Hi

**Learning and Development in an Agile Working Environment Focus Group – seeking volunteers**

Following on from the most recent communication cascade a few weeks ago, as you will may be aware the BC and management teams are now turning our attention to thinking about what our future way of working might look like when we are able to return to a new (and hopefully better) normal.   One of the areas we would like to consider sooner rather than later is how we can best support role specific and more general training and learning within a more agile and partially remote working environment to ensure differing learning styles and preferences can be accommodated and to understand any factors that may need to be addressed within an agile working policy.  We are therefore seeking volunteers to form part of a small focus group with representatives from across the business/different roles, who can help us come up with creative solutions on this topic.  The kinds of areas we will talk about and consider solutions/options for include:

* General onboarding and induction
* Role based induction and ongoing training (e.g. trainee attorney’s, secretaries and administrative roles)
* Incidental learning (whether within teams, through supervision or cross team learning that may happen in an office)
* Management/supervisor training
* Mandatory/Compliance training e.g. ABC and GDPR (and other mandatory training that may be required in the future)
* Mentoring/revision support for patent/TM exams
* Mentoring/revision support for patent admin and CITMA courses
* Any other areas where learning and development occurs

We want to look at how training/development can be best delivered in an agile working environment, where traditional methods may still be needed but where there may be alternatives, e.g. technological solutions or hybrid options.

We are seeking volunteers from the following roles/groups to join who would like to contribute ideas, consider the options ready to put a proposal to the management team (although this is a guide so being willing and able to contribute is the main criteria).  We will be looking for an initial time commitment of a hour every 2 weeks (starting at some point in October) for a couple of months, whilst we get the project up and running, as well as time to follow up any actions assigned.  Ideally we need:

* 2 Fee Earners (1 x qualified and 1 x trainee)
* 1 or 2 Secretaries (any level) who have received induction training or been a mentor/secretarial trainer themselves
* 1 or 2 from another Business Services area

The group may be supplemented by relevant members of the operational committee as needed to provide input from a management perspective on various topics.  If you would like to be a part of this group to start shaping a new agile approach to working and learning, please let your line manager/partner know and they will then put your name forward.  Please could you do that **by the end of September**.

**IT equipment**

It has been nearly six months since the lockdown, and we have all made efforts to refine our homeworking set ups.  It seems inevitable (and welcome for most) that there will be a significant element of homeworking going forwards and we need to keep challenging ourselves to optimise our own homeworking set up.  We appreciate that not everyone has the space to mirror a full office set up but we would like to remind everyone that our preference is for all staff to have two monitors (neither of which is a laptop screen), a stand-alone keyboard, a mouse and a webcam (which is separate from the laptop).  We can also provide headsets to make those Teams calls better or powerline adaptors to create a wired internet connection without rewiring your house.

Don’t settle for what you have got! If you want to speak with IT about improving your set up and adding to the equipment you have then please log a ticket with support and they will arrange a time to chat with you.

**Six months since lockdown**

It seems appropriate to mark the passing of six months since lockdown.  A save-the-date invite has been sent for 5pm on Friday 25 September and further details will follow.  We hope to see as many of you there as possible!

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| Please note the change in our address to 15 Old Bailey, EC4M 7EF. COVID-19 - At AA Thornton we are able to continue to provide an uninterrupted, high-quality service to our clients. Please click [here](http://www.aathornton.com/covid-19/) for our latest update. |

