Career Development Plan

Introduction

An integral part of the performance review process is the Career Development Plan (CDP). The Plan identifies your strengths and areas of development as they relate to your career goals. Creating a Career Development Plan will help you develop strategies to maximize your opportunities for meaningful work in the future.

Since your career encompasses all your work experiences, your career goals could include development needed to fulfill your current role, and/or development needed to move into future roles. Use this plan for both scenarios. When setting your career development goals, focus first on your current role. Any development you require to meet your current performance targets or leadership competencies should take priority for development planning (i.e. any performance management rating less than 3). Once you are meeting your current role's expectations, you can begin development planning for future career goals.

The Plan is designed to be **self-directed**. With support from your manager and the organization, you will determine your long and short-term career goals, assess your own developmental needs, create your development plan to reach your goals and follow through with your plan. Your career development plan should be an integral part of the performance management process you undergo with your manager.

The Career Development Plan includes materials to help you think about, plan for and articulate your personal career development. Completing this process will help you to ensure you have the knowledge, skills, leadership competencies and abilities you need to successfully achieve your career goals.

Before you begin….
Revisit your most recent performance review to identify your career interests and training requirements. Copy this information onto the Career Development Plan.

The **Career Explorer** is an interactive, self-directed tool to help you create a picture of yourself by identifying your interests, values, and skills that you already have. It helps you gather and capture a wealth of information about yourself and potential work opportunities. This information may be helpful when building your Career Development Plan.

How to use the Career Development Planning resources:
1. The Guide: Read through the guide to help you complete the Career Development Plan.
2. Career Development Plan: Use this form to capture your action plan for your career development, including: your status in your current role and your future career goals; your development goal(s); steps to achieve that goal(s); timeframes; obstacles you'll face; resources you'll need; and how to tell when you've succeeded.

You should share your completed Career Development Plan with your manager to help him/her understand your goals and plans and identify opportunities to incorporate your career goals into your performance management plan. Your manager may wish to use a copy of your plan when s/he has Talent Review Meetings for your division/department.

The Guide

Step 1: Complete your Background Information

Purpose of this step

Your background information provides a context for where you should focus your career development. Your status in your current role and your career goals will form the foundation for setting your development goals.

The link to Performance Management

Review your ratings, actual results compared to targets and leadership competencies (if applicable). Summarize that information into a few sentences and write it in the space provided in **Performance Summary** section of the Career Development Plan form.

How to determine career goal(s), strengths, and areas for development

Review your career interests and abilities to determine your career goals. Think about both what you want your career to look like in the near future as well as your long-term goals.

Your short-term career goals should be achievable in the next one to three years. The successful achievement of your short-term goals should lead to your long-term career goals, which may take more than three years to complete.

Strengths and areas for development

Review your past performance and career goals to identify your strengths and areas for development. To identify **areas of strength**, consider what knowledge, skills, and competencies you have excelled in during your career.

To identify **areas for development**, consider what knowledge, skills, and competencies you have struggled with during your career.

To help identify both of these think about feedback (Feedback-type information may include: professional assessments; 360; personality type indicators; client feedback; leadership competency assessment) you have received (from peers, clients, direct reports, managers, etc.) regarding your abilities and performance.

What is it telling you? How do you interpret this information? What common themes do you see? Is there an area of critical need that stands out? Who can validate this for you? Based on this information, decide on your developmental areas. It could be a competency, a skill or talent that needs development.

Based on your past performance, strengths and career goals, prioritize your areas for development.

Step 1 Example

Career Goals:
"Move into supervisory role in two-three years. Move into Director level role in 10 years."

Areas of Strength:
"Excellent technical expertise"
"Leadership competencies of decisiveness and strategic orientation."

Areas for Development:
"Impact and Influence"

What next?

Add this information to **Career Goals, Areas of Strength and Areas for Development** sections of the **Background Information** page of the Career Development Plan.

Additional Resources

Performance Management Resources:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/default.asp?mn=1.360.364

The Career Explorer
http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/default.asp?mn=1.162.303.329

Purpose of this step

Goal setting helps you determine your priorities, get organized, make big decisions, and realize your dreams. Goal setting gives you long-term vision and short-term motivation. It focuses your acquisition of knowledge and helps you to organize your resources. Ultimately, this step will help you clarify and understand the direction of your career.

The link to Performance Management

Your Performance Management Plan/targets or objectives are one source for identifying developmental goals. At the same time, look for opportunities to incorporate your development goals into your Performance Management Plan.

How to set a goal

Now that you've identified your developmental needs, choose your specific goal(s). Don't focus on too many developmental goals at once. An effective plan should focus on **two** or **three** goals.

Consider both your short-term goals (one to three years) and long -term (three or more years) goals. Short-term goals may be directly related to your current job or to a position you aspire to in the near future. Also consider organizational goals, government's direction, the department's business plan and the team or group objectives.

Note: Training is an action step to achieve a goal.

How to write a goal

Write **SMART** Goals – resource link to Performance Management Handbook

The Goal should be **specific** enough so that you know exactly what you're striving for, **measurable** so you can tell exactly when the goal has been reached, **action-oriented** to indicate an activity that will produce results, **realistic** in that it is practical and can be achieved, and **time** (and resources) constrained meaning that it has a definite deadline for completion and realizes limited availability of resources.

