a few months to over thirty years.

Table 3.1: Sample of participants and their development experiences analysed

	'Receivers'			'Givers'			All		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
No. of participants interviewed	11	20	*31*	13	7	*20*	24	27	*51*
	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Total	Positive	Negative	Total
No. of development experiences analysed	38	20	*58*	36	5	*41*	74	25	*99*

Source: IES, 2004

3.2 Characteristics of good and bad development support

Experiences of both good and bad development stay with people for a very long time. Nearly half of the experiences described by 'receivers' took place at least five years ago. Experiences early on in their career may be especially memorable, and good relationships with managers can be sustained long after the line relationship has ceased.

The experiences of positive development were largely with line managers, but some were also with more senior managers (including the boss's boss), formal and informal mentors, and colleagues.

The characteristics of good development support

Good development is delivered through a **supportive relationship** between a 'giver' and a 'receiver', often a manager and their subordinate. Relationships that are developmental seem unusual in the degree of engagement the manager has with the individual employee as a person, and the warmth of the relationship. Trust is developed through this concern and a genuine desire to see the employee do well. Positive encouragement is offered. These relationships are usually characterised by frequent informal interaction, detailed discussion of work issues, and a relative lack of hierarchy. Development experiences within such relationships usually occur over months or years, rather than weeks or days.

● Such relationships are more likely to grow if the manager sets a **climate** in which they are easy to approach, and where development is an important part of working life. The word 'accessible' was used very often to describe good 'givers'.

● Good development support is quite **focused** through a clear, shared analysis of development needs, frequent review, and honest but constructive **feedback.**

● The delivery of development is through a **wide-range of learning methods**, tailored to individual needs. Good 'givers' make active use of formal training opportunities, but also

frequently use informal coaching (by themselves and others) and are especially active in finding employees the right range of work experiences (both within their current job and outside it).

- Good 'givers' nearly always couch development activity within a wider view of the employee's **career**, and their current career situation and future options. They actively spot potential, often where others have not done so. Sometimes they push individuals to go further in their careers than they otherwise would. They often carefully explain the processes by which individuals can change job or get promoted, and coach them on how to navigate these processes. They see people leaving them to progress their careers with satisfaction rather than regret.

Characteristics of bad development support

If you ask employees to think of managers who were especially bad at development, what emerges is both a lack of consistent, positive intent and also a lack of skill. Common experiences included:

- total neglect of development
- identification of development needs but no action
- deliberate career blocking
- aggression and bullying
- erratic responses to individuals asking for support
- negative or inconsistent feedback.

3.3 Situations where good developers make a difference

Most of the examples of support offered by the 'givers' were focused on certain types of situation, which included:

- employees new to a job or to the organisation, often with specific skill gaps
- employees they saw as having potential for more challenging work or promotion, but needing support to make this transition
- 'problem people' who had a particular behaviour that was dysfunctional
- individuals or teams who had been demotivated by previous circumstances
- employees re-thinking their career possibilities (often women who had been working part-time while their children were young)
- employees with a range of more personal issues: health problems, deep seated lack of confidence, or experiencing stress at work.

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Many of the receivers' positive examples echoed these same kinds of situations. However, several of their bad experiences were when little development support was given to them once they were well settled in a job. Several bad experiences also related to times when they had been working part-time, or as temp or agency staff, even in organisations giving good development to full-time employees.

3.4 What 'receivers' of development have to do

Although the study mostly focussed on the behaviour of effective 'givers' of development support, we also asked both 'givers' and 'receivers' what individuals had to do to develop themselves. The replies included:

- using the giver's time in a responsible and productive way
- willing and able to work with other people
- being receptive to feedback and willing to listen
- open to new experiences and willing to make some mistakes
- being interested in the work and the organisation
- willing to focus on certain development priorities
- motivation to learn and develop.

Where 'givers' felt they had failed to help someone develop, it was most often a lack of self-awareness which had prevented the employee from understanding their shortcomings. Even employees with quite severe behaviour or performance problems had improved once they recognised the need for change.

3.5 What motivates good developers of others?

We asked the 'givers' interviewed why they placed a high emphasis on developing other people at work. They had two common answers, and most of them gave both:

- Development is good for the organisation, because it is about helping someone to use more of their potential. They often added that it is even worth losing someone good from your department for the greater benefit of the organisation, and that the greatest business benefit of development is longer term.

- Developing other people is inherently satisfying. This satisfaction took a wide range of forms:

  - helping someone feel better about themselves or overcome some disadvantage

  - seeing people 'move on'

  - the pleasure of using your own skills in developing someone

- being seen by others as running a department in which people develop

- sometimes even developing people in spite of the organisational barriers!

Good developers are strongly influenced in both their motivation and their approach by both good and bad managers they have had in the past. They often vow not to be like the bad managers they had early on in their careers, as well as picking up tips from the varied ways in which good managers have developed them.

3.6 Enablers and barriers to developing others

The 'givers' interviewed were asked what helped or hindered their development of others in the workplace.

Factors helping development include:

- an HR function that provides a good range of formal training for staff, and advice to managers on staff development. Training architecture running right across different business units is helpful to staff making lateral career moves. Competence frameworks are used to some extent by 'givers' in analysis of training needs, but they more often rely on an holistic analysis of the person and the job demands.

- well-embedded performance appraisal process, encouraging thorough review

- training for managers in people management, including coaching skills.

Factors hindering development include:

- wide spans of control and numerous or conflicting objectives for line managers. Even good developers reported that they sometimes found it difficult to give their staff the individual time they needed.

- lack of recognition for managers who put a real emphasis on staff development

- unrealistic or inflexible departmental performance targets, which squeeze out the time employees might spend on their development

- geographical distance between line managers and their staff, even within the same office building

- lack of visibility and accessibility of the 'boss's boss' in some organisation structures. The boss's boss is often an important 'giver' of development, especially with regard to spotting potential.

- a business climate where staff are not given much autonomy. Several commented that the fashion for 'empowerment' in the early 1990s was better for development than the more risk-averse, target-driven climate of recent years.

- the promotion into management of managers who don't want to manage people

- HR processes, especially promotion criteria and job descriptions, that are too mechanistic and inhibit managers from giving stretching work opportunities to employees they believe have potential.

Good 'givers' of development support are very tough minded about overcoming organisational barriers. They are adept at 'working the system', and ignore or bend rules they see as unreasonable. They often enlist help from colleagues or superiors, including people they trust in HR.

3.7 The impact of good and bad development support

What does good development do to people?

Good development in most of the detailed accounts obviously involved the acquisition of **skills and knowledge** relevant to current and future work. Both technical skills and generic skills were seen to be important. Political skills were often mentioned too. The knowledge acquired was often a deeper appreciation of the underlying approach to work or the nature of their organisation.

It also very often involved extending the range of **work experience**, partly as a means of giving new skills, but also as a means of improving their CV, gaining a broader view of the organisation, and becoming more visible. Delegation and 'acting up' were often used to give 'receivers' greater experience and exposure.

In addition to these expected types of impact, this study shows the huge emotional impact of both positive and negative development support.

Increased **self-confidence** was the single most often mentioned impact of positive development, along with **career** impacts — usually a job move or promotion (both confidence and career impacts were mentioned in nearly 70 per cent of positive cases). It seems that, in spite of the attempts to play down the importance of career development for most staff, individuals associate good development with managers who helped them progress their career and 'move on' in some way. Both upward and lateral career moves were important.

