



January 2018

**Level 3 National in
31588H Principles of Management**

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What is a grade boundary?

A grade boundary is where we set the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade, at Distinction, Merit and Pass.

Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the external assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark is for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to ensure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

Variations in external assessments

Each external assessment we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries for each assessment, because then it would not take accessibility into account.

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Unit 6: Principles of Management

Grade	Unclassified	Level 3		
		P	M	D
Boundary Mark	0	27	46	65

Introduction

Unit 31588H Principles of Management is a Mandatory unit in the Diploma and Extended Diploma in Business and the Extended Diploma in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship.

This was the first opportunity for learners to take the external assessment set task for this unit.

The assessment is based on a case study that is issued in Part A pre-release one week before the supervised assessment. Part B contains the two activities set on the case study and is issued at the start of the supervised assessment. The pre-release period enables learners time to identify and understand the issues that the company's management have to face. It gives the learner the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the issues, the organisation, and the relevant sector.

The Part A pre-release case study involved a medium sized house building and general construction company with sector and organisation information for the time period of 2008 – 2016. This time period covers the 2008 – 2013 recession and the subsequent period of growth.

There are two activities in Part B. Activity 1 required learners to prepare a report on human resource planning and its importance to the construction company. It also required the learner to make recommendations about the key issues to be considered by the company to maintain its competitiveness and continuing success. Activity 2, a presentation, focused on training and development, the different approaches available to the company and the measures of effectiveness of the training and development that the company could use.

The assessment of the unit is based on 4 assessment focuses which are applied twice, once to the written report and once to the presentation. Each activity is marked out of 44 marks, giving a total of 88 marks for the set task. The assessment focuses are:

- Information/ data analysis and interpretation – 12 marks
- Key principles of management – 12 marks
- Suggested alternative management approaches – 12 marks
- Structure and presentation – 8 marks

Learners completed the assessment using a computer. Scripts were submitted as print outs or electronically on a USB memory stick.

A minority of centres submitted work without including signed authentication sheets and/or mark summary sheets. Centres are advised to review the administration guide for this unit which is available on the BTEC subject pages prior to submitting work to ensure that all administrative requirements are met.

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

Learners attempting this set task achieved between 0 and 83 marks out of the 88 available.

Learners took different approaches to the assessment. The majority of learners answered the two activities and produced a written report on human resource planning and a presentation on training and development. However, some learners took an incorrect approach; having completed activity 1 they then produced a synopsis of that activity as a presentation. This meant that most of the marks for activity 2 were not available to these learners.

Many learners completed activity 1 using a word processing package such as Word and presentation software, such as PowerPoint, for activity 2. A small number of learners produced a presentation using word processing software whilst others, having produced slides in presentation software, word processed their speaker's notes.

The majority of learners had made an attempt to answer both activities.

A major issue across both activities was that learners took the opportunity to write everything that knew about human resources and training and development but failed to apply their knowledge to the organisation and sector in the case study.

Many learners spent a lot of time copying out the case study into their answers but then not exploring it in relation to the activities. Some learners re-iterated case study data and facts, and perhaps commented on trends they found without reference to HR planning or by combining this data within their findings and analysis.

There were some learners who had produced graphs and charts to display the data from the case study, however, these usually did not add value to the report presented.

Few learners linked profitability and productivity figures in the construction industry with the time-period being covered, i.e. recession and the beginnings of recovery.

It was evident that learners at some centres were not ready to take the set task in the January window.

Activity 1

Assessment Focus 1: Information/ data analysis and interpretation

Many learners showed an understanding of human resource planning. Responses ranged from outlining and describing the basic elements of human resource planning, usually generically, to application and analysis in context.

Basic answers described the functions of human resource planning with little or no reference to the context of the case study, not picking up on, or misinterpreting the information and data in the case study. These responses were often limited to Band 1 or the bottom of band 2.

Some scripts showed evidence of pre-prepared answers being developed to the case study, and learned during the pre-release stage. As the learners had not seen the activities, these answers tended to describe all, or nearly all, of the items in the contents of the unit specifications with little or no reference to the case study. These generic answers could not move out of mark band 2 in relation to 'relevance to context'.

Some learners had not understood and/or answered the first part of Activity 1 about the importance of workforce planning, instead just wrote about general overall issues.

