

Addendum to the Policy Statement on CLP

First posted on Members forum by Barry Llewellyn on 13/03/09

Amended for re-publication on 16/07/09

In 2006 as a result of a growing number of calls for TrainerBase to recommend its members to the purchasing community, a panel of members was convened and the Standard and Certified Learning Practitioner (CLP) accreditation developed during 2007. The Standard and CLP were introduced to the membership in early 2007 and to the wider training community in 2008. TrainerBase was responding to the needs and wants of one of its key stakeholders; the purchaser of training.

In response to postings, regarding the "diminishing value for non-CLP`ers." or "TB - what value to unaccredited members?", the Directors of the Learning Practitioners' Association, which now includes the TrainerBase web site, would like to make the following comments.

There are many reasons why members join the Learning Practitioners' Association, which includes TrainerBase. Benefits such as the community spirit, free advice from fellow professionals, the forums etc., have in no way been diminished by the establishment of The Standard, and by extension, by the existence of CLPs. All such benefits are still available to all members, irrespective of their level of membership.

One key feature that brings many to the Association and TrainerBase is the ability to use the site as a marketing channel and win contracts.

So has the establishment of The Standard diminished the value of membership of the Association for non-CLP`s?

To determine this it is worthwhile considering the number ways members get business through the Association.

Search facility (Find a Trainer)

Firstly, and by far the biggest way, is that purchasers of training use the search facility to find suitable trainers. The Association has little or no knowledge that this business is even being conducted except from member feedback and surveys. In this instance the Association does not have the possibility of recommending CLP`s, even if there was one suitably accredited.

So has the existence of The Standard meant that non-CLP`s have seen a diminished value in this scenario- no. The client selects whomsoever they wish without any input from the Association.

Opportunities

The second way, and easily the next biggest way for members to get work is to respond to opportunities posted by purchasers. These are open to all members, irrespective of level of membership, and trainers win the work purely on their merit. The Association again does not get involved in those negotiations, so again the opportunity simply doesn't exist for us to make any recommendations.

So has the value for non-CLP`s actually diminished- no.

The above facilities have been in existence on the site since its inception in 2002 and have not been diminished by the introduction of the Standard and CLP.

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A facility that is new and coincides with the introduction of the Standard and CLP is the Brokering service that the Association now offers. This was devised because of a growing number of calls from purchasers who wanted a filtered shortlist of suitable trainers.

Brokering

This service is one of the smallest way members get work through the Association, - and to put this into perspective; less than 2% of tenders are brokered leads. Brokered leads are open to any member to apply for, and we shortlist the most suitable trainers irrespective of level of membership, until such time as CLP is a requirement.

A client may ask for recommendations and if a CLP meets the tender criteria and is included in the shortlist sent to the client; that trainer will be identified as an accredited member. It is then down to the client to select whichever trainer they feel most suitable. Every member has the same opportunity to put themselves forward, just as they always have done. (A previous brokered lead included one such CLP, who was identified as such, but the CLP was not selected as other members on the short list better suited the purchaser needs). So again has the value of membership been actually diminished by the existence of The Standard, - no.

The above are all directly related to activity on the site which form the major interface between the purchasing community and the membership. What may not be evident to members is the office based and other activity that is conducted on behalf of all members; some of which results in an increase in web site activity and contracts.

Direct requests

Staff at the association are answering a growing number of calls from purchasers of training. These purchasers are looking for both assistance in finding a trainer and recommendations. A purchaser is talked through the best option for their need and is presented with a list of trainers that meet the disclosed criteria. These lists sometimes include both CLPs and non CLPs and where appropriate (asked for) Association staff may be able to and do occasionally recommend CLPs. Is recommending CLPs to these direct callers diminishing the value of what the site offers – no.

Exhibitions and conferences

The Standard and CLP has also provided a valuable platform for engagement with purchasers and other key stakeholders within the learning and development community. The Association has attended a number of exhibitions. This attendance would not be cost effective without the Standard and CLP. It can be argued that the Standard and CLP has increased the value for all members by the increased exposure of the Association.

Purchaser projects

Staff at the Association spend a considerable amount of time contacting companies- introducing them to the Association and maintaining a relationship with them with the intention of getting them to use the TrainerBase site and Association members next time they are looking for an independent trainer.

One of the things that crops up regularly in a very positive way is that the Trade Association is perceived as a representative body within the sector.

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Secondly, and perhaps obviously, the fact that our services are free to purchasers is also seen as a good thing.

These projects are for the benefit of all members and significantly increase the value of being part of the Association and being registered on the TrainerBase web site.

That said, purchasers and other stakeholders in the learning and development community (awarding, sector and other representative bodies) ARE interested in the concept of the Standard and what it stands for, and a growing number of companies are considering adopting it as part of their selection criteria when appointing independents. CLPs are displayed in a different colour in search ranking (Enhanced members are also identified differently) and are listed on a separate page; as are Featured Trainers (members who have paid to be listed in on that page).

Finally; it is estimated that over £2 million worth of contracts will be awarded to members of the Association as a direct result of their presence on the TrainerBase web site; an estimated 20% increase on previous years. The significant majority of these contracts will be awarded to members who are not CLP.

The introduction of the Standard and CLP does not reduce a members ability to promote themselves on the site, they have provided the Association with a mechanism to satisfy the call from purchasers to recommend members. The Standard and CLP have provided a platform for promotion and engagement that is of benefit of all members of the Association and has not diminished what was already on offer by the Association.

The Directors
The Learning Practitioners' Association
July 2009