Good development support was also associated with improved **motivation** (in nearly half the cases) and to **job satisfaction** and

improved **job performance** (often implicit rather than explicit in self-reported accounts), and **a more positive view of the employer.** Where 'receivers' were now managers themselves, good development had also influenced how they **developed their own staff**.

So the positive impact of good development is not just through a direct link between skills acquired and job performance, but also through an emotional cycle of greater confidence, leading to greater motivation and job satisfaction, and career development.

What does bad development do to people?

A lack of development does not just act as a mirror image of good development. Interestingly, it did not all that often undermine self-confidence, but it did make people both very angry and very miserable. This hit hardest at job satisfaction and motivation, and often created a negative attitude towards the employer. Interestingly this seemed to happen even in organisations which up to then had been seen as positive. It is as though one bad manager can undermine wider organisational values. In several cases, poor development damaged job performance, more through reduced job motivation than a lack of skill acquisition.

In a number of cases, bad managers blocked individuals' careers, but in an equivalent number the discontent was so great that the individual left the organisation or escaped to another department. So some people had experienced positive career moves as a result of bad management!

Therefore, the negative impact of bad development is not only about lack of skill acquisition, but an emotional cycle of reduced job satisfaction and motivation, reduced organisational commit-ment and either prolonged frustration or escape.

**Figure 3.1: Performance via motivation**

Source: IES, 2004

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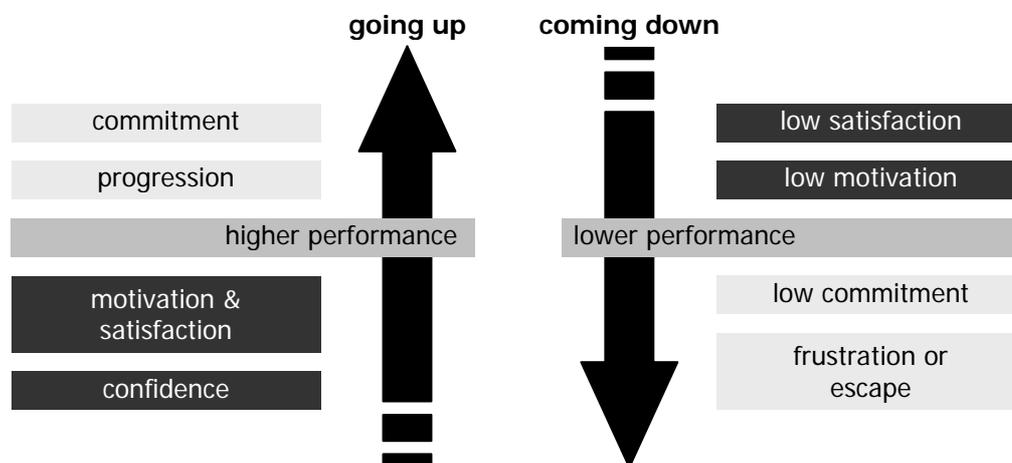
3.8 A framework for managers as developers

The findings above can be summarised in the form of a framework that highlights both the key aspects of behaviour which good developers show, and the main dimensions of the impact of development on the employee.

- Setting the climate and building the relationship are the crucial start points.

- These increase confidence and motivation, as does constructive feedback.

- Development, including active career development, is focused through monitoring and feedback discussions.

- Effective development increases performance and job satisfaction, career progression, organisational commitment and retention.

Figure 3.2: Key elements and impacts of developing others
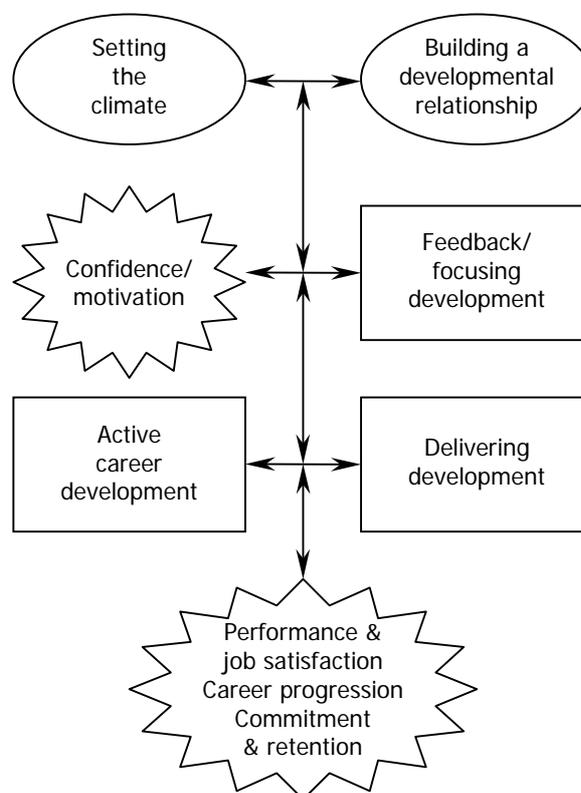
Source: IES, 2004

3.9 Some practical suggestions for managers

What to do to improve your effectiveness in developing others:

Setting the climate

- Find time for people whenever they need help, and make them welcome.

- Make development part of your team atmosphere by encouraging team members to help each other and share information in team meetings.

- Acknowledge your own need for improvement and development.

- Set work objectives with your staff and team that build in development, adjusting job design if appropriate.

- Work on staff development within your own natural management style.

- Allow yourself to take pleasure in developing others. Treat it as a business priority.

Building a developmental relationship

- Get to know your staff well through frequent, informal conversations about their work and how things are going.

- Listen carefully to their concerns. See the work situation from the individual's point of view, and tailor your response to their particular needs.

- Offer positive support, and build trust through an open, honest and considerate approach.

- Be pro-active and persistent in the development of staff, but try to give employees as much control over their own development as possible.

- Be alert to the extra development needs people have when they are new in a job or when they are outgrowing their job. Signs of stress or poor motivation can also show the need for extra development support.

- Adjust each developmental relationship over time, giving people more space as their skills and confidence grow.

- Be open to supporting other employees who do not work for you directly.

Feedback & focusing development

- Be explicit about the standards of work and behaviour required.

- Achieve a sound understanding of the individual's performance and skills through conversation, and also through direct observation and review of specific tasks.

- Review performance and development progress in frequent one-to-one meetings.

- Be open and honest in giving feedback. Give praise wherever you can, and use positive feedback to build confidence. Make any criticism specific and constructive.

- Listen carefully to how the individual sees themselves, and challenge this if necessary.

- Try to agree a few development priorities, based on a clear, objective, and shared assessment of their needs — sometimes just one thing is best.

- Track development activity and progress consistently, keeping notes if this helps.

Delivering development

- Make sure that agreed development priorities are actively pursued.

- If you are coaching the individual yourself, be focused and take the time to explain things thoroughly, preferably through using real work examples.

- Invite the individual to rehearse important tasks or to share ideas before executing them. Review such tasks afterwards and help the individual learn from them.

- Give employees a wider understanding of the business, including how it operates politically.

- Pull in others to help with development. Choose them for the skills they have and work experiences they can offer, but also pick people who are effective developers.

- Make the best use of the formal training your organisation can offer, where this meets the development needs you have identified. Talk to the individual before and after any training course.

