



DRAFT

Best Practice Guide

Implementing a Professional Development Program

Professional development provides workers with ongoing learning experiences, allowing them to build and advance their careers. Businesses can create professional development opportunities in many ways; it's important to be intentional about creating opportunities that fit the needs of your employees and your company. This best practice guide will help you build your professional development program and maximize its efficacy. In particular, it will highlight:

1. *The What and Why of Professional Development:* Why it matters for your business and your employees
2. *Determining the Best Form of Training:* Given your company's resources, how to identify the best ways to fulfill your and your employees objectives
3. *Accessibility:* How you can ensure that professional development opportunities are equitable and can promote inclusion
4. *Experiential Professional Development:* Beyond training, the many different ways you can leverage your company to provide professional development
5. *Making Professional Development Last:* Turn these trainings into institutionalized and effective practices

What Professional Development Is and Why You Should Care

Businesses can play an essential role not only in identifying areas of improvement for their employees, but also in proactively advancing the skill sets, learning opportunities, and career goals of their team. This is professional development.

Professional Development

(noun)

Process of improving and increasing capabilities of staff through access to education and training opportunities in the workplace, through outside organizations or through watching others perform the job.¹

The value created by professional development programs is cross-cutting and can have profound benefits for the company, employees, and broader communities. Understanding this value is useful for both identifying the objectives you might have in developing a professional development program and for securing buy-in and resources as you look to develop, formalize, or expand it.

For employees, professional development can:

- Increase their job satisfaction
- Improve their earning potential, potential for promotions, or future employment opportunities
- Enhance their personal and professional lives through learning that is applicable outside of the workplace



“ Invest in your employees. Happy employees are enjoyable to work with, they are creative, collaborative and excited to grow. Look for solutions that are mutually beneficial for the employee, the business and the community.”



- Steve Savage, CEO at 1908 Brands (Certified B Corp since 2014)

For the organization, professional development can:

- Attract and retain talent
- Improve the productivity of your employees
- Increase collaboration thanks to better understanding of other departments and networking inside and outside the organization
- Create pipelines for new managers and executives of the company
- Increase innovation as employees continuously improve and incorporate new ideas into their work

According to Gallup, 87% of millennials say professional development or career growth opportunities are a very important part of their job.²

And finally, for the community, professional development can:

- Give employees and the organization access to new perspectives and learning that can positively impact the community
- Provide a formal structure for employees and the organization to take steps to improve their social and environmental performance
- Create more financial security for families
- Improve the economic prospects of the community as a whole

Different Types of Professional Development

In order to know what type of professional development will fit your company's objectives and needs, it's important to first have an understanding of the different types and opportunities for professional development that exist.

As a starting place, it may be helpful to categorize professional development in the following ways: internal or external, training- or experience-based, and core job focused, advancement focused, or life skill focused.

Internal: Conducted through the expertise and experience of the company itself and their current staff

External: Delivered by individuals or organizations that are outside of the company itself, in order to grow the expertise of the organization as a whole

Training-Based: Professional development organized specifically through training: organized activities outside of regular work functions intended to build knowledge and skills of the staff that can be used in their jobs and careers.

Experience-Based: Opportunities, either formal or informal, that are designed to give employees access to new knowledge or skills through in-person mechanisms other than formal trainings.

Professional Development Types

Internal Trainings

- Initial job training for new hires
- Trainings led by managers or other team members; team shares or "brownbag" lunches

External Trainings

- Online courses and webinars
- Continuing education credentials and accreditations
- Seminars or short courses
- Subsidized degree programs

Internal Experience-Based

- Mentoring
- Shadowing
- Professional development oriented projects

External Experience-Based

- Event / conference attendance
- Community service / leadership

Core Job: Focused on directly improving the performance of employees in their current work

Examples: Initial job trainings, “refresher” courses, continuing education credits

Advancement: Focused on broader skills that might be only indirectly connected to their current work, but enhance the overall skills or knowledge of the individuals to improve their career advancement opportunities

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Examples: Management courses (for non-managers), public speaking, cross-job function training with other departments

Life Skills: Focused on information that is not career-specific and can improve employee well-being, and in turn improve job performance or career prospects

Examples: English as a second language training, financial literacy and planning

Impact Snapshot: Approaches to Professional Development

Goldfarb Financial Services

(Certified B Corp Since 2011)



GOLDFARBFINANCIAL

[Goldfarb Financial Services](#), a wealth management company based in the United States, provides a budget for employees to receive advanced designations relevant to their industry, as well as flex time support for employees who are in the process of studying and preparing for them.