More developed answers attempted to apply relevant issues in the case study weaving human resource planning elements with the live issues in the case study relating to the *Nugent Barton Construction Company (NBCC)* and/or the construction industry. Such answers engaged with the issues of skill shortages, the apprenticeship situation, staff turnover rates, the staff age profile and impending change of management in *NBCC*. Such answers scored marks in band 4 for 'relevant to context' and 'analytical approach'.

The best answers offered insightful application and analysis, which then formed a solid basis for the second part of Activity 1: the recommendations for maintaining *NBCC's* competitiveness and continued success.

Learners often misinterpreted the data provided in the case study. A number of candidates interpreted training days as days when the company's full workforce was in training rather than the number or individual worker training days. This often resulted in incorrect comments about training taking up almost two of the years between 2012 – 2017 or giving an average per year, as shown in the following extracts:

“In addition to this, too many days are being spent on training as the average per year comes up to 120 days. These days can be spent on productivity helping the business achieve their goals.”

“Over a period of 5 years (from 2012-2017) NBCC held 600 training days, 120 days per year.”

Additionally, some learners misunderstood the 15% of staff taking part in training interpreting it as 85% being absent/ not attending training, as shown in the following extract:

“The case study states only 15% are showing up to training programme of staff”

A small number of learners attempted to link the turnover figure to the training days and either used it to cost a training day or to show how much the company ‘could earn’ for each training day. Neither approach being acceptable or accurate.

“When looking at NBCC’s data we can clearly see that in 600 days the business is able to make £3.24 million this is only by training 15% of staff”

Such incorrect analysis could not be given any credit.

Many learners gave detailed theoretical accounts of motivational theories and leadership styles, with some covering paternalistic approach in detail which was a focus of the sample assessment. This was often in response to incorrect interpretation of the staff turnover figures. This data showed a company with lower staff turnover than the sector/ sub sector averages. The low percentage figures would indicate that staff stayed with the company. There is no evidence in the case study that the staff were demotivated/ unhappy at work. Many learners interpreted the figures as showing a large staff turnover because of poor motivation. As such much of the answers on motivation were not in context to the case study. The following extract illustrates

“NBCC cannot do this if labour turnover rates are fluctuating as years go by, with 4.9% being its highest and 2.1% being its lowest, the average turnover rate for the company is 3.65%. This shows us that the rate is not stable as staff are leaving for various reasons, with some years being quite low and some being quite high. This can demotivate staff as the workforce is constantly changing and they need to be used to seeing and working with the same people.”

A small number of learners confused staff turnover with the company’s financial turnover. Other learners correctly analysed the data and came to correct conclusions:

“NBCC has a lowered staff turnover rates than the over UK construction industry so for NBCC its matter of ensuring that those that are staying on at NBCC are skilled, qualified and flexible to carry out tasks within the industry as the company is going to need to be able to work efficiently and productively to complete their contracts and try to stay on top and ahead of the industry.”

The age distribution data was also misinterpreted by many learners. The data shows a young workforce, with 56% of staff being 40 years old or younger and, of this 15% being aged between 16 – 25. A number of learners looked at this data as showing an aging workforce and so came to incorrect conclusions. Other learners did correctly analyse the data with conclusions ranging from putting the youngest workers on apprenticeships, providing multi skilling training to ensuring that these young workers, once trained, were rewarded financially so that they would continue in the company.

Assessment Focus 2: Key Principles of Management

Activity 1 on understanding what human resource planning involves and its importance was answered relatively well by some students, who showed the depth of their learning and could contextualise principles of management well to the business. Some learners scored marks in band 4 with answers that explained relevant key principles of management such as the main elements of human resource planning, with application of the issues of skill levels and skill shortages, experience, labour turnover, employee satisfaction, and engagement with business culture in reference to the possible change in, and importance of, management style and business culture within *NBCC*.

