

# Retain and Gain

Career Management for the Public Sector



Lisa Taylor, Challenge Factory

**Equips  
managers  
for career  
conversations  
that grow  
talent**

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Lisa Taylor,  
Challenge Factory



**CERIC**

Advancing  
Career  
Development  
in Canada | Promouvoir  
le développement  
de carrière  
au Canada

*Retain and Gain: Career Management for the Public Sector*

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**Preface:**

This Playbook is published by CERIC, a charitable organization that advances education and research in career counselling and career development to increase the economic and social well-being of Canadians.

The first two editions in the *Retain and Gain* series focused on how small business and non-profit managers can use career management activities and tools to engage their teams. I am excited that CERIC saw the potential to expand the series to include this edition, focused on executives and managers in the public sector (encompassing all levels of government and jurisdictions across Canada). In researching this edition, some of the challenges that public sector leaders face resembled those I had heard from executives and managers in other sectors. In other cases, the very nature of the work that is done within the public sector, the size of this workforce and the way career progress and success is measured create unique conditions not seen in small businesses or non-profits. In this Playbook, I have tried to focus on those elements unique to the public sector while also sharing common tools and information useful to any executive or manager, regardless of their sector, seniority or team size.

No resource focused on the careers of employees would be complete without the provision of tools to assist leaders in the pursuit of

greater diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace. DEI is not a “special situation” to be addressed as something unique or optional and so, wherever possible, we have integrated these resources and activities into the main sections. DEI is a foundational part of an organization’s culture and inseparable from fundamental human rights. As such, while there are special situations listed in Section 4, these are intended to address unique circumstances that may sometimes (but not necessarily always) arise.

This edition of the Playbook does have one very unique feature that only applies to public sector leaders: this is our “Careers and Canadians” callouts. As you will read, we believe it is essential to address not only the impact that career management can have on the engagement of staff within the public sector, but also the significant impact a career development mindset can have on the framing and shaping of public policies, programs and operations. A public sector workforce that is aware of career management practices and tools can lead to broader benefit for all Canadians.

Finally, as always, I am grateful to all who have provided their time, expertise and commitment to the *Retain and Gain* series and this specific edition. For now, I’d like to provide sincere thanks and admiration to CERIC for its vision, support and leadership, as well as to my incredible Challenge Factory team,



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# Section 1: Introduction

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# Note to Public Sector Leaders

Welcome to the *Retain and Gain Career Management Playbook*, designed for you: smart, engaged and curious leaders in the public sector.

The goal of this Playbook is to assist you in implementing career management activities that will benefit you and your employees – the people who are critical to the success of your organization, as well as to the economic and social well-being of Canadians. These activities are designed to work with free (or low-cost) resources that can be applied on the job, as part of regular work structures, starting today.

Canada's public sector leaders work hard to improve the lives and well-being of Canadians while building strong and diverse workplaces.<sup>1</sup> These are no small tasks, and the stakes are high not only for public sector employees but for all Canadians served by them. The challenges facing public servants across the country are complex – including financial constraints, high workloads, aging demographics,

shifts in technology and rising expectations from citizens.<sup>2</sup> Finding the time, energy and resources to focus on career management, then, can also be very challenging.

Leading a team in the public sector means constantly balancing internal staffing needs against the operational requirements that enable the execution or fulfilment of a public mandate. Associated with this is the struggle against negative public perception that investing in employees takes resources away from public goods and services. The public doesn't always recognize the connection between internal investment in employees and external productivity or quality services.

These challenges and balancing acts take place no matter what jurisdiction you are working in – federal, provincial, territorial, municipal and First Nations – or what type of leader you are – in-scope or out-of-scope manager, supervisor, team lead, director and executive.

A key component of fulfilling public mandates *and* developing a skilled, inclusive, agile and equipped staff is effective career management. While employees have ultimate



## TAKE ACTION

Throughout this Playbook you will see the “**TAKE ACTION**” headings that suggest ways to put the information being shared to immediate use. Don't feel you have to incorporate all suggestions or topics covered immediately. The aim of this Playbook is to be an ongoing resource you can use over time. Return to it whenever you want to learn more or take action.



ownership over and responsibility for their own careers, managers have an important duty to enable their employees' careers through support, empathy and openness. In some cases, a manager's decisions or actions can affect an entire career. This is especially true for members of DEI groups, who can face career advancement obstacles from many quarters. By cultivating this type of careers-focused environment, managers not only contribute to the positive personal and professional growth of their employees but also lay critical groundwork for operational success.

Canada's public sector leaders know that in today's changing world of work, the status quo is not acceptable or feasible anymore, especially in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and its permanent impact on public sector work, careers and priorities.

They are committed to meeting the career needs and aspirations of their employees, and they don't need to be convinced of the good that career management can do. What they need is practical activities, tips and advice for putting career management to use as they find themselves in a constant tug-of-war between competing priorities, constraints and other public sector challenges.

This Playbook has something for every leader in Canada's public sector. To our main audience: Consider yourself a traveller and this Playbook your travel guide. Both you and your employees experience shifting demands and challenges over the course of your career in the public sector, and there's no "one-size-fits-all" approach to meeting them. The activities in this Playbook will help facilitate dedicated career conver-

sations, individual and organizational career planning strategies and greater awareness of the career-related resources available in the public sector – and how to find them. They will also help foster resilience and responsiveness to changing conditions, which will only continue to accelerate in the years to come.