Crepes Y Waffles

(Certified B Corp Since 2012)



Crepes y Waffles, a restaurant chain based in Colombia, has a formalized training program and evaluation system for all new employees. They also provide life skills and professional development coaching to their employees, who often come from low-income backgrounds.

Bluerise BV

(Certified B Corp Since 2014)



[Bluerise BV](#), a technology provider and project developer of ocean thermal energy solutions, based in the Netherlands, , offers financial planning, sales, and negotiation training to employees.

In addition to the types of trainings highlighted above, companies can also develop a variety of programs that are related or relevant to professional development. Examples include internships, apprentice programs, or intentional hiring and training programs for individuals who may have chronic barriers to employment, all of which will be discussed below.

Reflection Questions:

What potential benefits of professional development resonate with you? Are they covered in the descriptions above or are there other values that you care about?

Does your company already provide professional development opportunities? What types?

Determining the Right Approach to Professional Development

With all of the different options available for professional development programs, how can you go about identifying the best approach for your company?

In order to figure it out, you'll need to: (1) identify and clarify the objectives of your professional development plan, (2) identify the needs and interests of your employees to determine appropriate content and formats, then (3) allocate resources and understand constraints and (4) set the specific structure and policies of your program or plan.

Identifying and Clarifying Objectives

It is important to clarify your company's objectives for your professional development program and link them directly to the structure (and intensity), resource allocation, and content of your programs.

The nature of a program designed to increase retention for your workforce will look very different from a program designed to identify successors in management, and both would look very different from a program designed to give individuals with barriers to employment the opportunity to gain essential job skills and build a career.

In order to clarify your objectives, you should:

1. Review the values highlighted to the right and identify any missing potential objectives that should be added.
2. Eliminate the items that either do not apply or are not specifically of interest to your company.
3. Of those that are remaining, look to prioritize from most important to least important.

Sample Professional Development Objectives

- ☐ To reduce attrition at the company
- ☐ To improve productivity of our workforce
- ☐ To identify and train new organizational leaders
- ☐ To provide training opportunities to traditionally underemployed groups
- ☐ Other:

The worksheet included as an appendix to this guide will provide you with space to do this. Following the identification of your priorities, the next topics will help you link them to specific programs.



Q&A with Lori Clement, Manager of Growth at Charter School Business Management (Certified B Corp Since 2013)

How do you track your individual professional development efforts to make sure you're making progress toward your goals?

We employ professional development and company engagement tracking through our HR management system. In this system, our HR team in collaboration with people managers track the professional development goals of each team member, recommended and assigned trainings, feedback on those trainings and the outcome/improvement toward attaining professional development goals.

What professional development programming have you undertaken recently? Have you see the intended results?

We have recently begun to deliver team member training sessions based on role. For example, this year we developed and implemented a series of trainings for people managers. During the training, we were transparent with the strengths and challenges of people management within our firm, our goals, and how the method of managing people will shift as the organization grows. The positive outcomes on manager/direct report relationships and communication were immediate. Specifically, evaluative conversations have increased in their objectivity and are more focused on opportunities for growth and transparency on what is needed to achieve this growth.



Understanding Workforce Needs

No matter what overall approach your company takes to professional development, you'll also need to identify the specific content to focus on. This should be based on a combination of company needs and employee interests.

