

Solution 4 – First Level Manager

What is the First Level Manager solution?

We believe that developing the skills of managers is the key to unlocking most other skills in an organisation.

All too often high performing individual contributors are promoted to management positions without much thought about their suitability for people management or training for their new role.

This solution provides some practical help to senior managers who wish to help their new managers hit the ground running.

Who should read this?

Individuals working for:

- SSCs
- Brokers and Independent Advisors serving organisations who are interested in Management and Leadership (M&L) development
- Staff from the English Regional Development Agencies and the Devolved Administrations with a similar focus.

Who is the customer?

Second level managers and above who are developing their front line management team.

Sometimes the sheer range of new competencies required by the new manager can appear overwhelming. In particular, managing *people* rather than *projects* calls for a different approach. It's now all about getting things done through other people rather than simply doing it themselves.

This is also for first line manager candidates who wish to find out about opportunities for personal development.

What's the evidence?

Of the 150 + M&L issues identified in the 2007 Sector Skills Agreement research 'First Line Manager performance' was one of the most frequent problems cited by employers.

What business issues can the First Level Manager solution deal with?

A comprehensive range of issues relating to working with and managing people, specifically:

- Managing self and personal skills
- Providing direction
- Facilitating Change

- Working with people
- Using resources and Achieving results.

What's the offer?

Our Good Practice Guide¹ describes what programmes are run, sponsored, signposted or qualified by SSCs. It explores the range of offers that are available from external suppliers and offers suggestions to SSC staff, intermediaries and employers on how to identify an offer that is right for them.

The importance of choosing the right managers

Investing in managers' skills can have highly leveraged results throughout the organisation by increasing the level of engagement and effectiveness of all staff. But it's important to choose the right candidates for the right reasons to get the greatest Return on Investment (RoI). Moreover, identifying clear criteria for success, following up and measuring the impact are crucial in order to launch the organisation onto a virtuous spiral.

How is it delivered?

'First Level Manager' development offers are popular and widespread. Public courses through to personalised offers are readily available. The key issue for the emerging manager is choosing the offering that is right for them (in relation to time, place, and cost) and ensuring that it is provided by a quality supplier. The Good Practice Guide suggests an approach that will help employers find the right offer for them.

Where can I find out more?

Go to our solutions page² which provides a complete flowchart of suggested activities with employers, diagnostics that are available to use and M&L suppliers with some of their offerings. More importantly it provides a Good Practice Guide that suggests strategies for success.

What can I do next?

If this is of interest to you, read the material we've signposted here which suggests a 'Best Practice' approach including a comprehensive list of diagnostics and suppliers.

¹ http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk/files/NewSolutions/GoodPractice_Guide180707.pdf

² <http://www.sfbn-mandl.org.uk/Solutions.html>