



The CPD Certification Service

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HINTS AND TIPS FOR MARKETING CPD

The concept of CPD is maturing both in the UK and internationally. In many professions and countries it has been formally recognised for over 20 years, but it was only in the late ninety-nineties that its influence upon marketing communications was recognised and developed by the CPD Certification Service. This document expands upon those factors.

An increasing number of organisations are becoming members of the CPD Certification Service and making a commitment to the CPD 'movement'.

Naturally, they want a return on the human and financial investment they have made and, hopefully, will continue to make, in providing certified CPD.

Since we first conceived the concept of providing CPD within the marketing mix, we have developed and implemented numerous best practice techniques in marketing CPD and in exploiting the sales and specifying opportunities that can be created. Keep a regular eye on the CPD Service's web site (www.cpduk.co.uk) for future developments.

You will doubtless have your own ideas but to assist you in planning and implementing your CPD programme and in promoting it, this document contains a number of suggestions that you might like to consider.

- Using the CPD Certification Service's symbols
- In-house presentations
- Literature
- Direct Marketing
- Research
- The Web
- PR
- Advertising
- Exhibitions
- CPD Events
- General comments

SHARING YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Continuing Personal and Professional Development (CPD) is the term used to describe the undertaking of a structured and planned approach to post-qualification further learning throughout the career path.

Everyone wants to enhance their skills and knowledge. It makes good business sense. The enthusiasm for CPD comes from the individual.

Employers also recognise the business benefits of encouraging professional staff to undertake CPD. Most take a very pro-active approach to ensuring staff obtain CPD on technical and business related subjects.

CPD is a personal commitment and so it is up to each individual to determine what subjects they wish to investigate and how they wish to access learning opportunities.

The vast majority of people undertake CPD on those technical and business related issues and subjects that have a day to day bearing on their work. CPD is thus perceived as highly pragmatic and highly relevant.

All professional Institutes have CPD policies and expect their members to undertake CPD. Most Institutes provide some CPD through regional and local branch meetings.

Subjects covered are of a very general nature, as they do not have the resources or in-depth expertise to meet the individual CPD requirements of each of their members.

In the construction industry alone, an estimated 400,000 plus professionals working in the construction industry, who are members of one of the 32 professional bodies that constitute the Construction Industry Council, are currently obliged to undertake CPD.

CPD can be accessed from a wide range of mediums including the reading of technical magazines and journals, attending seminars, conferences, factory and site visits, videos, and electronic media, and increasingly, via the internet.

Most professionals are expected to undertake a minimum of 35 – 40 hours CPD each year. The norm is much higher. Some Institutes ask members to base their annual CPD on a point's basis – so many points being awarded for particular types of CPD undertaken. Professionals may be asked to obtain 100 points each year.

Whichever method is required, it is the individual's responsibility to determine the value of the CPD received.

Professionals are expected to keep records of the CPD undertaken. In most cases, the CPD record is an integral element of their work-based career / development plan. Increasingly, employers are holding these records. Some Institutes 'call in' a percentage of member records each year.

Employers recognise the value to the business in having staff as informed as can be possible on a wide range of business related subjects.

Most employers now have nominated CPD Co-ordinators or managers who have been tasked to actively arrange relevant CPD opportunities for internal staff.

Your customers, specifiers, decision-makers and opinion-formers undertake CPD and this is something that is very important to them.

By becoming a provider of independently certified CPD on subjects that relate to your organisation's areas of expertise, you will create numerous new opportunities for developing and maintaining long term relationships with your customer base.

You are experts in your field. As such, you have much to contribute to those undertaking CPD. They will want to learn from you.

This document contains a number of suggestions as to how you might promote your involvement in the CPD movement and the items of CPD that you have available.

Using the CPD Certification Service symbols

The CPD Service's 'member' and 'certified' symbols are recognised as marks of commitment and quality.



Make sure that you are taking full advantage of them.

Use the 'member' symbol on all sales and general information e.g. sales leaflets and brochures, display panels, advertisements, letterheads, visiting cards, training rooms and corporate and product power point presentations. Use the certified symbol only in connection with material that has been certified for CPD purposes.