These types of activities will have a



### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Career management can be a strategic lever for stronger organizational performance and success. It is a foundational component of a range of workforce and workplace needs:

- Recruitment and retention of talented employees
- Transition support (e.g., onboarding, automation, retirement planning, etc.)
- Development of new leadership candidates and skill sets
- Knowledge transfer
- Career agility, resilience and mobility
- Reskilling or upskilling that is increasingly needed in the rapidly changing world of work
- Safeguarding and improvement of mental health and well-being
- Fostering diversity, equity and inclusion



**FROM THE SECTOR:**

In developing this Playbook, we spoke with public sector leaders at various levels of government.<sup>4</sup> From coast to coast to coast, they showed us how motivated they are about addressing workforce and workplace challenges. They also demonstrated certain consistencies in their own experiences. Do these resonate with you?

- Leading career conversations with employees is difficult due to a lack of training, structure, time and allocated funding.
- Employees often lack diverse advancement opportunities that fit their skill sets and meet their career needs and goals.
- It can be a struggle to undertake career management activities in the face of formal rules, frameworks, policies and processes within the public sector.
- Leaders have to be creative in where they get career management tools, including looking outside their own organization or the public sector as a whole.
- There is confusion about the difference between career management, performance management and talent management.

positive impact on employees’ engagement and performance, as well as on their mental health and well-being. As COVID-19 laid bare, the separation between work and life is artificial, and trying to address them as such will not succeed. As the authors of *Strengthening Mental Health Through Effective Career Development* summarize, “Mental health is now everyone’s business.”<sup>3</sup>

Managers who help their employees find a sense of purpose, value and direction for their work also help to mobilize those employees’ talent and more fully capture their commitment and discretionary efforts. By focusing on practical career management activities, you will have a stronger platform on which to engage and support your employees through work and life decisions, challenges and transitions. In turn, this will lead to healthier, more engaged and more productive teams.

Career management offers many

**CAREERS AND CANADIANS**

The world of work, Canadian society and the challenges facing both are changing. The public sector is adapting, and its leaders need new tools to ensure they are developing and implementing strong, effective programs, practices and policies – both as an employer and in service of all Canadians. The work done by public servants at all levels of government and across jurisdictions impacts the lives, livelihoods and careers of every Canadian. As such, throughout this Playbook, you’ll see “**CAREERS AND CANADIANS**” headings that provide concrete examples of how career management activities, principles and concepts can also be taken up as a powerful lens and toolkit in the development, delivery and measurement of public goods and services.

valuable opportunities to the public sector, and we are very excited to show you what’s possible! ■

# How to Use the Playbook's “Travel Guide” Format

This Playbook is structured as a travel guide. We find this is a helpful framing device, even in times when actual travel is unlikely or impossible, and received great feedback about its use in the first two editions of this Playbook.

First, travellers are limited by the amount of time they can spend in any one location or on any specific activity. They need to make the hours count and stretch their financial resources as far as possible. As a result, they tend to focus on what will deliver the best experience.

Second, many of the public sector leaders who participated in our research used the following analogies to describe careers: a journey, trip, roadway or roadmap. A career can be a fun adventure sometimes, and a stressful slog of planning and roadblocks other times. Navigating a career can alternate between feeling like you're on a fast-moving highway and feeling like you're stalled in traffic. Anyone can get lost at different points in their career without a clear roadmap, and asking for help with directions or planning can mean the difference between a trip spent making unforgettable memories and one spent resenting your travel companion as you try to rejoin your tour group.



Third, time and money are critical constraints for public sector leaders. You know that recruitment, employee engagement, employee retention and productivity depend on positive employee experiences – including opportunities to learn, grow, feel appreciated, tackle challenges and be rewarded. But how do you make good on a great employee experience while juggling tight budgets, limited staff and not enough time to do all the things that “should” be done? How can you customize and tailor a “Career

Management Itinerary” to deliver experiences that meet the needs of both your staff and your organization?

The travel guide format also lends itself well thematically to the fundamental diversity in the public sector and Canada as a whole, and the need to intentionally and continuously integrate practices that recognize diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) as foundational to a strong organizational culture. DEI in the public sector serves multiple overlapping purposes:

- It reflects the diversity of the Canadian population and society, one of its core characteristics and strengths. This is a unique element of the public sector’s responsibility to its citizens.
- It brings together worldviews and experiences from a variety of backgrounds, leading to new ideas, critical thinking and problem solving.



### TAKE ACTION

The templates, resources and tools provided throughout this Playbook are designed to guide you to action. If something doesn’t quite fit, feel free to modify and adapt it. We hope the ideas are a starting point that inspire you to grow and build your people through great career experiences. As a first step, consider sharing this guide with your own leadership (or have them get their own copy) and work through key topics together.



### TRAVEL TIP: LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

Travel often involves learning new terms. During our research, we learned that sometimes terms like “career development,” “professional development” and “training” can be used interchangeably in the public sector, while the term “career management” is generally understood to be broader – encompassing many different activities throughout a person’s full working life. For our purposes, the terms “career management” and

“career development” will be used interchangeably in this Playbook, although some of the quoted sources may use other terms.

For those interested in formal definitions, *career management is a lifelong process of investing in resources to accomplish your future career goals*, and a continuing process that allows you to adapt to the changing demands of our dynamic economy.<sup>6</sup>

It embraces various concepts, including self-awareness, career ownership, career planning and exploration, lifelong/continuous learning and networking. As such, career management is 1) a set of principles and practices that every individual should be implementing throughout their life, and 2) a field with professional practitioners and decades of evidence-based research behind it.