- Look for direct experiences outside the normal job that can deliver development *eg* projects, working groups, job swaps, secondments, external activities *etc*. Use delegation consciously to develop others.

- If personal problems are affecting an employee's work performance or development, try and work with them to solve the problem in a supportive but objective fashion. Be flexible in your approach. Pull in expert help if needed.

Active career development

- See a person's current job performance in the context of what they have done before, and what they may go on to do. See their work and career in the context of their life outside work, and remember that people's circumstances are always changing.

- If you think someone has potential beyond their current job, or would do better in a different kind of job, talk to them. Be prepared to gently push them to extend their career aspirations if they underestimate their own ability. Sometimes, the reverse is needed for people who overestimate their own skills or abilities.

- If an individual is thinking about a career move, help them obtain a realistic view of the possible new job role, and whether they have the skills it requires.
- Support staff through the processes of job change or promotion. Make sure they understand how these processes work, and coach them if necessary on the application documents they have to complete, or for interviews or presentations.

What NOT to do in developing others:

We could write a long list, but here are some of the negative behaviours, which the 'receivers' in our study mentioned most frequently:

- blaming work objectives or targets set from above for not developing your staff
- making yourself inaccessible or being aggressive when people ask you for help
- criticising your staff or your team in front of other people
- showing an erratic or inconsistent attitude to staff development
- using negative feedback to undermine people, or hurt them personally
- giving someone a job you know they can't do and leaving them to sink or swim
- trying to keep someone in a job you know they have outgrown
- ignoring a personal problem that is clearly affecting someone's work
- losing touch with what your staff are doing, and how well they are doing it
- only talking about development once a year in formal appraisal. Agreeing a Personal Development Plan and then putting it in a drawer.
- seeing development only in terms of sending staff on courses
- being uninterested, not exploring performance and not helping the individual think ahead.

3.10 Summary

The IES research has given us some new insights into what actually happens when managers develop other people at work. It shows that developing others is not just about 'coaching' in terms of skills but is also about developing a relationship that engenders confidence and trust. As indicated by the literature review, the impact of good development is as much to do with motivation as it is with skill acquisition. The data have been used to generate a simple model and practical guidelines for managers.

4. Personal experiences of pleasure and pain

This chapter presents a selection of the narrative accounts collected during the course of the IES study.

To preserve confidentiality, individual and organisation names, and details of job content, have been removed. The initial R replaces the name of the 'receiver' of support, with G for the 'giver' of support. The title of each example shows whether it was reported by the 'receiver' (R) or 'giver' (G). The passages are extracts from longer accounts. The sections in italics are in the words of the interviewee. Paragraphs are marked to indicate a giver or receiver account, and of a positive or negative experience:

G+ **G–** **R+** **R–**

We hope that the illustrative material presented here may be a useful complement to the summary of research findings, especially in discussions or training sessions with managers and employees. The first set of accounts shows the many ways in which good managers develop people. The second set show how not to do it.

4.1 Some positive examples of managers developing others

R+ **P1. R looking back on one of her first line managers**

G spotted R's potential and gave her increased responsibility through a temporary promotion. *'The development was all focused on getting the job done by means of either learning on the job or training in response to whatever issues arose. He had incredible faith in me and gave me the responsibility to match. I felt that I couldn't let him down and that I had to prove myself. When I went for promotion, G was very helpful and positive. We did mock interviews. The biggest impact was increased confidence and motivation. It proved to me I'm capable of working well in a busy environment.'*

R+ **P2. R's account of her line manager over the past five years**

G has consistently discussed development needs. *'When we discussed training opportunities, the focus would be on what would primarily benefit me, and not just what was beneficial to the organisation. My manager would look for tasks to stretch and challenge me, giving me the opportunity to work on a higher level than the grade I was actually working in at the time.'*

R feels motivated and secure in her job, in spite of some disappointment caused by lack of promotion opportunities. *'I have grown as a person, I have developed myself and increased my skills.'*

R+ **P3. R's description of support from her boss's boss**

R works closely with G, who is two levels above her as the manager of her own line manager. *'The majority of the support is informal, as I see and talk to her all the time, she knows where I am up to. A lot of the development initially starts through just talking in everyday conversations.'*

G has supported R in getting onto a management development scheme. G also gives advice and guidance in regards to applying for specific jobs. *'She helps me to get additional training, and puts me in touch with the right people to make career progress.'*

G helped her to identify which specific skills she needed and gave her opportunities to develop those skills, looking for tasks to stretch her, and allowing her opportunities to work on different projects to gain more experience. *'She gives instructions in terms of goals, but gives flexibility about how to get there. In previous jobs, instructions could be absolutely rigid. The workplace feels a safe environment where I can try new things, and make mistakes without strong repercussions. I have learned to think outside the box, to think creatively and to be open to new ideas.'*

R+ **P4. R describing support from her line manager**

After a failure to get promoted, G gave her a thorough debriefing session. *'I was surprised by the amount of time he was prepared to spend … it took over an hour and he is a very busy man.'*

She felt she had identified areas for improvement for next time. G's interest encouraged R to. *'…read up on certain topics and to really put the effort in, seeing as G was putting in the time and effort to help. I was really surprised by the level of support I got.'*

G got her involved in other projects which had nothing to do with her job, but would provide her with the opportunity to be forward thinking and open-minded. *'He had a lot of faith in me, he'd say things like, "I'm here if you need me — you have the skills to do it." My confidence grew and grew.'*

The fact that G has put so much effort in, and is prepared to put in more effort in the future, makes R feel '*very special and valued*'. She originally left the same organisation 15 years ago because she got very frustrated about promotion and progression. '*But the organisation is a lot better now. The level of training is astonishing compared to 15 years ago.*'

R feels that it would be unrealistic to think that all employees get the same treatment and experience the same level of support as she has.

R+ P5. R in a new job, working closely with two managers

R worked closely with two managers, her boss and boss's boss. They both gave her quality work to do which really stretched her, and encouraged her to go for promotion by giving her coaching, setting up mock interviews *etc.* They both gave her regular feedback concerning her performance. '*I was genuinely shocked that my managers have such a positive attitude towards their work, to the department and to me. I just wasn't used to being encouraged so much. Most managers I'd had in the past never seemed to be as concerned. The support seemed to be tied into the day-to-day management of the team. The managers would never say that they were specifically going to focus on development. It was part of their job as they saw it to support and encourage their staff. What I really liked was that they would really listen to any ideas that anyone in the team had if it concerned their development. They would give me words of encouragement all the time like "you can do it." They had faith in me and gave me responsibilities. It made me a happier person.*'

R felt this support had an effect on how positively she thought about the organisation. '*Even though I am not currently a manager, the experience has also shaped my views of how to be an effective manager.*'

R+ P6. R's line manager supporting him in a new business venture

The development support was both formal (training courses) and informal during a challenging project. '*We worked closely together, and I was always able to ask questions on an ad hoc basis. G outlined the sort of processes and procedures that needed to be followed and I had to report back to him at specific intervals, commenting on what stage I was up to, what progress I was making, and if there were any problems. When I'd say something, he'd rephrase it and put it back to me as a question. I thought it was really good that he helped me to find the answers to my own questions.*

'*One of the most important things about G was that he has a great sense of humour … it was good fun working with each other, because although sometimes the work was serious, you knew that the people you were working with were light-hearted. G wasn't judgmental at all, so I would*

never hesitate to chat to G, and we would try and work round the problem. It was never the case that we had to be careful about what we said to each other [referring to all the team members]*, we could just be frank and honest, and enjoy working together. Because we were working closely on the project, it was easy for him to see where my strengths and weaknesses were. And it wasn't just that, he got me involved in a mixture of roles that made the best of the things I was good at and gave me experience of the things that I needed to work on. It made me feel great.*

'G really stuck up for me, he was on my side. I still look back on those five years as the most rewarding and satisfying of my career so far. I would pull out all the stops for him.'

