



Learning at Work Day Event Toolkit

A Resource for NIPSA's ULRs



Learning at Work Day Toolkit

This toolkit has been developed for use as a resource by union learning representatives in NIPSA to help them deliver a successful learning at work day (LaWD) event. It is envisaged that this document will also be a point of reference for managers who wish to know more about LaWD.

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Making the case for participation in LaWD

The success of your LaWD will depend upon the support of the Senior Management Team within your workplace. Use this document to develop a proposal which sets out the benefits to the employer (as well as the employee) of getting involved in LaWD.

What is LaWD?

LaWD takes place each year on the Thursday of Adult Learners' Week. Thousands of workplaces celebrate national LaWD by offering their employees an upbeat learning experience. The aim of the Day is to generate an enthusiasm for learning, whilst also aligning the learning to your organisation's business goals.

Organising a series of 'job swaps' and 'job shadows' on LaWD, for example, can improve employees' understanding of how the organisation as a whole operates. Fun, informal learning can be far more successful in engaging employees who do not readily participate in the process of learning, than 'formal' courses or programmes.

The Campaign for Learning (the national organisers) hope that LaWD will go some way towards making learning a part of everyday working life, especially for those employees who do not traditionally benefit from workplace learning.

LaWD can be tailored to the needs of the workforce - whether this is a case of improving staff motivation by embedding 'learning breaks' throughout the day, or helping to tackle 'stress' in the workplace by offering Indian Head Massage.

The Campaign for Learning can offer the support - including ideas, promotional materials, and tips on promoting the day -to make it happen.

A key element of the Day is clear signposting to the further learning opportunities that will help achieve organisational -and individual -learning goals. LaWD can also be used to promote the existing training opportunities offered at work that not everyone within the organisation may be taking advantage of.

Why LaWD?

The following are just a few of the 'business benefits' of taking part in LaWD. You may wish to use these as a basis for putting together a proposal to present to your employer.

- LaWD is an ideal opportunity to develop 'generic employability skills' in your employees. These are a set of transferable skills that enhance the individual's capacity to adapt, learn and work independently. They include such skills as communication, reasoning skills, diagnosing work problems, business awareness and negotiation skills.
- According to the National Skills Task Force, employers are increasingly seeking generic skills in combination with technical skills as a means of developing a workforce that is able to cope with shifts in the UK economy. For example, you could organise a communications workshop for LaWD, making it as fun and interactive as possible.
- LaWD is a way of switching employees back on to learning who have had previous bad experiences. These are often the people who don't visit the learning centre or actively seek out training and development opportunities at work. By engaging these employees in an informal taste of learning, this will help them to see the benefits and they will be more likely to readily engage in learning opportunities in the future.

- Much learning goes on in the workplace that is informal. This includes talking to colleagues and learning from them, talking to staff from other companies, watching demonstrations and reading trade magazines. LaWD is a chance to recognise and value informal learning. Formalising '10 minute learning breaks', for example, on the Day will mean that this form of learning is recognised and practiced throughout the year.
- Learning new skills on LaWD -from presentation skills to sign language -may prove invaluable to your organisation in the future. Many organisations will have completed a Training Needs Analysis and will know where the skills gaps are. However, LaWD is also a chance to learn other skills and discover your employees' hidden talents.
- Offering employees a break from their daily working routine and encouraging employees to take breaks away from their work station will help improve concentration and motivation.

An employee that is more motivated at work is likely to be more productive. Getting employees together and engaged in an activity that isn't purely work-related can help you to see colleagues in a different light and can, for example, serve to bring departments together who wouldn't usually interact.

- LaWD can be an integral and important part of an employer's learning and development strategy. It is a great opportunity to consult employees on what they would like to learn and where they perceive the skills gaps to be.
- The Campaign for Learning offers media support to all organisations that take part in the Day. This is a good opportunity to have your employer featured in the local press and promoted as an employer investing in the learning and development of its people.

Making Your Case

You may need to convince colleagues or management of the benefits of taking part in LaWD. We have developed the key arguments and evidence to persuade senior managers, line managers and HR. Many of the business-based arguments are generic and are listed in the section on engaging senior management. For a more in depth look at persuasive arguments download our planning pack.

Persuading Senior Managers

Senior managers tend to focus on the overall performance of the organisation. Employing staff who are not continually developing their skills and knowledge costs the organisation money. Performance improvements rely on increased skills and knowledge levels, and the most successful learners are motivated learners. Use LaWD as an opportunity to increase learning motivation among staff. It can help them more successfully acquire the new skills and knowledge that will improve organisational performance.

The Argument

Employing staff who are not continually developing their skills and knowledge is costing your organisation money.

The Evidence

The CBI estimates that poor skills cost the British economy £10bn a year.

Nearly 80% of small or medium sized businesses suffer financial problems in the first year because of a lack of basic financial skills. (Times, 2002)

A fifth of job vacancies are unfilled due to skills shortages, resulting in business being lost to competitors. (Learning and Skills Council, 2003)

The Argument

Performance improvements rely on improved skills and knowledge levels.

