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| Approach: **Building Capability** |
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| One of the challenges I came across as an SGL/acting Head of Department was having the right expertise to deliver certain courses. Sometimes you do have the capability but not always the capacity. One challenge for us was building capability and capacity in the specialist area of corporate reporting. We've tried to just go out and recruit people which hasn't been successful. So plan B was to build capability in house, we did this by identifying through PDR *(Performance Development Review, formerly Appraisal)* which colleagues were interested in this specialism through conversations about their development plans. For this to be successful and to ensure the colleagues who have the right level of interest and capacity to develop the required level of expertise, then the Subject Group Leaders need to understand their staff's development aspirations through having quality discussions, particularly at their PDR.Sometimes colleagues ask to go on a course but as a Subject Group Leader you need to understand why, how does it help their career aspirations and the requirements of the subject group? When you develop this level of understanding then you can identify development opportunities for groups of colleagues and achieve economies of scale.Helping staff develop beyond a unidimensional perspective is important, things change very quickly in accounting. Tax is a good example, what we taught last year is now out of date. So growth means staff development. You can't micro-manage development though, you need to get the conditions right. A bit like a plant, you ensure there has enough light, soil and water and the plant grows. In developing capability as a leader its ensuring staff get what they need, ensure they are happy, engaged and have freedom to provide intellectual contribution. Its always a danger we become so process and system fixated that it becomes counter-productive and feels like micro-managing. You have to trust people to be professional - which means paying attention to outcomes not process. *You can't run 100 metres in a straight Jacket!*Of course there are different levels of support you need to provide and you need to understand people's strengths. You can do this by having good conversations to understand what people are good at and enjoying doing - which could be different for everyone, and making those connections with what the subject group needs. People develop most effectively when they are doing things that interest them. |