

*CPD: an expense or an investment? Commeth the New Year, Ian Patterson looks at how businesses can plan to maximise the value of CPD activity.*

## ***Investing in CPD***

‘You cannot teach a man anything, you can only help him discover it within himself’ or so said Galileo four hundred years ago.

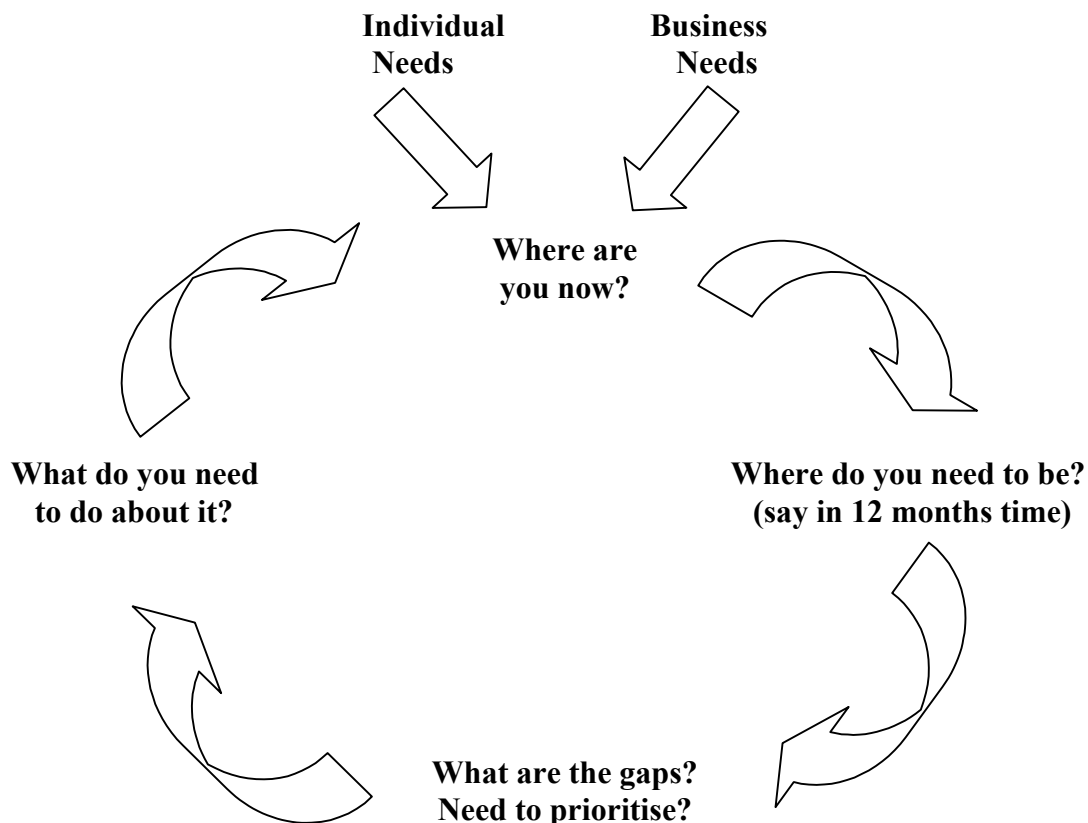
And herein lies the key to CPD. Most people I come across don’t have a problem with doing things that are relevant to their job; they are quick to pick-up on things that help them improve and do things better. Why then, is CPD not generally regarded as high priority?

The simple solution is to:

- ensure there is a clear link between what you do by way of CPD and the needs of the individual and the business, and
- encourage the individual to take ownership their CPD.

Key to achieving both of these is to ensure that CPD activity is focussed, relevant and planned. Adopting the following simple structure can help to make activities more planned and more effective. There has to be more to CPD than purely looking to meet either CII or FSA requirements.

The approach shown below is simple, not necessarily easy. Central to it is understanding what the goals should be. Here are some questions to ask yourself:



If there is a direct connection between the CPD activity and what the business wants, the value of the activity should be clear to see. Business needs are those that are key to meeting the business plan and may include things like the need to expand knowledge so as to move into a new market area such as planning for the older client, running client seminars and moving to a fee-based practice.

Individual needs might include the need to master a particular type of software, develop coaching skills or work towards the new CII diploma qualification structure. Needs in this area could arise out of your day-to-day activities – the things you know you could do better or have always wanted to try. A simple key question: how can I do my job better?

Effective CPD should ensure the planned acquisition of knowledge, skills and experience to develop an individual's personal qualities. A useful starting point might be to use a checklist approach to help identify potential gaps either now or in the future. I've included an abbreviated checklist to give you an idea how it can be used to systematically identify, prioritise and plan people development needs. Why not give it a try?

See attached checklist

In my experience, most people will be receptive to things that help them work better. Your investment in CPD can help to achieve this if needs are clearly identified and CPD is planned – will yours be in 2006?