G+ ## P7. G supporting an employee with emotional problems

G came into a department and took over managing R who was already on secondment there. R had been in and out of work due to various emotional problems. *'R was said to be 'emotionally distressed' and this was significantly detracting from her job performance. It actually got so bad that sometimes she would run out of meetings because of severe emotional reactions to other people. I initiated discussions because of what I was seeing, and also because of what came out of the appraisal process in terms of her describing how she was feeling. I had every confidence in her that she was a good performer and could do her job well. She just didn't have the right tools in order to cope with some of the other employees in the department. My focus was on what we could actually do practically.'*

R had found out about a course on emotional intelligence, which she felt might help her. *'Before the course started we sat down and had discussions about what she wanted to get out of it. In addition, during and after the course, we had many informal discussions about what she was learning and how it was affecting her. I was genuinely interested in how she was getting on, and she told me that she felt that she could come and talk to me when it was convenient to do so. At the same time, she was respectful that I am very busy, and I never felt as though she was pestering me. Sometimes she'd even be in tears in my office, but I didn't feel awkward about it, it wasn't unpleasant. I knew she was good at her job and it was really important to me as her manager, and to the department that she was able to resolve the issues she was having and get back on her feet.'*

In practical terms, G also realigned R's objectives so that she didn't have work piling up whilst she was going through this crisis. *'The emotional intelligence course was a life-changing experience for her. It resolved a lot of her problems and gave her many techniques to deal with her emotions and other people. She returned from her secondment to her original department at a higher job level.'*

G+ **P8. G supporting R who lacked technical skills in a new work area**

R was recruited into a post overseas and, being the *'best of a bad bunch'*, in terms of fitting the job spec, needed a lot of technical training over the first two to three years in this type of work. *'I had a lot of background knowledge and experience and knew all about R's role and exactly what sort of things she needed to know and do in order to do the role effectively. I assessed her development needs to find out exactly what it was she needed. I looked at the job requirements and compared them to a checklist of competencies.'*

G aimed to be approachable. *'You have to make yourself available so that they feel as though they can ask you anything. I know when I was in her shoes, sometimes I just wanted to ask my manager something just for some reassurance, and it was great when he responded positively adding on the end "… come back and ask me again if you get stuck." I would never really criticise any mistakes that she made, and would just look upon them as a learning experience. It just doesn't make sense to get angry and shout because it doesn't achieve anything. It makes it less likely that they will come and seek your help when they needed it, which slows things down. I remember when I was a junior, spending half a day trying to figure something out for myself just because I didn't want to ask my boss.*

'Over time, she demonstrated a visible gain in confidence. She is now in a pivotal role, where she is seen as an expert. She is very successful in her job.'

G+ **P9. G supporting high potential graduate entrants**

G is line manager to high potential graduate entrants. He sees his role as to *'show them the ropes'* and to give advice. At the very start of the process, G and R sit down and work out objectives, and do an extensive training needs analysis. *'I am not just interested in ticking a box about a specific competency. There is no point in saying — "oh okay we've covered that now, so just forget about it and we can move onto something else." You have to be able to remember what they have learned and look for situations in which they can apply it.*

'It is important to constantly see how things are going, to talk about if they are happy in their job, and ask them if there is anything they would like to do differently. It is quite common for them to need assistance in understanding how the organisation does business. It is important that R understands what they will contribute to the department as a whole. At the very start, it is important to extend their line of sight. This helps the development process enormously because they learn to think outside of the box.'

G sees it as important to set aside time to give development in specific tasks. *'For example, if an employee needs to be able to write important documents well, it is important to explain what is required and how to actually do it. Then you should give them an example to try*

and get them to do it on their own, then give feedback and talk about it. Then if they have proven that they are competent, just leave them to get on with it.

'Trust is also really important, if employees feel that you have confidence in them, then they themselves have more confidence.'

G+ ### P10. G supporting R though a promotion process

The issue of promotion came up in a one-to-one meeting between R and G. The first thing that G did was to get R to prepare a summary of the projects she had worked on, and the various skills which she had learned, in order to assess if their were any development gaps that existed. G then involved R briefly with a project to give her a wider appreciation of the work. *'I thought it would make her position stronger if she had some experience of the types of issues that we deal with in the field. Before she went out on this visit, we had a chat about her involvement and what she could expect to come away with.'*

Meetings with R were mostly fixed on an *ad hoc* basis. G recognised R was highly motivated and tried to keep the relationship *'very positive and light hearted'*.

Ultimately, R gained her promotion. *'Giving employees adequate development support for promotion really helps to build their confidence, which in turn, comes across at interview.'*

G+ ### P11. G tackling a member of staff who was annoying other team members

R was ambitious about development, so much so that other staff felt he was treading on their toes. *'He was almost aggressive in searching out development opportunities for himself. It was difficult because I had to be careful that other people didn't get pushed out of the way.'*

G raised this issue with R after a few months in one of their one-to-one meetings. *'As I saw it, it just wasn't fair on the other employees, and I told him that he needed to back down a bit as he wasn't doing himself any favours in the long run. Although R wasn't particularly happy with the situation, he agreed that there were other people who wanted the same opportunities that he did, and that it would start to cause problems with his colleagues if he kept on acting the way he did.'*

R+ ### P12. R with a line manager who raised her confidence

R was a team leader. *'G used 360 feedback and asked me what I thought my strengths and development areas were. I came up with about 20 development areas but couldn't think of any strengths. She said I needed to raise my confidence. She kept pushing me outside of my comfort zone. She would ask open questions, she would listen and picked*

up any confidence issues. I would go to team leaders' meetings and I would be happy when they were my own group, but when in a new group I would be intimidated and I would barely speak. G observed that I wasn't the only one struggling, and she would work with us and get us to work with each other.

'She would talk me through things. I got a massive amount of feedback. We would talk about something before I did it and then after. She would tell me what went well and what I could have done better. She would encourage me to do things in the team leader meeting – she would tell me that I had done really well, she would point out what wasn't clear. She developed an open relationship and built up the trust – she is a good judge of character. She asks people to be open and set expectations that she would be open and challenging.

'I was only with her for four months, and got more development than any other time in my career. She made me think about how I treat other people … I now think about people's potential. This was the first time I had experienced that kind of management style. It was a complete turning point for me. Other managers had offered responsibility and then set parameters, whereas she was allowing much more freedom. I think I helped by being honest with myself, once I could see the development experiences I would run with them.'

