

Babel Learning & Development Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Learning and Development policy is to ensure all staff benefit from continuous professional development that fosters employee satisfaction, engagement and career growth, and reinforces our company values: quality, collaboration and compassion.

Updates

This policy is published on the company's [website](#) and reviewed annually by leadership development leaders, HR and senior management.

Introduction

Babel is majority owned by its employees via an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT) and is focused on building a sustainable, ethical agency ready for the future; one where people, purpose and planet come before profit. The company is consistently recognised by the PRCA, the world's largest PR professional body for achieving the highest continuous professional development in the industry. Operating in a specialist field, as a top independent B2B technology PR and integrated comms agency, the company recognises the importance of learning and development in an evolving market.

Policy statement

All employees are entitled to:

- / Equal opportunities in all aspects of their development without regard to age, religion, race, national origin, ethnicity, colour, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability status or any other group protected by law.
- / Annual salary, bonus and benefits review.
- / A formal onboarding and induction programme covering the job, role, team, company, clients, policies and procedures.
- / A formal intern onboarding and training programme specific to their role.
- / A company overview including company direction and goals/objectives.
- / Regular onboarding check-ins and performance feedback meetings with their line manager during the first nine months.
- / Clear and measurable objectives for their performance at work.
- / A formal process for receiving performance feedback, including twice-yearly performance review, and annual 360-degree feedback.
- / A line manager who is committed to employee development.
- / Formal technical and skills-based training.
- / Coaching and mentoring to enhance learning, development, growth and career progression.
- / Give feedback, e.g. via formal employee surveys, pulse surveys, committee groups, peer groups, line manager, mentor, learning and development leader, external trainers, HR, senior management, etc.
- / Paid volunteering opportunities to support learning and development.



Objectives of learning and development are to

- / Promote and reinforce the company's values: quality, collaboration and compassion.
- / Attract new talent and retain existing employees by providing continuous opportunities for professional development.
- / Support 'team health' and 'client health' goals.
- / Model industry best practice and assist employees in adapting to automation and new technology.
- / Improve technical and interpersonal skills of employees.
- / Support career growth opportunities and advancement for all employees.
- / Support employees in managerial and leadership positions and the development of their interpersonal skills.

Our policy aims to recognise the importance of

- / Balancing individual development needs with the company's training goals.
- / A diverse training programme that includes industry accredited trainers and external professional development.
- / Training to support a change in responsibilities, e.g. new role or new client.
- / The role of a line manager in supporting and coaching an employee.
- / The role of a learning and development leader in upskilling multiple employees.
- / Having formal processes for booking courses and approving paid training time.
- / Monitoring and evaluating participation, volume, frequency and effectiveness.

Employee responsibilities

- / Identify their development needs, in partnership with their line manager.
- / Participate fully and positively in learning and development activities.
- / Participate in the PRCA CPD programme.
- / Host training sessions for individuals and groups.
- / Contribute to pre and post development discussions. Being respectful of others when giving informal feedback or formal survey feedback.
- / Alert their line manager if training volume or type is having a negative impact.

Line manager responsibilities

- / Employee responsibilities, as above.
- / Identify the development and training needs of direct report/s.
- / Meet with direct report regularly (typically weekly), or more frequently.
- / Support the direct report's continuous professional development.
- / Encourage feedback from colleagues on the direct report's activities, progress and performance.
- / Work collaboratively with HR and the learning and development leaders on training ideas, formats, monitoring and evaluation.
- / Host training sessions for individuals and groups.
- / Do not need to be a mentor.



Learning and development leaders

- / Employee responsibilities.
- / Do not need to be a line manager or mentor.
- / Are experienced staff with responsibilities for training groups of employees.
- / Consult line managers on learning and development needs.
- / Represent the interests of a group of employees, not the needs of an individual.
- / Consult with other learning and development leaders
- / Consult with HR and senior management on training ideas, formats, monitoring and evaluation.
- / Processes are supported by HR who assist in booking training sessions.

Mentor responsibilities

- / Employee responsibilities.
- / Do not need to be a line manager.
- / Are more experienced or knowledgeable than their mentee.
- / Identify the development needs of their mentee.
- / Meetings with mentee approximately quarterly, or more frequently.
- / Consult with their mentee's line manager with permission from the mentee.
- / Support and guide the mentee on development topics that they agree are important.

The role of HR

- / HR provides specialist support to employees, learning and development leaders, line managers, mentors and senior management.
- / Assist with the identification of learning and development needs.
- / Implement the company's learning and development plan.
- / Implement the company's essential employee training plan, e.g. professional standards, statutory obligations, new systems or policy changes, diversity training, and equal employment opportunity training.
- / Ensure induction and onboarding training for all workers.
- / Develop and design learning and development activities.
- / Source suppliers for training activities and evaluate appropriately.
- / Ensure written job descriptions for existing and new roles.
- / Provide guidance to line managers around written career goals, linked to performance objectives.
- / Overall budget management e.g. line manager/mentor budgets, PRCA training budget, external training budget and expenses.
- / Maintaining training schedules.
- / Maintaining evaluation records.

Identifying training needs

- / Via self-assessment, line managers, learning and development leaders, mentors, senior management.
- / Via external influencers include external trainers, PRCA, clients, journalist/analysts, competitors, industry judges, etc.



- / Types of training: essential training, induction and onboarding, internal formal, internal informal, on the job coaching, online training, seminars, conferences, web resources, external webinars, external coaching, and external training, job rotation, job shadowing.
- / Training needs are recorded on the employee's personal development plan and the employee, with permission from their line manager, formally requests the training by sending their personal development plan to HR.
- / HR consults with learning and development leaders and senior management before approving the employee development plan.

Influencing our industry

- / The company aims to influence its wider industry and publishes its own podcast: [Digital Communicators Podcast](#), featuring key industry influencers.
- / The company publishes its industry thought leadership via the media, our blog writing and social media:
 - [LinkedIn](#)
 - [Website](#)
 - [Instagram](#)
- / Senior management speak at industry events and are involved in judging award programmes.
- / The company champions and cultivates the next generation of talent by supporting programmes such as:
 - [Taylor Bennett Foundation](#) – Hosting training for the foundation's PR training programme participants.
 - [Bright City Bright Future](#) – Paid summer internships; London Living Wage.
 - Hosting training for educational institutions such as the [Bentley University programme](#).
- / Participation in annual industry benchmarking reports, e.g. PRWeek and the PRCA.

Company values

- / **Quality:**
 - Because we're experts. We deliver quality service and achieve fitting, show-stopping exposure for our clients. With deep sector knowledge, gained over decades of experience, no agency knows the B2B tech sector like Babel.
- / **Collaboration:**
 - Because we work as a team and we make it our business to understand your business. We leave no stone unturned and no story unexplored. We make progress where others can't.
- / **Compassion:**
 - Because we care; about each other, about our clients and about our planet. We look after our team and the world around us and we value our clients. We work with warmth, kindness and positive energy.

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