

Supervisor's Guide for Planning, Development, and Review Conversations

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Saskatchewan 

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Introduction

All in-scope employees of the Government of Saskatchewan are now expected to prepare a work plan.

Work planning and review is sound organizational practice that allows you to set objectives for the year, so you and your staff have a good idea of what you hope to achieve. It engages employees, and helps them understand how their work fits into the larger work of the ministry, and of government.

A work plan contains the objectives that guide an employee's work. It helps to ensure that the employee's work will assist the branch and ministry to meet established goals and priorities. It is an expectation of the Government of Saskatchewan that all employees will prepare a plan. Through planning, development and review conversations with employees, you will ensure that work plans are focused, appropriate, and realistic.

Why do we need In-Scope Work Planning?

- Well-performing organizations have some form of work planning and review for all employees.
- Leaders need/want improved methods of setting objectives and tracking performance.
- Other stakeholders have asked for a consistent planning program.
- It is connected to our Commitment to Excellence ([See Statement](#): p. 16 in [APPENDIX](#))
- It is connected to Public Service Renewal

What is Work Planning?

- The process of setting your own achievable work and learning objectives that align with Government, Ministry's, and work unit's objectives.
- Opportunity to provide information to employees about how their work fits into the work of Government;
- Allows opportunities for employees to provide feedback; and
- Provides a formal method for managers to say thanks.

What are its benefits?

- Provides employees with the answer to several questions:
 - What is expected of them?
 - How are they expected to do it?
 - How are they doing?
- Assists in setting and prioritizing projects/objectives.
- Provides a basis for them to discuss progress and address barriers with you.
- Provides them with the opportunity for understanding of organizational direction.

How does it work?

- [There are three phases in this process which are described later in the guide.](#)
 - Initial planning is done through conversation with direct supervisors.
 - Work Plan is created
 - Conversations occur throughout the year, with the expectation of a mid-year check-in to provide an opportunity to realign/ adjust work if necessary.
 - Year-end discussion to review progress and achievement of objectives and prepare for the next year's planning process

What's in a work plan?

- Work objectives, competency requirements and learning and development objectives created by you and your supervisor to help you and the organization identify how work will get done.
- It also allows employees and you to identify their strengths and areas for development.

The Guide

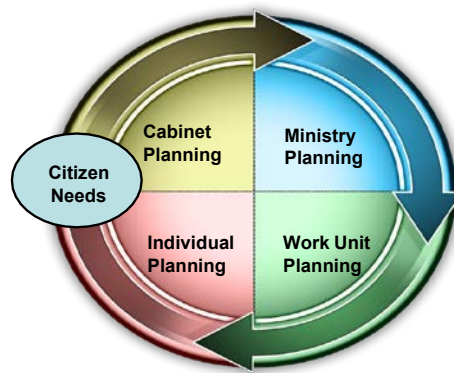
This guide is intended to be a general reference and a resource for carrying out conversations with staff to assist with the preparation and review of their work plans. Including the development of their:

- [Work objectives](#),
- Competency Objectives, and
- Learning and Development Objectives

Alignment to Government Direction

Work planning is part of a strategic approach that involves numerous systems and interactions at all levels within an organization to ensure alignment with overall goals and direction. The work planning process is not only about the relationship between you and your employees; it is part of the government's overall planning process.

Alignment to Government Direction



- The planning process starts with the overall vision of government, which is supported by ministry plans.
- Division and branch plans are based on the ministry plans, and work plan must align with branch priorities.
- Work plans ensure that employees contribute towards meeting the needs of Saskatchewan citizens.
- Additional needs or newly identified needs by the citizens are then addressed in the next planning cycle.

Understanding Your Role

As a supervisor, you are responsible for:

- Monitoring ministry and branch priorities, and determining who will be responsible for meeting those priorities;
- Clarifying and communicating organizational direction and goals on an ongoing basis;
- Carrying out planning, development, and review conversations with each employee to discuss the ministry's goals and priorities, to develop and review the employee's work plan, to identify solutions to challenges encountered, and to recognize progress and achievements;
- Encouraging work and learning planning as a way for employees to understand the government, ministry, the work unit, and their individual roles within these areas; ensuring their work plans are in alignment with organizational goals.
- Supporting employees in understanding how to set objectives and develop their own targets.
- Acknowledging the employee's talents and contributions to the success of the branch and ministry;
- Contributing to the ongoing development of a workplace environment that welcomes learning by encouraging different experiences, perspectives, and opinions, and by supporting the sharing of accumulated knowledge; and
- Supporting continuous learning by providing opportunities for employees to participate in relevant development activities for current and future roles, to apply new learning in the workplace and to share their knowledge and skills with co-workers;
- Providing regular feedback, advice and coaching, including mid-year check-in & year-end discussion

What is the Role of the Employee?

Employees participate in the process by:

- Taking an active role in developing your work plan.
- Understanding organizational direction.
- Understanding how their role contributes to the work unit and Ministry.
- Work with their supervisors to set objectives.
- Prepare draft plan.
- Taking personal ownership to ensure progress, conduct continual self-assessment, proactively provide and seek input

- Identifying obstacles, recommend solutions and support implementation
- Monitoring personal progress and gathering feedback from their supervisors to help determine progress in achieving their objectives.
- Formalizing their learning objectives based on their learning needs for their current role, and discussing the appropriate development activities with their supervisor.
- Taking ownership of their individual career aspirations.