It can be used on promotional leaflets and mailers promoting CPD events, you could also display the certified symbol on certified documentation, CPD Guides, CPD Briefing Notes, invitations to attend CPD presentations and on CPD Certificates of Attendance.

Take a look at the examples on the web site to discover how members are using the symbols. You may pick up some good ideas.

In-house presentations

Presentation Techniques

Not everyone feels totally comfortable speaking to groups of people. Those giving the presentations need to be perfectly at ease. Why not have a 'dry run' with colleagues to make sure that all the equipment works and the power point slides are in the right order (!). Get them to offer constructive criticism and positive comments as to the subjects being covered and the method of presentation.

Those who are proficient in presentation techniques and who meet our strict criteria could become Registered CPD Presenters by becoming Affiliate Members of the CPD Service in their own right. Call us for more details about this scheme.

Alternatively, why not go on a refresher training course on presentation techniques. Contact us for details of possible trainers.

The CPD Presentation.

What ever you do, never forget that CPD is not sales.

Never try to use a CPD presentation as a vehicle for promoting your company or specific brands, products or services. It won't do you any good. You will annoy the audience and turn them against you. What is more, the CPD Service will get to hear about it and you'll run the risk of being thrown out of the CPD Service – and that will not do your reputation any good at all.

Let's face it; there is no point in beating the audience over the head with your name. They know who you are because they have invited you to talk to them.

Remember CPD is generic.

Follow-on

You're coming to the end of the in-house certified CPD presentation. You've had a really good session with the audience, the power point worked without a hitch and there's been quite a lot of positive interest in the subject, and, of course, your organisation, and you know that the time has been really well spent.

How are you going to finish? Just leave them your card and your product brochure? Hand out your branded CPD Certificate of Attendance? Disappear?

You don't want to do that! You want to continue to excite these potential specifiers and customers and, more importantly, you want to establish close working relationships with as many people as you can – those who attended your talk and those who work within the organisation as a whole but did not attend the presentation.

Here are a couple of ideas you might like to try.

Homework

Hand out 'homework' sheets. Write down 3 or 4 of the most common design or specification problems you are normally faced with.

Hand them out to all in the audience. Encourage them to solve the problems, in writing, and to return them to you for 'marking'. It's all part of their CPD.

The answers should have been covered in the talk, be available in supporting documentation – see literature section below – and be in your company's product guide.

Once you've marked the 'homework' sheets, return them – they will have to write their names and address on the sheets – with additional questions and information.

Those professionals who are particularly interested in the subject could well be invited to the factory or distribution centre for a more in-depth presentation and even a demonstration. It all keeps the interest alive and the contacts 'hot'. It also helps you to add names to your database.

Never forget, organisations don't buy and sell – people do.

The more personal contacts you have within an organisation, the better.

Documentation

Use the presentation script as the basis for additional supporting documentation, which goes into the subject in more depth – and that, doesn't mean simply photostatting the power-point slides!

You've probably got the script saved on the PC. Retrieve the copy, expand it, cut and paste, add more illustrations and drawings, text, standards and regulations. Add a brief bibliography, if appropriate.

Submit it for CPD certification its own right. When that's been done, include a CPD Self-Assessment form (we can advise you on this) and a request sheet for more copies e.g. "Other colleagues might like to receive this free CPD Guide. Please let us have their names and we will forward them their own personal copy".

Also include details of all the other subjects and issues that you cover within your current, and 'forthcoming', CPD programme.

Include a registration slip, as you want to encourage professionals to register with you for your on-going CPD – see research section below. It's all part of adding names to the database for follow-up in the normal way.

Back to the documentation. It's been certified for CPD. Hold it on file. To reduce costs, run off copies from the laser printer and spiral bind the pages.

Put the bound document in a corporate folder along with relevant product technical data sheets.

Remember, CPD material does not have to be in glossy colour. Some of the most effective CPD guides are in black and white or two colours.

Take multiple copies with you, not just for those in the audience but for other members of staff unable to attend the presentation who would like to receive details.

The CPD co-ordinator will give you an idea as to numbers and distribute them to relevant staff. Ask for their names.

You've generated even more interest in the subject, made them remember what you have told them, and encouraged them to get to know your product catalogue and spread the message throughout the organisation.