This is a key driver of innovation. Multiple studies show that diverse workforces, at all organizational levels, have positive financial and performance impacts.<sup>5</sup>

- It helps break down systemic barriers and discrimination. Recognizing that we are on a journey allows us to reflect on our choices and consider the underlying structures and impact of our language, actions and opportunities. In this way, non-discrimination – including but not limited to anti-racism, anti-LGBTQ2+, anti-ageism, gender equality and equality for persons with disabilities – is integrated into every career conversation, activity and action we take as an intrinsic, non-negotiable value.



### FROM THE SECTOR:

*“When we talk about DEI, it’s not just about individuals who are members of protected groups like visible minorities. What we’re talking about is everyone as an employee coming with unique skills and personality traits. Regardless of who you are, you will have very unique needs and it’s very important for managers to take those without any judgment, and really understand and support employees with those needs...So if I’m a manager and I need to have a conversation with an employee, what are some of the questions I need to ask myself? What are some of the things I need to keep in check to make sure I don’t actually create a bias here and end up not being a support for this person’s career development, or end up creating such a negative experience for them that they end up leaving the organization. Which happens, right.”*

– Leader in a provincial government

Career management is a powerful tool in the public sector’s DEI toolkit. It has a positive impact on the career advancement of marginalized groups, as well as on the conditions that lower their work satisfaction on a day-to-day basis and prevent fair and inclusive policies and practices from being implemented. It also activates the diversity of experience and thought

– and tolerance for both – that gives employees a sense of safety, connectivity and purpose.

Diversity is often experienced in the workplace through differences in personalities, perspectives and even politics. Managers who foster conditions in which employees feel safe bringing their whole selves to work also reduce the pressure to “just go along to get

along” – to conform in order to avoid further marginalization. This pressure suppresses useful dissent, creative problem solving and sound risk management. Not only does it contribute to an insufficient understanding of issues and inability to address complex challenges facing public sector organizations, but it also erodes employees’ well-being and trust in their employers.

Career management, then, plays a critical role at the intersection of DEI, employee engagement and performance, and mental health and well-being. If employees can’t be who they truly are at work, they will not want to be there – and they will leave for better working conditions elsewhere.

We want to show you that career management is a high-value, high-return, low-risk organizational lever that will carry your organization across long distances. And, really, who doesn’t love taking a “just for you” custom-designed trip? The next section offers an opportunity to learn more about the benefits, methods and approaches of career management. If you are eager to jump right into the Playbook’s activities, skip to Section 3 on page 24. ■

## CAREERS AND CANADIANS

Career programs are typically considered the remit of departments of education and employment. But there is evidence that career development principles are included and considered in many other public sector portfolios. For example, Health Canada’s social determinants of health include a broad range of personal, social, economic and environmental factors that determine individual and population health.<sup>7</sup> The main determinants of health are:

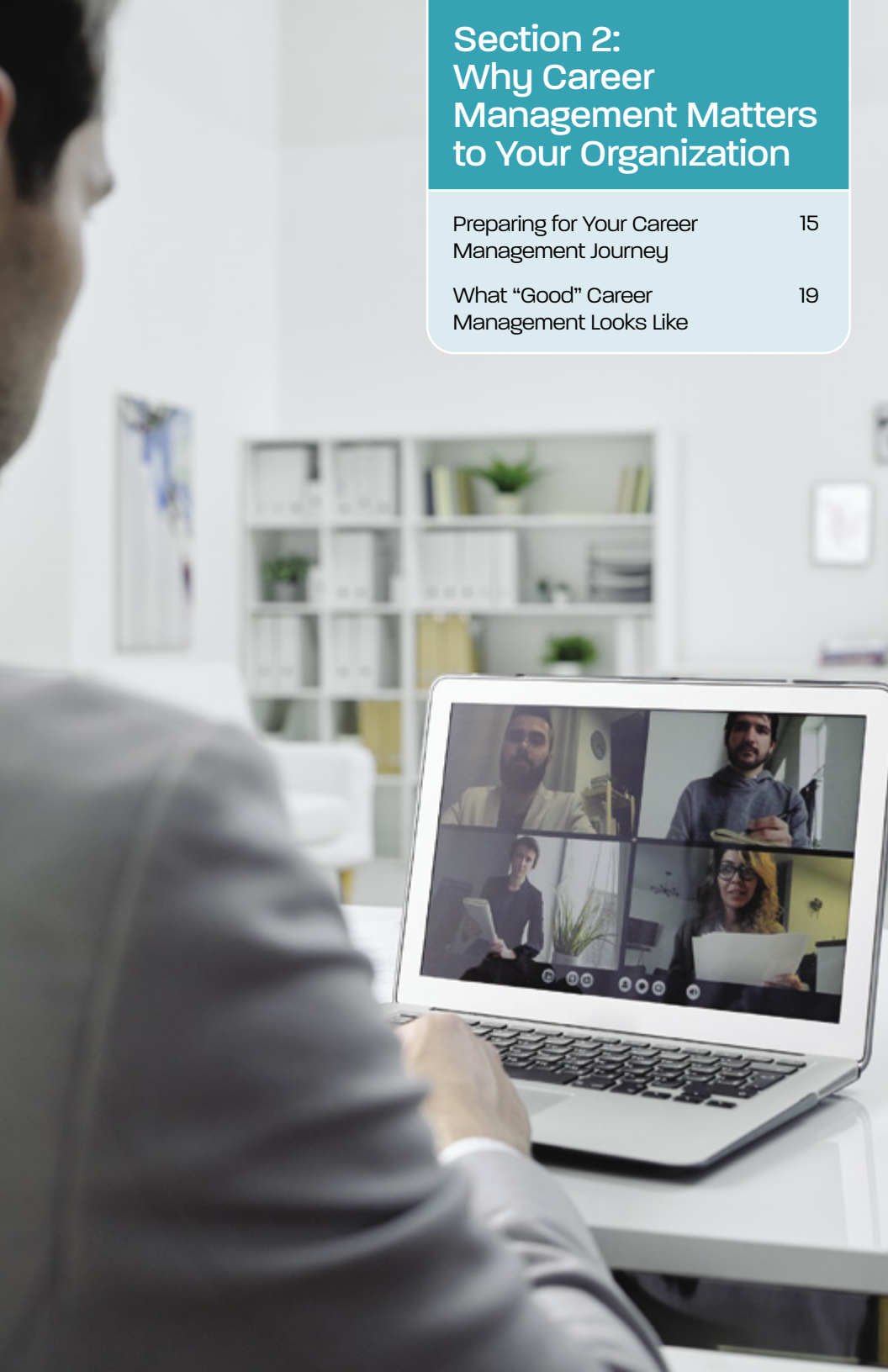
1. Income and social status
2. Employment and working conditions
3. Education and literacy
4. Childhood experiences
5. Physical environments
6. Social supports and coping skills
7. Healthy behaviours
8. Access to health services
9. Biology and genetic endowment
10. Gender
11. Culture
12. Race/Racism