In-Scope Work Planning and Review Process

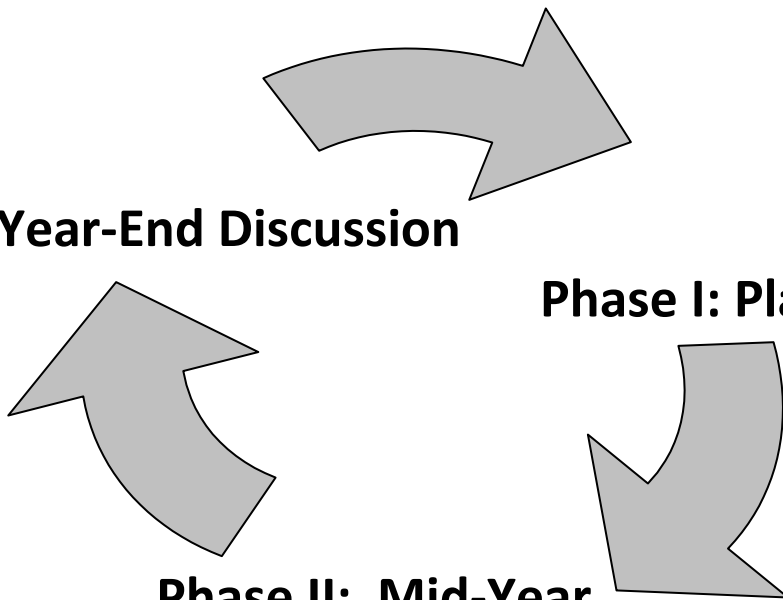
The work and learning planning process must be initiated by the supervisor.

- In advance of the planning, development, and review conversations ask the employee to review the objectives and priorities for the ministry and branch.
 - This will provide the basis for the conversation and will inform the content of the employee's work plan.
- You will meet again, during the year and at the end of the defined planning period,
 - To review the work plan,
 - To consider if objectives need to be adjusted,
 - To recognize progress and achievements, and
 - To begin preparing for the next planning cycle.

Phase III: Year-End Discussion

Phase I: Planning

Phase II: Mid-Year Check-in

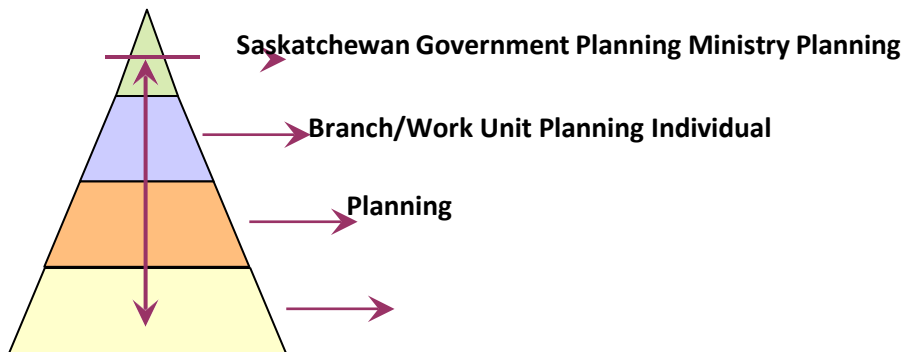


Planning, Development and Review Process

Planning, Development and Review conversations are discussions between you, as supervisor, and your employee, about the employee's progress at work. These conversations should be constructive and used to help focus the work of your employee, as well as to ensure that his/her efforts will benefit the ministry. Specifically, the objectives of the conversations are to:

- Share information about the direction of government and the goals and priorities of the ministry and branch;
 - Work plans need to align with all of these areas

Cascading Objectives



- Discuss the employee's current role and areas of focus for the planning time period;
- Collaborate on the development of the employee's work plan and objectives;
- Assess the employee's learning needs and consider development options;
- Regularly review progress and achievements; and
- Discuss the employee's career aspirations.

The success of a work plan process includes frequent conversation.

- Work plans should be a living document; for instance sometimes the priorities of work areas will change, and this will cause objectives to change.
- As a supervisor, you will need to be prepared to [give and receive feedback, and use basic coaching skills.](#)

Preparing for Conversations in All of the Phases

As the supervisor, you will need to clearly understand and be able to effectively communicate government direction, where the ministry and branch are headed over the next year, and how the employee can contribute to the achievement of the organizational goals.

Suggested ways to prepare for this discussion are as follows:

1. Review the vision, goals, and priorities of the ministry and branch;
 - Explore the ministry website;
 - Review the ministry's Annual Report, and the Plan for the coming year;
 - Review the work plan for your branch and/or work unit;
 - Get feedback from senior management on the priorities for this year; and
 - Prepare to communicate this information with your employee.
2. Review the employee's job duties
 - Think about the employee's strengths in this role, and what you consider to be some of the major accomplishments by this employee over the past year;
 - Understand the critical job duties and responsibilities;
 - Think about how the functions carried out by this employee connect to the goals of the organization;
 - Identify areas where the organization could benefit further by focusing on the employee's strengths; and
 - Identify areas where the employee could develop further in order to help the branch and ministry meet established goals.
3. Review the employee's most recent work plan (if one has already been created).

Creating the Environment

The purpose of the planning, development, and review conversations is to have a discussion about the work and learning that is important to the employee's role in the public service.