The Evidence

Both employers and employees see lack of training as the single biggest barrier to increasing employee productivity. (Productivity & People, Investors in People/NOP World, 2001)

A DTI survey has shown that in engineering companies the number of days spent training existing employees and new recruits is directly related to company performance. (DTI 1997)

One third of workers say they could do their job better if they had more training. (MORI, A Nation Ready to Learn? 2002)

The Argument

Staff learn most effectively when they are motivated to learn

The Evidence

Learners with strong motivation and a belief in their own abilities are more successful learners. (Learners for Life, PISA 2000, OECD)

The Argument

LaWD is an opportunity to increase the learning motivation of your staff.

The Evidence

The Work Foundation evaluation of LaWD 2003 found that increased motivation to learn was one of the main outcomes of the Day for many participants.

Persuading Human Resource Managers

HR teams will need to see how LAW day can help them achieve personnel and development goals. LaWD is an opportunity to raise the organisation's profile with external audiences as an employer that invests in its people by providing excellent workplace learning opportunities. It can also help increase awareness among employees of the organisation's commitment to staff learning. Building a reputation as an organisation that develops its people will help attract, and retain, the staff the organisation needs to meet its business objectives.

The Argument

Providing learning opportunities at work enhances an employer's reputation, making it easier to attract the best job candidates.

The Evidence

77% of respondents prefer to work for an employer who provides time, money and support for training rather than one who gives big salary rises but little opportunity for training. (Campaign for Learning MORI Attitudes to Learning Poll, 1998)

After basic salary, training and development are the most important considerations when looking for a new job. (MORI, A Nation Ready to Learn? 2002)

The Argument

Many workforces have 'hidden' skills deficiencies that cost their employer money. Staff may be aware of the problem but unaware of how it can be addressed. LaWD is a chance to inform staff of the options available to help them.

The Evidence

Almost a half of adults lack basic maths skills (unable to achieve a C grade pass at GCSE). (DfES, 2003)

One in six graduates have experienced difficulties with maths at work. (Cornelius, 1992)

11% of workers are classed by their employers as 'incompetent' - about 2.4 million employees. (Learning and Skills Council, 2003)

The Argument

Too many employers provide no training at all, risking poor performance and lost business. LAW Day is a chance to introduce a learning and development programme.

The Evidence

40% of employers provided no training in the previous 12 months. (DfES, 2003)

Persuading Line Managers

Line managers tend to focus on specific goals at a local level which you will need to identify through discussion; they are also the people who are juggling the issues of meeting targets and releasing staff to attend any learning opportunities. LaWD activities can help line managers build their team's skills and knowledge and help them achieve their targets. Many LaWD activities are good team-building exercises and help raise morale. It is a chance for the team leader to lead by example and demonstrate his or her commitment to learning.

The Argument

Personal commitment to learning from managers is an important lever to engaging widespread staff participation in learning

The Evidence

Campaign for Learning qualitative research into line managers' attitudes to staff learning has found that they recognise the need to act as learning role models. (2003)

The Argument

Staff who get involved in a LaWD activity experience higher morale which can result in greater commitment to their work.

The Evidence

A Work Foundation evaluation of LaWD 2003 reported that increased morale was a significant outcome of LaWD

How to write a LaWD proposal

If it is necessary to write a proposal in order to convince senior management of the benefits of a LaWD event, you may wish to address the following:

- What is LaWD? Stress that it is a national campaign to promote the benefits of workplace learning, organised by the Campaign for Learning. The Campaign for Learning offers support to make the Day happen, from producing promotional materials to providing media coverage.
- What is the training need or business objective you plan to meet by organising a LaWD event? For example, organising a series of job shadows in order to improve communication and understanding of roles between different departments.
- What are the 'business benefits' to the employer and employees? What are the expected learning outcomes for employees?
- How will you meet your objective in a fun and informal way in order to involve employees at all levels of the organisation? What incentives will you offer to encourage participation in the Day?
- How will you organise LaWD? Think about setting up a planning group so that employees have ownership of the event or activities. How will you promote the event? Who will run the activities, if you plan to use an external learning provider?
- What are the cost and time implications? Is it possible to get funding or 'in-kind' support?
- How will the event or activities be evaluated? Can you measure the success of your event or activities?
- How do you propose to build upon LaWD? What progression opportunities can you offer employees? How might you embed the learning started on LaWD throughout the whole organisation?



Draft letter to employer

Re. Workplace learning event

Dear [Name of manager],

As part of my role as NIPSA learning representative, I aim to promote a broad range of learning initiatives through a variety of means to all staff within the workplace. In line with this, it is my intention to work with you in partnership to arrange a workplace learning event at a date and time that suits.