The best place to start is with an assessment of workforce needs in order to identify gaps in employees' knowledge and abilities, prioritize the skills that should be developed, set goals, and plan training in ways that can be most effective.³

To assess workforce needs, you could use any of the following resources:

- *Questionnaires* are useful in asking specific questions of each employee (for a short sample survey that can be repurposed for your company, see below)
- *Performance reviews* can be designed to include an analysis of what skills need to be developed for team members' current roles as well as future opportunities. This can be used to identify individual professional development opportunities or to aggregate and identify common themes across the team or organization.
- *Forums* are helpful in small or flat organizations if a company is interested in involving employees in brainstorming gaps and creating a broad conversation with many individuals. Involving employees in this way can create buy-in as the program is developed. The forum can take place in a meeting or via an online communication tool like Slack and should enable attendees to respond to and build off each other's ideas.
- *Focus groups or committees*, like a forum, are useful in creating a conversation around professional development. For increased buy-in and inclusion, ensure that these groups have representatives from different departments and levels of the organization.

Sample Professional Development Needs Survey

These questions are particularly useful in determining skills gaps in an employee's current role and across the organization. They should be answered by the employee and reviewed/commented on by the manager.⁴

Write down a situation in the course of a week where you felt the following:		What skills or training would have been useful to make the situations listed move up a row?
Felt secure and competent		
Performed moderately well		
Felt very insecure		

When assessing the needs and interests of employees when it comes to content, also consider incorporating questions to identify their learning preferences⁵ and educating yourself on adult learning styles, especially if you choose to conduct the training internally.

Whichever mechanism is chosen, focus your efforts on discussing and answering three key questions.

- *What patterns stand out of individual and group performance?* Using the data and feedback gathered on individual workforce needs, identify common strengths and weaknesses within and across departments. This exercise will help you identify root causes, which are the skills or key knowledge that is currently lacking within the organization.
- *What are the priority needs of the organization?* Use the company's strategic plan and future goals as a tool for identifying where the workforce's needs overlap with the company's current and future needs. Engage department heads and executives to ensure that the professional development program not only addresses the needs of the workforce but anticipates the needs of the organization as it seeks to meet strategic objectives.
- *What professional knowledge and skills will address the priority needs and root causes?* Lastly, by identifying these patterns and organizational needs, you will have a clearer indication of what knowledge and skills training should be prioritized.



“ In terms of professional development, we offer staff a \$2,000 annual professional development budget, and work with them through reviews and Team Leads to plan out how they might use that benefit to advance their skills.”



- Marcus Iannozzi, Founder and Principal at [Message Agency](#) (Certified B Corp since 2014)

Allocating Resources

Professional development opportunities come with costs: money, time, and even near term productivity losses. In order to clarify what is both possible and appropriate, consider:

- What are the most absolute constraints on a professional development program? This includes recognizing the ongoing needs of the business to maintain its operations successfully. How much time can employees be away? In what context and frequency? How many at once? What do current budgets allow and what could future budgets incorporate?
- How do budget and time needs for professional development compare to other priorities, both for workers as well as the needs of the business? For workers, budget allocations to professional development can be seen as an additional benefit similar to time off, health care benefits, or even bonuses. Recognizing those resources are finite, how might they compare and prefer them?

Sample Professional Development Policy

Below is a professional development policy that can be considered for inclusion in an employee handbook:

[Company X] supports the professional development of our staff. [Company X] will reimburse employees for seminars, classes, conferences or training that furthers professional development or personal presence. Classes or seminars should be submitted for approval in advance. Individual professional development allowance is currently capped at [\$2,000/annually] [Month, Year], but [Company X] may need to adjust this allowance as part of the annual budgeting process. Travel to and from the professional development opportunities will be reimbursed and applied to the annual allowance. Employees are eligible for this benefit in the first calendar year of employment following their start date. Work time used for professional development usage and related travel should not exceed [5] days per year.

- Which resources—time, money, etc.—are the most constrained at your organization? If budget is the most pressing, then the company should look to incorporate low-cost options for professional development; if time is more of a constraint, then it might be appropriate to hire third parties to deliver the most effective and efficient trainings.