If one of the greatest challenges facing Canadians is their adaptation to an ever-changing Future of Work ecosystem, is it time for the creation of a “Ministry of Career Development?” Alternatively, is there evidence of careers thinking in the programs and policies emerging from departments such as energy, economic development, environment, Veterans affairs, Indigenous affairs, immigration, housing, etc.?

## Section 2: Why Career Management Matters to Your Organization

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# Why Career Management Matters to Your Organization

This section provides background information to help you become familiar with the language, opportunities and options that career management can offer your organization and staff.

In a real travel guide, this section would give you an overview of the city, region or country that you were planning to visit. It would be the pitch for why you should spend your money and time there. In this Playbook, you'll be learning more about why career management should be a priority (i.e., a great journey and destination) in your organization and leadership plan. If you prefer to jump straight into planning your Career Management Itinerary, skip ahead to page 24 to find activities, tips and templates.

## Preparing for Your Career Management Journey

Before preparing for a trip, most people have a few specific questions:

- What can we afford?
- When is the best time to travel?
- What type of experience do we want to have?

To answer these questions, you plan, budget, scour online reviews and ask friends about cities, hotels and tours. Then you make choices that best fit your criteria.



Similarly, your current and future employees go through the same type of process when deciding to apply, join or remain with your team or organization. They consider the value of the work and how it aligns with their personal beliefs. They evaluate the salary and benefits offered, and whether now is the right time in their career to take the role you offer or to take a new role elsewhere. They also consider what it's like to work with you:



- Does the daily and long-term experience of being on your staff energize and build their career, or does it drag them down?
- Do you foster a productive, enjoyable and inclusive workplace culture?
- Are other employees thriving under your leadership?

In this Playbook, we provide tips and activities that enhance your employees' career opportunities, build your



### FROM THE SECTOR:

*“A public service career [can be] roughly 30 to 35 years. So, imagine if the skills you started with were the same skills you had at retirement. You would miss out on years of learning, advancement, contribution and overall impact benefitting Canadians. You would be the one driving a horse and buggy when others around you are driving their electric cars. Or maybe you would be driving your car when other cars are driving themselves. Learning is an important part of career development. It helps us adapt to continuous change in our work realities. Investing in learning – and especially in our people – is critical for a competitive and relevant public sector.”*

– Taki Sarantakis, President,  
Canada School of Public Service<sup>8</sup>

workplace culture and establish your organization's reputation as an employer of choice.

Anyone who's been through a recruitment cycle knows how time-consuming it can be and how important it is to make good hiring choices. And hiring is only the beginning. A complex challenge that public sector organizations face is the combination of 1) poor retention and loss of great talent, and 2) high retention despite under-engagement.

There are many paths for people to grow their careers in meaningful ways in the public sector. The interconnectedness at different levels of government often means building a career can be facilitated by the networks, on-the-job training, job mobility and lifelong learning opportunities that are available to employees – if they know how to find and access those career development tools.

Because advancement in the public sector is often (though not always) possible only by moving into people management roles, the lack of diverse, progressive career paths can result in strong technical employees or subject matter experts being promoted into general managerial roles that are not a good fit or misaligned with their interests, skill

sets and expertise. When employees come to this type of crossroads in their careers, some choose to leave for other sectors that may be more fulfilling from a technical or knowledge expertise perspective, while others may choose to stay for the job and financial security, good benefits and pension. This latter decision can result in decreased engagement and productivity while they “wait out their service for retirement day.”

Engaged employees align their own career success with the success of the organizations for which they work. How employees perceive internal career opportunities is linked to key organizational results and overall workplace culture. Turnover is expensive and members of a disengaged workforce will struggle to be the mission advocates that leaders need.

This discussion of retention and engagement, as well as the evaluation and decision-making process that employees go through when considering career moves, is an important facet of our understanding of careers as a journey or trip in need of a travel guide. Effective career management is a key secret weapon for organizations looking to retain talented employees and leaders looking to help their employees while



### DID YOU KNOW?

In the federal government’s 2016 Indigenous workforce retention survey, 40% of employee respondents indicated they were planning to leave their current position.<sup>9</sup> A significant reason for this was a lack of career progression opportunities and the view that some recruitment and promotion processes in their organizations subjected them to bias and discrimination. It was also found that Indigenous employees were promoted at a lower rate (19.9%) than employees who did not self-identify as Indigenous (25.4%), and Indigenous employees who have worked for the federal government for 5-10 years have critical workplace needs (for example, regarding their professional development, advancement and mobility beyond initial recruitment).