Learning new things can benefit everyone. Employees benefit from new confidence and enthusiasm, and employers benefit from having a more motivated workforce better able to meet new challenges and often healthier.

The Government is keen to increase the skills level of the workforce and of its own employees. NIPSA has a good record of supporting the development of skills among its members. We want our members to have access to broad, transferable skills that can help them with their current job and future development. Working in partnership will bring both of these ideals together.

NIPSA learning representatives regularly run taster events and workshops, to show members the range of learning that is available and to encourage them to try new things. Learning can provide all sorts of benefits to members, to the union, and to employers.

Learning activity can improve life at work for staff. It can have benefits for health, make members feel happier at work, and encourage them to do more training at work. It can also help staff feel more confident to apply for promotion within their current working environment. This is particularly true where members can receive a recognised qualification.

It would be my intention to meet at an amicable time to discuss this matter further. Alternatively, with your approval I can organise the learning event, keeping you in the loop as appropriate.

Yours sincerely,

NIPSA Learning Representative

A step-by-step guide to planning your LaWD

Following these basic guidelines should help you to plan LaWD in your workplace.

Think through the why, who, what, when, where and how!

- Who is going to take part? Make sure that you cater for staff who may work different shifts or who are freelancers or contractors.
- Why are you organising the Day and what are the 'business benefits' to the employer? Consult with both managers and employees to ensure that you are 'meeting a need'.
- What activities are you offering and how will they fit in with the budget, resources and time you have?
- When will you run activities (what time)? Where will they take place?
- How will you promote them to staff? How will you sustain interest in further learning?

Get Support

- Use the sheet on the 'Making the case for participation' to help you. The most successful days are those that have the commitment from everyone in the organisation, from the Chief Executive to the most recent recruit.
- Commitment from managers is particularly critical as their example influences how staff respond to LaWD. Consider how you might involve managers in LaWD activities? Be sure to get their 'buy-in' from the outset -clearly setting out the business goals -and use their input to shape your plans. Could you persuade them to take part in a 'job swap' for part of the Day?

Get Together

- Don't work alone! Set up a planning group and allocate tasks to different members. This will not only help colleagues to gain an insight into the skills involved with project management, but involving others in the process of planning encourages ownership.

Plate Spinning or Presentation Skills

- These should be linked to your aims for the Day. There are some ideas in this pack. You should try to ensure that your activities are appealing and fun. Visit www.learningatworkday.com for more activity ideas.

You're Booked

- Book room space, activity leaders and equipment. Liaise with your designated Health & Safety Officer to check that the allocated space is suitable for what you propose to do. Book the people who you propose to get to run your activities. Of course, it may be possible to run all your activities 'in-house', using the expertise of your colleagues.

Promotion, Promotion, Promotion

- Use all channels of communication within your workplace, from email to displays by the coffee machine. The best form of marketing is 'word of mouth' so encourage members of the Planning Group to talk to their colleagues about the activities.

- Think about how you can make sure that all employees -even those who work outside main organization base, never look at a notice board, aren't comfortable reading letters or confident with English -have the information they need to get involved.
- Another way to get noticed is by holding a competition open to all LaWD participants.

Ensure that Your Activities run Smoothly on the Day

- Have a back up plan in case your activity leader doesn't turn up or, for example, there is a fire alarm. Publish a programme of activities so colleagues know what is happening where and when. Have people on hand to reassure and encourage colleagues' involvement, and check all the equipment before each activity starts.

Evaluate your LaWD

- You need to think about how you will evaluate when you are at the planning stage of your event. Ask yourself these questions:
- Why are you evaluating and what will you do with the data? What is it that you are evaluating?
- For whose purpose are you evaluating? What approaches will you use?
- Remember that feedback forms aren't the only answer and may not always be the most appropriate method. See the section on evaluation for more information.

Plan Ahead

- Keep the momentum going - LaWD should be the start of something, or part of an on-going programme of learning opportunities for colleagues. Remember that LaWD is part of Adult Learners' Week and there will be hundreds of learning opportunities organized.
- Put a report together based on the comments collated through verbal and written feedback.

Activity Ideas

- The LaWD website includes activities that you can replicate for LaWD within your place of work. An A-Z of ideas is attached at Page 20.

Pointers for activity ideas

1. Audit the skills you have 'in-house'. For example, is there a member of staff who speaks French who could run a taster session or someone who is a star with Outlook? Ask colleagues if they have any family or friends who would be willing to come into the workplace and run a LaWD activity.

You might also like to think about contacting your suppliers and other businesses you work with. For example, if you out source your IT support, perhaps someone could come in to run a session on web design.