According to the 2015 Association for Talent Development's State of the Industry Report, average spending per employee per year on professional development was \$1,252.⁶

- What assets do you already have available in your workplace or in your network? There will be a variety of different experience levels of expertise within your organization that can be utilized and shared with other team members without the need to bring in third parties. Through the exercise of identifying patterns of strengths and weaknesses, you may find individuals who are capable and willing to train their peers.⁷

Set Up Your Program / Policies

With an understanding of the available resources, your objectives, and your team's needs, it's time to put in place some policies to facilitate your professional development program. While the formality of set policies may seem inappropriate for smaller companies, they are recommended because they:

- Create accountability for the work,
- Help ensure awareness and accessibility for your employees, and
- Help enable tracking and measurement of effectiveness.

What Can Be Done for Free or Minimal Cost?

- ☐ Mentoring / Shadowing
- ☐ Free Online Courses
- ☐ Staff Member Led Trainings
- ☐ Network / Supplier / Customer Led Presentations and Trainings
- ☐ Service Opportunities



“ We encourage all staff members to access opportunities to advance their personal development and growth, through educational programs, trade association memberships, trade publications, etc.

There is an annual budget fund created each year to cover these expenses for staff.”



- Kim Steinfeld, COO at Westwood International
(Certified B Corp since 2016)

At the same time, it needs to be recognized that objectives, resource availability, and even the needs and interests of employees may vary greatly within different parts of your organization. Most approaches to professional development require a multi-faceted approach, as well as a great deal of flexibility to recognize the complexity of organizations and their different needs.

In order to navigate this flexibility, it may be useful to think about professional development issues at a whole company level, a team level, and an individual level.

Whole Company: What types of trainings / experiences are universally useful to all members of our organization?

Team Level: What types of trainings / experiences are specifically relevant to certain teams, functions, or departments?

Individual Level: What needs or interests might individual employees have that should fit into a professional development program, and how might that be incorporated?

For individual professional development, it might make sense to allocate a specific budget allocation for individual workers that can be used at the discretion of the employee and their manager.

Reflection Questions:

- *What resource constraints and opportunities does your company have?*
- *How would you translate your professional objectives into meaningful programs?*
- *How does your organizational and team structure need to be considered when thinking about relevant professional development needs and opportunities?*

Impact Snapshot: Professional Development Policies / Programs

BluPlanet Recycling

(Certified B Corp Since 2012)



[BluPlanet](#) a recycling collection service provider based in Calgary, Alberta, has a formal training and education system which provides specific training courses and programs which employees can access. Compensation for some courses and programs are intended to support employee specific professional development plans, while others are geared towards improving the company's systems. In cases where courses are directly related to systems-improvement projects, for which the company will see direct and immediate benefit, these courses are paid for 100% by the company, while those courses and programs which are useful for an employee's personal development, but do not have an immediate impact on the firm, are paid for in part during compensation review. Employees who take professional development courses may receive additional compensation.

Facilities Management Services

(Certified B Corp Since 2016)



[Facilities Management Services](#), a janitorial services company based in Louisville, Kentucky, has the FMS Leaders Learning Program. Twice a year FMS leaders are selected to participate in an 8 week class designed to enhance their leadership and supervisory skills. The classes are taught by a certified trainer. Some examples of the curriculum include; team building activities, interpersonal skills training, effective communication techniques, conflict resolution, problem solving, ethical decision making, time management and stress reduction practices. These classes are college credit eligible and occur on a regular basis for employees. After the initial 8-week program is complete the leaders have the opportunity to attend quarterly training on additional topics related to personal and professional development.

Accessibility and Inclusion in Professional Development

In addition to identifying the business needs of the organization, it is also important to take into consideration the accessibility of professional development opportunities for different groups within the company.

One of the values of setting formal policies is that it requires transparent and thoughtful decisions on whether and how different groups within the organization can utilize professional development, helping drive more equitable outcomes. For instance, a professional development budget available only to a certain team, or only available to managers, might inadvertently re-enforce opportunities and privileges for traditionally well-represented groups. So while different types of professional development might be

required for different teams or organizational levels, always consider the baseline for access and work to incorporate professional development for all employees in an equitable way.

