

Business Services Training

Unit of Competency

Work Effectively in a Business Environment

BSBIND201A

Unit Descriptor

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to work effectively within a commercial or business environment. It includes identifying the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers and conducting business in accordance with the organisational goals, values and standards.

Employability Skills

This unit contains employability skills.

Application of the Unit

This unit applies to individuals developing basic skills and knowledge in preparation for working in a broad range of settings.

Competency Field

Industry Capability – Industry Context

Work Effectively in a Business Environment

This book supports BSBIND201A, Work Effectively in a Business Environment in the Business Services Training Package.

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Unit 2: Develop Effective Work Habits

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this section you should be able to:

- Identify work and personal priorities, and balance the two
- Understand and apply time management strategies
- Recognise and display the kind of behaviour that your place of work, type of work, or contact with customers requires
- Observe appropriate dress, and understand how your work role determines your personal presentation
- Understand the importance of maintaining good fitness, health and personal hygiene standards
- Recognise how stress can affect workers, and apply the strategies for keeping it in check
- Recognise further training as a goal and an opportunity, and find information on the different types available

Ways to Work Smarter

Working smarter – not harder – is the key to accomplishing more during your day and completing tasks on time.

Time Management

Time management is applying common sense skills that help you use your time effectively and productively, by focusing on results rather than just being busy.

By using time management skills you can learn to:

- Order tasks in terms of importance (this is called ‘prioritising’).
- Control distractions that waste your time and break your flow.
- Increase your effectiveness and reduce stress.

By becoming more effective in use of your time at work you can:

- be more in control of what you do
- be productive and secure in your job
- enjoy what you do
- give yourself more quality time to relax and enjoy life outside work

Learn to prioritise

Prioritising your responsibilities, tasks and engagements is very important. You have to determine which tasks are more important to complete than others or your day could be chaos! Spend the majority of your time on your top priority tasks or projects and you can't go far wrong.

'To-do lists'

One way of prioritising is to compile a 'to-do list', whether on paper or your computer. If you don't already jot down lists of things to do, start now. Divide the list into three columns: A, B and C. List tasks you intend to do today in column A. List tasks you intend to complete within the week in column B. Use column C for those tasks that need to be done within the month. Column B and C items will move up the list as their deadline gets closer.

At the beginning of each day, look at your to-do list. You might have been up half the night with a brilliant new strategy for your company, but do you have the time to get it all down right now? Probably not. Focus on the most important and/or urgent things to do and work to complete them on schedule. Try coming up with your own different method if you like, but do it.

Stay focused

Don't constantly jump from one project to another without completing any. Focus on one task or project at a time until it's done before moving on to the next. If you do have to juggle tasks or projects, break off at a point you'll be able to pick up from again easily.

Break projects down into bite-size parts

Break projects or big jobs down into individual component tasks. Be clear about what needs to be done, and how to keep things moving along at the right speed. This way, even the most daunting tasks are made simpler.

Learn to use the tools of your job effectively

Make the most of your technology tools. Email, word processing and office computer programs like databases and spreadsheets have empowered us. Find time early on to become familiar with the tools of your job. Make sure you get training or attend any courses offered.

Be tidy and organised

Keep your workstation tidy. Not only will you give the impression of being in control - you'll feel much more relaxed and able to focus on the job in hand. Keep files up to date so you know where to put your hands on the information you need - and do your filing regularly. It's easy to lose bits of paper or forget something important if everything is not kept in the right place. Set up a structured filing system on your computer for electronic information using folders.

Overload

If you have more work than time to do it in, limit the number of tasks on your daily to-do list and schedule the rest for other days. Or talk to your supervisor about re-assigning tasks away from you - this is called 'managing your workload'.

Are you a 'morning' or 'afternoon' person?

Try to work on your most important tasks during your peak time of day. Some people are morning people while others have trouble getting into gear until the afternoon. Determine when you are more productive and schedule your important tasks, meetings or projects during that time.

Exercise 6

Compile a 'to-do list' for the coming month for your school or college work, and include other tasks and responsibilities outside of school or college too.

Training to Acquire New Skills

The quality of your experience of work will depend partly on your employer's commitment to your personal development through training and education specific to your job. If your employer wants to hire and keep good employees, it is in their interests to invest in developing the skills of their employees so they can develop personally and increase their productivity.

Why do employers bother with training?

- Training builds a more efficient, effective and motivated team.
- Training enhances the company's competitive position and improves employee morale.
- Training creates a skill pool to replace personnel who leave or move up in the organisation.
- Training ensures the necessary skills are on hand to manage change or expansion.
- Training enhances the company's ability to adopt and exploit new technology.

As a new employee, you should be offered a range of training and development opportunities organised by your employer - some formal, others informal - to assist you to perform more effectively in your job and to enable you to better understand how the business operates.

Often, training needs are identified during regular meetings with your supervisor or at more formal performance review sessions.

Requirements of the business change over time

Businesses enter new markets, departments get reorganised, job specifications are reassessed and more efficient ways of carrying out jobs are implemented. On-going training helps employees adjust to rapidly changing job requirements.