For more information on the hiring, retention and promotion of Indigenous employees in the federal government, see *Many Voices One Mind: A Pathway to Reconciliation*:

 <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/knowledge-circle/many-voices>

And for over 50 published sources related to Indigenous recruitment and retention:

 <http://caid.ca/IndRecRet2017.pdf>

ensuring strong productivity and operational success.

Another important dimension of workforce retention and engagement is longevity. The average age of Canada’s workforce and the number

of people working past the historical age of retirement are both increasing.<sup>11</sup> As a result, the nature of career journeys is changing, as well as the career supports needed by employees at different stages in their work life.

Importantly, as employees get older or their careers in the public sector lengthen, the amount of career support they need does not decrease – it instead changes. Many of the public sector leaders whom we spoke to, however, identified employees in their early careers and those stepping into a new leadership role as requiring more career management support. This misperception is also reflected in the amount of career support (guidance, opportunities, challenges, etc.) they indicated is provided to employees by their organizations, with progressively less support available to employees as they get older.

If employees are remaining with the public sector for lengthy terms of service yet aren't receiving the career support they need, what type of workforce and workplace culture is being cultivated over the long term? For more on this topic, see “Career Considerations for the 50+ Workforce” in Section 4 – including advice for leaders who find it uncomfortable offering career support to employees who are older than them.

Career development is a lifelong pursuit for everyone, regardless of age, salary or seniority. Employees will benefit from a broader understanding of their own career path



### DID YOU KNOW?

The financial ramifications of employee turnover are enormous. According to Employee Benefit News (EBN) and the Work Institute, replacing an employee can cost 33% of their annual salary in turnover-related costs and 74% of the causes of employee turnover are preventable.<sup>10</sup>



### TRAVEL TIP:

As you explore this Playbook, consider the employment path your organization is on. You likely know what your public service or mandate delivery goals are, but what are your employee-related goals and investment plans? If you think about careers as a journey, what stage is each of your employees at and what type of “trip planning” support do they need from you?

over the entirety of their lives, while leaders will benefit from a fulsome understanding of how to motivate, challenge and support their employees as they move through different stages of their work life. Leaders can't do this without having proper support of their own, and taking up practical career management activities is a great way to start. ■

# What “Good” Career Management Looks Like

**Leaders in the public sector shared with us their concerns about setting career management goals and having career conversations with employees.**

Of those leaders we spoke to, 51% think managers find career conversations difficult to initiate or lead with employees, while another 27% think managers find them difficult “sometimes.” This mirrors findings in other sectors and can be traced to an absence in Canada of a culture that prioritizes career literacy, competence and lifelong learning.

Leaders described several causes for their reluctance to have career conversations with employees, including their worries that:

- They don’t have the skills or training to offer good suggestions to the challenges their employees face, often due to a lack of management resources that would prepare them to provide career support.
- Having this type of conversation may lead employees to request additional development opportunities, for which there is no funding.
- Their employees may think a punitive measure was being taken against them, or be unable to accept constructive criticism or feedback.
- Encouraging broader career discussions may accelerate employees to



either 1) decide to leave to pursue other opportunities, or 2) realize their expected career progress isn’t aligning with their current opportunities.

- Asking employees about their career goals may be viewed as too personal or intrusive.

Sometimes, leaders can resist having career conversations because they misinterpret them as performance evaluations, which can entail difficult



### FROM THE SECTOR:

*“Career development is one of the human resources practices that has changed the most over the past 20 years. Paternalistic organizations of the past rewarded good work with lifetime employment, planned development and steady advancement. In today’s rapidly changing organizations, employees recognize that their jobs will continue only as long as their skills are relevant to an evolving organizational mission. They know they are responsible for their own career development. Nevertheless, the stresses and frustrations experienced by employees as a result of changing career patterns can contribute to reduced productivity, poorer quality of decisions, increased absenteeism and turnover, and increased incidence of disability claims related to stress. For employers, understanding and addressing employee career issues helps redress the above problems and significantly enhances organizational vitality.”*

– Lorraine Dyke, Linda Duxbury and Natalie Lam, “Career Development: Taking the Pulse of the Public Service,” *The Journal of Public Sector Management*<sup>12</sup>

discussions about shortcomings and consequences. Check out the Travel Tip at the end of this section for the difference between career management and performance management.

It is good to be aware that personal and cultural differences can inform contrasting understandings of what topics are considered intrusive. However, not having career conversations at all will be less helpful in the long run to both employees and managers. To navigate these differences, one tip is to focus on the tone you want to set for conversations with your employees and for your organizational culture as a whole, emphasizing openness, empathy and support. Career conversations may be difficult to start or uncomfortable at times, but they will benefit you, your employees and your organization. Proceed with courage!