Literature

The 80 / 20 law says that 80 per cent of specifications will come from 20 per cent of the specifying market.

In many cases, therefore, you will want to target those who are giving your in-house CPD presentation to the larger sized specifying organisation.

However, there will always be others that you want to reach and influence.

If you can't see them personally, then literature is the next stage in the communication process.

CPD Programme leaflet

To generate more interest in your CPD Programme, you could produce a simple C5 sized four page leaflet that features your name and the CPD 'certified' symbol on the front page, together with copy along the lines of: "XXX's CPD Programme 200X".

On the inside pages, give details about your intention to become a major provider of certified CPD on subjects relevant to your organisation's areas of activity and list what you have available. Or, indeed, that you wish to cover – see Research section below.

Include a coupon to be sent to you, or to the CPD Service, which would enable the respondent to obtain more information.

Distribute this leaflet via the sales force, in mailings, information packs, exhibitions and so on.

Additionally, or alternatively, get the CPD Service to include copies in one of its monthly mailings to its CPD Contact database and/or include details of the leaflet on the Noticeboard section of the web site – www.cpduk.co.uk

CPD Guide

Actively market and promote the Presentation supporting documentation in its own right – let's call it "The XXX CPD Guide to....". Do it as part of your own promotion e.g. mail shots, PR, exhibition hand-outs or get the CPD Service to help promote it. Make it clear that multiple copies can be obtained.

When requests come in, make an internal judgement as to the value of the respondent. If it's an organisation on your top hit list, get on the phone and 'sell-in' the seminar.

If you're not sure, phone them up. Ask how many copies they might want. What their interest is in the subject. How else you might be able to help them in a CPD context. Get the names. Add them to your database.

CPD Briefing Notes

The CPD Guide will probably cover a number of issues in sections or 'chapters'. Call the copy up on your PC screen and beef up the copy. Turn each 'chapter' into a separate CPD Briefing Note.

It doesn't matter if it only covers two sides of one sheet of your company headed paper. Number each Note. Make it clear that each is part of a series. Get them certified for CPD purposes.

Market and promote them over a period of time. Encourage professionals to 'collect' them. Promote the series as if they were a 'part works' type of publication.

You could even send the first one or two CPD Briefing Notes out in a company folder. Overprint the folder with your company name and address and call it "The XXX CPD FILE".

Encourage professionals to use it to store all the information you send them relating to CPD - and your technical data sheets.

Go down this route and very quickly you can produce a really interesting and comprehensive series of credible CPD Briefing Notes that can reflect existing and new products and services.

It will also give your PR and advertising agencies something to really get their teeth into – see PR and Advertising sections below.

Direct Marketing

CPD can make a significant contribution to the implementation of successful direct marketing campaigns.

It can help in terms of creating new interest in your organisation, products and services and in updating and indeed for increasing, your contact database.

What is more important is that your CPD literature can be used as the theme or the basis for direct marketing campaigns aimed at specific target audiences.

It can be used to prove that you understand the recipient's areas of activity, responsibilities, the issues they have to deal with, their desire to enhance their knowledge and at the same time promote the support and expertise available from your organisation, thus helping to enhance corporate and product reputation and technical recognition.

First relate or adapt your CPD literature to meet the educational needs of each of your varying target audiences. Build up a bank of literature which, whilst they may all cover the same subject, has each item relating to differing specifier and opinion forming groups.

To ensure that the recipient takes note of what you have to say lead your covering letter with your CPD 'story' instead of a sales message.

Include with the CPD material relevant product or technical data sheets.

To help make sure that the envelope is opened, you could overprint envelopes with the certified CPD symbol and/or include copy along the lines of: 'This envelope contains CPD Material'. This will make it clear that the contents are not sales related.

Don't forget that we can mail CPD related material on your behalf to our exclusive database of CPD Contacts. Call us to find out more.

Research

Your involvement with the CPD Certification Service and your activity in the CPD sector can be used for a number of research activities.

CPD Questionnaires

To help you determine the potential interest in your subject and the likely demand for in-house presentations and literature, print off a "CPD Questionnaire" on a sheet of your company's letter headed paper.