- You will want to create an atmosphere that is comfortable, relaxed, and conducive to the open sharing of ideas;
- Choose a location that will be free of interruptions and distractions and give the employee your full attention and help them think through their work objectives and development needs;
- Also, talk about how you will keep in touch about any changes that may happen over the year and when you will next meet to discuss progress in general;
- Refer to the [Coaching section](#) in this document, as well as the [Coaching Tips](#), and the [Tips on Giving](#) and [Receiving Feedback](#) in the [APPENDIX](#); and
- Conclude the conversation by confirming what has been discussed, and make arrangements to finalize the content and sign off the employee's work plan.

Discuss the Employee's Current Role and Career Aspirations

Before you can help to assess your employees' development needs, you will need to consider their current jobs as well as their individual career aspirations.

- Be sure that your conversation includes a discussion about what your employees are working towards in their own careers.

In some cases, an employee may see herself/himself as close to retirement, in which case you should ensure that your conversation includes a discussion about the knowledge and skills that you agree are important to transfer to others within the ministry, and determine the best way to do so.

Ensure the Plan is Appropriate, Realistic and Focused

As the supervisor, be sure to review and confirm that the employee's work plan meets the following criteria:

- Objectives clearly align with the branch priorities
- Objectives are connected to ministry goals
- Objectives are realistic and measurable
- Development activities include both informal and formal learning as appropriate
- Employee understands that development activities are a shared responsibility and are realistic
- Employee's learning style has been considered
- Timeframes are realistic and are flexible to change as required
- The best ways to determine how your employee is attaining the goals, and work to remove barriers that may be impeding achievement of the goals has been identified.

The employee's work plan will identify three types of objectives:

- **Work Objectives** - the key areas of work on which your employee will focus her/his efforts.
- **Competency Objectives** - the key behavioural actions and technical skill requirements that support your employee's progress toward work objectives.
- **Learning and Development Objectives** - the learning and development that will help your employee to achieve her/his work and competency objectives.

The plan also identifies:

- **Timeframes** - when your employee is expected to achieve each objective
- **Measure of progress** - how you and your employee will assess her/his progress

The supervisor needs to assist the employee in developing S.M.A.R.T objectives that are:

- **Specific** - Spell out expected results.
- **Measurable** - What does success look like? What results are you trying to achieve?
- **Achievable** - Realistic; can be achieved but offer employees an opportunity for growth.
- **Relevant** - Does it align with Ministry and Branch/Work Unit objectives?
- **Time-bound** - Has a timeframe been set, key milestones, dates or times of year?

Help the Employee to Assess their Work and Learning Needs

Part of your role is to help your employee identify her/his own work, competency and learning needs, which will then form the basis for the employee's work plan.

- Concentrate on the knowledge, skills and abilities (competencies), behavioural and technical, that are important to the employee's current role and the goals of the ministry and branch over the next year, and then consider the knowledge, skills and abilities that are important to her/his future career aspirations.
- Consider making use of the tools provided for setting objectives:
 - [Tips for Creating Work Objectives](#)
 - [Sample Behavioural Competencies](#)
 - [Tips for Setting Learning Objectives](#)
 - Etc.
- Be prepared to provide the employee with some feedback by giving some thought in advance to what you think her/his learning needs might include.

Mid-Year Check-in

- It is appropriate to have continuous conversations throughout the year with your employee.
- The mid-year check-in is a more formalized activity.

The purpose of a Mid-year Check-in is to provide an opportunity for:

- Open and honest dialogue;
- Shared understanding of how changes impact achievement of objectives;
- Realigning the plan to ensure objectives and expectations are on target;
- Commitment from employee to achievement of the objectives; and
- Create commitment from you, the supervisor, to provide support where required.

Year-End Discussion

For the purpose of reflecting, reviewing and recording achievements and shortfalls over the past year

- To know what has been achieved (public accountability)
- To outline accomplishments towards strategic objectives
- To know what needs to be carried forward into next year's performance plan
- To identify areas for improvement at an individual and organizational level

Coaching Employees

Coaching is part of your role as a supervisor to assist employees in achieving the objectives in their work plans.

What does a Coach do?

- Clarifies expectations
- Provides tangible and appropriate support
- Provides the 'big picture' for employee contribution
- Encourages mutual problem solving
- Helps plan for actions to achieve solutions/change
- Discusses changing priorities or procedures
- Creates a supportive environment
- Listens to employees

The Benefits of Coaching

The Benefits of Coaching Are:

- Sustainable results and engages employees;
- Recognizes strengths;
- Endorses effort and growth;
- Optimizes everyone's styles and strengths;
- Helps others solve and prevent problems; and
- Assists with collaboration with employees and resolution of problems

Types of Coaching

As a supervisor, you will coach employees in two ways:

1. **Positive coaching** to assist employees with achieving their objectives. Specifically, you will:
 - Clarify your expectations
 - Define the behaviours and actions wanted
 - Identify steps to develop
 - Provide ongoing support to employees.

Positive coaching is used to motivate an employee, help an employee develop or enhance a key skill, or prepare an employee for a new assignment or project.

- **Coaching to solve problems** is working with employees to help identify problems and solutions to problems. When work bogs down or tasks are not on track, the supervisor should work with the employee to address challenges.
 - ☒ Define the problem
 - ☒ Explore solutions
 - ☒ Test feasibility
 - ☒ Decide
 - ☒ Implement
 - ☒ Follow-up

The goal in problem-solving coaching is to have the employee take ownership and responsibility for solving the problem. The supervisor serves as a resource to identify and work with the employee to remove barriers that may be impacting the employee's ability to achieve the goal.

"... Balance the needs of the individual employee and the needs of the organization ..."

