

Applied Leadership and Management in the Workplace
Module Assignment Submission

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1. Summary

This report explores the importance of developing workplace relationships and personal development within a large steel company managing a mega industrial project. Drawing upon theories of organisational behaviour, motivation, learning, and leadership—including the Michigan Model, Edgar Schein’s Career Anchors, Holland’s Career Typology, and David Bohm’s dialogue principles—the report demonstrates how intentional development strategies enhance collaboration, trust, and performance. It further evaluates professional development frameworks such as Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model, Miller’s pyramid, and CPD cycles to assess individual growth and organisational impact.

2. Introduction

As a Document Control Manager within a large organisation responsible for delivering a mega construction and engineering project, effective collaboration between departments, vendors, and project teams is absolutely vital. Information governance, the accuracy of documentation, and workflow transparency directly influence project delivery timelines, safety performance, and regulatory compliance. Developing individuals and fostering workplace relationships are key enablers of greater cohesion, accountability, and a shared sense of purpose.

Technical competence alone does not guarantee success. The performance of the document control function—and indeed the wider project—is deeply influenced by the quality of relationships between individuals, their development, the clarity of expectations, and the strength of collaboration between teams.

This report explores how individual development and workplace relationships enhance both personal performance and organisational effectiveness. Drawing upon key theories of learning and development and career growth, it examines how investing in people leads to improved communication, stronger collaboration, meaningful performance management, and ultimately greater project efficiency and reduced operational risk.

The analysis is based on executing a mega project where the document control function interfaces with numerous disciplines, vendors, and clients. Specifically, this report will address:

1. The organisational benefits of developing individuals;
2. Strategies for managing an individual’s expectations regarding personal development;
3. Evaluation of suitable development vehicles aligned with both individual and organisational needs;
4. The design of a detailed development plan and methods for managing performance; and
5. How these approaches contribute to creating a positive, collaborative, and high-performing work environment.

3. Potential Benefits of Developing Individuals in the Workplace

3.1 Aligning Organisational and Individual Goals

For development to be effective, individual goals must align with organisational strategic objectives. As the Document Control Manager, I conduct regular one-to-one reviews with staff to establish how their aspirations (e.g., a vendor liaison role, increased responsibility, system specialist) integrate with the project's document management objectives. Using SMART objectives (Doran, 1981) helps clarify what is to be achieved, by when, and how. Staff understand what performance looks like and how their development will support overall project success.

3.2 Career Anchors – Edgar Schein

Schein (1978) introduced the concept of career anchors—intrinsic career drivers such as technical competence, managerial competence, autonomy or security. Recognising each individual's anchor helps tailor development and avoid dissatisfaction (e.g., a document controller who values autonomy being forced into a rigid reporting role). By acknowledging career anchors in development discussions, expectations are managed more effectively.

3.3 Personality–Environment Fit – Holland's Theory

Holland's RIASEC model posits that individuals achieve greater satisfaction and success when their work environment matches their personality type. Careers New Zealand +1 For example, a person with a 'Conventional' profile (organiser, detail-oriented) may thrive as a document controller; whereas an 'Artistic' profile may struggle. By assessing fit, we can guide individuals into roles or development paths that enhance satisfaction and reduce turnover.

3.4 Managing Motivation and Engagement

Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene theory (1959) highlights the importance of intrinsic motivators (recognition, responsibility) for satisfaction, and hygiene factors (salary, conditions) for preventing dissatisfaction. Through appraisal feedback, mentoring and recognising contributions (e.g., improved transmittal turnaround, zero non-conformances), we address the motivators. Clearly communicating how development links to both personal and organisational performance helps manage expectations.

3.5 Change Management – Kübler-Ross Change Curve

Projects often involve change (new systems like ACC, revised workflows, vendor integration). Staff may pass through phases of denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Understanding this curve helps managers support individuals, especially when introducing new processes. Clear communication and training reduce anxiety and ensure expectations are practical.

3.6 Transparent Communication and Feedback

Regular, open communication is a cornerstone of effective management and team development, particularly in complex environments such as large-scale industrial projects. Structured appraisals, development discussions, and feedback sessions provide a consistent framework for communication, enabling managers to convey expectations clearly while giving employees a forum to express their aspirations, concerns, and development needs. This structured approach ensures that feedback is purposeful, actionable, and aligned with both individual growth and organisational objectives.

