

Standardized, effective and timely data management training at Cmed

In Spring 2007, an idea was born at Cmed that was to change the way we deliver data management training. It was conceived from a desire to:

- **Deliver standardized data management training:** A standard training input results in a standard learning outcome, and we wanted to be sure that our data managers were working in the same way, no matter which of our offices they were located in.
- **Ensure competence:** Attending training is great, but we wanted to be sure that our data managers were competent in the tasks they undertook and that they understood and were compliant with Cmed processes. It was also important to us that our team managers were able to delegate work to their team members with confidence – this goes a long way to ensuring that we deliver a great product to our customers.

We faced the same training challenges as most organisations: New employees joined at different times and in different offices, they started in different data management roles and worked on different tasks. Timing matters where training is concerned, yet even in a rapidly growing department we rarely had more than a few people at a time requiring training on any one topic. If we were to wait until we had a full class of trainees, it would be too late for some.

In October 2007, the Data Management Operations (DMO) technical competence framework was launched.

The DMO technical competence framework

The DMO technical competence framework consists of over forty short, granular technical training modules, mapped to the various DMO roles. Each technical training module is a comprehensive training guide that describes for a specific data management task or unit of work:

- The training **content**. This includes descriptions of 'expert' behaviours such as planning, trouble-shooting, decision-making and problem-solving, as well as the approved DMO process and relevant functionality of our in-house data acquisition and management system, Timaeus.
- The training **process and expected duration**
- The **assessments** used to determine the trainee's competence in the task and full understanding of, and compliance with, Cmed procedures. Competence tests may be verbal or written and they may involve a practical demonstration of the trainee's ability or submission of his/her 'live work' for evaluation by the trainer – whatever is most meaningful for the training topic.

All are described in the depth and detail required to achieve a standard training input and learning outcome each time the training is delivered.

Key roles

There are two key roles in the DMO technical competence framework: Module Maker and Training Champion.

A **Module Maker** is a named person, selected because of their expertise in a particular area of work. They have overall responsibility for development and maintenance of the module relating to this area.

A **Training Champion** is a named person, assigned responsibility for delivery of one or more modules. Training Champions may also undertake development and maintenance of their assigned module(s) under supervision of the Module Maker. Training Champions are selected because they:

- Are competent and experienced in the area of work that is the subject of the module
- Show an interest in the development of others
- Have the respect of their peers
- Demonstrate strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Demonstrate diplomacy and confidentiality

Training Champions and Module Makers are given full responsibility for their module(s). They are considered the 'Authoring Team' and only they – not their senior managers or departmental head – can make changes to the content of their module and the way it is delivered. We believe this responsibility is critical in developing the keen sense of ownership of training outcomes that we have achieved.

Once a Training Champion has been nominated, our Learning & Development team helps with the development of their training skills by delivering 'Train the Trainer' workshops. Training Champions have found these to be helpful for increasing their confidence and skills in training. Confidence is particularly important when trainees may be more senior than the trainer.

Finally, in order to ensure the consistent learning outcome that was our original aim, a new Training Champion must shadow and be shadowed by a current Training Champion in the delivery of the named module.

Application

Technical training modules are the primary vehicle for technical training in DMO at Cmed. They are used to train:

- All new joiners to DMO. Technical training modules apply equally to experienced and inexperienced data managers. Cmed processes are very different in many respects to equivalent processes in other organisations and the same terminology can have different meanings in different companies. We have found that even those who have built considerable data management experience in other companies have benefited from training in the Cmed way of doing things.
- Current employees who require training in tasks or units of work that are new to them.

All employees are encouraged to request 'refresher' training if they feel they need it.

The DMO Initial Training Plan is available to help team managers to plan and request training for their team members. It includes a matrix of technical training modules and the job roles for which they are appropriate. The Team Manager simply marks what training they want for their employee and when they want it. Our training co-ordination team does the rest – scheduling training, sending invites and logging competence assessments as they are completed.

Benefits

In our experience, the DMO technical competence framework offers a flexible and effective training solution for a busy and growing department.

Technical training modules are short and granular, on average about an hour in duration and cover just one task or unit of work. They are flexible, working equally well for one-to-one delivery at the trainee's workstation or group delivery in a classroom or even to different countries via our web-based meeting tool. This means we can offer each module every month in each office, that training champions and trainees can more easily fit training into their busy schedules and that trainees can access the training they need, when they need it.

Right person, right topic, right time, right result!

The training evaluation sheets bear testimony to the popularity of this approach – trainees particularly appreciate that the technical training modules are practical, real and relevant to the tasks they're taking on at the time:

"I liked that I was able to interact with the trainer and demonstrate my understanding of the issues. I think this practical method of training is very interesting and useful in order to understand the (Cmed) process"

"The content was relevant, informative and delivered at the right time"

"The training was delivered at the perfect time. The content was just enough for my own tasks and was very clear"

"I liked being able to learn by doing the tasks in question as I find this the best way of learning and more effective than reading instructions/watching presentations. It also allows questions to be answered as you can bring up queries whilst completing the task in hand"

"It was a good opportunity to go over the skills I had already been putting in to action and also raised some areas within the role of which I was previously unaware"

But, has the technical competence framework delivered on its promise of standardisation and competence? Tracy Fells, Global Head of DMO for Cmed remarks that

"The standardised training modules have contributed enormously to ensuring harmonisation of training and processes across all Cmed Data Management offices. The introduction of this approach to Data Management Technical Training has shown definite benefits to the Global team through improved efficiencies in processing now that all teams are receiving standard training modules - one result is that the training modules can be conducted simultaneously for data managers based in US, UK and Romania etc and then assessed by the trainer who may be located in any one of these offices. This approach has also improved the communication channels between the Data Management Teams as training champions from all offices work together to develop training material and also training sessions can be run globally - I believe this contributes to building stronger relationships and working processes between teams who may not often get the chance to meet face-to face as they are located across different continents."

What about the bottom line? Is the technical competence framework providing return on investment (ROI)? We are currently developing mechanisms to better report the impact of the technical competence framework on our key performance indicators (KPIs), from which we will be able to calculate ROI. Watch this space!

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