Explicit career management principles, theories and tools are often not included in the learning and training opportunities offered by organizations. Common examples of these are mandatory training courses for new managers or leadership development courses for future leaders. These tend to provide training and development for *people* management more broadly but not for *career* management specifically. With respect to career management resources that do exist, the DEI lens is frequently absent, which only makes it more



### DID YOU KNOW?

During our interviews, we heard a variety of misconceptions about career management. These prevent organizations from establishing good career support and practices. To counter them, we've put together a list of key facts about career management that you should remember:

1. Career management and training are not the same thing, nor are career development and advancement.
2. Employers are not in control of the career paths of their employees.
3. Employees often don't know how to manage their own careers.
4. Managers often don't know how to help employees with their careers.
5. Generational cohorts do not have homogeneous career aspirations, qualities or interests.
6. Older employees often need to worry about their career just as much as younger employees, and many people do make significant career changes after the age of 50.
7. Career management is not costly and delivers an immediate return on investment to the organization.
8. Career management is for everyone, not only professionals or knowledge workers.
9. There are proven practices, hard data and solid research available to help leaders with tough career-related situations.
10. Career management is a useful tool for addressing systemic barriers and discrimination.
11. Managers struggle to provide career support to employees from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds.
12. There is clear evidence that shows career management improves diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace.

**You will find supporting evidence for these key facts throughout the Playbook. For a deeper dive, consider using the resources in Section 6 as a starting point.**

difficult for leaders to develop cultural competence for career conversations with all employees.

When good career management takes place, managers and employees work together to explore careers and career growth. CERIC has developed

eight Guiding Principles of Career Development to help clarify and define the scope of career-related work.<sup>14</sup> (Remember that we're using the terms "career management" and "career development" synonymously in this Playbook). These principles can help

ensure you have good career conversations, resources (like those listed at the end of this Playbook) and programs in place with your staff.

### **Career Development:**

1. Is a lifelong process of blending and managing paid and unpaid activities: learning (education), work (employment, entrepreneurship), volunteerism and leisure time.
2. Entails determining interests, beliefs, values, skills and competencies – and connecting those with market needs.
3. Involves understanding options, navigating with purpose and making informed choices.
4. Should be self-directed; an individual is responsible for their own career, but is not alone – we all



### **FROM THE SECTOR:**

*“Up until my 40s, my career was on the rise. Then, different circumstances led to me being placed in positions where – long story short – I didn’t feel that I fit. Little by little, my self-confidence waned, and lassitude kicked in. I saw myself being under-exploited and my skills misaligned with my duties. But with 360,000 positions spread throughout tens of ministries and departments, I bet that there would be one in which I would be more effective and useful, and therefore happier. I began using my network and... [tried to] find a new job, better aligned with my profile, but without success.*

*I was going in circles. [...]*

*“When you wake up in the morning dragging your feet and you live for weekends and vacation, something is wrong. The worst was that the situation didn’t improve, despite my efforts. I realized how many of my colleagues were in similar situations. I really wished I had been supported by some kind of internal placement service. A flexible and dynamic (and why not profitable) organization with the mandate to put challenge-seekers in contact with talent-seekers. [...]*

*“Alas, no such “talent optimizer” exists within the federal government. What’s more, as I write, managers are not incentivized to support an employee who, in a genuine optimization effort, would like to change teams. In general, that’s left to their discretion and they do as they see fit for themselves or their team. Serving the best interests of the federal government is not systematically taken into account [and nor is the well-being of the individual in question].”*

– Martin Houle, former federal public servant,  
*Le Devoir* (January 9, 2020)<sup>15</sup>

- influence and are influenced by our environment.
5. Is often supported and shaped by educators, family, peers, managers and the greater community.
  6. Means making the most of talent and potential, however you define growth and success – not necessarily linear advancement.
  7. Can be complex and complicated, so context is key – there may be both internal constraints (financial, cultural, health) or external constraints (labour market, technology).
  8. Is dynamic, evolving and requires continuous adaptation and resilience through multiple transitions. ■



#### TRAVEL TIP: LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

Career management is distinct from but intersects with other people management activities – including talent management, performance management, training and coaching. Talent management is a formal discipline for workforce planning that is directed by the organization. Performance management is a part of talent management activities and focuses on optimizing employee performance based on metrics and feedback. It focuses on how well employees have accomplished specific job-related activities in support of stated strategic objectives and organizational goals. (For example, is your service delivery program meeting its targets? Is your project manager staying on time and on budget?)

This Playbook addresses topics and actions that go beyond performance-related discussions,

interventions and follow-on actions. Career management is a partnership: “Managers, by providing learning opportunities and supporting career goals, help to empower their employees and further their career development. The organization, for its part, has a duty to help develop employees’ career management skills through human resources programs, mentoring and networking. Lastly, the employees themselves must be accountable for their own development through self-assessment, skills updating and setting career goals. When these three work together, employees become more engaged and retention improves.”<sup>13</sup> Think of this partnership as a triangle, with employees as the career owner, managers as the career enabler and organizations as the career supporter.





## Section 3: Building Your Career Management Itinerary

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# Building Your Career Management Itinerary

This far into the travel guide, you should have a better understanding of what career management is, its importance in the public sector and how it can help leaders and employees navigate their work, professional growth and interpersonal relationships.



We've provided background about why career management is directly connected to individual, workforce and organizational success (i.e., the “destination” of your journey). We've also outlined the complex challenges facing managers as they try to support their employees, ensure strong engagement and retention, and balance operational requirements against their management responsibilities.

But we all know the most rewarding part of preparing for a trip takes place once the itinerary is set and the planning is done, when you know what to expect and can focus on how to turn an already great schedule into a terrific experience. As you explore the activities in this section and choose those most useful to you, remember that this Playbook is not a comprehensive manual to career management. It

should intrigue and encourage deeper learning while providing concrete, practical starting points.

## TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED

1. Just as a travel guide about a place or tourist attraction has different categories of activities for visitors (e.g., what tours to take, where to dine, which hotels to stay at, etc.), we've also designed our recommendations around different categories of activities that may interest you. Consider the following:
  - “The Specialty Tour”: Some managers may prefer to structure their activities around a single goal, like a foodie charting their movements through a city to dine at all the best restaurants.