Coaching; Giving and Receiving Feedback

Good Coaching Questions

- ☒ As a supervisor, you need to ask good questions to start a dialogue
 - Keep away from closed-questions (easily answered with a yes or no, or one word)
 - Ask employees for their feedback, understanding of a situation, etc. to gain clarity around their messages.

Giving Feedback

- ☒ Be sure to:
 - Give feedback as close to the time of the performance as possible
 - Choose a location to minimize interruptions
 - Set aside appropriate time
- ☒ Common elements:
 - Be specific
 - Be timely
 - Be objective
 - Respect the individual
 - Call for action

Receiving Feedback

- ☒ Assess your own performance
- ☒ Ask for regular feedback and be willing to listen
 - Review progress from others' perspectives
- ☒ Listen
 - Clarify – actively discuss
- ☒ Agree to learning points and action plan (as appropriate)

Review Employee Progress and Achievements

It is your role to schedule a mid-period and annual meeting with your employee to have a conversation

- ☒ About the progress they have made towards their objectives,
- ☒ The support they received, and
- ☒ The challenges encountered.
- ☒ It will also provide an opportunity to share ideas about what could be done differently in the future and planning for the next year.

Other Suggested Resources

You will want to help your employee explore opportunities for informal learning from his/her work experiences, relationships with others, and self-directed learning.

For example:

- **Work experience** – special projects/assignments, participation on committees/working groups/teams, secondments, acting assignments
- **Relationships with others** - mentorship, coaching, networking
- **Self-Directed Learning** – volunteering, community involvement, reading books/articles/papers, watching videos

You will also want to consider formal learning opportunities for employee development such as workshops, training courses, educational programs, and development programs.

APPENDIX



The Saskatchewan Public Service Vision:

The Best Public Service in Canada

Our Commitment to Excellence

Dedicated to service excellence, we demonstrate innovation, collaboration and transparency, practice effective and accountable use of resources and promote engagement and leadership at all levels.

Our Core Values

***Respect and Integrity Serving
Citizens Excellence & Innovation
One team***

SMART Objectives

It is important that the work objectives and results expected be stated in the most effective possible form. The SMART model, outlined below, is helpful in developing the content for Work, Competency or Learning and Development Objectives.

The first step is to sort out the difference between objectives and aims, goals and/or targets before you start. Aims and goals etc relate to your aspirations; objectives are your battle- plan. Set as many objectives as you need for success.

SMART stands for:

S **Specific:** Work objectives are for the purpose of identifying the specific results for which the individual employee is accountable. Specific, in this case, does not mean detailed. Rather, objectives need to be clear and concise, as opposed to generalized or ambiguous. Whether a job assignment is operational or strategic in nature, objectives need to be directed towards the achievement of the goals of the organization.

M **Measurable:** The results should be observable, such that they can be assessed as evidence of reaching the objective. The measure and how it is to be assessed are to be described in the Achievements and Progress section of the work plan. Four types of measures to consider when writing a work objective statement:

- Qualitative - how well the result is produced/performed to what standard
- Quantitative - how much/many of the results are produced or performed
- Cost-Based - at what expense the result is produced/performed
- Conditions - what conditions, restrictions or limitations must be met or respected, in the achievement of the objective

Measurements can be stated as rates (*90% accuracy*), ranges (*+/- 50%*), or absolute quantities (*5 projects*). Measurements can also be stated to reflect specific requirements; for example, "*to meet written specifications*", "*according to project guidelines*", "*within the identified budget*".

A **Achievable:** Objectives should "stretch" the employee's performance, but must be achievable by the individual employee. Limitations of achieving the objective need to be assessed beforehand. It is important that the manager discuss the employee's perception of control over the outcomes or timelines expected. Consider the employee's authority, requirement to influence others and resources needed to achieve the desired result.

R **Relevant:** Objectives are to align with the ministry's goals and plans. Work objectives are of greater value to the organization when directly aligned to ministry/work unit goals and plans, otherwise their value is diminished. All employees should be aware of the organizational planning documents.

Realistic: Objectives must also be realistic about the human resources, time, money and opportunity required. The objective must be of sufficient priority to garner the needed resources. Often another objective needs to be completed beforehand. If this is the case, set multiple objectives in priority order.

T **Time-Bound:** Each objective should have a specific time frame or deadline for accomplishing the objective and/or key progress points. Timeframes can be specific dates (*August 14*), times of the year (*by the end of June*), tied to significant events (*before the launch of project XYZ*), or ongoing (*daily, weekly*).

Don't necessarily try to use the SMART order, often the best way to write objectives is: M-A/R-S-T.

One strategy to writing quality objectives is to use action verbs, as they are much easier to measure. Examples include:

to achieve	to investigate to launch
to administer to allocate	to lead
to analyze to assess to assist to build to clarify	to maintain to manage to model
to collaborate to communicate to complete	to modify to monitor to negotiate to notify
to conduct to confirm to define to deliver to design	to obtain to operate to organize to oversee
to determine to develop to direct	to participate to plan
to distribute to draft	to prepare to present to prevent to produce to promote to provide
to encourage	to record to recruit to register to repair to report to research to review to revise
to enforce to enhance to ensure to establish to evaluate to examine to expand to explore to facilitate to finalize to generate to guide	to schedule to secure to select
to identify	to strengthen to submit
to implement to improve	to supervise to support to track
to incorporate to increase	to train to update to utilize
to initiate to inspect to integrate to interpret	to validate to verify
to introduce	

You will know an objective is specific enough if:

- Everyone who's involved knows that it includes them specifically
- Everyone involved can understand it
- Your objective is free from jargon
- You've defined all your terms
- You've used only appropriate language.

