Engaging employers in HE – communicating with the private sector

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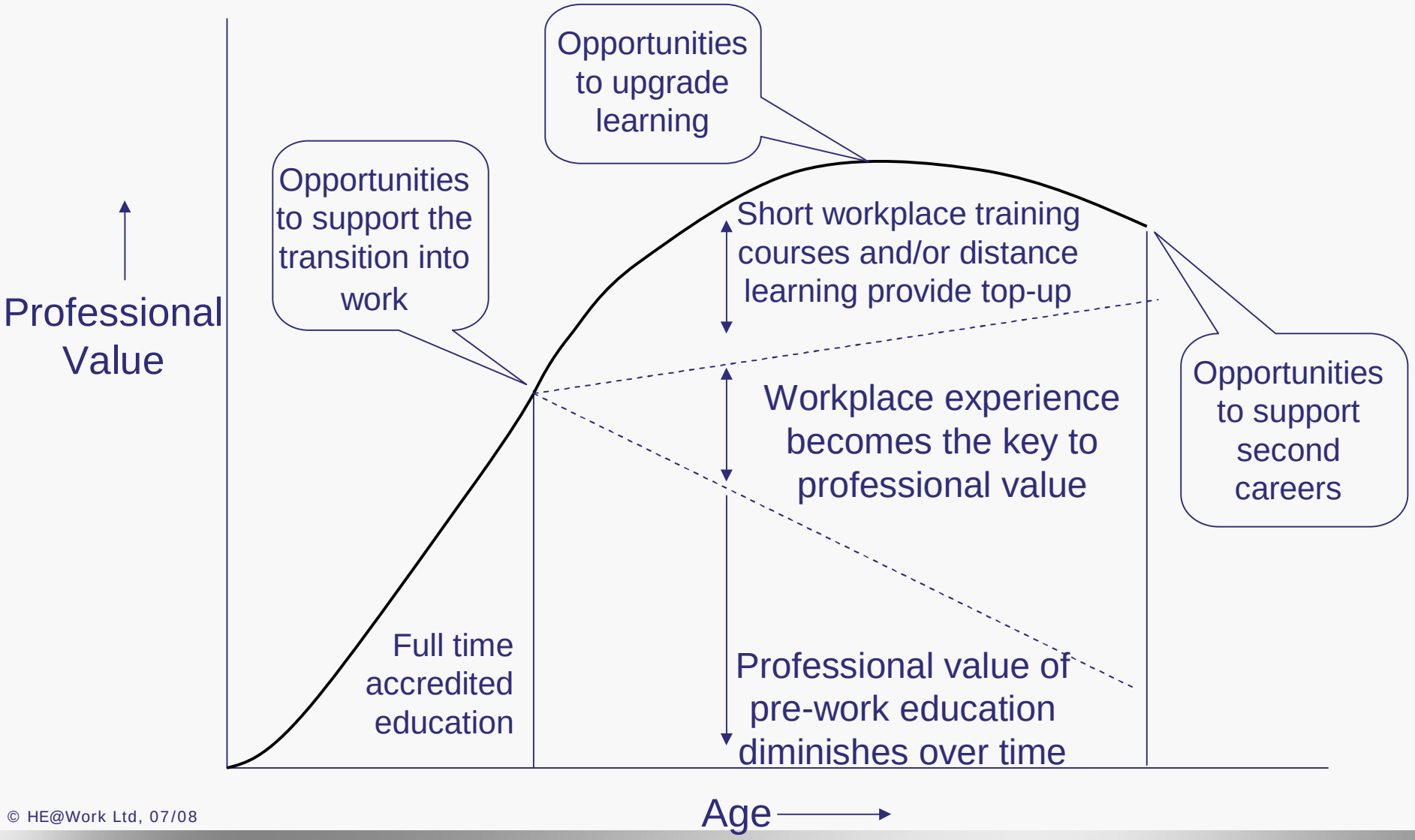
Communication Basics

- Research your audience
- Have a credible purpose for each contact
- Focus on what people want not what they need
- Position your message in their priority list
- Listen more than you speak
- Achieve a meaningful outcome at each contact
- Aim for a long term relationship

Understanding the world of work



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Understanding Employers

- Focus on organisational (not individual) capability
- Compliance evermore critical in many areas
- Pace of change speeding up (need flexibility to plug skills gaps quickly)
- Higher level skills becoming more important (but there is an oversupply of ‘graduate job’ seekers)
- Soft skills becoming more important (but they don’t believe Schools/HE/FE can supply)
- Career development becoming more focussed

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Understanding Employees

- The majority (ca 80%) of people in full time employment say they want to continue to develop professionally.
- The more qualified people in employment expect to manage their own progression.
- On balance they are happy with the level of training provided by employers but would prefer a switch to more accredited/residential short courses
- The more qualified people are the keenest to progress further.