Equally important is two-way communication. Employees must feel empowered to articulate their career goals, skills gaps, and learning preferences, while managers must respond transparently about what the organisation can realistically provide in terms of training, opportunities, and career progression. This transparency mitigates the risk of unrealistic expectations, such as assumptions about rapid promotion or responsibilities beyond the scope of their role, and ensures that development initiatives remain credible, achievable, and aligned with strategic goals. Effective communication also fosters psychological safety, allowing team members to raise concerns or suggest improvements without fear of criticism. In document control, where coordination across multiple teams and disciplines is critical, this enhances workflow efficiency, reduces errors, and promotes a culture of accountability.

Embedding Continuous Professional Development (CPD) alongside structured feedback further strengthens this environment. CPD ensures that employees maintain and expand their technical competence, keep up to date with evolving systems such as ACC, and adapt to changes in processes or project requirements. Regular appraisals identify skill gaps and guide learning priorities, while mentoring and knowledge-sharing sessions facilitate cross-team collaboration, allowing lessons learned and best practices to be disseminated efficiently. When individuals perceive that their professional growth aligns with project success, motivation, engagement, and proactive collaboration increase.

Ultimately, combining transparent, two-way communication with structured appraisals and CPD creates an environment where staff feel valued, supported, and capable of continuous improvement. Employees are better equipped to contribute to team goals, adapt to change, and support organisational objectives. In the context of document control, this approach ensures that technical accuracy, compliance, and timely documentation are maintained, while fostering a collaborative and high-performing team culture that drives both individual and project success.

4. Managing Individual Expectations in Respect of Personal Development

4.1 On-the-Job Training

On-the-job training is arguably the most directly impactful form of development in a project environment, particularly in roles such as document control where precision, process adherence,

and timely execution are critical. Staff learn through hands-on experience, gaining practical knowledge by actively engaging with the tools, systems, and workflows they will use daily. For example, mastering the ACC transmittal workflow under supervision allows employees to understand not only the technical steps but also the rationale behind procedures, such as version control, metadata requirements, and approval hierarchies.

The advantages of this approach are multifaceted. Firstly, it is highly relevant, as employees are learning skills they will immediately apply to real-world tasks. Secondly, it offers immediacy, providing instant feedback and opportunities to correct errors in a low-risk environment. Thirdly, it is cost-effective, as it utilises existing resources and work activities rather than relying solely on formal classroom training.

On-the-job training aligns closely with Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984), which emphasises learning as a four-stage process: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. Employees first experience the workflow, then reflect on what works and what needs improvement, conceptualise ways to optimise processes, and finally experiment with improved approaches. This cyclical approach ensures deeper understanding, skill retention, and the ability to adapt learning to new tasks or project requirements, making it particularly valuable in high-stakes, document-intensive project environments.

4.2 Coaching and Mentoring

Mentoring and coaching are powerful development tools within a document control environment, particularly in complex projects where accuracy, compliance, and interdepartmental coordination are essential. Mentoring involves pairing experienced document controllers with newer staff, creating a structured relationship in which knowledge, skills, and organisational insights are transferred in a practical, real-world context. Through mentoring, less experienced team members gain guidance on processes such as transmittal workflows, metadata compliance, and document lifecycle management, while also learning the nuances of stakeholder communication, prioritisation, and escalation protocols. Mentoring fosters confidence, enhances problem-solving abilities, and accelerates the onboarding process, ensuring new staff become productive more quickly and consistently.

Coaching, by contrast, is typically more targeted and focused on specific behavioural improvements. For example, coaching can address stakeholder engagement, communication clarity, or conflict resolution within cross-functional teams. By providing regular feedback, observation, and practice opportunities, coaching enables individuals to develop these skills in a controlled and supportive setting.

This dual approach aligns closely with Schein's Career Anchors framework, which highlights intrinsic motivations such as technical expertise, managerial competence, and autonomy. Mentoring and coaching can be tailored to reinforce these anchors, ensuring that development efforts resonate with each individual's career aspirations. In combination, mentoring and

coaching not only build technical capability but also strengthen relationships, collaboration, and performance across the document control team, ultimately contributing to project efficiency, accuracy, and organisational success.