Types of leadership

There are many effective ways of managing employees and there are many different types of leadership. These include autocratic and democratic, paternalistic and transactional and transformational. These leadership styles are all different and can affect the workplace massively. The importance of that at the moment at NBCC is that there is a change in board of directors so management style is uncertain and a leadership style has not been determined and this can cause major uncertainty for the business. During this time the HR plays a major role as they are the communicators for both senior staff such as new board of directors and the employees and the HR department will play a major role in easing employees into these new leadership styles making sure employees transition into the new leadership roles effectively allowing employees to get use to the new leadership and make sure it does not affect their job roles. The HR will communicate the changes that will happen due to the change in board of directors and make sure they are not scared of the changes that may happen

As noted in Assessment Focus 1, some learners concentrated on motivational theorists. The data in the case study does not illustrate issues relating to demotivation and as such learners were not developing their answers in context and often were restricted to bands 1 and 2. However, some of these answers did attempt to link to the continuing success of the business and its future competitiveness and scored in the lower part of band 3.

Many learners leaned very heavily on theorists, management by objectives and Brexit. Some learners gave very detailed analyses of theorists but these were generally not linked to the context or business goals and stood in isolation. Such scripts were limited band 1 in relation to 'relevant to context'. Other learners did attempt to link theorists to the company's business goals scoring in band 4:

"This is a key issue because if the labour turnover increases overtime it may impact the business negatively as highly skilled staff may leave. The slow increase indicates that the employees may be unsatisfied with the company. The two-factor theory by Herzberg shows that the work itself is an important factor to increase productivity and motivation as it shows that they are satisfied. Therefore, to ensure that NBCC meets its goal of maintaining a skilled and flexible workforce they need to make sure that the labour turnover reverses its trend. However, the increase in NBCC's labour turnover is better compared to the average turnover rate in the industry which, suggests that NBCC may be doing well in terms of providing job satisfaction to their employees."

Assessment Focus 3: Suggested alternative management approaches

The recommendations about the key issues to be considered by *NBCC* formed the basis for this assessment focus. Learners who undertook appropriate information/ data analysis/ interpretation (assessment focus1) of the case study usually carried through that analysis/ interpretation to make appropriate recommendations. The widely advocated recommendations included *NBCC* reinstating an apprenticeship programme and measures to improve the efficiency and reduce the cost of the company's existing training programme.

A small number of learners noted the difference between the training and the development programme offered by *NBCC* and made appropriate recommendations. Such answers tended to be scoring in band 4.

Key issues NBCC are facing

Training that *NBCC* are offering is not always key to the business as it says that "the development programme is about helping individuals to achieve their full potential regardless whether or not this is related to their current job role". This is a key issue that they are facing as *NBCC* has spent 600 staff training days from 2012-2017 and only 15% of the workforce has been trained in this period of time. This is a major issue as *NBCC* could be spending costly amounts of money in sending employees to professionals in off the job training styles and paying for employees to gain skills which then do not relate to the business. This highlights that *NBCC* is potentially spending vast amounts of money on training employees to motivate them and create a loyal employee base, but these skills acquired by employees is not being beneficial to the business and the workforce. This will eventually become a problem with the business and could stop them from being competitive with the rapidly changing environment. The effectiveness of the training is key to the business and needs to be developed and changes if they want to continue to be competitive and have a continued success. *NBCC* could change this by using more on the job training as this will be beneficial to the business as all employees trained on the job are going to gain skills that are profitable to the business as all skills will be related to job roles within the business. Therefore no excess money is spent on training employees with skills that do not apply to the workforce and organisation. Therefore this is a major area to be considered and developed so that the business is spending money effectively in developing staff with the right skills whilst motivating them at the same time. These high training costs could be lowered by using on the job training as they would be reducing the amount of money spent on professional training for staff that may not necessarily need it.

Recommendations were offered by some learners but often lacked explanation and direct context which meant that learners could not access bands 3 and 4.

"Setting appraisals would also help *NBCC* perform better as a whole as they would have trained and skilled workers all working towards the same goals and if done properly then would allow *NBCC* to stay in a good position within in the construction industry because due to a low demand , companies are going to be more competitive"

Others made very general recommendations or copied statements from the case study, scoring in band 1:

“For NBCC to continue to being a successful business they need to focus on maintaining a skilled and flexible workforce. The human resource planning should include forecasting labour demand which will help the business predicts the quality and quantity of people needed in the business. The business should also consider other than developing existing staff skills they could also recruit more flexible and skilled workers. “

Where apprentices were identified, this was generally well thought out and well-argued as a recommendation, achieving in band 4.