2. You might also find it useful to access the Learning and Skills Council's 'Employers Guide to Training Providers'. Many providers will run sessions for you at no cost, or how about using college NVQ students?
3. Learndirect is the free, national learning helpline and lists thousands of learning opportunities around the country. The free-phone number is 0800 101901 and the website lists thousands of courses and online centers, as well as giving advice and guidance on learning. The website also features free business briefing factsheets, including personal development plans, appraisals and employment law.
4. The BBC learning website offers online learning, support and advice. For example, if you were thinking of running a language- themed LaWD activity, you will find: free online language courses, a translation dictionary, and links to the National Centre for Languages.
5. If you are looking for a 'tutor' in a particular subject area, who could come into your workplace and run a session, then visit the Personal tutors website. It is possible to search for tutors by subject area as well as by geographical location.
6. Information, advice and guidance is a key ingredient for a successful LaWD activity. Your local NEXTSTEP will be able to put you in touch with training providers, basic skills providers and other organisations that provide learning.
7. The Business Link website provides employers with a searchable Training Directory, as well as a very useful directory of funding sources. You can also call 0845 6009006 for details of your nearest Business Link office.
8. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) aims to encourage all adults to engage in learning of all kinds.
9. Raw money is a great way to pick up tips and tools for managing your money better, and has a number of interactivities for your members.

‘Quick wins’

If this is the first year you have taken part in LaWD or if you have a limited amount of time and resources available to you, you may like to take a look at the following ‘Quick Win’ activities for LaWD.

Don’t forget that the Campaign for Learning provides a variety of free planning, promotional and activity materials to help you get involved in LaWD. There is a full list of support on offer at the learning at work day website and this includes:

- An Introductory flyer / Planning Grid;
- An online Planning Guide, which includes an A -Z of tried and tested activities that you can replicate;
- Downloadable posters to promote the day; Posters and stickers;
- Advice on getting management buy-in for the Day, a sample evaluation form and participation certificate;
- A variety of free online activity resources, including a Coaching Skills Quiz, Learning Diary and some mini learning workouts from a company called The Mind Gym. Most of the free materials are available from the learning at work day site but you also might like to register by phone to automatically receive updates on the latest LaWD materials – 0207 766 0001
- Visit the Campaign for Learning website and download lots of free workplace learning resources, including a quiz to help you analyse your organisation’s learning environment and free bite size learning ‘workouts’.
- Raise awareness of existing opportunities for learning and development within your workplace by putting up posters (available free from the Campaign for Learning) advertising what opportunities are on offer to employees.
- Set up a ‘Learning Needs Notice-board’, where employees pin up what it is they would like to be able to learn.
- Arrange job swaps and job shadows within the organisation. The Campaign for Learning has produced some guidelines to help you get the most out of this (available from the website).
- If you have a meeting on LaWD, spend the first part of the meeting going around the table and encouraging your colleagues to share a particular skill or talent.
- Learn some Brain Gym moves! Brain Gym is a series of simple moves, which can be done at your desk, to exercise the brain. Visit new oceans for more information. You might also find the brain games website useful.

Some Funding Opportunities

- Business Link has a range of information on a wide range of funding opportunities, as well as local & regional training grants available in your area. Visit the Business Support Directory on the site.
- European funds has information on the range of structural funds, promoting employability & regeneration, from the DTI.

- Grants Online enables you to access the very latest information on grant funding opportunities from the European Union, UK Government, Lottery, Regional Grant Making Bodies and Grant Making Trusts. There is a 7 day free trial offer.
- J4b allows quick and simple searches of the constantly updated j4b database of business grants and loans -the most comprehensive database of its kind in the UK. This award-winning website helps you cut through the business grants jungle.
- Selective Finance for Investment in England (SFI) is a fund established in 2004 for businesses investing in certain regions in England offering a percentage of costs includes training costs.
- The learning and skills council website has information about opportunities from the Learning and Skills Council, including Investors in People, Small Firms Initiative, Employer Training Pilots, Bite Size & links to local LSCs who may have local funds available for skills training. There is also an 'Employer's Guide to Training Providers'.

Promoting the Day

Here are a few tips on promoting LaWD to colleagues -particularly those who may be apprehensive about taking part in a LaWD activity.

Contributors and Co-developers: Involving employees in the selection, planning and delivery of activities sends out important signals about the scope and nature of the day. It helps to remove the guesswork about which activities, timings, internal communication channels and venues will and won't work. It also connects you, the organiser, to a network of employees who will informally promote and champion the day and/or specific activities.

Employee Champions and Advocates: When it comes to overcoming individual resistance and reluctance to take part in training and development programmes, a lot can be learned from the approaches of union learning representatives. Peer-level champions provide role models individuals can more readily identify and associate with. They play an important role in encouraging participation.

Ensure your champions have a role in the day's formal promotion by including, for example, their views and quotes in staff newsletters, and getting them to run a session. Ensure they are fully briefed about the aims and objectives of the day -so they may play a full part in the informal 'word of mouth' promotion. Remember that champions aren't just to be found in the ranks of formal organisers and those delegated responsibilities.

Every organization has individuals whose internal networking skills and ability to relate to others make them pivotal part of the communication process. Invite your champions to give you on-going feedback on how staff are responding to your promotions?