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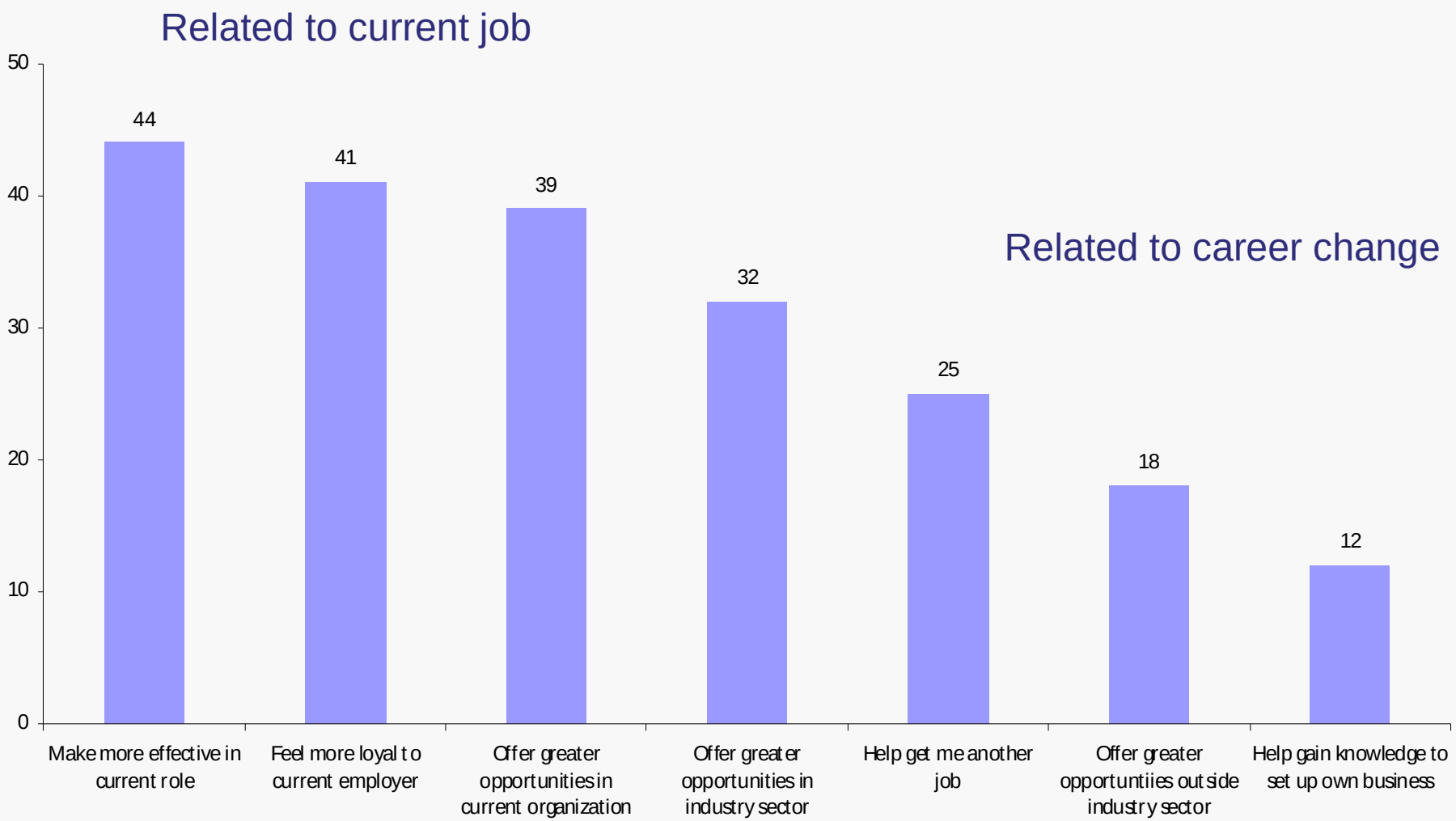
Why do employees study for accredited qualifications



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Training wanted by employees