Work Objectives “Thought Jogger”

When I think about being successful at work, I should look for opportunities to.....

Do more of the kinds of activities that meet my work goals and objectives, like...	Continue to perform activities that are of benefit to me, my employer and my co-workers/staff like...
Do less of the activities that waste time or are unproductive use of my time, like...	Learn about new ways of doing things or changes that have occurred like ...
Start doing more activities that make better use of my time, like ...	Be willing to accept greater responsibility for tasks and projects that help me grow and develop, like...
Stop doing activities that are not productive or waste my time, like ...	What other work related things can I start doing that would make my job easier or help me develop new skills or abilities...

WORK		
Potential Role	Work Objectives lead to	Examples of Work Objectives
Supervisory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective functioning of individual, unit or branch • Fulfillment of unit or team objectives • Contribution to branch priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direction and support to ensure that direct reports achieve planned outcomes and results. • Participate as a contributing member of the branch supervisory team. • Ensure that work projects contribute to unit objectives.
Project-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project deliverables • Project parameters (time, cost, etc.) • Collaboration/teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement inventory management system, within established budget and timeframes, by October 1, 20xx. • Lead the development of a sector integration strategy with stakeholder buy-in, by December 1, 20xx.1 • Complete a review of the xxx program by June 1, 20xx.
Client Driven (e.g., consulting, situation response, casework)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of Client Satisfaction • Policy/program standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver xx consulting services to achieve outcomes as agreed with clients. • Address emergent situations as required to ensure the safety and security of people and premises at xx. • Support ministry planning processes as required. • Provide information to support executive team decision making as requested. • Manage designated caseload to ensure the safety and wellbeing of families.
Task-based (e.g., processing, situation maintenance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantity of output • Quality of output • Timeliness of response/ completion • Program/process standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 6 financial administration training courses by March 31, 20xx. • Complete 15 program audits by March 31, 20xx. • Process 200 funding requests, with a first-pass-yield rate of 98%, by March 31, 20xx. • Deliver accurate balance reports to all clients within 5 days of month-end. • Complete scheduled duties (<i>may be listed</i>) to maintain an orderly and secure operating environment at xx.
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service standards • Satisfaction of needs • Service enhancement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to xx according to established service standards (<i>may be listed</i>). • Ensure enquiries are referred to appropriate managers within 2 hours. • Ensure timely agendas, minutes and logistical support to monthly management meetings. • Re-organize the file storage to provide efficient access to records by April 30, 20xx.

LEARNING

Career Path	Things to Consider	Examples of Learning and Development Objectives
Current Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What challenges me in my role? • What changes may occur next year? And • What would prepare me for the changes? • Do I need to develop my: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical Skills - Behavioural Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop tolerance by attending a Crucial Conversations Workshop and volunteering to work Bingos with the Ringette Club. • Improve my writing skills by completing the <i>Essential Skills Workbook</i> from the library. • Provide better customer service by practicing Active Listening.
Career Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do I want to be in 3 years? 5 years? 10 years? • What skills or abilities will I need? • Should I join a professional association? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the qualifications for the Association of Administrative Assistants. • Register with <i>LinkedIn</i> and develop an on-line network. • Interview a team leader about needed qualifications.
Options for Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who could provide coaching? • Could I <i>Buddy</i> with a new employee? • What volunteer or leisure activities could help? • Could I join a committee? • Would I accept a term position? • What reading materials would benefit? • What self-assessments are available? • What community learning activities are available? • Could my employer help with time? Costs? Workload? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the <i>Competency Development Guide</i> for books and reflection tips. • Borrow and read <i>Please Understand Me</i> from the library. • Check the Career Centre for potential term assignments • Ask my supervisor if I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - may <i>Buddy</i> with the next new employee - can sit on the _____ Committee - qualify for a TAHD

Sample Behavioural Competencies

Understands a situation or problem by identifying patterns or connections and addressing key underlying issues. Conceptual thinking includes organizing the parts of an issue or situation in a systematic way, making complex ideas or situations clear, simple and understandable. Assembles ideas, issues and observations into clear and useful explanations and solutions.

Innovative Thinking

Takes an innovative approach to problem solving by generating varied solutions to problems. Is innovative and creative when generating solutions, and willing to go beyond the conventional when trying out different solutions. Tends to be seen as original and value-added in brainstorming sessions.

Strategic Orientation

Understands how the organization interacts with the external world. Analyzes how changes might impact communities and the ministry and calculates the necessary adjustments that will be required to achieve desirable outcomes. Demonstrates an understanding of the capabilities, nature and potential of the ministry.

Change Leadership

Energizes and alerts others to the need for specific changes in the way things are done. Involves taking responsibility to support or lead the change effort through building and maintaining support and commitment. Challenges the status quo by comparing it to an ideal state or a vision of change; creates a sense of urgency.

Holding People Accountable

Gives appropriate direction. Makes needs and requirements clear to achieve expectations. Acts to ensure others perform in accordance with expectations and goals. Reviews performance against expectations. Provides feedback and coaches employees about their performance.

Team Leadership

Mobilizes people to work toward a shared purpose in the best interests of the ministry and the people it serves. Includes the ability to effectively guide a group through an appropriate process to help them achieve a desired outcome. Shares responsibility with individuals and groups so that they have a deep sense of commitment and ownership. The "team" here should be understood broadly as any group in which the person takes on a leadership role, formally or informally.