R+ P13. R reporting on support in the run up to a job move

R was supported by G over two years, but especially in the month preceding a job move. This involved a lot of largely informal discussions in addition to the regular formal one-to-one meetings, which he had always received. *'G asked me a lot of questions about my future and where I thought I should be setting my sights. G was impartial and honest. As G was able to observe me in the workplace, he was able to identify my strengths and weaknesses. This meant that he could keep an eye out for opportunities. If it hadn't been for G then, I wouldn't have heard about the job. He had his ear to the ground, he found the opportunity and thought of me. He was just really altruistic, he didn't have to spend as much time with me as he did.'*

R+ P14. R receiving encouragement from a senior manager

'I didn't report to G but worked in her department (G was several levels above R). I would see her around. I noticed that she had photos of her doing a degree sponsored by the organisation and I had been thinking about doing something similar.

G arranged for the organisation to sponsor R on some external studies. *'She asked me how I was getting on and was willing to sign me off on study leave. It was only a small thing, but she was very encouraging and she would talk to me about it.'*

Later R noticed a very costly business problem, which she worked on intensively with G to resolve. *'She took me to all of the meetings, she would come and sit in the main office rather than in her own office.*

She took time out to talk to me, she was very trusting and we worked closely together for a couple of weeks. She would convey every confidence in me.

'A year ago I was thinking about carrying out my ambition to do a degree and I sent G an email to ask her advice — at that time I hadn't worked with her for over two years. She sent me a really long email saying how well she thought I had done, and that I should think carefully about the time that I would need to give to the degree. I was impressed that she had taken time out to do that — I thought it was brilliant.'

R+ **P15. R helped by his manager to address his own management skills**

'When I entered the role I was the referral point for a number of [call centre] *staff which I found hard. I got a lot of questions. When I had been in the job for about a month and some staff had their reviews, they said I wasn't approachable and I didn't have time for them.*

'My manager G was sensitive, ever so nice. She kept the feedback very light, said she was pleased with my work, that she knew I was busy, that she had some feedback that she wanted to discuss and she wanted to see how she could help me more. She said it was just an issue of people management skills. She put me on a time management course and said we needed to find out why people were referring so much to me. She reviewed the whole situation with me and helped improve my staff management. She told me that I would change my posture when people approached me to put them off. I didn't realise that I did that and became more self-aware. We also laid on some staff training.

'G just being there was a support. She would take on some of the workload and would give me one-to-one time each day. We would talk about the problems I was having and would help overcome them. She was supportive without taking over the work I was doing.

'Once my management skills got better the stress came off, my attitude changed and how I came across changed too. She also gave me coaching on the job role — how to work inside the system and how to use it.'

R+ **P16. R being supported on moving from temp to permanent employee**

R knew G before she moved from a temp role to permanent employment with the organisation. At this time R felt quite inadequate compared to the rest of the people in the department. G, as her manager, initiated the period of support as part of the formal induction process. *'G went over and above the formal process in making sure I received the right training and development for my new role. G always knew where I was up to and what I was doing. I could chat to him or go to him with any difficulties I was having. If I went on any external training courses, then we would always sit down in our one-to-ones and discuss what I wanted to get out of the training and the points which I should pay most attention to. In addition, after the*

training, we would chat about what it was like, and review what I had learned and how I might go about applying such things in the workplace.'

After she had been there for three months, R had her first three-month review. *'Other people in the organisation had spoken about the three-month review as some big thing, but because there had been a constant dialogue, the meeting was very relaxed, and we were able to reflect effectively on the previous three months. G was in a position to give some really strong, constructive feedback and encouragement.'*

R saw this support as helping her to settle in quickly and establish a good relationship with her manager. As time went on R felt that she was able to pull her weight, and because of this she felt less anxiety about the job. R felt she achieved performance improvements faster because of the good support she was receiving.

R+ ## P17. R receiving support in developing team leader skills

G supported R in a secondment to develop her skills as a team leader. They also discussed particular work issues, *eg* how to handle conflict in the team. *'It wasn't just that she was approachable, she'd always set time aside and she'd stick to it too. With some managers I'd had in the past, they say come and see me at such and such a time, and then when the time came you could tell they just wanted to get it over with so they could get on with their work. They didn't see it as part of their job, it was like extra hassle.*

'I think that if you want your manager to support you, then you need to be in close contact with them, that they need to know your situation.

'Even though I now work in a different department from G, we still keep in touch and let each other know how we're doing. It was comforting to have a manager who was genuinely interested in my development.' The secondment widened R's work experience and organisational understanding.

R+ ## P18. G supporting someone new to a role in her team

R had recently been promoted to G's team, and was finding it really difficult to adjust to the new role. *'When someone starts a new role, it is always stressful, there's always loads to learn and loads to do.'*

G sat down with R early on and looked through what sort of training courses R could go on. Next, G made sure that R was able to get involved with other projects that were currently running, so that R could observe first hand other people doing the same job.

'I think to develop someone quickly you do have to throw them in at the deep end, which is always going to be stressful. But you also have to provide a high level of support for them too. You have to make it explicit

why you are doing what you are doing and what they are going to learn from it.

'I use weekly one-to-ones to keep up-to-date with how everyone is doing. I feel that I don't have to make time, because it is already booked into my schedule. The regular one-to-ones also give me a chance to get to know the employees I work with a bit more. Because they are every week, after a while, people really start to open up. You get to talk about things that you wouldn't really talk about in every day work.'

R was able to grow into her role without too much difficulty. R is now fully competent in the role and less stressed than she was when she started the job.

R+ P19. R working with a senior manager, an internal customer

R was about to present a proposal to a meeting of the leadership team, including G, a senior sponsor of her work. There was no line reporting relationship between R and G.

'Ahead of the meeting I went to see G to seek his advice. I knew him pretty well at this time. He had been hard to get to know, but I had spent time building up credibility with him. I felt I had a relationship with him that was unlike any other I had in the organisation. I used the meeting with him to discuss how to get a win-win situation for both of us out of the [leadership team] *meeting. After this initial conversation, we had several follow-ups – emails, telephone conversations, and quick chats over the three to four weeks before the main meeting.'*

R knew how she wanted to present her proposal, but was unsure that the leadership team was ready for this approach. *'G helped and supported me in the meeting and gave valuable feedback on how I was perceived. His support was critical to the success of presentation, both because he made time and was open to my suggested approach, but also was never patronising. He never just provided the answer. He advised me to remove jargon, put in money values and benchmarking data, but not to get bogged down in figures.'*

R had considered carefully who to approach for advice on this issue. She had chosen G because he had been supportive previously, but also because she saw him as willing to take risks. The success of this presentation felt good and also led to further opportunities in this area of work and increased pay.

'It gave me increased confidence in presenting to senior management. I continue to have a relationship with this manager, and talk to him about career and work issues.'

R+ P20. R in his first job outside his main discipline

R worked as an assistant to G, a general manager. *'One day during my first two to three weeks in the job, G said to me, "You don't need to*

ask me. Take responsibility to sign off and do things." This made me think "Really it is up to me after all!" All this took place in a routine meeting that only lasted ten minutes — something he will forget and I will remember forever.

'G enabled me to push boundaries for myself, get comfortable in taking decisions, and network with colleagues. G had a strong reputation for the way he worked with his staff. He wanted them to test boundaries for themselves. This was something that was less usual for people in technical roles (R's early career had been technical).

'He totally changed the context of the role for me — changed the goalposts entirely. He saw huge creative possibilities in the role. I was empowered to act on his behalf. He trusted me.'

