



Virtual Learning Resource Centre
Userguide



ASHRIDGE

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Welcome to the VLRC

This Userguide has been designed to help you understand the resources available to you, help you find your way around the VLRC and offer some practical advice on how you may use the wealth of information.

How to access the VLRC

Open the Virtual Learning Resource Centre website www.ashridge.org.uk/vlrc * and log-in using the details found on your Log-in Card at the back of this binder. Familiarise yourself with the navigation buttons down the left hand side of the screen. Look at the Site Map section on page two, cross-referencing the live website at all times.

The Development Log

The Development Log is an optional tool that will help you track the learning resources you have used on the site. Fill in the boxes as you work through, and use your line manager as a mentor to assess your progress. This may also be used in conjunction with an organisational personal development plan.

* (or whichever URL your organisation has chosen to use.
Further details on your Log-in Card)

How do I find my way around the site?

Home

You'll find links to a guide for new users, latest content updates, self-assessment questionnaire, online survey/feedback and the Ashridge website.

Learning guides

Over 60 Learning guides available: select from an alphabetical list or by subject area.

Pocketbooks

Access to PDF versions of over 70 Management Pocketbook and tips on how to print. Titles are listed alphabetically.

Book reviews

Regular reviews of top business titles which can be accessed by subject area or alphabetically by title.

Economic trends

Monthly industry sector reports and a 12 month archive. Country profiles on over 50 nations delivering social, political, geographical and economic news.

Software guides

Access to a range of helpful guidance, advice and hints and tips on using various software packages.

Career development

Self assessment questionnaires, book reviews, journal articles and recommended websites relating to career planning and personal development.

Ashridge publications

Access to Ashridge publications plus links to Ashridge research centre websites and faculty publications database.

Useful websites

Select from over 700 websites which have been categorised by business topic.

InfoTrac

Search a database of 250 top business publications for full-text articles.

What information will I find?

Self Assessment Questionnaire

On the home page you will find a link to the self-assessment questionnaire based upon Ashridge's 360° diagnostic tool which will identify areas of learning that are key for your development. On completion, the questionnaire will provide a list of recommended resources for you to print off and work through.

Learning guides

There are 60 Learning Guides written by Ashridge tutors, associates and consultants covering a broad spectrum of management skills and competencies. Each guide contains an overview of the topic area, a variety of practical development activities and recommended resources for further reading. You can search for Learning Guides from an alphabetical list or according to subject area.

Pocketbooks®

For a more light-hearted approach to learning, you can download or print pdf versions of the successful Management Pocketbook series. These popular handbooks contain humorous, 'bite-sized' tips, bullet-points and quotes. The subject areas provide a good complement to the Ashridge Learning Guides.

Book reviews

Choose from over 200 carefully selected business and management titles which have been reviewed by Ashridge associates. These comprehensive reviews extract the key learning points from the text, designed to save you valuable time.

Economic trends

Five new economic trends are added each month. These are quarterly global reports, written by an Ashridge economist on how a particular industry has been performing. Each report is archived, giving you the ability to track trends, figures and PEST information over a period of time. Oxford Analytica's country profiles are also available and provide political, economic, geographical and social data on over 50 countries.

Software guides

These software guides written by Ashridge's IT trainer will help you brush up on your IT skills. Explore a range of tutorials from beginner to advanced covering the entire Office Suite for Microsoft Office 2000, 2003 and XP.

Career development

This increasingly popular section includes interactive exercises to help you assess your skills, development activities and recommended resources including learning guides, book reviews and websites on many areas including redundancy, flexible working and tips on developing your career in the 21st century.

Ashridge publications

A range of Ashridge publications written by Ashridge tutors, consultants and associates is available to keep you up to date with the latest in management thinking.

Useful websites

To save you time using search engines, 700 websites, as recommended by Ashridge personnel, have been hand-picked and categorised by industry and business topic.

InfoTrac®

InfoTrac is a Thomson Gale database which stores over 200 business and management journals including such titles as *Management Today*, *Marketing Week* and *The Economist*. Key word searches can reveal full-text articles to print or download.

Help/feedback

This area contains the relevant contact details of those Ashridge staff who can help you — let us know if you are experiencing technical difficulties or have any queries about the content of the VLRC. We value your opinion, so if you have any suggestions or requests please contact the VLRC Content Manager.

Getting started

Identify areas of learning that are key for your development by completing the self-assessment questionnaire found on the home page. Based upon Ashridge's 360° diagnostic tool, the questionnaire on completion, will provide a list of recommended resources for you to print off and work through.

To kick start your development, select the Learning Guides on Self-Managed Development and Managing your Career and work through the activities.



www.ashridge.org.uk/vlrc

How will I use all of these resources?

The Learning guides will support you:

- when you're coping with the pressures of a new job
- when you're studying
- when you're trying to improve cross-departmental communications
- post-appraisal
- before an interview
- during self development
- when you're doing the job, but don't know the theory
- when you want access to information quickly
- if you are contemplating a change of career
- after 360° feedback.

Tip...

If you are facing organisational change, distribute Learning Guides to your employees on a subject which will help them to deal with the forthcoming upheaval.

Tip...

Use the Learning Guides as part of the appraisal process either as pre-appraisal reading based on the organisational competences or as post-appraisal tasks to improve weak areas.

Pocketbooks®

- will give you valuable crossover with the Learning Guide topics – they can be used together to capitalise on two different approaches
- provide a light-hearted approach to management and business topics, contrasting with the in-depth nature of the Learning Guides.

Tip...

If you're planning workshops or group-work, print or attach copies of the Learning Guides and/or Pocketbooks and use as hand-outs or preparation reading.

Book reviews allow you to:

- save time and stay up to date with the latest in management thinking from key business books including Management classics
- support research, study and project work
- check the relevance of a title before purchasing in hard copy.

Use Economic trends to:

- understand your own organisation's market
- understand your customers' markets
- access instant economic data for report writing
- access instant PEST data for project work
- chart the history of an industry sector in the archive section.

Tip..

Sales people – use the Industry Trends before visiting potential clients to better understand their market and predict their needs.

Use the Career development section if you are:

- contemplating a change in your career
- seeking to develop your career and skill set
- facing or dealing with change at work
- wanting to assess your strengths and weaknesses.

Useful websites

- save you time
- remove the need to use search engines which can generate scores of irrelevant websites
- select the best quality sites
- highlight those sites used by experts.

Tip...

Locate the recommended websites for your industry sector and Bookmark (or add to Favourites). This will encourage you to keep abreast of information relevant to your business.

InfoTrac® will:

- allow you access to full-text articles for project work, benchmarking or personal development
- help you compile research reports and dissertations
- provide you with trade and industry journals specific to your industry sector
- keep you updated with articles on your business function, e.g marketing, hr, operations, finance
- help you locate information about legislation and it's implications

Tip...

Enter a search term in the basic search field to look through recommended articles from reputable business and management publications.

Tip...

For further tips on how to search the InfoTrac database visit the VLRC.

Development Log

Record in the table below all the Learning Guides, Pocketbooks and book reviews you have read through, together with an assessment of how well you understood the subject:

1= not understood

2= some understanding

3= fairly well understood

4= very well understood

5= extremely well understood.

Date	Resource	Purpose	Score
20/01/07	<i>Influencing Skills Learning Guide</i>	<i>Preparation for meeting</i>	4



Contacts

Technical queries

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Content queries

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