Impact and Influence

Persuades others through oral and/or written presentations by appealing to reason using data or concrete examples. Customizes and adapts a presentation or discussion that appeals to the specific interest and level of the audience. Anticipates and prepares for the reactions of others. Uses experts or third parties to influence others.

Listening, Understanding and Responding

Demonstrates openness and receptivity to new information. Is willing to listen when approached by others and is willing and able to see things from another person's perspective. Is able to demonstrate an understanding of other people's concerns. Listens and responds to people's concerns by altering own behaviour in a helpful manner. Is genuinely sensitive to non-verbal cues, feelings and emotions. Responds with sensitivity and directness.

Networking

Establishes, maintains and uses a broad network of contacts in order to keep a pulse on public, political and internal issues and make informed decisions. Includes identifying who to involve, and when and how to involve them, in order to accomplish objectives and minimize obstacles.

Teamwork

Works co-operatively with others, working together as opposed to working separately or competitively. Regards team members in a positive light and willingly participates in a team setting. Keeps team members informed and up-to-date about all relevant or useful information, even if not directly required to do so. Solicits ideas and opinions to help form specific decisions or plans. Values others' input and expertise and is willing to learn from others.

Results Orientation

Works to achieve desired policy and program outcomes. Develops challenging performance expectations ensuring the right mix of activities and resources. Includes setting goals and priorities that maximize the use of resources available to consistently deliver results against government direction, ministerial objectives and public expectations.

Commitment to Learning

Actively pursues learning and development in order to achieve results and to contribute to continuous improvement. Supports and encourages the learning and development of others.

Client Service Orientation

Demonstrates a desire to identify and serve client needs. Takes personal responsibility for correcting client service problems. Makes self fully available, especially when the client is going through a difficult period. Serves the public interest through focusing individual effort on meeting key public needs through development and implementation of sound program policy, programs and services.

Concern for Political Impact

Identifies and understands the implications of key issues or decisions in light of the potential impact on public interests/concerns. Weighs stakeholder needs against public interest and works to reconcile needs of multiple stakeholders. Conducts risk assessment to maximize results, with the best interest of the public in mind.

Flexibility

Adapts to and works effectively within a variety of situations, and with various individuals or groups. Flexibility entails understanding and appreciating different and opposing perspectives on an issue, adapting one's approach as the requirements of a situation change, and changing or easily accepting changes in one's own ministry or job requirements.

Organizational Awareness

Acts with an understanding of the ministry and government processes such as legislation development, policy development, planning, budgeting and decision-making. Includes taking action to make changes in order to resolve identified issues or problems.

Planning

Ability to set goals and objectives and develop the steps to achieve them. Ability to balance priorities and design programs/projects to achieve desired outcomes. Identifies the most appropriate measures for assessing program/project achievements, emphasizing outcomes; makes adjustments to plans and resource allocation as needed to stay on track.

Initiative

Proactively doing things and not simply thinking about future actions. Grasps opportunities or identifies potential problems and takes the initiative to follow through rather than wait for problems to arise. Anticipates longer-term situations and takes appropriate action to address them. Organizes resources and activities to deal with problems or opportunities.

Sensitivity to Diversity

Creates an environment that recognizes, supports, respects and welcomes diversity of employees and clients. Recognizes and values cultural differences when considering client needs. Works toward common goals and objectives while maintaining a healthy, productive, respectful and safe work environment that is free of discrimination. Works toward the development of a representative workforce in the public service.

Tips for Coaching

Effective work planning requires regular, face-to-face communication and dialogue between managers and employees. Coaching and giving feedback are essential elements of this communication process.

Coaching and giving feedback requires patience, planning and a willingness to help employees develop their own solutions and methods.

Coaching vs. Feedback

Coaching is part of an overall philosophy and approach. The coaching process can occur at a variety of different levels in organizations. Although coaching can include many different types of activities and skills, giving effective feedback is one of the most important elements of coaching.

Why Coach?

The overall focus of coaching is to help employees improve their performance, grow in their jobs and develop their skills.

Effective leaders and managers coach employees to:

- Help them maintain good performance;
- Motivate or help foster their growth when they are performing well; or
- Work with them when they are not performing well.

Being a Coach

As coaches, leaders and managers are motivators, trainers, coordinators, supporters and partners. A coach looks at the big picture and balances the needs of the individual employee with the needs of the work team and the organization.

A coach establishes a partnership with employees through supportive and action-oriented behaviours.

An effective coach will:

- Listen to employees to learn their viewpoints, perspectives, ideas and motivators.
- Create a supportive climate;
- Effectively paint the “big picture” with realistic descriptions of business goals, financial objectives, opportunities and directions.
- Provide tangible and appropriate support (training, resources) for improvement of development;
- Clarify expectations;
- Encourage mutual discussion and problem-solving
- Focus on action plans to achieve solutions or changes;
- Discuss changing organizational priorities; and
- Explore potential areas of growth and development for employees.

Positive Coaching

You may use this approach when you want to:

- Continue to motivate an employee that is performing well,
- Add new responsibilities to an employee’s job,
- Help an employee develop or enhance a key skill, or
- Prepare an employee for a new assignment, project or promotion.

Coaching to Solve Problems

You may use this approach when:

- Work bogs down or tasks become blocked;
- You want to encourage the employee to take ownership for identifying problems and solutions;
- You want to facilitate a process for working jointly on a problem where the employee takes the initiative and you act as a resource.