The Persuaders

When planning and promoting your Day to employees, you may find it useful to put yourself in their shoes by examining the questions below. By addressing key logistical and psychological barriers you'll significantly improve your ability to increase and widen participation in learning.

- How do I feel about learning? How does the proposed learning fit with my professional and personal notions of who I am, my values, and what's important to me?

- What has past experience of learning in this organisation and/or in life generally led me to believe? Past successes, and failures in learning, and the perceived rewards or costs of taking part affect my willingness to attend. Can I explore free of judgment or penalty?
- Will I be fully supported by the organisation and my line manager to attend? Active encouragement from line management makes a fundamental difference to attendance levels. Line manager's attitudes towards displacement time, and employee learning and development can inhibit and seriously undermine attendance levels.
- What will participants be able to do better, quicker or more successfully as a result of attending the session? Adult learners need to see quickly that the learning will be meaningful and relevant to their lives.

More Promotional Tips

The promotion of LaWD should begin when you first consult with employees over what it is they would like to learn. You should at least advertise the date of LaWD a long time in advance.

It is important to create a 'climate of anticipation' in the lead-up to LaWD. Design your own posters, run quizzes linked to the event and mini-tasters. These forms of communication should be used, as well as the more traditional emails, posters and leaflets.

'Word of mouth' is the best form of marketing, so use your colleagues to spread the word. Recruit your own Employee Champions and use them for the promotion of other forms of learning and training.

Your regional TUC will help you with further ideas.

Evaluating

Before setting out to evaluate the impact of your LaWD event, you should ask yourself the following questions:

Why are you Evaluating?

What will you do with the data? Make sure that your evaluation has a purpose, and it won't just sit on the shelf gathering dust. How will the evaluation of your event inform future practices? Where does it fit in with the Learning and Development Plan?

What is to be Evaluated?

Are you looking to measure the effectiveness of the learning experience itself (the PROCESS)? In which case, you will need to ask questions about the session leader's delivery methods, the quality of materials and the learning environment. Or, are you looking to evaluate the outcome of the learning experience (the OUTCOME)? In which case, you will be looking to find out what people have actually learnt as a result of the learning experience and how this has been applied to their work.

For Whose Purpose are you Evaluating?

Managers, trainers and employees will all have different perspectives and objectives. For managers, the need to evaluate is to help answer the related questions of whether the business goal has been met, and whether it has helped with motivation and productivity. Whereas, for employees, the evaluation questions are likely to be linked to whether it has helped to do the job better/easier/faster, helped with career development or helped with work/life balance.

How will you Evaluate and What Approaches will you use?

A feedback questionnaire straight after the LaWD event is just one approach. You will find a sample form at the end of the booklet. Glossary of Ideas

Evaluation form for Learning at Work event

1. Did you enjoy the day?

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.....

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2. Did you sign up for anything and if so what?

.....

.....

.....

3. Would you consider doing something in the future? If Yes – What would you consider?

.....

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4. Was the day of benefit to you?

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.....

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5. What was most useful about the day?

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.....

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6. Was there anything you felt was a waste of time?

.....

.....

.....

7. How could we improve for next year?

.....

.....

.....

8. Would you like to be contacted by your local ULR? Please provide your email and contact Phone Number

.....

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this feedback form.

Learning at Work Day (LaWD)

Timeline for ULRs

Assuming that LaWD is to be held in May; adjust timeline accordingly if held at some other time.

January	Set up planning group, schedule in meetings for run up to event Decide on date of event Source funding Some funding sources might have different deadlines so need contingency plans Source and book venue
February	Planning Group needs to decide which Providers to invite Plan publicity strategy
March	Contact colleges and providers by telephone Confirm booking(s) in writing Consider which H&S risk assessment is needed – generic/specialist according to type of activities to be held Contact management regarding release of staff (is this early enough?) Design publicity (posters etc.)
April	Order publicity materials, promotional items Commence dissemination – “Teaser” campaign, posters, internet, intranet, dept and union publications Check Providers still able to attend, any special requirements Consider booking system for staff to access time to attend Decide which stall goes where Agree timetable for ULRs to ensure that everything is covered eg meeting and greeting, refreshments (if provided), stalls to be staffed, trouble-shooter(s)
May	Final check on what is needed on the day Ensure all visitors are encouraged to complete evaluation form on the day Enjoy The Day!
June	Follow-up evaluation? Format?
January	Set up planning group ...

