

## ***Unit 96 - Developing Personal and Team Effectiveness Using IT***

*I currently work in a small organisation which has one office. We sell computers, build and fix computers, supply hardware and software, offer IT training and Office services ie photocopying, troubleshooting etc. Our customers are small companies and private individuals.*

*There are 7 employees in the organisation and we are a very busy office with some part time employees and some people that we contract to help us as and when needed ie specific software trainers etc. We are also looking at new technology and software systems continually so we are aware of the markets so we can best advise our customers and are looking at installing monitoring software in some of our equipment that we maintain for other companies to allow us remote shadow access rather than visiting the office.*

<p><i>1 Understand how IT can support personal development</i></p>	<p><b>1.1 and 1.2 Describe how at least three IT tools and resources can be used for each of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>• to support your own personal learning and development</b></li> <li><b>• to support personal performance improvement</b></li> </ul>
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*When I first started learning about all these systems, procedures and technology it was a rapid learning curve I had some previous knowledge of mobile technology and parts of the systems. Software, resources and technology are continually being updated so I am always learning.*

*Tools and resources that can be used to support my development are:*

*1. The helpdesk database*

*if a fault is reported I can check on the database to see if there was a similar fault reported previously and check how it was resolved. This can help if the problem is similar as it can save a lot of time diagnosing the fault and trying to find a solution. In the database faults are categorised and we use a coding system so it is relatively simple to query the database and see if similar faults have occurred in the past. I used the database a lot when I first started to improve my personal learning as it was very useful looking at faults that had occurred on different pieces of hardware and with different software and to see how they were resolved. It was also good to see that not all faults were resolved very quickly and sometimes the fault was passed around the team and even externally to the manufacturer before being resolved.*

*2. Manufacturer instructions*

*if a fault is reported I can look up the codes in the instruction manual and follow the instructions to repair the fault. The manufacturers instructions come in various formats, book, CD or online. If the solution is in the manual we annotate the database to show which page etc so it is easier to find in future. I would use the manufacturers instructions to teach myself how to use certain pieces of hardware and software as new releases come out. I can follow the instructions on how to set up the product initially and then create a crib sheet with brief instructions on how to use the product from the manufacturers instructions.*

*3. Online help*

*if a fault is reported I can look up the fault online using manuals, forums etc. Lots of manufacturers and other fault solvers are happy to share their resolutions with others. Some of the sites you have to register with and some you have to pay a small fee to use. As we use a variety of products and resources it is very useful for us to use as many of the faults we have to deal with are new to our organisation so it can save a lot of time on resolving the fault. These sites are also great for picking up new tips and finding out about new technology many of them email us a weekly newsletter keeping us informed with*

*developments. This helps my development as I am more aware of changing and new*

<b>2. Use IT to support personal development</b>	<b>2.1 Implement at least three IT tools and systems to support personal performance and time management</b>
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*technology.*

*I also attend a college night class – I am currently studying CISCO which involves attending a nightclass once a week and working online following an online learning package, watching tutor demonstration on video and then sitting online tests. On Cisco there is an online tracking system which keeps a record of where I am up to. I can also set up Cisco so I can see the information on when tests and resits are so I can plan what work I need to do each week.*

*I have an action plan I use for work which I have set up in MS Word this is a quick overview of my personal performance showing my strengths and weaknesses and plans for future development including targets see appendix 1.*

*In our office we have networked computers so as customers telephone or call in any employee can add the job to the computer system or check the progress of the jobs. We also have mobile handhelds that employees take with them when they are out of the office we can use them to diagnose problems and update jobs whilst out of the office, as they give us access to the internet and to our intranet, these update our networked system and are updated when the employees are out of the office via mobile wireless. We currently use Vodafone. These greatly help us with managing our time as when our customers ring they expect us to answer the phone within 5 rings and be able to deal with the queries effectively and efficiently rather than be put on hold and passed to several employees before getting a response. The mobile devices are ideal for updating our systems quickly if we visit a customer and they have a problem that requires a new part we can update the system from their office and the part is ordered by someone back in our office before we have travelled back so saves time and delays. It also allows us to pick up other jobs rather than travel back to the office. So if we are at a customers 40 miles from our office and another job comes in, in that area, we can pick it up and save travel time and travel costs by visiting that job at the same time. I have set up 2 mobile devices and configured them to allow these features.*

<p><i>3. Know how IT can support the development of team effectiveness</i></p>	<p><b>3.1 Describe at least three roles and responsibilities of team members</b></p> <p><b>3.2 Explain how at least three IT tools and systems can be used to enhance effective team communications and collaboration</b></p> <p><b>3.3 Compare at least three ways that IT can be used to overcome obstacles to effective teamwork</b></p>	<p><i>IT Tools - communications: email, sharing calendars, sharing files, intranet, netmeeting, bulletin boards, video training, enewsletters, social media tools: forums, blogs, chat, social networks, websites, mobile devices and applications, collaborative technology, cameras, internet, news, wireless, virtual learning environments, media rich content, simulation,</i></p>
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*3.1 Within our organisation we have a Manager who owns the company and manages the staff and the business. We have a sales team who are the first point of contact for our customers when they ring or call in and they manage our contracts with businesses. The sales team are also responsible for researching on new technology and resources and for ordering products. We have an IT maintenance team who are responsible for the fault finding including software and hardware faults, installing and maintaining networks. They also build Computers for customers. They are responsible for checking their jobs allocated to them on the helpdesk or on their daily job list, visiting customer sites, remote support, installing and maintaining networks and resolving any faults. We also subcontract some work out to IT trainers who teach our customers how to use the systems we install. They are responsible for developing training guides, delivering training and meeting with ourselves regularly to discuss work. We also subcontract our systems design out to a freelancer who analyses the customers needs and then designs a suitable system for their organisation. They then work with staff in our organisation and the software trainer so we are all fully able to maintain and support the new system.*