4.3 Formal Education and Certification

Formal education and certification programs play a critical role in the professional development of document control staff within large-scale industrial projects. Opportunities such as **ISO 9001** Lead Auditor, Prince2 Practitioner, or EDMS (Electronic Document Management System) certification provide individuals with recognised credentials that enhance both technical competence and credibility within the organisation. ISO 9001 Lead Auditor training, for example, deepens understanding of quality management systems, audit processes, and compliance requirements, enabling document controllers to ensure that project documentation consistently meets contractual and regulatory standards. Similarly, Prince2 Practitioner certification equips staff with structured project management skills, improving their ability to contribute to complex project workflows, manage deadlines, and support cross-functional teams effectively. EDMS certification ensures that staff are fully proficient in the electronic systems used to manage document lifecycles, approvals, and distribution, which is particularly critical in environments handling thousands of controlled documents daily.

Investing in formal certification also signals the organisation's commitment to growth, quality, and continuous improvement, reinforcing a culture where learning is valued and rewarded. Staff perceive this investment as recognition of their potential, which enhances engagement, retention, and motivation. Moreover, formally trained and certified employees contribute to project standardisation, reducing errors, improving efficiency, and ensuring compliance with internal procedures and external regulatory frameworks. Overall, formal education and certification provide both tangible and intangible benefits that support individual, team, and organisational success.

4.4 E-Learning and Self-Directed Study

Flexible training options, such as online platforms like LinkedIn Learning, offer document control staff the ability to develop skills in project collaboration, document management systems, and related professional areas at their own pace. This approach supports continuous learning, allowing individuals to address skill gaps, stay current with evolving technologies, and reinforce best practices without the constraints of formal classroom schedules. Integrating these learning opportunities within Continuous Professional Development (CPD) frameworks ensures that employees' progress contributes to long-term career growth, while also aligning with organisational goals for competency and performance. CPD recognition formalises the learning process, demonstrating the value placed on skill development, and encouraging staff to take ownership of their professional growth. Additionally, tracking progress through CPD logs provides transparency and accountability, allowing managers to monitor engagement, evaluate

effectiveness, and ensure that learning activities translate into measurable improvements in workflow efficiency, accuracy, and overall project performance.

4.5 Job Rotation and Secondments

Job rotation and secondment provide document control staff with the opportunity to gain practical experience across different functional areas, such as procurement, quality assurance (QA), and construction. By temporarily placing individuals in these roles, staff develop a broader understanding of how each discipline operates, the specific challenges they face, and the interdependencies that exist within a complex project environment. This exposure fosters empathy and collaboration, enabling document controllers to communicate more effectively with engineers, procurement specialists, and construction teams, anticipate requirements, and proactively resolve potential conflicts. Moreover, rotation reduces organisational silos, as employees bring insights and best practices back to their primary role, creating a more integrated workflow and improving overall project efficiency. This approach aligns with the Michigan Model's development element, which emphasises preparing staff for future responsibilities and career progression, ensuring that the workforce remains adaptable, skilled, and capable of supporting evolving project demands and strategic organisational objectives.

4.6 Appraisals, Assessment & Feedback

Regular performance appraisals are a vital tool for identifying development needs, bridging skill gaps, and monitoring progress within the document control function. These structured evaluations allow managers to assess both technical competence and behavioural performance, ensuring that employees are meeting the standards required for accuracy, compliance, and timely document management. Frameworks such as Miller's Pyramid provide a systematic approach to evaluating competence, moving from knowledge acquisition (knows), understanding application (knows how), demonstrating capability in controlled settings (shows how), to consistent performance in real-world tasks (does). This structured assessment ensures that employees are not only trained but able to apply their skills effectively within project workflows. Additionally, Kirkpatrick's Four Levels (reaction, learning, behaviour, results) offer a robust method for evaluating the impact of training programs, linking learning outcomes directly to behaviour change and measurable project results, such as improved transmittal accuracy, faster review cycles, and reduced document errors, thereby supporting both individual and organisational performance.

4.7 Conflict and Skills Training

Effective collaboration requires conflict resolution and interpersonal skills. Training might include workshops on Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Modes, Bohm Dialogue sessions, or scenario-based role play. These development vehicles enhance the social dimension of work and support better relationships.

4.8 Evaluation of Vehicles

Not all development vehicles will have equal impact. Using Kirkpatrick's model we evaluate effectiveness:

Level 1: Participant reaction (satisfaction)

Level 2: Learning (knowledge/skills)

Level 3: Behaviour (application on job)

Level 4: Results (impact on project KPIs)

In our context, we might measure reduction in document revision cycles, fewer late transmittals or improved vendor submission rates.