LaWD Action Plan

[illegible]

3. What activities will the event involve?**People I need to get in touch with to run activities:**

Internal:

External:

4. Promoting your event

I will promote my event by:

Curiosity

Awareness:

Interest:

Desire:

Action:

5. Delivering your event

I will prime people up for learning and ensure a memorable learning experience by:

6. Maintain the momentum

I will maintain momentum by:

7. Evaluation - why, what, how?

I will measure the success of the event(s) by:

8. My next step

Actions I need to take to forward my plan: To be taken by (date):

LaWD Event Checklist

Task	Responsible person	Deadline
Venue		
Identify a suitable venue (size, location, facilities and equipment, cost, disabled access)		
Agree numbers		
Confirm booking of venue		
Order refreshments/ Lunch		
Update venue on numbers for refreshments/lunch and check order		
Check layout of the venue is appropriate for the day.		
Publicity and Promotion		
Post and/or e-mail invitations to target audience (include special requirements – diet and access)		
Design and produce a flyer to go on notice boards		
Add event details to internal calendars and website		
Draft a specification for photographer		
Source and book a photographer		
Write a press release		
Contact the press		
Attendees		
Create database for attendees		
Produce attendance list		
Make name badges		
Send name badges to venue (to named person)		
Obtain and send travel directions		

Task	Responsible person	Deadline
Agenda/Guest Speakers		
Agree main speakers and confirm		
Discuss outline content (if necessary) and allotted time. Agree date for presentations to be sent		
Agenda finalised		
Presentation received from speakers		
Presentations sent to venue		
Person to meet/ greet key speakers		
Ensure name holders for key speakers are printed and in place		
Resources		
Enough staff available for the day		
Technical staff available to operate any IT		
Bits and Bobs Box available (scissors, sellotape etc)		
Check all contents received by venue		
Feedback forms designed and printed		
Order freebies and other items for distribution		
Prepare delegate packs/handouts		

Glossary of Ideas

A

Accounting
Astrology
Alexander Technique
Antiques
Army
Aromatherapy

B

Balloons
Ballroom dancing
Belly dancing
Brail, blind or partially sighted awareness

C

Calligraphy
Car maintenance
Card making
Ceramics
Circus skills
Colour me beautiful
Combating domestic violence
Cookery
Creative thinking
Creative writing

D

Deaf awareness
Disability awareness
Digital photography
Drug and alcohol abuse awareness
Dyslexia

E

Email use
Embossing
Embroidery
Eating sensibly

F

Fencing
Financial management
Fire brigade
First aid
Flower arranging

G

Gardening
Gift wrapping
Golf

H

Health issues
History
Homeopathy

I

Indian head massage
Internet
IT testers

J

Japanese
Jewellery making
Jive
Judo
Juggling

K

Karate
Keep fit
Kick boxing
Kite making
Knitting

L

Language tasters
Libraries
Line dancing
Literacy

M

Magic
Memory workouts
Marketing
Massage
Meditation
Mind gym
Motivation
Music

N

Needlecraft
Negotiating skills
Netball
NIPSA (all relevant information)
Nutrition

O

Opera
Organisational skills

P

Papier mache
Pilates
Plumbing
Police
Positive thinking
Presentation skills
Providers (local colleges etc.)

Q

Quilt making
Quizzes

R

Raffles
Reflexology
Relaxation
Road safety

S

Salsa
Self Defense
Sign language
Stress management

T

Tai chi
Taste tests
Theatre skills
Tiling
Time management

U

Ukulele
Upholstery

V

Violin
Voice coaching
Volunteering
Volleyball

W

Water Colours
Wine tasting
Woodwork
Working out your pay slip

Y

Yoga

Creative Writing

Creative writing can improve:

- Communication skills
- Interpersonal relationships
- Assertiveness
- Creative thinking and problem solving
- Transference of experiential learning
- Focus on investigating interests
- Relaxation and stress relief
- Self exploration
- Clarification of goals

Creativity doesn't necessarily need good writing skills. If you have members of your workforce who may struggle with their literacy skills try to make it accessible to them by marketing your activity as a creative storytelling session, creative thinking or using your imagination. If your business involves employees who frequently have to write articles for journals or magazines, this is a great way to polish their skills in a fun way.

Work round all members of the group so that no one feels uncomfortable with using their writing skills. Find out or decide beforehand whether the group wants to work together or individually. Set some ground rules about expressing ideas openly. Take a brief look at how people want to feed back to each other – constructive criticism.

Look at what makes a good story. Explore with the members of the group how we use narrative in everyday conversation to discuss problems, relay anecdotes, explain or resolve situations, or just communicate with each other to build relationships.

Think about beginnings, middles and endings, and how to structure and link them.

Explore different points of view: how we would tell a story from our own perspective (first person), from another's point of view or as a narrator (third person).

Decide who you want to write for. Who is your audience? Are you writing a mystery, children's story, fantasy, political, psychological, historical, moral...? ... The possibilities are endless. Take some time however to think about your knowledge base and that of your audience. It is generally better to write about what you know. Think about books or stories you might have read. What made them good? If your story revolves around a legal battle and you know little about law the chances are that someone else will know more and read it unfavourably.

Start Simply: none of your group will be ready to write a full novel in one session. Set out to write a short piece. Set limits on detail if you need to so the whole project doesn't get out of hand.