If you are planning specific professional development programs, also consider issues such as the following to make sure your opportunities are truly accessible and relevant to your entire workforce:

- ☐ Accessibility of physical spaces, materials
- ☐ Languages used
- ☐ Access to or cost of transportation
- ☐ Geographic location/time zone
- ☐ Level of literacy
- ☐ Access to Internet/computers
- ☐ Pay implications for hourly workers
- ☐ Access to childcare

As part of your continuous improvement of your programs and policies, make sure you solicit feedback from employees who do not take part in professional development opportunities to learn about any hidden barriers to participation.

Professional development opportunities can be used not only to improve job satisfaction and retention to your overall workforce, but also to complement other company diversity and inclusion initiatives, creating an inclusive work environment that is more likely to attract and retain a diverse talent pool. In fact, it might be a key to the success of your company's other inclusion-focused programs. To learn more, check out our Best Practice Guide on "[Engaging and Retaining a Diverse Workforce](#)."

If your company has intentional hiring programs for individuals with barriers to employment, or if it's an unintentional but common component of your workforce, it may be necessary to customize the content or delivery of professional development training to specific in-need groups. Beyond skills training for their current role in the organization or cross-disciplinary training that enhances their business skills, life skills training for personal development may be prioritized for in-need populations. Life skills training focuses on building skills and enhancing knowledge-based learning for life outside of the workplace, which may include training on literacy, personal financial planning, resume building, and emotional intelligence.

Impact Snapshot: Open Hiring and Training Programs

Greyston Bakery (Certified B Corp Since 2013)



[Greyston Bakery](#), based in Yonkers, New York, hires individuals with chronic barriers to employment through Open Hiring™ in which jobs are provided on a "first come first served" basis without any questions asked. Once hired, employees go through a 6-9 month paid apprenticeship period in which they learn baking and employment readiness skills.

In 2015 their Open Hiring Program provided over 195 employment opportunities and more than 2000 hours of training was provided through the apprenticeship program.⁸

These programs, when done effectively, may do more than reduce absenteeism and attrition (lowering costs and improving productivity); they also present marketing opportunities to differentiate the company to businesses and customers who are interested in sourcing and buying from companies that are proactively providing job and development opportunities.

Reflection Questions:

- *How might your current professional development programs limit full participation?*
- *Are all employees receiving some form of professional development, and how might it vary?*
- *What particular training or support might be useful for your current workforce demographic groups?*

Opportunities for Experiential Professional Development

Depending on the audience, environment, and resources discussed in the previous section, your company's professional development program may require a more innovative approach. Here is a list of possible professional development opportunities that take less traditional forms than formal courses or external consultants.

Internal Mentorship and Coaching: An internal program by which employees are paired to increase collaboration and engagement. A mentorship program focuses on “collegial friendship and guidance,” while a coaching program’s focus may be to improve job performance⁹. By formally pairing employees with different levels of experience and even across departments, the company strengthens a learning culture whereby knowledge is shared throughout the organization. These connections can benefit both parties; a junior member may gain a macro-level understanding of the business and professional advice, while the senior member gains a better understanding of workplace trends. The mutual investment of time and energy by fellow coworkers increases engagement. A mentorship program also creates an environment of belonging and support for a diverse workforce, enabling a more inclusive corporate culture and increased cultural awareness¹⁰. For a mentorship program to succeed, it is important to create structure.

Impact Snapshot: Apprenticeship

Netraising
(Certified B Corp Since 2013)



Netraising, a web services company based in the United States, includes mentoring and apprenticeship as a key element in their employee professional development strategy. Time and resources are carved out to allow for one-on-one trainings, and employees are also occasionally reimbursed by the company for continuing education.