### TRAVEL TIP:

Check out the template on page 46. You can use it to build your own “itinerary,” putting into action the career management activities that are recommended in this Playbook and modifying them as you see fit.

- “The Highlights Tour”: Some managers may want to get exposure to a variety of ways that career management can be usefully implemented across work activities, like a traveller immersing themselves in an array of unfamiliar cultural beliefs, practices, events and histories.
  - “The Featured Tour”: Some managers may skim a list of activities and only select those that can help them navigate a current issue on their plate, such as a “featured trend” that’s popular in a given travel season.
2. As with the research you do when planning a trip, we’ve listed far more activities in this Playbook than can reasonably be accomplished within a short timeframe. Don’t feel pressure to choose more than the number of activities you feel is realistic. Just as you can’t see all the attractions in a city or country in one trip, prioritize those activities you want to do first. Then plan to come back and build new itineraries each trip to broaden your career management experience and exposure.
3. This section starts by challenging you to think differently, then drills down into specifics. Each subsequent activity becomes progressively more action-oriented and tied to organizational goals. We recommend starting by reading all the activities and putting a star beside those you want to begin with. Next, review your “shortlisted” activities and consider which are most important and in what order you want to tackle them. Then, fill in the itinerary template provided.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Diversity is a fact. Inclusion is a choice. Applying a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) lens in the workplace is not optional. Public sector leaders across Canada share this view, but may not know how to put it into practice. A DEI lens is essential to creating equity and inclusion, upholding the fundamental human rights of employees (and Canadians more broadly) and creating an organizational culture in which a sense of belonging extends to everyone.

The first and best resource for leaders is their employees. Leaders should ask employees who are directly impacted by DEI what they can do to help *them*, without creating an environment in which they are made to feel tokenized. The responsibility for driving equity and inclusion, demystifying inaccuracies and countering stereotypes about marginalized groups rests with those who are *not* subjected to systemic barriers and discrimination.

It’s important to be proactive and intentional about integrating career management and a DEI lens – rather than treating either as separate from each other or from “regular work.” The activities in the itineraries that follow aim to make this possible for busy leaders.

# 40+ Career Management Activities

## Itinerary A: 10 minutes to spare

If you can carve out 10 minutes daily, consider choosing one activity to do each day. You can do the same activity each day, or alternate between activities.



### Brainstorm

*Goal: Identify new, positive actions to take*

Think about yourself. Identify one career-defining moment from your past. Write it down and consider sharing it as part of an upcoming team event, call or communication. Why was it meaningful? What did you learn? Does your story provide context to any career situations that others may be experiencing? How might your background, prior experiences and different identities play a role? Consider sharing your story as part of a broader employee communication.



### Share

*Goal: Develop a culture of learning and exploration that encourages employee development*

Begin to regularly share one-line success messages with your staff that highlight how an employee has grown or developed new skills. Consider using this format:

*Subject: Career Creativity*

*Body: Last week, [employee name]*

showed career creativity when they helped [client/peer/me] solve a problem. [Outline the problem and what it meant to the person being helped and to your organization]. I look forward to [employee name] sharing what they learned from the experience. Well done.

Some organizations will send these types of messages out whenever there's a success to celebrate. Others will set a more predictable schedule, perhaps including these messages as part of a broader monthly or quarterly communication. In some organizations, sending "yet another email" may be received poorly because of the high volume of emails already experienced. If this is the case, consider including this type of one-line success message in an already existing email that is sent out regularly. Alternatively, consider sharing these success messages during a regular lunch-and-learn session or team meeting.

Whatever frequency and medium of communication you decide to use, let your staff know what they can expect and ensure you spend 10 minutes every few weeks soliciting stories from employees. On an ongoing basis, review which employees are the subject of these messages. Are diverse voices being recognized for their achievements and performance? If not, why might that be?



## Discuss

*Goal: Connect the dots to align organizational goals with your team's day-to-day experiences*

Call an employee and have a “check-in.” Let them know you are calling to

see what’s new with them and see how their day is going. Be clear that you have about 10 minutes and, if a longer conversation is needed, you will schedule a follow-up time to address items in more detail. Let your staff member spend a few minutes sharing whatever information is top of mind. What you discuss doesn’t have to be

### CAREERS AND CANADIANS

In addition to the “career journey” as a common metaphor or form of imagery, some of the public sector leaders we interviewed also pointed to the “career ladder.” Those who did described it as the traditional analogy or the analogy that best fits the hierarchical structure of their organization. Analogies are helpful in describing employment structures and relationships. They also ensure there is common language to describe core elements of organizational culture. As leaders, the way you talk about careers is powerful in orienting your employees to expectations and possibilities.

Fixed analogies for careers are less useful in the development, delivery and measurement of public goods and services. An over-reliance on describing employment, the workforce or labour markets with simple imagery overlooks the dynamic and complex

nature of today’s careers. As a federal government report on the Future of Work notes:

*“Career ladders are becoming career lattices: According to Barclays, 24% of workers under 34 have already worked in four industries, while 59% over 65 retired with three or less. The career lattice is characterized by constant skills learning and updating, steeper learning curves, and change management. Labour could become more transient, potentially impacting community cohesion but perhaps raising understanding between diverse groups. The future of vulnerable groups may worsen if governments don’t adapt skills training, redefine skilled immigration, and shift curricula to prepare Canadians for the career lattice and lifelong learning.”<sup>16</sup>*

A career ladder, lattice, journey, spider web or other fixed image may

serve a specific purpose at a particular time. But the broader focus should be on the dynamic relationship between Canadians and labour markets, not on the imagery itself.