Originality: Once you've look at how to construct a story and why you want to write it, it's time to think of your ideas and get creative. If it helps, individuals may want to close their eyes for a minute to take themselves out of their current situation and find the focus of, or visualise the setting for, their tale. Alternatively, they may want to use what's around them. As said previously, writing about what you know is often better.

Get people to verbalise their ideas. Most people will initially be more comfortable with talking about a situation or describing something in their own words, as they will be more used to speaking than writing.

Think about:

- Setting
- Characters
- Dialogue
- Plot
- Subplot
- Themes
- Tone
- Symbolism
- Viewpoint

Put together the bones of a narrative as a group using flipchart notes as an aid, or individually using brief notes. Mind mapping is a good way to be inclusive of everyone's ideas, branches can then come off to form further detail. You don't necessarily have to complete a final product; getting people thinking is the most important aspect of the exercise. If you do want to produce a final product why not ask people to write certain sections, find someone who's willing to write up the full piece, or offer to put everything together yourself. Ensure the whole group agree that what is written up is an accurate account of what was intended. Maybe a group could come back together at some later point to elaborate on their original thoughts.

Running a short session as part of your Learning at Work Day:

- If you are not sure how to get people writing, ask any local education outlet for volunteer teachers, lecturers or students willing to give an hour's taster session.
- Spend a few minutes on introductions and look at working together constructively and how feedback will be given.
- Have an open forum and make a list of the sort of stories and narratives people enjoy.
- Keep the situation informal and ask people what they are interested in and what they might like to 'write' about.
- Look, as a group, at what constitutes a story – beginnings, middles and endings.
- Discuss how you want to work together – as small groups or individually.
- As groups or individuals spend some time putting together a short plan or ordered list of who, where, what, when, how and why, for your story.
- If there's time try writing some short narratives based on the plan. If people are happy to share their work leave some time at the end for stories to be read out. Alternatively, and particularly if you are short of time, present a story verbally using the plan to form the narrative in an improvised way.

As a guide, if you don't have much time and the session is just an initial taster, don't just expect people to come in, sit down and write a story. That may feel too much like some people's negative experiences of school. They will need a facilitator to get them sharing ideas and feeding off each other's creativity. Once they've found their motivation and method of approach they will start to achieve their goals.

Further activities:

- Perhaps if you have achieved a final product it might be something that could be put in a staff newsletter or magazine.
- Keep people motivated to use their imaginations through further sessions or get

members of the group to start up their own creative writing club. See how the session is received and take the learning further where possible.

- Suggest to people to look at writing further through self-exploration. Keeping a journal can not only be therapeutic, but can provide additional inspiration for fictional or creative writing. Why not run a session on journal keeping?
- As with other subjects, see what's available through local education providers and keep staff informed of additional learning opportunities.

Hobby sharing

Introduction

Using 'hobby sharing' as a theme for your Learning at Work Day is an ideal solution if you are limited in terms of time and budget. It won't cost a lot of money (although you may need to supply some materials), you don't need a huge amount of office space, it won't take you too long to organise and you can do it over a lunch hour. All you really need is some colleagues who are willing to share their skills and hobbies. There are also some great learning outcomes – not least, colleagues will learn to develop their skills and confidence in teaching others.

Objectives and Learning outcomes:

Colleagues sharing their hobbies, and those on the receiving end, will:

- Learn a new skill in half an hour (or however long you run the sessions for), giving them a taste of learning something new and different.
- Find out how to further their learning if they are interested in doing so. Those sharing their hobbies should research where colleagues can find out more, or enrol on a course.
- See your colleagues in a different light, by finding out more about them and interacting with them on a different level.
- Help your colleagues to feel valued, and boost their self-esteem. For many, this will be the first time that they have had experience of 'teaching' others and sharing their own particular hobby or talent.
- Develop skills and confidence in teaching others, which should carry on into daily working life. For example, colleagues may feel more willing to ask for help and support each other when experiencing difficulties with particular areas of work.

Planning Schedule

The following Planning Schedule will help you to go about putting on your own 'hobby sharing' Learning at Work Day activity:

1. Firstly, send round an email or talk to colleagues on an individual basis about Learning at Work Day. Put forward your idea for a hobby sharing session and ask colleagues if they would be willing to share their hobbies and talent with others. To start the ball rolling, it may be useful if you put yourself forward for running a session. Ask colleagues to get back to you with a rough outline of what they could do in a 20 – 30 minute slot (longer, if appropriate). You shouldn't make everyone take part, but perhaps you could encourage colleagues who aren't willing to take part this time round, to take part in the future.