R sees G as seeking to role model the organisation's desired leadership style. *'He was almost too open, too space giving — and was frustrated with people not taking the space. But he drew on his experience, personal style, and natural instincts. In the end I could have done with more boundaries sometimes. Sometimes I needed time with him when he was not available.*

'G had a big impact on the way I subsequently managed people. R now reflects that although this empowering style suited that role, it was not a recipe for success in all situations. There is no one size fits all — I tried to apply it [G's style] *to another team and it didn't work. I feel that I have often been supported, but in many different ways. Currently, for example, I am getting more structured coaching from my line manager.'*

G+ P21. G coaxing R to develop her potential

R had been a secretary for many years. G felt R was capable of moving on to a more demanding role.

'R was terrific in her present role, but she had lacked the confidence to move into a new role outside her comfort zone. I initiated a discussion with R about her future. She was not keen to move on. She liked her present job and it fitted with her personal situation, as a mother of young children. I decided nevertheless to give R more accountability and to involve her more in activities associated with my work. I invited R to attend a leadership team meeting to get a business perspective and to help her understand how decisions were made. I made a point of asking R for her views in the meeting.

'In a subsequent meeting that discussed possible future roles, I got R interested in [a particular area of work in a different team], *and then got her involved in organising a conference with that team. I also got her the opportunity to job shadow in that team. R described it as interesting but still felt she could not do the job, primarily because of wanting to work limited hours while she had young children. So she decided not to take the job opportunity that was available at that time.'*

Some time later R felt she was ready for a move, and another opportunity came up in the work area she had looked at before.

By now R had the confidence to go for it and moved. The whole process took about 18 months.

'I saw the challenge as R having to build a different view of herself and then being confident enough to take a step towards it. I needed to show empathy and understanding of what was getting in the way of R progressing. I gave constructive feedback to reinforce and build confidence in her own abilities. This included giving immediate feedback on her work and encouraging her to seek advice from me and others. R is now working in her new role as though she was always able to do it. She is very comfortable with her new role, has much increased confidence, and is taking developmental opportunities proactively.'

R+ **P22. R reporting on active career support from a senior manager**

G was in R's reporting line but three levels above him. This period of support was 15 years ago and lasted two to three years. *'Because it was a small office (about 35 people), G knew all the people quite well. He came out of his office and learned about people. He recognised my potential. The relationship started informally. He said he was pleased with my work — he didn't have to. He talked to me, but he did this with everyone.'*

G used the annual reporting cycle to get R's potential recognised in the organisation. *'He had a game plan for making me look good — this consisted of using the annual reporting cycle to build up from good to very good to excellent. It was unusual for someone to get that involved.'* R assumes his career was discussed by G and his line manager. *'G had an idea of the grade I could reach over a five-year period. The common thread in the relationship was G saying "that was well done" and talking about my ability to move on. He made it clear that he appreciated what you did.*

'G gave me access to the right experiences — sideways moves within the office and management responsibility — this was very important. My immediate boss was more involved in day-to-day development, but G did help identify my development needs.

'He made me feel valued, that I had something to contribute — not just coming into work and turning over correspondence. I would have carried on moving more quickly if I had been tactically astute and hadn't them come across the manager who was a horror story. Other managers were quite good if they liked you. It was important that we worked together for long enough for him to make a real input. Continuity is important in development. He was also 'planful' in how he went about my career support.'

R+ **P23. R on effective development support during a difficult time**

G was R's line manager during an intensive period of professional training. She described him as a *'cross between a manager and a mentor.'*

'It was easy to talk to him. Any weaknesses were not used against me. I didn't feel nervous or worried going to see him – I went to see him whenever I needed to. He never seemed too busy and you did not feel you were wasting his time. If he was busy, he looked at his diary and fixed a time.

'His approach seemed quite intuitive – a natural style. He let you get on with the work and treated you as quite senior. He did not over-supervise me. This suited me as I don't like a hands-on manager.

'Although his approach appeared informal, he did keep careful information on my progress. He let you know where you were in terms of the standards you have to meet. Too often people don't know this. We regularly discussed specific cases. We discussed his ideas and my ideas. He gave me feedback after meetings. He was open – had no reticence. He never made negative comments. He provided confidence and constructive feedback – he picked out the positive. Failure was not turned into an excuse to run you down or have a go at you.

'I had a period of ill health during this training and was off work for two months. It put my training at risk. G kept in close contact by phone. When I came back he agreed I could work part-time without loss of pay. I didn't know how well I would manage while I was still unwell. G encouraged me not to give up.

'He focused me on my training priorities and lightened up office casework. He provided options. We took it one step at a time and did not prejudge the future. He put a lot of trust in me – that I wasn't messing around or taking advantage. If I was having a bad day, I could just go home. He dealt with all this locally – involving his senior manager and the medical officer – he got the right people involved but did not follow the rules inflexibly.'

R completed the training successfully. *'This was a make or break time for me. The outcome was successful for me and for the organisation. They have kept an able and willing person. I have a huge respect for G as a person and as a manager.'*

R+ **P24. R supported by a junior manager**

R's first line manager, many years ago, supported her for the first 18 months while he was her line manager, but then carried on informally for about four years.

'The support was mostly informal. He set time aside to talk to me about my work – he did this with others also. He identified things I could cope with and things I would find stretching. He got me to think about work.

For example, he would give me a piece of correspondence and say "find out what you can about this".' R would look up technical issues to do with this and then come back. *'He had a very practical outlook. Encouraging and appreciative — positive about what I was saying. Even though he was somewhat limited technically himself, he never dismissed technical stuff.*

'As people we were very different, although somewhat similar in terms of background. He was quite wily and political. G was not very senior but took pleasure in seeing others progress. He had a good understanding of what makes people tick. He helped me understand people better as well as the work — some of this was political. He was very good with the public and with external clients. He allowed me to answer the phone when the senior person who usually did this was not there.

'G had a clear basic model for development — giving people manageable work, reviewing it with them, reflecting on what had happened and then moving forward. G called his team the 'bees knees' when talking to others. If there was negative stuff, he handled it within the team.

'It made you feel nice. I felt I was really learning, even though there was a lot to know. The people skills were especially helpful later on when I became a manager. Some other people might be surprised to know how good he was — he was not necessarily widely recognised in the organisation as a highly successful manager.'

Much later, when she had overtaken him in promotion terms, their relationship adjusted, but they continued to support each other. *'He never resented it when I had overtaken him in career terms.'*

R+ P25. R on a line manager who helped him work more effectively

G made it clear to R that he needed to give his professional exams a high priority. R often struggled with the combination of high workload and study.

'G noticed that I was working very long hours and suggested there were ways of dealing with the job which were more efficient. At one point when I was struggling with workload, G told me to give it three months as the jobs I was working on would settle down and I needed those jobs to give me the right range of experience. He saw the danger of not achieving targets. He had a good understanding of what I needed to do and good judgement. His advice was very honest and thoughtful, but not always the easy answer. I could approach G anytime — he was quite open — this was part of his approach.

'G sometimes sought advice from me too — he respected your knowledge in an equivalent way — it was reciprocal. G gave me a small group of clients 'to play with'. We talked about these clients, and used them as real examples to talk through technical issues.

'He would not let you loose if you were not up to the job — but would let you loose when you were up to it. G selected work suitable for trainees — other managers let trainees choose their own work or gave them too much rubbish or routine work. G protected trainees from poor quality work. G's style adapted to different trainees.