List all the subjects that you might cover, as many as you like, indicate how this CPD could be accessed e.g. in-house presentations and seminars, half day workshops, training courses at your factory or training centre, CPD guides, CPD Briefing Notes, site visits, factory tours, CD-ROM's, floppy discs and via your web site.

Add space for the respondent to put in his/her name, position, organisation, address, telephone and fax

number and the e-mail address. Ask them to complete the form and send it back to you or, to help give added value to the exercise and enhance still further your credibility - with prior agreement – they could be returned to the CPD Service for processing.

You could distribute the questionnaire yourselves; via the sales force, central mailings, presentations, copies of the CPD Guide and CPD Briefing Notes.

The CPD Service could also distribute it within one of its mailings or, indeed, feature it on its web site.

Such an exercise will help you prioritise subjects and determine the human and financial resources that will have to be allocated to really exploit the CPD aspect of your sales and marketing programme.

Product Development Questionnaires

Products are introduced to solve problems. Understanding how to solve problems is part of CPD.

Thus, you could always add to your CPD questionnaire one or two subjects that have a relationship to new product development ideas that your R&D guys are working on. It could help to 'test the water' and, indeed, might give you an indication as to product benefits that have not been fully considered.

The Web

Most organisations have a corporate web site. A few are really good, useful and interactive. Most are not good. Designed by 'web masters' for 'web masters', they rarely contain the information that professionals want and are rarely structured in the best way to make it easy to access the information.

Most company web sites seem to follow the same format - how large and wonderful the firm is, a list of products, some case study application stories and a few technical information sheets that can't be properly read, take hours to download and can't be printed off!

Keep it simple. Keep it straightforward. Keep visuals to a minimum. Make pages easy and quick to print off and make sure that the images reproduce well. Show the layouts to your targets. Ask them what they would like to learn from the site.

Test it with targets, not your own staff, before you go live.

Don't forget to put a CPD page on the site and to feature this heavily on your 'host' page or site index.

CPD on your site

The CPD Certification Service is constantly coming up with new and exciting ways for people to access information about your CPD from its web site and how you might promote your CPD – contact us for more details or take a regular look at www.cpduk.co.uk.

CPD Section

List the CPD section/page on your main index - use the member symbol as the 'click here' mark.

Start the section with a page that states your commitment to the enhancement of skills and knowledge through your membership of the Construction CPD Certification Service and the technical and design support services that you provide.

Feature the 'certified' symbol as the 'click here' mark to take the viewer in to the next page – an Index of subjects covered by your CPD programme.

Clicking against each subject would then take the viewer on to a page that gives a summary of what is covered.

Each of these pages could feature the 'certified' symbol.

Opportunities to go to the 'contact us' - for details as to how to request the CPD – should be on each page.

Provide a link to the products or services that relate to each CPD subject.

You need to capture the names of those viewing the section. But as most people will be wary about putting their name on your web site - they will think that you will be on the phone selling them product, get the contact point to be the CPD Certification Service. We will process the request back to you in the normal way – please contact us about this service.

Don't forget to include a CPD registration form which viewers can e-mail back to you.

CPD on the Web

A development of the above could enable viewers to read on screen or to print off, the CPD Guide/s and CPD Briefing Notes, in full, via your CPD section.

Add in the 'homework' questions – see the in-house presentation section above. The answers could be in the form of multiple choices. They tick the answer that they think is right. By e-mailing it back to you for checking, they could receive a CPD Certificate to show that they have completed the 'test'.

CPD online

We have a scheme which enables your certified CPD presentation talk to be accessed 'live' over the web.

Visitors to our web site can actually listen to the voice of the presenter as they view the power point visuals. It makes the presentation far more exciting.

They can fast forward or play back as they wish and by successfully answering questions at the end of the presentation, they can download a CPD certificate.

You receive details of those who have registered for your presentation.

PR

You've already budgeted for PR and, no doubt, prepared a planned programme of press releases and articles. Why not use your CPD material as the theme for some of these?

Press releases could be issued about the availability of the CPD Guide/s and CPD Briefing Notes, collectively as one story or drip fed to the press over a period of time – get colour pics taken of the covers or front pages to illustrate the stories.