2. When you have an idea of the sorts of hobbies people will be sharing, you can decide on the most appropriate venue and time of day. You'll need to think about health and safety issues for each activity. For example, if someone is looking to share their particular talent of playing 'keepy-uppy' with a football, it's probably not the best idea to run the activity near computers! Instead, you may need to think about booking a meeting room. At what time of day you run your hobby sharing event is up to you. It can be organised to fit in with your daily working schedule.
3. Next, decide on the format of your event. Do you want to offer a rotating programme of activities, so that things are repeated? If so, remember to add in time for refreshment breaks. How long do you want the hobby sharing sessions to run for? Do you want people to book themselves on, or would it be better to run it on a drop-in basis?
4. When you have decided on the above, produce a programme of activities. Make sure that your colleagues who are running the sessions are happy with the programme. Send the programme round to everyone in your office by email, and post it up around the office. You may like to think about customising one of our Learning at Work Day posters with the programme details.
5. Check if colleagues who are running the sessions need any additional materials. For example, if someone is sharing their skills at drawing, they will need a supply of pencils and paper. Decide if you have a budget to supply materials, or whether you need to find a creative way around this!
6. Make sure that there is someone for people to go to if they have any concerns or worries about leading a hobby sharing session. This may be you, as the organiser! Prior to the event, you may wish to think about running a coaching session, or advice surgery, to give people tips and support in leading a session. You may need to help out with structuring the sessions and come up with a specific format. For example, 5 minutes giving the history of the hobby, 10 minutes showing how to do it, and 15 minutes letting everyone 'have a go'.
7. Ask your colleagues to produce a sheet for further information about their hobby, including where classes are held and a list of useful websites.
8. On the day, try and make sure people keep to time, and that sessions run smoothly.

Session Ideas

The type of sessions you run will depend very much on the specific skills/hobbies/talents that your colleagues have. It might include:

- Language
- Juggling
- Playing a musical instrument
- Sewing
- Wiring a plug, etc.

Follow-up and Help

As with all Learning at Work Day activities, it is important that you embed follow-on activities. This may be a decision to run the session again, a session focusing on one particular hobby that your colleagues are especially interested in, or providing colleagues with the information to enable them to further their learning in their own time. Ask your colleagues to produce a sheet of additional information. You may wish to consider allocating work time to allow them to do this. The document could include: a history of their hobby, the main pointers of success, information on where to buy equipment, and information on local classes, teams, courses or associations. Ask for feedback on how your colleagues found the sessions, and use this to plan future learning activities. You might also like to speak to managers about using colleagues' experience of running a hobby sharing session in their annual appraisal. You should take time to ask colleagues about what they feel they got out of running the session, and any new skills they have learnt as a result

Office Book Club

Escape...

Open to full-time and part-time staff, Union members and non-members, everyone is welcome to NIPSA's new book club.

Book clubs are springing up everywhere, with all sorts of different people getting involved. Whether you want to pick a good read for your summer getaway or chat to colleagues about something more interesting this autumn than where to hold the Christmas party!

Give it a go, you might make some fascinating new friends!

Interested?

Contact:



Book Questionnaire

Name

.....

Extension

.....

Favourite type of Book (please tick)

Fiction: ☐ Non-Fiction: ☐ Either: ☐

Genre (Please number your favourite genres 1-10 with 1 being your favourite)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ● Art, Architecture & Photography | ● Music, Stage & Screen |
| ● Biography | ● Poetry, Drama & Criticism |
| ● Comics & Graphic Novels | ● Religion & Spirituality |
| ● Crime, Thrillers & Mystery | ● Romance |
| ● Food & Drink | ● Science Fiction & Fantasy |
| ● History | ● Science & Nature |
| ● Home & Garden | ● Scientific, Technical & Medical |
| ● Horror | ● Society, Politics & Philosophy |
| ● Humour | ● Sports, Hobbies & Games |
| ● Languages | ● Travel & Holiday |
| ● Mind, Body & Spirit | |

Any Books You would like to include our a reading List:

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Comments:

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Useful websites

www.NIPSA.org.uk/learning

www.bbc.co.uk

www.bbc.co.uk/becomingwebwise

www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise

www.bbc.co.uk/gardening

www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone

www.bbc.co.uk/languages

www.bbc.co.uk/raw

www.aoc.co.uk

www.channel4.com/learning

www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk

www.countmeincalendar.info

www.csv.org.uk

www.cvs.co.uk

www.dcsf.gov.uk

www.do-it.org.uk

www.open.ac.uk

www.unionlearn.org.uk

www.moneymatterstome.co.uk

www.niace.org.uk

www.readingagency.org.uk

www.literacytrust.org.uk

www.move-on.org.uk

www.ufi.com

NIPSA Learning Services

BBC Homepage

BBC Web wise

BBC Skills Wise

BBC Gardening

BBC Learning Zone

BBC Languages

BBC Reading & Writing

Association of Colleges

Channel 4 Learning zone

Promoting Learning

Count me in Events Calendar

Community Service Volunteers

CV & Career Resources

Dept. Children Schools & Families

Volunteer Website

Open University

Trade Union Learning

Practical Guide to Finances

Promoting Adult Learning

Literacy

National Literacy Trust

Adult Literacy & Numeracy

Improve Skills through Technology