'G had quite old-fashioned values — he kept his private life quite private, kept work and life quite separate.

'I felt more secure with G than I do now — I felt secure in my work, I could discuss my mistakes, I was protected from the pressure of targets. My priorities were kept firm, there were no swirling distractions. I could discuss my work problems and enjoyed talking to him. … G changed how I managed myself. He had a genuine interest in his staff. He spent time and took the issue seriously. His values included caring for staff. He didn't have favourites — all staff were cared for. He died last year — I really want to talk to him, but he's not here.'

R+ ## P26. R on a manager who balances monitoring with space

'G has a mentoring day with each trainee every nine weeks. He goes through all your work and offers in-depth advice. This meeting is a focal point — you work towards it. It is a kind of mini review — G puts things on the agenda but you can too. In between these meetings G has an open door policy — you can go to him at any time. G takes quite an equal tone — friend to friend — not heavy handed, very equitable. He suggests other ways of tackling things.

'Over time, G has now stepped back more and given me more room to manoeuvre. He likes to know what you are doing (eg sees correspondence) but rarely intervenes. If there are issues he will pick them up at the mentoring day. He watches you but does not intrude. He provides a safety net — saves you from shooting yourself in the foot. This builds confidence — I know he would nip a mistake in the bud.

'G has had a deep impact on me. I feel more secure than otherwise. Trainees in other offices feel vulnerable. I feel I have had the best preparation of anyone I know. I feel I can rely on him as a manager.'

R+ ## P27. R on a senior manager widening his skills and understanding

G was R's manager's manager.

'I worked for very closely with G on a big change project in the office, for four to five months, meeting every Friday and with daily contact. I didn't know G well at the start. He worked through the project brief carefully at the beginning. As I took more responsibility, G got summaries of progress and I went to see G when needed. G gave me lots of headroom, although he was always involved in final decisions. Had his hand on the tiller less and less. Went to meetings together. When I needed specific training (eg in IT) G got me on a course very quickly — this is unusual in the organisation. He often used journey time to talk

about dealing with people, especially senior people — helping me to see a higher level/more strategic picture (how would senior people be looking at this?), understanding organisational politics.

'He developed my broader skills as well as my technical skills. He discussed my future career and fed back strengths and weaknesses. He improved my communication skills upwards and downwards. He gave me a wider perspective on what the organisation is all about — not just the local office but also wider politics. G was not especially well liked within the organisation. Working with him made me respect G more and be less judgmental — I realised what he had to deal with.'

`R+` P28. R developed systematically

G was R's line manager for about a year, about seven years ago.

'G was good at using the organisation processes (eg for performance and promotion), as he had worked in HR for a while. He used team meetings to discuss work examples. He was approachable, knowledgeable, and competent — so I respected him, and listened to him. He gave objective advice, even if it was not what you wanted to hear. He was straight but encouraging, bringing his own experience and consideration. He looked widely at the development needs of the organisation — not just the immediate need of the office or even of individuals, but longer term.

'We had a monthly one-to-one to go through my work — he would nudge me in the right direction. G kept records on my progress to shape his management report. He was very steady — good at dealing with stress — just calm. He would sit and listen when I was stressed. I still talk to him, seven years later.'

`G+` P29. G working with two trainees who were struggling

G was the line manager of two professional trainees.

R1, the first trainee, had failed two important exams and was in danger of being taken off the training scheme. *'I used a mentoring session to try and reassure him that he should continue. R1 wondered if it was worth it — was it all too much? I emphasised the positive, showed him his own strength of character and ability. I told R1 I could see how much he had developed over the period. If he maintained his current level of work, he would produce what was required by the end of programme. R1 was concerned he did not have strong enough evidence of practical work — I stressed that it was the quality of the work that counted not just quantity. I said he could get just as good results in a shorter time with fewer work examples — the key issue was to demonstrate the skills required. We worked together over a number of sessions, for about six months'.* R did keep going and became more confident.

'R2, another trainee, was in a similar problematic situation. I spent a whole session with R2 looking at his strengths and weaknesses — no punches pulled. The session was carefully thought out and planned. I aimed to make clear how far short of the required standard R2 was — an

enormous movement was required – but at the same time not destroying him. I tried also to bring out positive points, what he had built on to get where he was. We also discussed what commitment we could give, resources available, who else could give help. Initially R2 felt he wanted to continue with the professional training, but at the end of the session decided it was not for him. When push came to shove, R2 could not cope with the pressure, and I realised that did not have the capacity to cope with it. R reverted to his previous role and is now doing a different kind of job very well. He was a square peg in a round hole. The situation was very personal but I tried not to demoralise him. It was difficult but satisfying. I feel sure R2 would now say it was the right outcome.'

`G+` P30. G, a mentor, setting an open, approachable tone

G is a mentor for technical specialists. *'Individuals can run things past me. I take an interest and give help especially in technical skills. When I start mentoring someone, I review the work they are doing – I find this a good place to start. I need to adjust the amount of my input to the needs of the individual. I have to be careful at the start, eg I avoid sarcasm. I try to be approachable and friendly – they should not ever feel they are being a nuisance. I should respond when needed. The relationship is informal and fluid. Once I literally took the screws of a self-shutting door to keep it open.'*

`G+` P31. G encouraging someone to see her own potential

G was the manager's manager of a long serving woman from an ethnic minority (she was Asian). R first came to see G with a technical problem, which her own manager was not able to resolve. G had an open door policy.

'R talked to me about the issue. I was impressed by her knowledge of her staff and her attitude, approach and grip on the work. I felt she had potential for professional level work. I raised the issue of professional training with her. She was surprised and quite resistant – her previous boss had not encouraged her to think about promotion. I helped her fill in the forms for internal application to training – and showed her the need to praise herself, which she found difficult. She took the course and got the highest exam score that year in London. After that she was fully qualified. Now her children are older, she has carried on with study at university – she is an excellent professional.'

`G+` P32. G chooses other people with care to help with developing his staff

'I am not so much involved with technical work myself now, managing a large team. When trainees are working for me I try to stress the importance of them taking time for their studies. I allow them to work at home or in a local library – I need to trust them to do the work. It is important to select the right work for them at the right time. I put them working with experienced people – to go out on visits and to gradually

play a larger part. I keep informed about their work and go on some visits myself to see them in action. I make sure the experienced advisers I put them with are also good trainers — I pick these people carefully.'

4.2 Some negative examples

R– **N1. R describing an over-controlling manager**

R started working for a new manager, who was quite senior. *'She was a very aggressive woman, a micro-manager. She wanted to know the finest detail about every aspect of my work, and did not give me any freedom. She wanted things done in a specific way, and would constantly be looking over her shoulder all the time. Working for her was a complete nightmare. She was very negative and never gave any positive feedback, only criticism and put-downs.'* After a while, R confronted G and they formed a personal agreement whereby R would be left to her own devices a bit more. *'G actually thanked me for it, and it cleared the air a little.'*

'The manager was actually good in terms of formal training. She was good at identifying needs, it was just that she was a really poor communicator, and that she didn't trust the staff to do the job on their own. She said I was 'obstructive' because I had different views about how things should be done. The amount of formal development reduced because the relationship deteriorated. It boils down to how much you respect each other, how well you get on with them, and how much faith they have in you.'