“Therefore, employing apprentices will allow the company to train staff in the way that could benefit the business. Furthermore, another advantage of recruiting apprentices is that it can give a positive attitude of the business. This is because NBCC are investing in their workers for the future which can make employees feel valued. Additionally, recruiting apprentices can also increase staff loyalty, this is because apprentices are more likely to stay with the company in the future because of the value of their training from NBCC.”

Other recommendations included having effective human resource planning processes:

“NBCC requires an effective human resource planning system in order to continue to be successful. The use of human resource planning will enable the company to identify where they need staff and how many staff they need. The company should produce an audit which can assess what needs to be done. They should then identify any gaps and then implement this into the workforce. “

In some instances, recommendations veered away from the unit specification, eg into marketing or improved negotiation with suppliers. There were examples of learners recommending the implementation of appraisal systems and management by objectives. These are areas not mentioned in the case study and could not be credited as recommendations in context.

Some learners missed the recommendations altogether or, if there were some recommendations given, they were not fully developed in terms of context and business goals

Assessment Focus 4: Structure and presentation

There was evidence of good structure from learners offering well-presented and structured reports containing clear headings, clarity of communication and use of relevant management terminology. However, some learners presented reports that had just paragraphs without key sections on findings and recommendations or conclusions. If there were no headings, there often was a logical structure to it and generally communication was error free.

Many centres followed the structure given in the revision guide but often confused findings and recommendations by separating the work into areas such as management style, training, staff turnover, etc.

Activity 2

Assessment Focus 5: Information/ data analysis and interpretation

The responses to this activity were far more focused than those for activity 1. When candidates performed well, they clearly focused on the issues from the case study, taking relevant data and combining this with the range of approaches available to the business.

Performance was hindered by candidates not including supporting notes, therefore showing little or no analysis. Additionally, some learners focused on issues outside of the training and development remit, i.e. wider management issues, and so were limited to band 1. Generally, the links to the case study were difficult to find in most presentations and where they were in place, were not fully developed or lacked relevance. This limited learners to band 1 or 2 depending on the detail presented and the analysis provided. When this was done well, there were references throughout the presentation and learners were able to link these back to their findings and produce a good, balanced conclusion, achieving in band 4.

Many learners included a slide introducing themselves and the topic. It should be noted that most slides submitted were plain backgrounds and this is acceptable. It is not expected that learners should spend time on selecting backgrounds and inserting animation to their slides.

The first part of the activity on showing your understanding of the different approaches to training and development provided lots of answers where learners discussed internal/external, on and off-the-job, mentoring and coaching, and then some chose which they would use. Very few learners identified that different types of training need different methods of training. For instance, brick laying skills could be taught internally, on the job, whereas an accredited qualification such as a licence to drive a fork lift truck would most probably be trained and tested externally and off-the-job. A small number of learners identified the need for a

Construction Skills Certification Scheme card (CSCS card), some calling it a Health and Safety card, before construction workers are allowed on site. These are types of areas that could be researched in the pre-release period.

Many learners did not identify the difference approaches used by *NBCC* in their training and development programmes. As stated in the case study these two programmes have different purposes.

The purpose of the training programme is to develop employees' existing skills or to gain new ones, and is related to their existing work role. The development programme is about helping individuals to achieve their full potential regardless whether or not this is related to their current job role.

Many presentations were relevant to the sector and company, but there was a big variation in application to the case study and in depth of analysis. On-the-job/off-the-job training were well understood but the development of the response in terms of depth and relevance to the case study ranged from the totally generic to the well-applied and analysed and fully-focused.

The better responses that scored in band 4 started with an analysis of the approaches to training currently used at *NBCC*

NBCC Current Approaches to Training

- Invests in training and development of new staff and existing employees
- Does not hire apprentices, but has done so in the past
- Training programmes are offered to all employees at all levels
- Training programme is intended to develop employees' existing skills and gain new skills regardless whether it is related to their role or not
- *NBCC* want training to help employees achieve their full potential
- 600 staff training days from 2012-2017
- 15% of staff participated in the training programme from 2012-2017

Such slides were also accompanied by relevant speaker's notes which added further information to that on the slide.