Each vehicle must be selected based on the individual's development needs, organisational context (mega project), cost, and expected return on investment.

5. Evaluation of Development Vehicles Available to the Organisation

5.1 Identified Development Need

In my role as Document Control Manager, I identified a potential development need in one of my team members ("Individual A," a mid-level Document Controller). KPI review revealed that although uploads and transmittals were being made, vendor submissions often lacked required metadata, and review cycle times were longer than target. Feedback also indicated that Individual A felt "stuck" and was uncertain how to progress into a vendor liaison or team lead role.

5.2 SMART Objective Setting

Objective 1: By end of Q2, Individual A will reduce vendor transmittal rejection rate from 14% to under 8% through improved metadata compliance training.

Objective 2: Within 6 months, attend and complete an internal workshop on communication and stakeholder engagement, leading to documented feedback score improvement from 3.2/5 to 4.0/5 in peer reviews.

Objective 3: Over 12 months, rotational secondment through procurement team for two weeks, culminating in a shadowing exercise with Vendor Liaison Lead, and achieving a transition readiness assessment by year-end.

5.3 Development Activities and Vehicles

Objective Activity Support/Responsible Timeframe Measurement

Obj 1 Metadata compliance workshop, ACC system coaching Document Control Manager / Internal Trainer 3 months Rejection rate metric

Obj 2 Stakeholder engagement workshop, mentoring from Vendor Liaison Lead HR-L&D & Mentor 6 months Peer feedback survey

Obj 3 Job secondment/procurement, shadowing vendor liaison Procurement Manager & Line Manager 12 months Transition readiness assessment

5.4 Performance Management and Evaluation

Performance will be managed via monthly one-to-ones, quarterly appraisal and annual review. The appraisal incorporates: (i) behaviour outcomes (Miller's "does" level) – e.g., flawless transmittal process; (ii) results outcomes – measured via document turnaround time, rejection rates; (iii) development behaviours – evidence of learning, mentoring participation and job rotation. Kirkpatrick Level-3 behavioural change and Level-4 organisational results will be used to evaluate success of development initiatives.

The Michigan Model emphasises appraisal and development as integral to strategy.

HRM Guide +1 The appraisal process helps align the individual's development with project KPIs. Course feedback, behavioural change and improved outcomes will confirm the impact of investment.

5.5 Review and Iteration

Development plans must be dynamic: review every six months to adapt to project changes, vendor performance issues or evolving technology (e.g., new ACC features). Embedding Continuous Professional Development (CPD) supports long-term growth and adaptability.

6. Development Plan and Performance Management

6.1 Psychological Safety and Trust

Amy Edmondson's work on psychological safety shows that when team members feel safe to speak up, error rates drop and innovation increases. In document control environments, this means team members raise concerns about missing metadata or vendor submissions quickly, reducing risk. Mentoring, feedback and open dialogue (influenced by Bohm) foster this environment.

6.2 Dialogue and Shared Meaning

David Bohm's Dialogue Theory posits that through group reflection and conversation, a shared understanding emerges. On the mega project, this translates to regular cross-discipline

‘document review clinics’, where engineering, procurement, construction, QA and document control meet to review transmittals, share challenges, and build mutual understanding. This reduces friction, fosters alignment and improves workflow efficiency.

6.3 Organisational Structure and Relationship Development

The project uses a matrix structure: functional lines (document control team) and project lines (engineering, construction, vendor). The Michigan Model’s matching of HR practices to structure supports this by ensuring roles, development and access align with strategic project goals. The use of appraisals and feedback further supports this by clarifying roles and responsibilities.

6.4 Conflict Management and Skills Development

Conflicts inevitably arise—for example, vendors submitting incomplete documentation, engineering teams making late changes, document control enforcing standards. Training in conflict handling using Thomas-Kilmann modes, plus Bohm’s dialogue sessions, equips individuals with skills to manage these effectively rather than escalate them, thereby maintaining positive relationships.

6.5 Culture of Continuous Learning and Feedback

By embedding Continuous Professional Development (CPD), conducting regular appraisals, and promoting structured knowledge sharing, organisations create a work environment in which individuals feel recognised, supported, and empowered to grow. CPD ensures that employees continuously update their skills, maintain professional competence, and adapt to new technologies or systems, such as document management platforms or workflow tools. This not only enhances individual capability but also ensures that teams remain agile and responsive to the evolving demands of complex projects.