Be as specific as possible and indicate what behaviours exemplify success in this area.

Step 2 Example
"When in a group situation, be able to present my ideas and opinions in a manner that impresses and influences others."

What next?

Add this information to **Step 2: Development Goal** section of the Career Development Plan. Use one page per goal.

Additional Resources

Competency Dictionary for Leadership Roles in the Public Service of Nova Scotia
http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/default.asp?mn=1.360.364.370#MCP_New

The Career Explorer
http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/default.asp?mn=1.162.303.329

Purpose of this step	Once you have a well-formed Goal, you need some direction to follow to achieve this Goal. The creation of Action Steps gives you a list of the important things that need to be done to achieve the Goal. It's an action plan that allows you to track your progress towards the goal. This is where you detail your project plan for your own development.
The link to Performance Management	Your Performance Management form or appraisal may be a source of action steps.

How to determine action steps

An Action Step should have three main parts:

Action – what action will be taken?

Context – when, and where, will it take place?

Results – what will be the result of this action?

Step 3 Example

"Attend monthly meetings with Ms. Super Presenter and accompany her in 3 situations when a major presentation/meeting is taking place."

"Make at least 3 presentations or chair 3 meetings with her in attendance and receive feedback."

Types of developmental activities or actions that can be used to build skills and competencies include:

- Practical on-the-job experience (joining a committee or project team)
- Coaching/mentoring sessions
- Special assignments (cross-functional team, task-force)
- Increased responsibility
- Self-directed study or reading
- Training
- Job transitions – change in work, people, location, scope

What next?	Add this information to **Step 3: Action Steps** section of the Career Development Plan.
Additional Resources	Competency Development Resource Guide: http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/default.asp?mn=1.360.364.370#MCP_New Corporate Training and Development Programs

Purpose of this step	To help ensure that your career development goals are not sidetracked, it is helpful to consider the obstacles you may encounter in reaching your goals and identify possible ways to overcome these obstacles.
The link to Performance Management	Operational needs must be considered when planning for development. Certain goals or target dates may not be realistic given operational demands related to your current position.
What's an obstacle?	An obstacle is anything that may pose a barrier to achieving your career development goals, such as:

- Limited time to devote to development
- Lack of financial support
- Lack of feedback or encouragement
- Manager is unsupportive of development

How to overcome obstacles and identify solutions

Step 4 Example
Obstacle: "No time for development."

Solution: "Schedule time in your calendar specifically for development and ensure your manager supports this time commitment."

Identifying what resources are available to you will help to increase the probability of successfully achieving your career development goals. You need to think about what types of resources you might need and where they will come from. There are usually a number of potential solutions for overcoming a barrier, such as:

If you cannot take on additional developmental assignments due to your existing workload, a potential solution would be cross-training with another team member.

If your budget for training courses is limited, potential solutions could include choosing low cost options such as online learning or reading a book.

If you think your manager may not be supportive of your development, a potential solution would be to choose developmental activities that will directly benefit your manager and your department, such as taking on a project that is under-resourced or in trouble, or a task from your manager's workload.

Other resources that may be available as part of your solution may include:
- Motivational support and/or coaching from a mentor
- Assistance from your department HR Consultant or HR Development Consultant
- Time to work on your development
- Feedback and advice from those who are skilled in the areas you are seeking to develop
- Corporate guidelines and toolkits for training and career development: www.gov.ns.ca/psc/innovation/ or http://www.gov.ns.ca/PSC/default.asp?mn=1.360.364

What next? Add this information to **Step 4: Obstacles and Solutions** section of the Career Development Plan.

Additional Resources

Corporate Training and Development Programs

Competency Development Resource Guide: http://www.gov.ns.ca/psc/default.asp?mn=1.360.364.370#MCP_New

Purpose of this step

By evaluating your progress, you will be able to establish when you are successful in meeting your training and career development goals.

The link to Performance Management

Your developmental goals and high-level action steps should be recorded in your Performance Management Plan for evaluation, especially those related to training for your current role.

How to… evaluate

Step 6 Examples

"1. Receiving positive feedback from mentor on at least 2 presentations"

"2. Successful completion of certificate program by a specific date."

"3. Receiving a satisfactory performance appraisal from Ex. Dir in the following leadership competency: Impact and Influence, level C: calculates impact of actions or words."

Evaluation is closely tied to goal setting. By setting S.M.A.R.T. (specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic, and time-specific) goals, you will ensure that their achievement can be evaluated. If you do not think you will be able to evaluate a goal, it probably isn't meeting one of the S.M.A.R.T. guidelines.

In addition to your own self-evaluation, you should have another source for evaluation. In most cases, this person would be your manager. However, in some cases, you may wish to have a 'mentor' provide you with additional evaluation feedback on one or more of your goals. Another evaluation criteria may be the target date you set for your action step(s).

Keep in mind that your Career Development Plan is not a one-time activity, rather a document that records an evolving process. It may need to be revised as the year progresses, if you experience changes in your role or responsibilities, or if significant changes to your objectives are required. Regular review and tailoring of your plan is necessary to make your development as effective as possible.

The performance management process at the beginning of the year (goal setting), and at the mid-year and year-end reviews should be used to formally revisit your career development plan. This will help to identify opportunities where your career goals can be aligned with your performance management objectives.

What next?

Add this information to **Step 5: Evaluation** section of the Career Development Plan.