Shadowing:

Although shadowing is often done during employee onboarding to help them understand their new role, it can also be used cross-organizationally to learn from other areas of the organization, creating opportunities for increased innovation and collaboration. Employees may join another team for a meeting or a day, allowing for better understanding of stakeholders within the organization and building relationships.¹¹

Pro Bono and Volunteer Work:

Pro bono work provides opportunities to gain professional experience outside of the employee's daily role and can be used to either reinforce the skills necessary for your employees to fulfill their current role or to expand skills for future opportunities. Additionally, pro bono or volunteer work donated to nonprofits positively impacts external stakeholder groups of your company. Certified B Corp [Catchafire's online tool](#) allows volunteers to find opportunities based on time, skillset, and cause area.

Internship Programs:

While not professional development for your current staff, creating an internship program is an additional way to deliver on some of the values that professional development can provide to the company and community. When creating internships, consider how the company could provide those opportunities to traditionally underrepresented groups that can also serve as a pipeline for future hires. Also be conscious when designing an internship program that a fair wage is being paid for the work being done, and remember that the primary focus should be on the learning and development of the intern.

Key Questions for Developing a Mentorship Program

Here are some key questions to ask yourself as you develop a mentorship program:

(Adopted from "Implementing an internal employee mentoring program" by Dr. Susan G. Weinberger)¹²

- Is the program open to all employees?
- Who is the right employee to facilitate the program, serving as liaison or coordinator to handle all the mentoring details? Typically (but not always, depending on numbers of employees), this person is housed in Human Resources.
- Can mentors pursue informal mentoring programs independently as well?
- Is participation voluntary for both mentors and mentees?
- How are all employees notified about the program creation?
- What is the role (if any) of those not participating?
- What application process must potential mentors and mentees complete and do they understand their roles? Is there a Memorandum of Understanding between the two?
- How is confidentiality handled?
- How are mentors and mentees matched?
- Who conducts training and on-going training opportunities?
- How are program participants recognized? Is there a marketing plan?
- What if the match does not work?
- How is the program evaluated? What are anticipated outcomes?

Impact Snapshot: Service for Professional Development

Burnham Benefit Insurance Services (Certified B Corp Since 2015)



In order to incentivize community service and utilize it as an opportunity for professional development for its employments, Burnham Benefit Insurance Services includes a policy in their handbook explicitly offering support for employees to receive training that will enable them to provide community service and leadership. It reads:

“As part of the Burnham commitment to community service, and as an alternative to job-related professional development, Burnham may provide financial assistance to those employees who wish to have training to serve in external leadership positions of community service organizations, such as a nonprofit Board.”

Quick Reference Guide for Professional Development Types

If...	Consider...
If you operate in industries or have teams that have specific industry trainings or continuing education requirements...	Hiring external trainers or reimbursing employees for their continuing education credits.
If your workforce has retention issues that may be related to non-professional issues...	Identifying life skill training opportunities like computer or financial literacy.
If there are professional development needs that your entire workforce shares...	Hiring a trainer to come to an all staff meeting or retreat to train employees all at once.
If you're primarily interested in growth and succession opportunities for your employees...	Trying experiential development like mentoring and shadowing, or robust programs like reimbursement or subsidization for more advanced certificates or degrees.
If employee interests and opportunities vary significantly...	Allocating a fixed budget for all team members to provide more discretion over trainings.
If your company has internal experts...	Organizing internally guided professional development trainings
If your company is interested in building relationships with nonprofit and community groups,	Allowing staff to spend budgeted time on leading pro bono projects with cause-based organizations that interest them.
If your company has goals or programs dedicated to inclusion and diversity,	Identifying how professional development programs can contribute to reaching those goals.