Key Actions for this approach:

1. **Define.** Assess the problem objectively. Try to identify the real issue. Focus on defining the actual problem rather than the symptoms.
2. **Explore.** Brainstorm ideas and look for creative solutions to the problem.
3. **Test.** Test the feasibility of all possible solutions. For each solution ask, *Does it solve the problem? Is it reasonable? Do we have resources to support this? How can we change the solutions to fit the resources available?*
4. **Decide.** Select the best solution for the problem.
5. **Implement.** Agree on actions, responsibilities and completion times.
6. **Follow-up.** Monitor progress, activities and results. Provide specific feedback when needed. Evaluate activities to see if the problem has been solved.

Coaching to Guide Development

You can use this approach when you want to:

- Guide an employee's long term growth and development on the job;
- Plan and provide for growth opportunities;
- Share knowledge and experience with employees.

Key Actions for this approach:

- Work with the employee to identify specific leadership and management competencies that you would like to see developed;
- Provide training for the employee through organization-sponsored courses, outside seminars or on-the-job experience.
- Assign the employee to special projects or committees to enhance knowledge and skills;
- Serve as a resource to the employee for ideas, connections within the organization and for problem-solving.
- Look for potential strengths and skills of employees and identify creative ways to enhance and develop them.

Tips for Giving Feedback

Part of the coaching role is giving effective feedback to employees. Many managers find it difficult to give honest, useful feedback – whether negative or positive.

Giving feedback on negative behaviours may feel uncomfortable, but it is essential to letting employees know where they stand, empowering them to change and grow, and creating the organizational culture that we wish to see.

Opportunities for feedback can be:

- Quick and informal (stepping into the employee's office or stopping for a chat)
- Formal and more detailed (a series of one-to-one meetings to discuss an ongoing project or challenge.)

Tips for Effective Feedback:

- **Be specific.** Use facts to clearly identify what behaviour you are giving feedback on. (e.g., results, observations or results.)
- **Be immediate.** Give feedback as close to the time of performance as possible.
- **Focus on behaviour.** Focus on quantity, quality and outcomes, not on the person.
- **Link feedback to impact and desired organizational outcomes.** Relate the impact of the behaviour to its effect on clients, the team or the organization.
- **Respect the individual.** Be considerate. Avoid use of negative words that put people on the defensive. (e.g., “always”, “never”, “neglect”, “ignored” etc.):
 - **Use positive non-verbal feedback.** Maintain eye contact, nod, smile, lean forward to encourage employee participation.
 - **Reinforce productive behaviour with positive feedback.** Link praise to specific behaviours and outcomes. Always recognize improved performance and how you will support it.
 - **Allow the employee to respond.** Listen closely to the response. Ask questions to clarify reactions that are unclear to you.
 - **Give balanced feedback.** Consider just how much you need to tell an employee at once to be honest about behaviour and yet maintain the motivation to improve. Avoid misrepresenting the quantity or quality of the person's work.
- **Call for action if required.** Identify ways to improve or build upon good work:
 - Agree on an appropriate timeline.
 - Schedule a follow-up date if needed.
 - Summarize points and confirm actions.
 - Express your support as appropriate.

- **Minimize interruptions.** Choose a location that is private and where you can avoid interruptions.
- **Take enough time.** Set aside enough time to deal with the issue at hand. If the issue is complex, you may need to schedule some more formal time later.
- **Seek to enhance your skills.** Contact your HR Client service team or refer to the Leadership and Management Competency Model Development Activity Guide <http://cms.psc.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=52bee8cd-75c1-418a-8eef-7c203b8de9d6> for ways to improve your coaching and communication skills.

Summary

- Coaching and giving and receiving feedback are essential tools of ongoing review of work and competency objectives for successful leaders and managers.
- When coaching and giving feedback are done well, and on an ongoing basis, the formal review will hold no surprises for the employee or manager. It should summarize discussions that have been held throughout the year.
- Coaching touches all aspects of an employee's development – immediate, daily tasks are recognized through giving feedback; the ongoing activities and challenges are handled through problem-solving and planning; and the long-term responsibilities are shaped through positive coaching and guided development of the employee.
- Performed with skill, patience and consistency, coaching and feedback can help make employees more productive and engaged and make a manager's job more satisfying and rewarding.

Tips for Receiving Feedback

Requesting and receiving feedback throughout the year helps you and your manager to evaluate progress towards achieving your objectives. Ongoing dialogue between the employee and manager/supervisor will eliminate surprises, ensure problems are addressed, and create opportunity for objectives to be realigned as needed during the year.

To maximize the opportunity for good discussion and build on the feedback you receive, be sure to consider the following steps:

- 1. Be open to feedback.**
- 2. Try to control your defensiveness.**
- 3. Listen to understand.**
- 4. Ask questions to clarify.**
- 5. Assess your own performance.**
- 6. Evaluate feedback before responding.**

1. Be open to feedback.

Get in the habit of asking for feedback regularly. We are often unable to see ourselves as others do and therefore another perspective on our actions and behaviours can help us identify both strengths and areas for improvement. Your openness to feedback is obvious through your body language, facial expressions, and welcoming manner.

2. Try to control your defensiveness.

It is hard to accept negative feedback; but it is also hard to give it. Don't argue with the person giving the feedback. You may not agree with what they say, and that's ok. Justifying your position or denying actions may make the conversation more difficult for both of you than it needs to be. Defensiveness may discourage future feedback.

3. Listen to understand.

Set aside your fear, worry and anger and try to listen closely to what is actually being said. Use body language and facial expressions that encourage the other person to talk. Summarize what you have heard. Your feedback provider will appreciate that you are really hearing what they are saying. Even feedback that is delivered in a less than ideal way will likely contain information that is useful.

