

## **CCL Benchmarks Assessment for Development**

### **A note to my survey respondents: from Michelle**

Dear Colleague,

As you know I have recently completed with other colleagues the CCL Benchmarks Assessment for Development process to which you contributed as one of my Survey respondents.

Thank you for the time and energy you devoted to completing the questionnaire and providing verbatim comments.

The process has been very helpful and has led me to engage in conversation about my perceived strengths and my perceived areas for development as well as my future personal and professional options.

I recommend it to you.

I have been reminded through this process of the important steps in my professional journey.

I started out in Accounts Payable in Business Services (long before it was realised that 'Finance and...' need to be added to the title), only to be tapped on the shoulder and asked to apply for the O/S payments officer position in General Accounts.

It only got better from there when I was once again tapped on the shoulder and asked to apply for the Finance Officer role in the Library. I applied (because it would have felt rude not to...) and was then offered the role. I stayed working in the Library in that same position for the next 10 years. Why? Because it was fun! Because every day brought a new challenge (3 of us shared the 1 computer back then...I know!) and the people I worked with were amazing. The staff morale was so high, new technology meant processes kept changing so I was always learning something new and it was just a pleasure to come to work each day.

Eventually I could no longer ignore the financial need to be earning a higher income and there was no progression plan for Finance Officers in a Library, so I applied for a secondment with another Department. It was only a 6 month secondment so I was safe in the knowledge that if it was all too scary I could return to my old position.

As it turned out my new boss left within the first couple of months (not because of me...just in case you were wondering) and I was suddenly thrown into the deep end managing several staff as well as the accounts. Who knew I would enjoy this challenge so much! I resigned from my safety post at the Library and worked as a Finance/HR Officer in this new area. My mentor's catch phrase at the time (and she

is never without one) was 'Our team: Leading the Way' and she certainly did that for me.

My mentor was always a great motivator and soon had you believing you were awesome! ...even negotiating that I submit a late application for a challenging position that closed that day. I still don't remember how we had arrived at this point. One minute I was having a casual conversation about life with and the next minute I had to spend my entire weekend applying for a new job that I knew nothing about. I guess I shouldn't say that because at that time I did know one thing about the job – I would be perfect for it. That's what my mentor told me anyway....

I soon realised it's a fine line between excited and absolutely terrified when I was asked to attend an interview. It was during that interview process that I met my new manager for the first time. I always felt lucky to have been invited to interview but I was shocked to say the least when I was offered the role. Thankfully - going to work at this new position ended up being another great move for me. My new boss was a 'tell it like it is' boss and that suited me perfectly. Apart from having to go home and watch 14 Black Adder episodes and 39 episodes of Vicar of Dibley (so I could understand her humour) it was a smooth transition.

Ultimately, I was given the opportunity to add new areas to my list of responsibilities. I was apprehensive at first (to say the least) as I was unsure how I would manage the increased workload but soon realised it would not be a major problem. As my boss explained that I could manage it easily - I just had to simply 'lift my eyes up out of the minutiae'

So...here I am...eyes lifted!

So if you are still with me, there is a reason for going into such detail about my life. It's because when, as part of the CCL Benchmarks process, I had to stop and think about my own 'Career Management' and I realised I have been outsourcing that job my entire life!

***My strengths seem to be:***

Putting people at ease, respect for differences and strategic perspective.

People tell me that I am straight forward, analytical, politically aware and compassionate. I believe in outcomes but try to be sensitive to the impact I may have on others.

***It would appear that Areas where I might engage in further development are:***

Career Management (if this comes as a surprise to anyone...you skipped the first page didn't you?) and Change Management. This process has also reminded me that, considering things never seem to stay the same for long, I need to be patient and supportive of staff that may be reluctant to see change as a positive in the first instance. I also need to have more confidence in my abilities and 'own my strengths'

***I intend to use my strengths and the clarity afforded through this process to undertake the following further learning options:***

I hope to have the opportunity to attend the CCL Leadership Development Program. The LDP is designed to address the leadership tensions inherent in leading in the middle zone. LDP builds the skills and confidence you need to build commitment and translate strategy into effective action.

Finally I wish to say that the perception feedback provided to me through this process (based as it has been on CCL valid and reliable research work) has been very important and I would value your keeping me grounded in the future with further timely feedback.

Best wishes

Michelle