Making Professional Development Programs Last

After you've gone through the processes above to get your professional development strategy set up and underway, don't leave it unattended! It is essential to install procedures, as well as attitudes, to ensure that everyone gets the most out of the offerings available and that they are built to last. All companies should consider the following:¹³

- *Cultivate a culture of responsibility for professional development.* This includes being sure that managers and staff members value, support, and reward learning, and that employees are also held accountable and feel empowered to work on their own professional development.
- *Be clear about professional development opportunities.* Not only should the company ensure that policies and programs are formalized in a place like an employee handbook that is accessible to all staff members, but employees and managers should also proactively share learning opportunities for one another. The company can even create specific channels for that communication so employees know where to look, such as on a bulletin board or on company intranets or communication channels.
- *Incorporate into performance reviews,* both to be forward-looking in terms of identifying opportunities for future development as well as backward-looking to identify how employees embraced and improved through development opportunities.
- *Make it worthwhile for employees.* Consider developing individualized career mappings with employees or the company could provide more formalized career paths within the company to encourage and provide clarity about their career growth. Companies can also formalize internal promotion policies to create opportunities for current employees prior to looking for external candidates.
- *Encourage action.* Whatever form the professional development program takes, employees should reflect on learnings through journaling, group brainstorming, and/or feedback surveys throughout a professional development opportunity and immediately after trainings so they have a clear vision for how to incorporate lessons. One way to utilize the lesson is to schedule a "train the trainer" session, where the employee can review the lesson and practice skills by sharing it with others.
- *Continuously improve.* Companies should develop procedures to track the usage and efficacy of professional development opportunities to identify what is working and how programs can be improved, including soliciting feedback directly from employees to understand their experience of what is offered. This can then be used to inform future iterations of policies and offerings.

Reflection Questions:

- *What resources do you need to make your professional development efforts effective?*
- *What are the best ways to encourage employees to use their professional development opportunities?*



“ We survey our staff after most PD and training events to get input on what they thought, if they found it valuable and what we could do moving forward to improve their experiences. We also ask for feedback after every all-staff meeting to hear what employees are thinking and how to improve or share new topics of interest at the next meeting.”



- MaryKate Maher, Mission and Marketing Manager at [Happy Family Brands](http://HappyFamilyBrands.com) (Certified B Corp since 2011)

Did you find this resource guide useful? Do you have feedback on how it can be improved, or ideas for other resources we can provide? Let us know what you think at standards@bcorporation.net.

Endnotes:

- 1 <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/professional-development.html>
- 2 <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/191435/millennials-work-life.aspx>
- 3 <http://www.insperity.com/blog/5-steps-to-creating-employee-development-plans-that-truly-work/>
- 4 <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/ldc/personal/plan/identify/>
- 5 <http://vark-learn.com/>
- 6 <https://www.td.org/Store/Product?ProductId=15672339>
- 7 <https://www.sba.gov/blogs/8-tips-training-your-small-business-employees-budget>
- 8 <http://greyston.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Annual-Report-2016.pdf>
- 9 <http://hr.blr.com/HR-news/Staffing-Training/Employee-Manager-Training/zn-Implementing-internal-employee-mentoring-progra/>
- 10 <http://chronus.com/how-to-use-mentoring-in-your-workplace>
- 11 <https://www.buildyournumbers.com/9-reasons-employer-employee-shadowing/>
- 12 <https://hr.blr.com/HR-news/Staffing-Training/Employee-Manager-Training/zn-Implementing-internal-employee-mentoring-progra/>
- 13 http://www.optimumonline.ca/pdf/29-4/career_development_3.pdf

Worksheet: Your Program's Needs, Assets, and Constraints

Use this worksheet to brainstorm and take notes about your company's professional development needs after reading *Determining the Right Approach to Professional Development* on pages 5-10.

Program Objectives

Circle any sample objectives that apply to your program, or write down your own.

*Reducing
attrition*

*Improving
productivity*

*Identifying
new leadership*

*Creating opportunities
for underserved groups*

Other:

Assessing Needs and Interests

What methods would be effective for learning what topics and types of professional development make sense for your business?

- ☐ Questionnaires/surveys
- ☐ Performance reviews
- ☐ In-person forums
- ☐ Focus groups or committees

Other:

Resource Constraints

What hard limits exist that could affect your professional development program?

Budget:

Staff time:

Other:

Existing Assets & Related Programs

What assets or expertise already exist in your organization that could boost your professional development program?

What existing programs or strategic goals, especially related to inclusion & diversity, would benefit from professional development?