

Creating a Learning Culture

In today's fast-paced economy, if your people aren't learning, your company will fall behind. Position your company for future success by making learning a core part of your corporate culture:

- **Encourage learning at all levels.** Provide opportunities to learn for everyone from junior staff to old hands, administrative assistants to the CEO.
- **Demonstrate your commitment.** Include training and development in your annual budget.
- **Make it official.** Have a formal training and development policy that outlines how often employees are expected to receive formal training.
- **Offer reimbursement.** Approve partial or full reimbursement for outside training that is relevant to the employee's job and meets company performance requirements.
- **Look for learning opportunities.** Use everyday activities, like a customer compliment or article from a trade publication, as a chance to reinforce preferred behavior.
- **Help employees stretch.** Assign projects that develop problem-solving, critical-thinking and decision-making skills.
- **Make time for learning.** Provide time during work hours for employees to learn and practice new skills without interruptions.
- **Learn from mistakes.** Turn mistakes into learning opportunities and avoid penalizing new learners.
- **Provide learning resources.** Stock a company library with industry publications, job manuals, textbooks and other self-study materials for employees.
- **Share knowledge.** Encourage employees to volunteer to lead informal discussions on topics of expertise.
- **Make learning comfortable.** Designate an attractive space for training and encourage employees to also use it for self-study.