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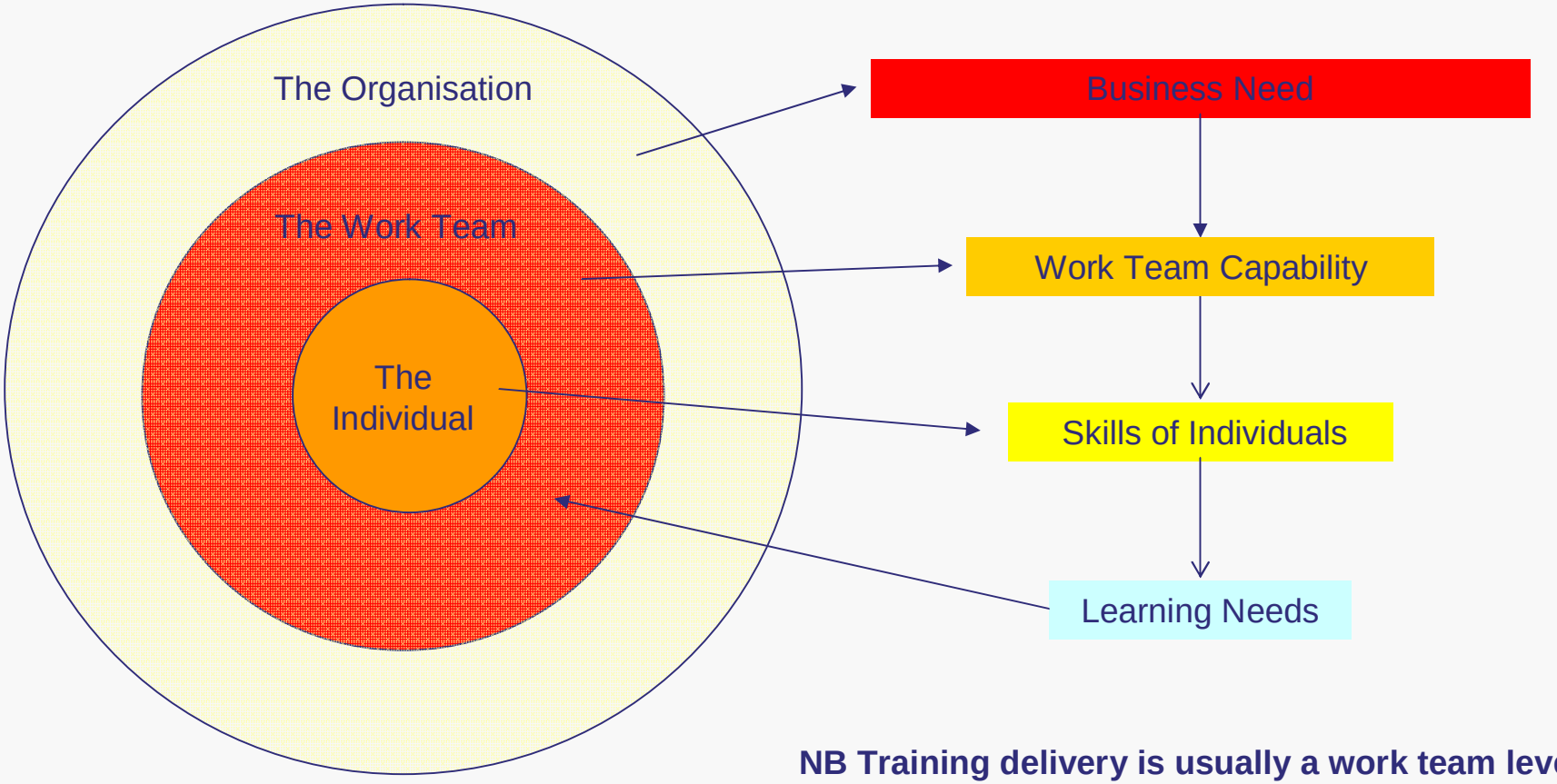
Relating employer need to employee need



NB Training delivery is usually a work team level

Complementary learning Approaches

Strong emphasis on structured formalised course based learning and demonstration of outcomes mainly through formal examination with fine grading

Experiential aspects often neglected; usually artificial, outdated and generally unmeasurable, i.e. do not count towards the HE award grade

Typical HEI	Typical Workplace
Assessment and accreditation	Work Appraisal
Teaching & Mentoring	Training & Management
Case studies	Achievement in a real life situation

Accreditation usually neglected & assessment limited to rating in-job performance

Lack of structured reflection and embedding of learning

Emphasis on career paths which develop capability through real life experience & achievement

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The communication with employers

What employers want

- Access to better-suited recruits
- Entry level transition programs
- Quick relevant training supplements as and when needed
- Focussed professional development in certain areas

What FE/HE can offer

- Access to student population
- Mentoring employees on how to learn/research
- Short sabbaticals
- Staff competency assurance

What's in it for the company?

- More attractive recruitment offer
- Lower turnover rates
- More efficient use of training
- Staff competency assurance

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