Developing managers to manage
sustainable employee engagement,
health and well-being

November 2014

Frequently asked questions

Checklists for running development
programmes aimed at developing managers
to manage sustainable employee
engagement, health and well-being

Frequently asked questions

Checklists for running development programmes aimed at developing managers to manage sustainable employee engagement, health and well-being

What is meant by development 'programme'? What interventions/activities might this include?

The checklists are intended to guide practitioners involved in running programmes aimed at developing managers to manage sustainable engagement, health and well-being of team members. Activities and interventions included within the programme might include (but not be limited to) learning and development workshops, 360-degree/ upward feedback, coaching, mentoring, peer group meetings, action learning sets.

What is the purpose of the checklists?

The checklists are designed to support organisations by allowing them to consider the range of factors that have been shown by research to enhance or reduce effectiveness of such programmes. The checklists can highlight areas in which the organisation is prepared and succeeding, and any gaps that need to be considered and appropriate action taken.

How do Stages 1, 2 and 3 differ from each other?

Stage 1 is intended for those that are *considering or planning to run* a development programme.

Stage 2 is for those *in the process of designing and running* a development programme.

Stage 3 is for those that have *already run a development programme* and wish to ensure that learning is sustained and applied in the workplace.

Can I use these checklists for programmes aimed at non-managers?

The research and development of this checklist has been specifically created for programmes to develop managers. As a result, although there may be useful elements, many of the questions will not be relevant for use with non-manager groups.

My programme is aimed at developing team effectiveness rather than engagement, health and well-being – are these checklists still relevant?

The research process and checklist development was specifically designed to highlight the key considerations when developing managers to improve team engagement, health and well-being – not effectiveness (such as performance and output). However, research suggests that engaged, happy and healthy teams are more likely to perform well; and that many of the management behaviours that are important in managing engagement, health and well-being are also likely to improve effectiveness. Therefore, although the factors likely to be important to performance may not *all* be included in the checklist, the majority will be, so the checklist will still be useful and relevant.

How were the checklists developed?

The elements in the checklist were developed based on rigorously tested academic and practitioner literature and/or two or more sources from interviews with stakeholders in four different organisations. They contain important elements that have been identified as: (a) affecting the success of development programmes aimed at changing manager behaviour, (b) supporting transfer and sustainability of learning from management development programmes into the workplace, and (c) likely to impact on the relationship between manager behaviour and employee engagement, health and well-being. For full details of the background research, you can download the research report at: *(website to be confirmed)*.

Who is best placed to complete the checklist?

Ideally, it should be an individual within an organisation who has responsibility for developing and implementing a learning and development programme designed to develop managers to manage sustainable engagement, health and well-being of team members. It may be worthwhile to complete the checklist collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders to get a more accurate interpretation of the successes and gaps.

Should I refer to data when completing the checklist?

There may be instances where referring to data such as employee engagement surveys, appraisal data or HR data could be beneficial.

What if I keep answering 'don't know'?

Try discussing the checklist with other stakeholders who may know the answer.

I am getting really low scores on the checklist (answering 0, 1 or 2). It feels overwhelming.

This research was necessary because there was a lack of concise and integrated guidance on how to run management development programmes successfully. We also know that many development programmes do not result in sustainably changed behaviours in managers and positive outcomes for employees – so that means that many organisations are also not doing these things. So, if you are getting low scores, you are not alone – but you are also at risk of running an unsuccessful programme. If you are at Stage 1, you might decide to delay rolling out a large programme until more of the contextual elements have been addressed. If at Stage 2 or 3, our advice would be to do what you can now and develop some actions to help you improve the situation for the future.

Is there a 'pass mark'?

No, at the moment there is no relative priority given to any of the questions and no baseline established for minimum requirements to ensure success, so therefore no pass mark. All questions have been found by our research to impact upon the success of management development programmes and so all should aim to be addressed if possible and feasible. We are hoping in the next year to produce further outputs from this work that may include an analysis tool to provide further prioritisation and start to set baselines/minimum requirements for practitioners.

What if the answer to the questions is different for different parts of the organisation?

It may well be difficult to answer the checklist on behalf of the whole organisation because of its size or the variety that exists in culture and initiatives within different areas or locations. It may therefore be worthwhile to use the checklist several times to cover all the different areas within the organisation. If you generate a series of completed checklists for different parts of the organisation, it may then be helpful to review where they are similar and where different and see if the different areas can learn from one another.

What if I am finding it difficult to answer questions as I cannot control the outcomes?

It is unlikely you will be able to control all the factors. It is important in these instances to provide examples and build an understanding of why you or other key stakeholders don't have control and formulate action plans to mitigate any potential problems this process identifies.

I'm unsure how to select which managers should attend training.

Guidance is provided in the checklist as to the types of individuals who are more likely to succeed at training. It is important individuals are supportive of their team, display integrity, are independent thinkers, are effective performers, have some self-awareness, are keen to learn and are supported. Personality and cognitive ability have also been shown to predict training success, but this should only be assessed by qualified professionals in an objective and standardised way. Although you can ask for volunteers for training, it is likely the trainees that are attracted will not be those that are most in need of development.

How does this work link with diversity programmes?

The research behind these checklists focused on employee health, well-being and engagement, so was not looking directly at diversity issues. Remember to refer to the Equality Act 2010 when planning the programme – for instance, ensuring it is accessible to part-time workers and considers the needs of older workers.

How do I find out more about Affinity Health at Work's management competencies that support sustainable engagement, health and well-being?

Please visit the Affinity Health at Work website at **www.affinityhealthatwork.co.uk/our-work/research** to learn more.