When the project came to an end and R moved on, she was very relieved. *'The experience made me feel dreadful, both about work and about myself. I lost faith in the department and strongly intended to leave the organisation. I was less productive and less proactive. I felt that the whole time I was there, I didn't develop at all, although I learned the lesson of how not to do it.'*

R– **N2. R describing a lack of feedback**

R was working on a major intensive project with a team under her. *'It was a very complicated and huge task and everyone needed to work overtime to make sure the job was done correctly. My team managed to do the job well over a four-day period. The manager came in afterwards, checked the system, and left. He gave no praise whatsoever. In general, he gave no feedback, no direction, no praise. Together this resulted in my total demotivation. It created a most unpleasant working environment.'*

R– **N3. R describing a lack of development from a manager**

'I never got any positive feedback from this manager, was sent on no courses, and had no line management support. Another thing the manager did, was to point out all my weaknesses during appraisal and

then provide no development support afterwards in order to address some of the issues.'

R– ## N4. R describing two years with a blocking manager

After a relatively short amount of time in the job, R realised that G *'… wanted to control everything, even the thoughts of everyone she was managing. I had absolutely no freedom and no responsibility.'* G's idea of development was typically to send someone on a training course. *'But it was all too formal, there was never any follow-up to the training I received. I would just get back from the training and do exactly the same thing as I had been doing before. There was no way of capitalising on any of the training that I had received.'*

G prevented R from going for a promotion, by giving R a low score for the criteria 'supports line manager', which effectively blocked her getting promoted. *'What sort of support did G expect when she, in turn, gave no support to any of her staff?'*

R left the department after four months. *'It was hideous, I didn't want to be there. It was like work was a necessary evil, there was no pleasure and no joy. I became disillusioned with the organisation as a whole, especially as during this time the organisation was awarded Investors in People accreditation. I thought this was a joke.'*

G– ## N5. G reporting on the difficulty of being physically remote

G described an example of managing someone who was in a different office on a different floor. He was happy to be available to her whenever he could, but the physical separation made it really difficult. *'Because I didn't see her every day, I didn't get to know her that well. It was hard for me to see how she was doing and what support she needed. I think she felt like she was pestering me whenever she had any questions. The fact that she was on another floor meant that she couldn't just quickly ask me a simple question if she had one, and would sometimes struggle on her own.'*

R– ## N6. R reporting on conflicting feedback

'I was in my previous company for seven years and the experience of development was unhelpful. I had a monthly review and kept getting conflicting messages. I was told I wasn't gelling with the other staff and the following month I was told I had gelled too much. The next month I was told that my customer service was too good. My manager was always looking for the negative and it was always presented as fact and not up for discussion. I left the company, I found it really difficult. I thought it was partly personality at the time and believed some of it, but when it flipped round and I hadn't done anything different, I asked myself "what am I doing wrong?"'

R–

N7. R on lack of focus in discussions with a manager

'G had a lot of faith in me and praised me a lot but didn't stretch me. We would have weekly one-to-ones and a monthly official one-to-one with quarterly appraisals. They were casual chats and not about me, although they were meant to be explicitly about me and my development. G did not manage me in depth, but I got on with him great.

'G now works for a developmental manager and the difference in him is massive. He understands the principles of looking at what someone can do and what they are avoiding or not tackling.'

R–

N8. R getting very little development support as a temp

R had previously worked as a temp in the organisation where she is now permanently employed. *'During the few months I was temping, I got virtually no support whatsoever. It was just a case of being taught on the first day to do a relatively simple task and then being left to it. My manager during this time was more of a controller, he just wanted the work to get done, and wasn't interested in even really talking to the temps.*

'I can understand that temps come and go, but he really wasn't interested in being friendly or anything. When I asked him about trying to get a permanent job he just told me to keep an eye on the intranet as jobs are coming up all the time, but you could tell that he wasn't bothered. He didn't even ask me what sort of thing I was looking for.'

When R applied for the job she now does, G helped her to some extent, which she was thankful for, but she feels that he could have done more to help her. G was not forthcoming with advice or help. *'I think if he'd shown more interest it would have made me feel better in myself, that they thought I was good and that they wanted me to stay.'*

G–

N9. G describing a failed attempt to turn round a poor performer

'I had a young lad on the team whose performance was not very good. He wasn't meeting objectives. I used the appraisal process to set targets and review them and although he would have short bursts, he would never perform at the right level in a sustained way. I discussed with him how he felt he was doing. It's easy if people know they are not working well, but more difficult if they do not know. I went through the targets with him and said we would give it a month and monitor it. The next month there would be more excuses. I offered to help, and made suggestions for improvement. He was a lovely lad and got on with him well. I didn't look forward to these meetings in the end — I felt apprehensive. I felt he didn't really want to be working here.'

G was asked if she would do anything differently if this situation occurred again. *'I would have showed more empathy. I was fed up*

myself at the end and switched off. It is really down to listening. The relationship wasn't positive, but it wasn't because we didn't talk. '

R– ## N10. R being set up to fail

R went to a new job, which he expected to be exciting. He found himself in the middle of managing a major redundancy and re-structuring exercise. *'This was something I was not aware of until I arrived. The plan was to create a new unified team. The plan was strongly opposed by the employees. The plan was clearly ludicrous, but G, my boss, would not hear it – he just wanted to get people onto lower pay and conditions. I was put in a sink or swim role with G not supporting me. Ultimately G was replaced by a manager who was much better – more supportive.'*

The impact of G on R was very profound. *'It was very undermining. I lost faith in the organisation's leadership – lost my compass. It was very debilitating. I felt I was the fall guy – being set up to fail. It knocked my confidence, and it made me think about taking on an operational or commercial job again.*

'If I was in that situation again I would do things differently – keep my boss better informed, recognise earlier that all was not well, make my boss more aware of on-going issues, get help from peers and other senior managers. But G might still not have listened.'

R– ## N11. R still remembers a discouraging senior manager

R reported a negative experience from his boss's boss 14 years ago. *'G never came out of his room to trouble himself that anyone needed help or support. He liked to delegate but never explained what was expected. My immediate boss seemed satisfied with me, but I never knew how G saw me as performing. After 8 months in the job, I raised the issue of my career with G – I felt there was a glass ceiling on me in this office. G asked a completely irrelevant question and told me I didn't have the quality to progress.*

'About this time I was offered a job elsewhere. My response was "get me out of here".' This move slowed R's career as it was into another area of work, which made it harder to get where he wanted later on.

'I felt very negative for a long time. I felt my work was not appreciated. I also felt that because I didn't have a university degree I was worth less. G had no idea how to encourage people. I only think about this bad guy once a day now.

'Development is about hanging about with the right sorts of people and doing the right things – the right sort of work. It is about helping people find their interest and challenge. Good developers watch how people cope and trust you to get on with it. It's like learning to ride a bicycle. You should feel that you can ride the bicycle, it's OK to fall off, they will help you repair your punctures.'

R– **N12. R on a manager who was rude**

This was a recent line manager. *'I liked him as a person but G was completely useless as a manager. He didn't champion his team with others. G gave way to other teams and volunteered his people to do more work. He was also quite derogatory – calling his team the 'riff raff' in front of other staff. He never said 'well done'. He was quite rude to individual members of staff when talking to them in our open plan office. I tried explaining this problem to G's boss but he didn't seem to understand. You don't appreciate having a good manager until you don't have it.'*

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