Our Partners

Learning & Development is working with a variety of skilled partners to facilitate and deliver learning opportunities to University of Guelph employees. We work with a number of internal and external partners to provide quality learning and development services.

Learn more about each of our external partners, including:

- Diana Kawarsky, The Soft Skills Group Inc.
- Meghan Kirwin, The Kirwin Group
- Jackie Lauer, Axletree Consulting Inc.
- Jane Parkinson, Jane Parkinson & Associates
- Dr. Lynda Pinnington, Pinnington Training & Development
- Doug Heidebrecht, Sun Mountain Self Management
- Arlene Cohen, Arlene Cohen Presenting
- Kate Jones, Live to Learn

Diana Kawarsky, The Soft Skills Group Inc.

Diana is the President of The Soft Skills Group Inc. [1] a training & development consulting firm. She brings nearly 20 years of experience in delivery, design & consulting with Fortune 500 companies and Universities & Colleges. She regularly receives outstanding feedback from the UofG community to her courses. Her expertise lies in influencing, communicating, teaching and all aspects of consultative relationship initiation and maintenance. Diana is known as an energetic, results-oriented consultant who takes great pride in influencing the human side of business. Her experience has great breadth from working with a variety of professionals from new hires to executives. Her group facilitation and public speaking skills are honed through work with over 10,000 clients. Diana has attended the University of Toronto, Simon Fraser University and Athabasca University.

Meghan Kirwin, The Kirwin Group

Meghan Kirwin, Principal founded The Kirwin Group based on her drive to implement positive change in client organizations. With over a decade of senior HR and leadership experience, Meghan blends experience, best practice and business understanding to build innovative solutions for clients that drive performance. She has extensive experience working with leaders as a trainer, group facilitator, project leader, and coach. Her depth of expertise provides a valuable and innovative approach to many organizational issues. She has consulted in a wide range of industries including education, high tech, professional services, pharmaceuticals and health care. Meghan completed her Masters of Business Administration program specializing in Management and Organizational Behaviour at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Jackie Lauer, Axletree Consulting Inc.

Jackie brings over 16 years of experience in management, human relations and systems development to her work as an executive consultant and coach. Prior to launching Axletree Consulting she managed large-scale sales and marketing initiatives in the Education (public and
private) and Telecommunications Sectors with such organizations as Carleton University, ITI Information Technology Institute and Nortel Networks.

She has managed as many as 200 individuals. As a leader, she soon learned her talents were in facilitating buy in for large-scale change initiatives and developing the leadership skills of those around her.

Her approach is based on proven consulting and coaching methods, integrating individual performance, personal development, change management and well being, with business results. Trained in Change Management methodologies, Jackie combines her knowledge of assessments and change strategies with her training at the Coaches Training Institute and the B-Coach (Business Coaching) program, as well as being certified in Emotional Intelligence and Relationship Systems Coaching. Her coaching supports increased awareness, allowing leaders to take more purposeful action, build greater competence, and increased confidence as individuals learn how to become more efficient and effective. By integrating skillful use of intention, reflection, dialogue and action to transform vision into reality, her clients experience genuine and sustained change.

Jane Parkinson, Jane Parkinson & Associates

Jane Parkinson is a Certified Professional Co-Active Coach and holds a diploma in Nursing, Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Education from the University of Western, Ontario. With over 25 years as a leader and consultant in human resources and organizational effectiveness she offers a depth of experience working in education and health care systems in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Taiwan. She has well developed expertise in leading quality improvement initiatives and in facilitating others to successfully implement complex change.

Jane is a highly collaborative, practical and caring leader and coach. She currently maintains a consulting practice and serves as Vice President, People and Organizational Development, Good Samaritan Society, Edmonton Alberta. She has demonstrated a strong commitment to continuing education through enrollment in many professional development activities. For example, she recently completed a trainer certification program in Leader Effectiveness Training through Gordon International and Team Management Profile through Team Management Systems.

She has delivered many planning retreats, facilitated workshops and made formal presentations in content areas such as leadership development, team and facilitation skills and organizational change. Jane focuses on coaching executives and middle managers to develop leadership practices, clarify goals, roles and accountabilities and to build human resource systems that support change.

Dr. Lynda J. Pinnington, Pinnington Training & Development

Dr. Lynda J. Pinnington is a partner of Pinnington Training & Development, a Cambridge based firm which designs and delivers training programs for organizations across North America. A highly regarded facilitator, conference speaker and consultant, Lynda has an Honours BA from the University of Windsor and MA and PhD degrees from the University of Toronto. She is a four time recipient of the Ontario Municipal Management Institute's Excellence in Training award given to the "Trainer of the Year" in Ontario and has been honoured as a "Woman of Distinction" by the Cambridge YWCA for her contributions to continuous learning in the community.

Lynda has worked extensively with the University of Guelph delivering workshops, facilitating focused working sessions for individual departments and workgroups, and providing consulting and design services in leadership development, conflict resolution, team development, project management and customer service.

Doug Heidebrecht, Sun Mountain Self Management
Doug is the principal of Sun Management Self Management. Self Management learning (also known as workload management, results management, priority management, etc.) has been his specialty for the last 17 years. Working in Canada’s corporate market, he has facilitated workshops across Canada and more recently in Italy and Romania for thousands of people in hundreds of organizations. He has also appeared on BNN, and has been featured in the Globe, the Star, Your Workplace, On Board (the Toronto Board of Trade magazine) and various other publications.

After completing a Bachelor of Commerce degree from McMaster University he developed an enthusiasm for bringing “what they don’t teach you in business school”, specifically self management to the corporate world. Helping people produce better results, feel less stressed and enjoy life more is what really motivates Doug. In his efforts to promote long term learning implementation – real change – he has become an Adler Certified Professional coach.

Arlene Cohen, Arlene Cohen Presenting

Arlene Cohen, a successful Public Speaking and Professional Development Coach, a professional Actor, Voice-over Talent, Creative Consultant and University Instructor at the Ontario College of Art and Design University.

Through her company, Arlene Cohen Presenting, Arlene teaches her own branded method to individuals and groups that span world of business, politics and academia. Her method is result-oriented and quickly takes the fear out of public speaking, boosts self-confidence and increases oral communication agility. Topics covered in her interactive Art of Presentation Workshop include; how to overcome the physical challenges of speaking in front of a group; how to improve vocal projection and expression; and how to create and deliver dynamic content.

Kate Jones, Live to Learn

Kate’s extensive experience in the private, public and non-profit sectors across Canada spans more than twenty years in the areas of Performance Improvement, Training, Facilitation, Leadership, Sales and Sales Management, Communication and Group Interaction. This knowledge and expertise enables her to effectively communicate with learners at all skill levels.

As a facilitator, Kate utilizes innovative training methods that create dynamic learning environments. She conducts customized workshops and personalized coaching sessions in a variety of areas including Leadership Development, Customer Service, Selling Skills, Time Mastery, Building Effective Work Teams and Understanding Behavioral Styles. Her focus is to utilize proven strategies and the techniques necessary to optimize the personal and professional success of her clients.