eavolve®

Getting Your Development Funded

How to make the case to your employer, and what to do if they say no.

Most professional development is paid for by employers. Most EAs and PAs never ask, because nobody has shown them how the conversation works. This is a short, practical guide to asking well: the timing, the framing, the email, and the one page that does most of the work for you.

Asking is not a favour.

Training budgets exist. In most organisations they are underspent, and in many they are underspent specifically because the people who would benefit most never put a case forward. The budget does not go unclaimed because it is precious. It goes unclaimed because nobody asked.

The reason EAs and PAs ask less often than other functions is rarely confidence. It is framing. Development is usually pitched as something the individual wants, which puts the employer in the position of granting a favour. Framed as something the business gets, it becomes a decision about return, which is a decision managers are comfortable making.

Everything in this guide is built on that single shift. You are not asking your employer to invest in you. You are showing them what they get back.

You are not asking for permission. You are presenting a return.

Ask at the right moment.

The same request is received differently depending on when it arrives.

01

Know the budget cycle.

Most organisations set training budgets annually and review them quarterly. Ask early in a cycle, when the money is unallocated, rather than late, when it is spoken for. If you do not know the cycle, finance or HR will tell you.

02

Anchor it to a review.

A development conversation already on the calendar is the easiest place to raise this. It is expected, it is on topic, and your manager has already set aside the time.

03

Follow a visible win.

Ask when your value is fresh. Not opportunistically, but sensibly. A manager who has just watched you handle something well is already thinking about what else you could take on.

04

Avoid the obvious no.

Do not ask during a hiring freeze, a restructure, or the week the quarterly numbers come in badly. Wait. The request is not urgent, and a no now is harder to reverse than a yes later.

What your employer actually cares about.

Four arguments worth making, and one to avoid.

Capacity at leadership level.

Every hour you take off your executive is an hour given back to one of the most expensive people in the business. This is the strongest argument you have, because it can be measured and the benefit is immediate.

Reduced risk.

Better judgement in the support function means fewer things missed, fewer decisions delayed, and fewer problems reaching the executive at all. Managers understand risk reduction even when they resist development spend.

Retention.

Replacing a senior EA costs a multiple of what developing one does, and takes months. Investing in someone who is already embedded is far more cost effective.

Visible return.

Development that produces something the business can see, a new process, a better structure, a capability the team did not have, is easier to fund again next time.

The argument that does not work: *"I would find it really valuable."* It is true, and it is the version most people default to. It puts the decision on the manager's generosity rather than their judgement, and generosity has a much smaller budget.

The email.

Adapt it to your voice and your situation. Do not send it as it is.

MAIL · DRAFT SEND

Inbox › Development request

Development proposal: [programme name]

From you@yourcompany.co.uk
To [manager's name]

Hi [manager's name],

I would like to propose funding for [programme name], and I have attached a short overview from the provider.

What it is: [one line. What it covers and how long it takes.]

Why I am asking now: [one or two lines. Connect it to something live. A change in the business, a gap you have noticed, something you are being asked to take on.]

What the business gets: [two or three specific outcomes. Frame them as what you will bring back, not what you will learn. For example: more of your time protected, a clearer process for X, capability we currently outsource.]

Cost and time: [cost] plus VAT, and [time commitment]. I would cover any preparation outside working hours.

What I will do with it: [one line. How you will demonstrate the return. A summary back to the team, a process you will build, a change you will make.]

I am happy to talk it through whenever suits you.

[Your name]

SEND SAVE DRAFT DISCARD

Keep it under a page. The attachment does the detail. The email only has to get it opened.

When they hesitate.

Three responses, and what is really being said.

"There is no budget this year."

Usually means: not in this pot, not right now.

Ask which budget it would come from, and when that cycle resets. Then ask to be considered at that point. You have converted a no into a date, which is a much better position than it sounds.

"Can we look at something cheaper?"

Usually means: I need to justify this to someone else.

Help them justify it. Ask what they would need to be able to say. Offer to split the cost, propose a payment plan, or start with a smaller element. A partial yes is still a yes and it sets the precedent.

"How does this help the business?"

Usually means: you have not told me yet.

This is not resistance, it is an invitation. Go back to the four arguments on page four and pick the one that matches what your organisation is currently under pressure to solve.

Almost no first answer is final. The people who get funded are usually the ones who asked twice.

The one page that does the work.

What to attach, and why it matters more than the email.

Your manager may forward your request to someone who has never met you. That person will not read a long email, but they will read one clear page. Every eavolve® programme has an employer overview built for exactly this: what the programme is, what your organisation gets, what it costs, and what is included.

It is written for them, not for you. It uses their language, it leads with return rather than learning, and it means your manager does not have to explain anything to anyone. That is the whole job of it.

Ask us for the overview for the programme you are interested in, and we will send it across.

If the answer is no.

It is information, not a verdict.

A no tells you something worth knowing. Sometimes it is genuinely about money, and it will be a yes in four months. Sometimes it is about how the request was framed, and a different argument would have worked better. Occasionally it tells you something larger, that the organisation does not see your role as one worth investing in, which is a much more useful thing to have learned than to have suspected.

If it is timing, ask to revisit it on a specific date and put it in the diary yourself.

If it is framing, ask directly what would have made it an easier yes. Most managers will tell you.

If it is the third one, you now have real information about where you are, and what you decide to do with it is a separate conversation. It is one worth having with someone outside your organisation.

The professionals who progress are not the ones who never hear no. They are the ones who ask what it meant.

Be part of the eavolution.

Whatever the answer was, the next step is the same conversation.

If you would like the employer overview for a specific programme, or you want to talk through what would actually be worth asking for, book a call with Emily. Fifteen minutes, no obligation, and you will leave with a clearer idea of where to put your effort.

Book a discovery call **Explore our programmes**