The case study states that NBCC has always invested in its staff by providing training and development. This shows that they are giving their employees the opportunity to gain further skills and knowledge which will allow them to have better opportunities in the future. The training programme is run for NBCC to achieve their main aim of supporting their employees to reach their full potential. This suggests that from young employees to their senior managers, NBCC is supporting their employees to get the most out of them and for them to meet their full potential for their current job role and to gain skills that will help them move into other job roles. NBCC invest a lot in their staff which shows that they are committed to their progress, however, the effectiveness of the training is questionable as NBCC have had only 15% staff participation. The Board are questioning whether the training is cost effective, as staff turnout to training is low.

Many learners' responses included evidence of a variety of approaches to training and development programmes including coaching, mentoring and appraisals in addition to on-the-job/ off-the-job training. However, coaching and mentoring were described but not always applied appropriately to the case study. Explanations were mainly generic. The opportunity to show the cost effectiveness and value of coaching and mentoring was not always grasped. More depth was needed to address these training options.

Assessment Focus 6: Key Principles of Management

This assessment focus created a lot of generic answers, many of which were not in context. Where theorists had been relied upon in the report, they appeared again in the presentation, often taking up two or three slides but. In these cases, learners made some attempt to apply motivation theories to training and development.

NBCC
Skills Required to be successful at NBCC

- Setting objectives
- Valuing and supporting others
- Motivating
- Managing conflict
- Decision making
- Building positive interpersonal relationships
- Team building
- Using emotional intelligence
- Leading by example
- Communicating
- Consulting
- Providing feedback
- Problem solving

Speaker Notes

There are various skills which an employee must have to be successful. The current construction sector suggests that it is very difficult to fill staff who have the correct skills, qualifications and experience. NBCC should look to employ staff with the skills listed above because it means a worker has the required skillset to complete the role. When the problem arises, NBCC should look to carry out skills audits or use appraisal information to find where there are skills shortages within the organisation. This shall enable them to come up with an idea of what skills are missing within workers in the organisation and should create a basis for the training and development that then needs to take place to make sure these skills are worked on by employees so they gain these. This should make training and development at NBCC more effective because they are producing an effective human resource planning system to provide training to staff to improve specific skills rather than general ones which the individual may already hold. This would bring more benefits to the business as it means NBCC is able to develop employees skills and create a more experienced and specific workforce where there are more skills and hence workers are more suited to their roles. This would mean that the training and development programme NBCC currently have is becoming more effective so they are using sending more efficiently. This would give the board of directs less to think about. Developing the skills of employees is key so

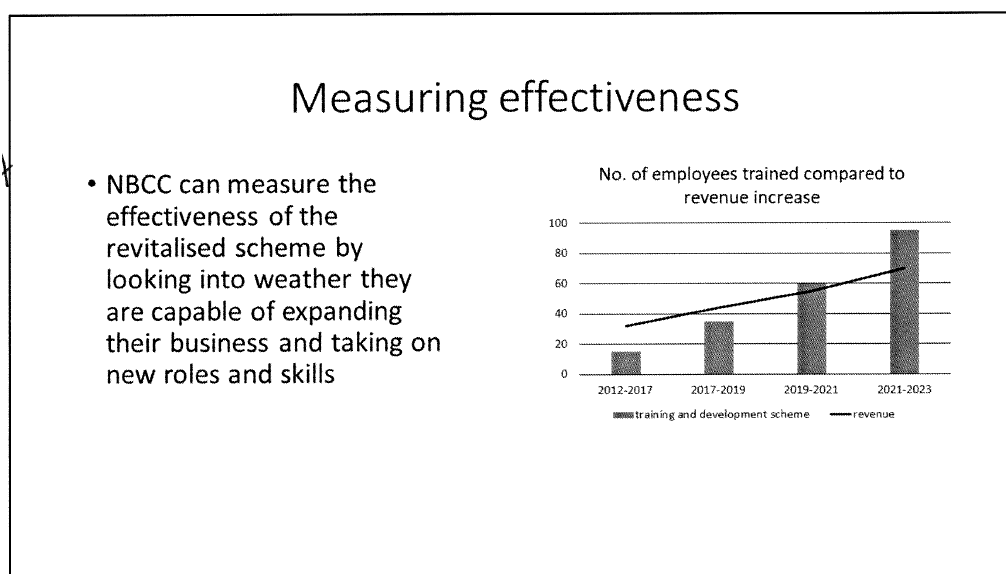
Those presentations that scored in the higher bands in this section gave more developed responses covering management principles which were well explained and were sprinkled throughout the presentation.