It is important that employees remain flexible and are able to adapt to meet new objectives and changing conditions. Peoples' jobs change over time as businesses adapt to changing market conditions and demands. Businesses compete to sell their products or services to customers or clients who have the power of choice. For this reason businesses change their strategic direction over time and constantly strive to improve their products, services and ways of doing things to become more efficient. Employee training is key to successful management of change.

Personal development and achievement of career goals

We all want to develop ourselves personally and professionally and to achieve our own career goals. As you become more proficient at your job you may want to take on new responsibilities, apply for internal promotions or for more lucrative, interesting and demanding positions elsewhere. Acquiring new skills will make you a more valuable member of the team and help you to achieve your personal ambitions. Identifying your training needs

Training needs are assessed by analysing the needs of the business, the characteristics of your job and your individual needs. Training may be directly related to your job and how this should be performed on a task-by-task basis. Your needs can be evaluated by comparing your skills or performance with the performance requirements or needs of the organisation.

Training may be based around the company's products or services, customer requirements or internal systems.

Basic skills which are very useful for new employees to develop include:

- Communication skills for requesting advice, receiving feedback and for working in a team.
- Problem solving skills to solve routine problems.
- Planning and organisational skills.
- Computer skills.

Types of training

New skills are developed by a number of methods: coaching or mentoring by your supervisor or other colleagues, attending presentations and demonstrations, formal courses or new work experience. There are two broad types of training: on-the-job and off-the-job training.

On-the-job training is delivered to employees as they perform their regular jobs. Techniques include orientations, job instruction training, job rotation and coaching.

Job rotation involves moving an employee through a series of jobs so he or she can get a good feel for the tasks that are associated with different jobs. Job rotation is usually used in training for supervisory positions. The employee learns a little about everything.

Off-the-job training includes lectures, special study, films, television conferences or discussions, case studies, role playing, simulation, programmed instruction and residential training courses.

Audiovisual training such as television, videotapes and films are effective means of providing real world conditions and situations in a short time.

Role playing and simulations are training techniques that bring realistic decision-making situations to the trainee. Likely problems and alternative solutions are presented for discussion. There is no better trainer than experience. Experienced employees describe real world experiences and they assist in and learn from developing solutions to these simulations.

Programmed learning, computer-aided instruction and interactive video all allow the trainee to learn at his or her own pace.

Laboratory training is delivered by skilled trainers for groups, often at a neutral site away from the work place. It is used for management trainees to develop team spirit and an increased ability to deal with management and colleagues.

Trainers

Who actually conducts your training will depend on the type of training needed. On-the-job training is conducted mostly by supervisors; off-the-job training either by in-house personnel or outside instructors.

In-house training is the daily responsibility of supervisors and employees. Supervisors are ultimately responsible for the productivity and, therefore, the training, of those who report to them. Many businesses use in-house personnel to develop formal training programmes to be delivered to employees away from their normal work activities, during company meetings or individually at prearranged training sessions.

External trainers include consultants, professional trainers, technical and vocational schools, continuing education programmes and chambers of commerce.

Formal Training

Future prospective employers will want to know what skills you have acquired to date. Make a note of the date of any formal training courses you attend, and add them to your curriculum vitae at a later date.

Exercise 7

Role playing is a very useful training technique. Choose a partner for this role playing exercise.

A customer walks into the offices of Yum-Tum, an ice cream manufacturer. The customer, a restaurateur, ordered thirty cases of chocolate ice cream three weeks ago for a big children's party to be held at the restaurant. When the ice cream delivery was late and a mistake was made with the order. Tutti-frutti flavoured ice cream was delivered instead of chocolate. The party is booked for tomorrow. The customer is not at all happy.

You and your partner can role play the parts of customer and Yum-Tum customer representative, then swap over and play the other part. How do you calm the customer down so he/she leaves satisfied? You may wish to look at the section on 'Attitude to customers' on page 15 for tips.

Personal Presentation

During your time at work, you are representing your employer so you should dress and behave accordingly.

We all have favourite clothes that we feel most comfortable wearing. But during working hours we must bear in mind that our personal presentation must be appropriate to our place of work. Your employer will let you know at your induction session if any dress code applies at your workplace. Looking smart lets everyone know that we think high standards are important in everything we do. Looking smart encourages us to approach our jobs professionally.

What does your organisation require?

First you should find out whether any guidelines or requirements for your dress and personal presentation are laid down by your organisation. You can find information by:

- Asking the HR Manager at your induction session
- Asking your supervisor or line manager
- Looking in your job description or the organisational manual

Dress code

The type of clothes you will be expected to wear will depend on where you work - is it an office, a shop, a medical centre, a hairdressing salon, a restaurant, etc?

- A uniform may be required in many jobs, such as the police, army and for other public services, in hotel receptions and in shops.
- If you work outdoors you will need to consider warmth and comfort too.
- If you work in an office or in retail, the dress code may be 'smart casual'. This means no jeans or training shoes and often requires men to wear smart trousers and a shirt and tie, women a skirt and blouse or trouser suit.