Regular appraisals provide an opportunity to assess performance, identify skill gaps, and set tailored development objectives. When linked to constructive feedback, these reviews enable employees to understand how their contributions impact wider project outcomes, reinforcing the connection between personal development and organisational success. Knowledge sharing, whether through mentoring, cross-team workshops, or informal guidance, fosters collaboration and reduces silos, ensuring that lessons learned and best practices are disseminated across the team.

When employees perceive a clear alignment between their professional growth and project achievements, motivation and engagement increase. They are more likely to take initiative, share insights proactively, and collaborate effectively with colleagues from different disciplines. This culture of continuous development and open communication directly contributes to improved team performance, enhanced efficiency, reduced errors, and overall project success.

7. Conclusion

In the context of a large steel company, document control is a pivotal function that ensures the integrity, traceability, and timely distribution of documentation across engineering, procurement, construction, and commissioning teams. The role of the Document Control Manager extends beyond technical oversight; it encompasses developing individuals, fostering workplace relationships, and aligning staff capabilities with organisational objectives. Technical competence—while necessary—is insufficient to guarantee efficiency or compliance. The performance of the document control function is equally dependent on the motivation, engagement, and collaboration of the individuals who manage and maintain the documentation ecosystem.

Investing in employee development provides multiple organisational benefits. Using the Michigan Model of HRM, training, appraisal, and reward systems can be directly aligned with strategic objectives, such as reducing errors in transmittals, ensuring compliance with internal and external standards, and improving turnaround times. Staff development tailored to these strategic goals enhances operational efficiency while also promoting individual engagement. Complementary frameworks such as Schein’s Career Anchors and Holland’s RIASEC model enable managers to match individual motivations and personality types with their roles, ensuring that document controllers are satisfied, productive, and less likely to disengage. For instance, a detail-oriented individual in a “Conventional” role may excel in metadata verification, while those motivated by autonomy or technical mastery can be guided into roles that maximise their strengths.

Collaboration and communication are equally vital. Document controllers must interact with multiple stakeholders, including engineering, procurement, QA, and vendors. Bohm’s Dialogue Theory supports structured, reflective communication, encouraging staff to share concerns, resolve conflicts, and build a collective understanding of processes and priorities. This approach reduces bottlenecks, miscommunication, and errors while fostering a culture of transparency and trust.

Continuous professional development and performance assessment frameworks, including CPD, Kirkpatrick’s Four Levels, and Miller’s Pyramid, provide mechanisms to monitor learning, behavioural change, and impact on project outcomes. Change management tools such as the Kübler-Ross Change Curve guide staff through transitions, such as system upgrades or revised workflows, reducing resistance and ensuring smooth adoption. Together, these models provide a robust framework for developing technical competence, interpersonal skills, and organisational alignment simultaneously.

The table below summarises the primary models and their relevance to document control:

Model/ Framework	Primary Focus	Strengths	Applicability to Document Control
Michigan Model	Aligning HR practices with strategy	Aligns development with organisational goals	Supports compliance, efficiency, and traceability
Schein's Career Anchors	Individual motivations	Tailors development to career drivers	Improves engagement, reduces turnover
Holland's RIASEC	Personality–environment fit	Enhances job satisfaction	Guides role assignment for optimal fit
Bohm's Dialogue	Collaborative communication	Fosters trust, reduces conflict	Enables cross-functional coordination and review
Kirkpatrick's Evaluation	Training effectiveness	Structured learning assessment	Monitors training impact on workflow and compliance
CPD	Continuous learning	Encourages adaptability	Maintains skills with evolving document systems
Kübler-Ross Curve	Change management	Supports staff during transitions	Smooth adoption of new workflows and systems

In conclusion, a well-structured approach to individual development within document control not only enhances technical capability but also fosters collaboration, clarity of roles, and continuous improvement. By integrating these frameworks, document control teams become technically proficient, adaptable, and strategically aligned, resulting in reduced errors, faster turnaround, improved morale, and stronger overall project performance. Ultimately, investment in people and relationships is as critical as investment in systems and processes, ensuring that document control is a resilient, efficient, and high-performing function.

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