Some learners mis-interpreted the activity and didn't see the relevance to Training and Development and focused on how the business could remain competitive. Very often links to the case study were minimal with few management principles being included and there little or no development. Such presentations were limited to band 1

Assessment Focus 7: Suggested alternative management approaches

This assessment focus was assessed through recommendations to measure the effectiveness of training and development. This assessment focus was either not addressed at all or answered perfunctorily. Some responses were about how to make training and development effective rather than about how to measure the effectiveness of specific programmes that were available to *NBCC*.

Most learners included a slide which had recommendations listed, but in some cases the recommendations were not relevant or unrealistic. Many learners did not develop the recommendations simply listing them.



Recommendations- measuring the effectiveness of training and development undertaken by its staff

Analysing NBCC's statistics and figures

Effective if:

- ▶ Staff turnover rate decreased
- ▶ Productivity and profitability increased
- ▶ Revenue increased
- ▶ Percentage of staff from ages 16-25 have increased

Issues that needed addressing have been improved

NBCC can analyse their statistics and figures of their business to see if the training programme has had an effect on NBCC in a positive way. If statistics of NBCC improved then it can suggest that the training and development is effective. If the issues that needed addressing have also been covered or had an improvement then it also suggests that it has been effective

Some learners did not cover 'the measure the effectiveness' in this activity, rather they concluded the presentation with recommendations on which types of training to use. They focused on recommendation for training and development with limited evidence of measuring effectiveness within the presentation. Such presentations were limited to band 1. Those who did attempt to answer this aspect of the activity, provided a variety of possible options, although in a number of presentations, without thought being given to the context of the workers being in the construction industry.

Recommendations

- On the job training alongside mentoring
- Apprenticeships - mentoring

Advantages

- Cost effective
- Time efficient
- Younger workforce
- Flexible
- Increased productivity

Disadvantages

-

Better scripts included recommendation for measuring effectiveness of training and development undertaken by staff.

How can NBCC measure if the training has been successful

- Appraisals
- Measure productivity
- Measure profitability
- Setting targets and objectives
- Performance of business after training

There are many ways in which NBCC can measure the successfulness of training as they want to be sure that the training they are providing is working and is benefiting the business. One way in which NBCC can measure effectiveness is by measuring the percentage of productivity and profitability. If training is being successful there should be a relationship/link between training success and productivity. If training has been successful NBCC should be seeing an increase in productivity and profitability as staff would be more highly trained and will be able to complete tasks more efficiently and effectively as they are more motivated due to the training opportunities and the chance to develop themselves to a more highly skilled worker. If there is not an increase in these figures there is a clear defect in the training methods. From table 1 I can clearly see that the training at NBCC has not been effective and successful as profitability and productivity has not increased but has gone down. Productivity has gone down from 1.5% in 2014 to 0.5% in 2016 and profitability has stayed the same over the last years at 2.8% which highlights training has not been successful. Another way that NBCC can measure if training has been successful is by setting reasonable targets and objectives and this will allow the HR to measure the effectiveness of the training by seeing if they are hitting the set targets which should be realistic to them and if they are not hitting set objectives there is a clear problem with the training that is being offered. Furthermore appraisals can be used to measure the success of the business because the HR department will be able to see what employees are doing and how effective they are being and how this affects their productivity. If there are not many appraisals then training is clearly unsuccessful because if the training is a success then there should be

Assessment Focus 8: Structure and presentation

Generally, the structure of the presentations was good. Some learners used different designs, but the majority were on plain slides. The majority had a good structure and were error free.

Where presentations were well done, they had a logical structure and complimented the report giving new information and justifications and focusing very much on the training and development needs of the company within the construction sector.

Many learners provided an introductory slide followed by slides covering types of training and development finishing with recommendations to measure the effectiveness of training and development.

Summary

Based on the performance of learners in this January series learners should:

- Use the pre-release time to become familiar with the industrial context as well as issues in the case study
- Contextualise their responses to the sector and organisation within the case study to enable them to achieve in higher bands
- Divide their time equally between activities 1 and 2
- Ensure that they answer activity 2 as a separate topic to that covered by activity 1
- Be familiar with a range of management data in different formats
- Make reference to a range of relevant management and leadership principles and terminology in their responses
- Ensure they provide recommendations or alternative approaches
- Provide logical structures to both the report and the presentation



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