

Discoveries

What is it?

A discovery is an experience or insight that will guide/modify how you choose to act in a similar situation next time. It could be on any topic, both in and out of work and should prompt reflection. You may have also come across **lessons learned** sessions after a project, or collaborative piece of work. But by the end of a lengthy piece of work we completely forget the things we learnt at the start of the project, and how do you know if you have learnt anything?

Sharing the experience is essential – if it was a lightbulb moment for you or a time saving discovery, it could be for others too. In Focus we have found that when you think “I bet everyone knows that already”, it’s amazing how wrong you can be!

When to use it

Every day! The idea that ‘every day is a school day’ is not wrong...by observing others at work; listening to podcasts or watching TV, whatever it may be, there are so many situations when you may think – *I didn't know that, or why didn't I think of doing it that way?*

A really good way to build Discovery capture into your team’s routine is to get into the habit of holding a *Daily Update* – either face-to-face, online or hybrid. The Daily Update template can be downloaded from the [Online Toolkit](#) along with an explanation of how to use it, and will ensure that team members are prompted on a daily basis to reflect on – and share and log – their Discoveries.

How to use it

Discoveries can be a team activity or you can think about them on a personal level too.

1. Log your discoveries

Reflect every day. Don't wait until the end of an activity to look at what you've learnt. Capture discoveries as you experience them – logging them on a simple spreadsheet - date, who made the discovery, a brief description and how you might change

Categorising them by type of discovery – process; customers; behaviours; mind-sets; technology etc., is really useful to group ideas when you come to review them.

2. Review and Act

Review and discuss the collected discoveries regularly. This is an ideal time to learn from each other and consider how you need to adapt the next time.

Consider any actions that can help ensure a discovery is incorporated into team best practice or ways of working. Set a date to complete the Action, and importantly, don't forget to tell other teams

Benefits at a glance

- Recording a discovery at the time will mean it is less easy to forget.
- Learning from experience and adapting your behaviour will lead you to perform better.
- Sharing personal insights can build trust in a team.
- It builds the habit of listening, reflection and adaptation, which is the cornerstone of continuous improvement.



or your customers if your new way of doing something is going to impact them.

Discovery	What could we do differently?
1. Task View on you bottom of your screen can save you ages looking for documents you've recently been working on	Give it a go
2. Bear in mind that not all students are adults, there more U18's than you might expect at Oxford	Be aware when drafting communications for students to consider guidance applicable to U18's
3. It is possible with the right people, and the right will, to develop and deliver a service very quickly	Believe that not everything at Oxford needs to take years to develop and introduce
4. Tricky Teams Tuesday!	Beware it's a thing! The day Microsoft does updates to Teams
5. Listening to the radio ... report about someone who made a ritual of preparing a G&T and watching a candle flicker while appreciating her situation	Be encouraged to appreciate the smaller positives
6. Power of the message ...how strongly you put it across can be more important than content	Take more time to consider use of words and pictures when preparing presentations.

Figure 1: Examples of different sorts of 'Discoveries' logged by members of the Focus team during the team's Daily Update