4. Ask questions to clarify.

Actively listen and ask questions to clarify. Be sure you understand the feedback you are receiving. If you have questions, now is the time to ask them. It's often helpful to ask for specific examples that illustrate the feedback.

5. Assess your own performance.

Take time to reflect honestly on the job you've done. Interpret the feedback you have received. Ask other sources for their feedback. High performing individuals are very self-aware. Identify the behaviors you demonstrate and identify those you may want to change.

6. Evaluate feedback before responding.

If you disagree with the feedback you received, wait. Take some time to consider the feedback from their perspective. When your emotions are under control, reopen the discussion. There may be information you didn't hear or there may be a misunderstanding that needs to be clarified.

When you do respond, focus on working toward learning points and an action plan (as appropriate).

Frequently Asked Questions

Question #1: What are the benefits of Work Plans for in-scope employees?

A. Work planning clarifies the current areas of focus and priorities in your job. Benefits also include:

- Having a clearer understanding about ministry and branch direction and increasing your understanding of your contribution to both;
- Ensuring there is a shared understanding between you and your supervisor regarding current work expectations;
- Supporting meaningful conversations with your supervisor, including opportunities for feedback on your work; and
- Tracking and managing your own career development.

Question #2: Why is this process being introduced formally?

A. Successful implementation of a single method of work planning means all employees will be treated consistently, regardless of where they work in the public service.

Question #3: What contributes to successful work planning?

A. For Employees:

- Review and reference the following tools: your job description and competencies; In- Scope Employee's Guide – Developing Work Plans; Tips for Creating Objectives; and Work Planning Thought Jogger.
- Take initiative to learn as much as you can about the strategic direction of your work unit, branch, and ministry.
- Work with your supervisor to develop your objectives.
- Use your work plan, once it has been developed, to assess your progress and ensure your plan is kept updated.

B. For Supervisors:

- Review and reference the Supervisor's Guide for Planning, Development and Review Conversations
- Clarify the organizational direction and priorities for staff.
- Assist in the development of objectives and be available to provide ongoing feedback, advice and coaching.
- Conduct a mid-period review and have ongoing dialogue with employees and discuss progress in achieving established objectives.
- Support learning and development opportunities for branch employees.

Question #4: When should someone create a work and learning plan?

A. Your ministry will provide further information as to when plans should be in place.

Question #5: What are objectives?

A. Objectives are concise statements of what you are planning to achieve. For individual planning purposes, the three types of objectives are:

- Work Objectives - the key areas of work results on which you focus your efforts.
- Competency Objectives – the key behavioural actions and technical skill requirements that support your progress toward work objectives.
- Learning and Development Objectives – the learning and development that will help you to achieve work and competency objectives.

Question #6: Why set work objectives?

A. Work objectives clarify your direction and priorities for a specified period of time. They help you to determine the relative importance of your work tasks. Having work objectives also allows you to assess your learning and development needs to achieve those objectives.

Question #7: What does it mean to make objectives S.M.A.R.T.?

A. Making objectives S.M.A.R.T. means that each objective should be:

Specific - Spell out the outcomes you want to achieve.

Measurable – What does success look like? What results are you trying to achieve? Achievable – Realistic can be achieved but offer a challenge to employees.

Relevant – Does it align with Ministry and Branch/Work Unit objectives?

Time-bound – Has a timeframe been set, key milestones, dates or times of year?

Question #8: What are achievements and how are they used?

A. Achievements are used to track the progress of your work toward your objectives. They can refer to qualitative progress (how well something is done), conditions of progress (conditions that must be met), and/or quantitative progress (how much is accomplished or produced).

Question #9: How else can I assess my progress?

A. Assess yourself frequently. Ask yourself, “What went well that I am proud of? What was more of a challenge? When did I access support and what happened as a result?”

Asking for feedback from a variety of sources is very valuable. Think carefully about whom to approach for feedback. Be prepared to hear constructive suggestions when you use this approach.

Question #10: What are competency objectives and why do they matter?

A. Competencies are behavioural or technical/task-related knowledge, skills or personal attributes which enable you to progress toward your work and career objectives. Research has shown that behavioural competencies (e.g., initiative, teamwork, communication) are very important to achieving work and career goals.

Question #11: What if there is no budget in my area to support the learning and development objectives in my work plan?

A. Learning and development occur in many formal and informal ways, not just by taking courses. You and your supervisor should work together to consider a variety of ways to achieve learning and development objectives. Learning and development is a responsibility that is shared between you and your supervisor.

Question #12: How do I get started in developing an individual Work Plan?

- A. First steps in creating your plan should include:
- Reviewing a copy of your branch work plan to clarify the links between your work activities and branch priorities;
 - Reviewing your current job description and competencies, as well as having a conversation with your supervisor to determine where to focus for the upcoming planning period;
 - Thinking about feedback you have received in the past and what this may suggest to you for success in your work;
 - Recognizing that your work plan can change and may have to be updated to reflect changes in branch and ministry priorities and other changes at work.

Question #13: Is there support for supervisors and employees to help them to implement this successfully?

- A. Yes. Your Human Resource Service Team is available to help you get started.

Question #14: Do I have to do an individual Work Plan?

- A. Having an individual Work Plan is a standard expectation for all employees.

Question #15: What is available to help me manage my career?

- A. Talk to your manager about your goals and aspirations. You may also follow up with a member of the Human Resource Service Team that provides service to your ministry.