*3.2 In our office we have networked computers, we all have our own unique login and password so as customers telephone or call in, any employee can add the job to the computer system or check the progress of the jobs. We also have mobile handhelds that employees take with them when they are out of the office they can use them to diagnose problems and update jobs whilst out of the office, these update our networked system and are updated when the employees are out of the office via mobile wireless. We currently use Vodafone. These greatly help us with managing our time and the mobile devices are ideal for updating our systems quickly if we visit a customer and they have a problem that requires a new part we can update the system from their office and the part is ordered by someone back in our office before we have travelled back so saves time and delays. It also allows us to pick up other*

*jobs rather than travel back to the office. So if we are at a customers 40 miles from our office and another job comes in, in that area, we can pick it up and save travel time and travel costs by visiting that job at the same time.*

*We use a database that we have designed in our office to deal with the jobs which is related to our tasks software. As a job is added it is allocated to an appropriate person – if we are unsure who to allocate it to, we can do a global message to all employees to see who is in the area or who may have dealt with a similar situation previously, the name is then added to the database which then updates the task list for that employee. The employee will then deal with that job and update their tasks if they cannot complete the job then they can access software to order parts required, reallocate the job to another member, or add comments as to why it has not been updated.*

*We use remote access with some customers when supporting them this means we can access their products without travelling to the site. This saves us travelling time and costs and mean the customer fault can be dealt with quickly and they can observe how you are resolving the fault so they may be learning how they can resolve it themselves in future. This means we save our time but also have a good relationship with the customer as we can resolve their faults quickly.*

*3.3 We are looking at a new notification system - currently as information is updated centrally a message is sent to the phones so people are aware of the updates such as a new job however in some cases if someone is in a location where they do not have a good reception on their mobile technology then this means that they do not receive the message. We are working with our customers to allow our phones to connect to their network to receive update messages in areas where we have a poor signal. This will save team members having to leave the area before they are updated.*

*We have a weekly team meeting where we discuss issues and have currently identified that there are some improvements that can be made ie more lookup fields in the database to save user input error. This will mean the team can work more effectively as inputting will be quicker and more accurate – avoiding frustrations when querying data and producing reports with inaccurate information in.*

*We are also looking into the Just in time ordering system and how we can use this to our advantage. We can currently place an order from a customers premises it is then sent to the office where our sales staff the research the best product and price on the internet. If it is a product we have ordered in the past 3 months all this work has already been done so we are developing a system to check the existing stock database and then the previous order date an then to order automatically for products ordered in the last 3 months. This will save the sales team time checking it manually and speed up the delivery time on products.*

<b>4. Work as a member of a team to achieve defined goals and implement agreed plans</b>	<p><i>4.1 Assess contribution of own use of IT in at least three team activities</i></p> <p><i>4.2 Provide feedback to others on their use of IT in a constructive and considerate manner on at least three occasions</i></p> <p><i>4.3 Review feedback from others on own performance and adapt behaviour on at least three occasions</i></p> <p><i>4.4 Assist others to use new IT tools and systems on at least three occasions</i></p>
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*Over the last two years I have worked on various projects with teams of people.*

*For one organisation we were asked to set up a spreadsheet system for them to use when ordering stock, I worked with the customer and our designer on the project. As the employee of the company I used MS Project to plan the project timescales with the customer and the consultant. I then worked with the consultant and our sales team to plan resources required for the project. I produced a weekly report from information from the consultant to send to the customer so they could see we were on track to complete the project to the agreed timescale. I had worked on 4 similar projects previously where another member of the team was in charge of the Project software and I observed and assisted. I felt fairly confident using the software and had it checked regularly by my manager. I did have some assistance to produce the weekly report to ensure the wording was professional. I felt I worked well liaising well with the consultant, the sales team and the customer. I used the project software well and produced the weekly report from project and into Word and then used email to send it to the customer. Based on the feedback I had and my own review I felt this project went well.*

*A company asked us to transfer all their business contacts from a paper based system to MS Outlook. There were approximately 180 contacts. I worked with the company and established which field they wanted completing: Name, Address, Email, Telephone number, company, job title, web page address and any notes. I investigated the best way of creating these contacts and found it was easier to create a spreadsheet file and import it into the contacts. I checked each record for accuracy before importing them. Once they were created I installed them on the network of the organisation and then set up 3 accounts so they can access them and wrote user instructions for other employees who may want to set them up at a later date on their email. I was pleased with the work I did and the time it took it was time consuming checking it all but accuracy was very important.*

*Our organisation wanted to purchase remote software so we can access customers PCs and problem solve. In our team meeting we discussed what we would expect this to be able to do*

*and who would be able to access it and which customers it may be suitable for. There were several tasks – task 1 Sales team to find prices and details of products, task 2 – obtain sample copy of each one of interest, task 3 – Me to set up a network PC and install software task 4 – test the software, task 5 – trial with 1 company.*

*My role in this project was quite important as the network had to be set up correctly to ensure we got real results. Installing the software was very important as I had to ensure the settings were correct for all the ones we trialled to get the best out of the software. I talked with the testing team to ensure the settings worked well for them and amended them as requested. There were a couple of times when I had to have assistance in setting up the software from a couple of suppliers.*