Your budget will include colour separation charges so we're not talking about additional cost.

In fact, by using CPD as story lines instead of, say, application stories, it is likely that you will be able to save money.

You won't have to incur high PR consultancy bills for researching, drafting and finalising a press release or, indeed, have to buy very expensive external photography of buildings.

The copy for the CPD Guide/s and the CPD Briefing Notes could also be used as the basis for placed articles in your key target media.

You will find that editors will appreciate the 'independent' style of the copy and the fact that it is material certified for CPD purpose.

Research suggests that you are likely to get up to four times the number of enquiries for CPD material than for product information and that the level of respondent is going to very high.

Get your PR agency working. See just how creative they are!

Advertising

As with PR, so with advertising. Why not give over some of your ad pages to promoting your CPD? Advertise the availability of your certified in-house presentations and/or your literature. You will find that it will generate not only new interest in your company but generate high levels of response.

Don't forget to feature the 'member' symbol on the ads and/or small pics of the material – see PR section above.

Exhibitions

Exhibitions can be very costly. The cost of the space, the stand, the human resource costs and expenses, the cost of promotional material – and you're in a highly competitive situation.

Your stand has got to shout louder than any other does. There has to be a good incentive for attendees to step off the gangway and onto your stand. Why not make CPD that reason?

Firstly, make sure that you have displayed the 'member' symbol on the stand's exterior. Set up a 'CPD Information Centre' at the back of the stand.

Feature the 'certified' symbol and have some display panels produced which are specifically about the CPD you have available.

Have copies of your CPD material on the stand for people to peruse.

Get visitors to complete a CPD Registration form.

Talk about CPD, and then develop the conversation onto their specific needs – it will enable you to find out more about them and lead to them being introduced to your products and services.

You could always invite CPD Contacts to meet you on the stand to discuss their CPD requirements and how you might be able to assist them. It's much easier to talk about CPD than about product. One leads naturally to the other.

CPD Events

To assist you and your regional teams meet with local customers and opinion formers, we can organise and promote CPD Seminar events on your behalf.

These might be one-off events or a series of day-long events featuring a number of your certified CPD seminars.

By promoting them as events 'organised by the CPD Service in association with XXXXX', you are likely to generate higher levels of attendance than for 'normal' product sales demonstrations organised under a commercial or brand name.

However, these events would also include product display areas manned by sales staff.

Targets can be encouraged to attend via your own mailings to your own database of contacts and/or via CPD Service mailings.

If your organisation is involved in the construction industry, you could participate in our annual CPD RoadSeminar Tour.

This is an exciting, novel and proven way to meet potential specifiers, from all sectors of the industry, by delivering certified CPD seminars at a choice of up to 16 locations across the UK.

A maximum of twelve non-competitive topics are covered at each event. Each location includes an exhibition/display area.

Contact us to find out more about how we can help organise your own CPD events or how you could take part in our annual CPD RoadSeminar Tour

General

The main point to remember is that the promotion and marketing of your certified CPD is dependent upon one thing only - your marketing skills, knowledge and imagination.

CPD is all about establishing and maintaining long-term personal relationships with existing and prospective customers.

Sharing skills and knowledge has always been recognised as being a powerful element of business development.

CPD can be the umbrella for such policies.

Customers or specifiers not only have much to learn from you, they have much to offer you as well. Don't forget, communication is a two way process.

By encouraging individuals to register with you for your on-going CPD, you will be able to keep track of what they are doing and what their needs are.

Registration also means that when they move from one firm to another, you stay with them.

The desire to enhance skills and knowledge, on a continuing basis is here to stay. CPD will never be a 'flavour of the month'.

As time goes on, continuing personal and professional development will become more and more a natural part of everyone's lives.

The CPD Certification Service encourages the provision of, and assists in the dissemination of, high quality, independently certified, CPD throughout the industry and allied sectors.

It has been highly successful in developing new techniques for the production, promotion and uptake of certified CPD.

The CPD Certification Service will continue to play its part in the continuing development of the provision of CPD.

Talk to us about the promotional support the CPD Certification Service can provide to help you maximise your investment in the provision of CPD.

We're here to help you talk to the people who matter.