A similar over-emphasis on one magic bullet to address current challenges may suppress the role each individual has in forging their own career in favour of a standard set of courses and tasks that, if completed, will lead to success in emerging employment structures. For example, reskilling or upskilling are important methods of adapting to the changing world of work. However, too narrow a focus on skills ignores the equally important role that individual interests, beliefs, values and other systemic elements play in ensuring career ownership, growth and readiness. How can skills training and initiatives also include these other elements?

career-related – but know that there are career implications for building this type of casual rapport and relationship with your employees. After the discussion, note priorities, topics or questions that come up. Select a different employee next time.



*Goal: Take action that fosters career opportunities for your team*

Are you committed to providing career support to your employees, but are having trouble getting started? Sometimes the best way to overcome that initial hump is to get organized.

Some organizations have an abundance of resources for employee, professional or workforce development, which can make navigating or taking advantage of them feel overwhelming.

Other organizations have few resources, especially for managers, leaving you to feel like you're alone.

Whether you are overwhelmed or underwhelmed, compile a list of the resources available to you (such as training opportunities) and collect those materials that can be gathered (in print or digital format). Remember that your focus is on career management resources. Not all of the professional development resources available to you will have an explicit career management focus.

Any resource focused on employee management can become a career management resource. Some are already explicitly focused on careers (such as this Playbook). For others, you may need to use the Guiding Principles on page 22 as part of your consideration of the topic at hand. Gaining exposure to stories of diverse experiences, operational successes and

innovative practices can be good “door-openers” to discuss career interests, learnings and opportunities.

Once you have an organized list, identify the gaps in your career management resources. If you aren't sure where those gaps are, ask yourself what you find especially interesting or challenging about providing career support to your employees. Do you want to improve your coaching skills? Do



#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

In our research with public sector leaders, we delved into what they think makes for good career conversations, coaching and support. These are the qualities they identified:

- Open, approachable
- Non-threatening, non-judgmental
- Empathy, patience, compassion
- Listening skills, observational skills
- The ability to ask questions
- Being interested, involved, encouraging
- Recognition of cultural differences and impacts
- Self-awareness
- The willingness to make time available
- Experience and practice



### TRAVEL TIP: SAVE TIME AND MONEY BY RELYING ON EXPERTS

Some trips are planned all on our own. Others are more complicated or require insight we don't have the time to gather. In these cases, we turn to travel agents and tour companies to help us plan a great experience. In the field of career management, there are advisors and experts able to help you with planning and execution. Look for professionals who use the term “career” (distinct from “HR” or “talent”) to describe their area of expertise.

you find initiating a career conversation daunting? Do you want to learn more about career development theories and principles? Do you want to increase your awareness of how diverse groups experience work, careers and community?

Lastly, consider ways to begin filling in those gaps. Can this Playbook help fill them? (Remember to check out the Resources section on page 72.) Do you need to do more research about the resources available to you within your organization? Can you take your list and its gaps to your own supervisor to begin a discussion about getting more resources?

Prioritize one topic and one resource that you will review in the next two weeks.



### Reflect

*Goal: Take time to focus on what you and your team need to keep growing*

What does “career success” mean to you? Do you think it will mean the same for each of your employees? People may instinctually identify upward mobility (promotions and salary increases) as a key indicator of success. But is this all it is?

Write out your personal definition of career success and what it may mean for your own career growth. Then try to place yourself in the shoes of your employees, considering how their definition of career success may differ from yours, and how that may affect the support they need from you. What challenges are your employees facing that may impact their journey and success? Make sure to consider DEI barriers they may be up against, and how you can help as their manager.

The role your allyship can play in supporting an employee’s career success when they are subject to systemic barriers or discrimination cannot be understated. Check out the *Guide to Allyship* at [guidetoallyship.com](https://www.guidetoallyship.com) and “Two Ways to Stand Against Racism and Sexism At Work” at Bloomberg: <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-09-28/how-to-be-a-better-ally-against-racism-and-sexism-at-work>.

It’s always a proud moment for managers when their employees earn a promotion, but this is not the only indicator of success – for them or for you as their career enabler. This is uniquely true in the public sector, where (depending on the jurisdiction) there can be more opportunities for lateral,

temporary or project-based movement. Does your organization have a formal program for this type of movement? Are there any informal paths?

For additional reading, check out “A Definition Of Career Success And Why So Few People Ever Experience It” at Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/terinaallen/2020/08/31/a-definition-of-career-success-and-why-so-few-people-ever-experience-it/#55d12d8d4dd2>



## Measure

*Goal: Identify good data that can help you make better decisions*

Many people believe professional development training and career

management are the same activity. They aren't. However, training can be one tool that an employee uses to manage and navigate their career. Resolve to ensure that, from now on, your employees complete an evaluation of any online, in-person or on-the-job training courses they take. The focus should be what was learned, how it has been applied and how it advanced one career and one organizational goal. Book time to review the results and consider which training approaches lead to faster or better career and organizational improvements.

MaRS provides a template you may want to modify or use:

<https://learn.marsdd.com/article/training-evaluation-sample-feedback-questionnaire-for-trainees/>

### CAREERS AND CANADIANS

Career development emphasizes that careers are self-directed, lifelong processes that blend paid and unpaid activities, interests, beliefs, values, skills and competencies. These are all shaped by culture, identity, socio-economic background, personal preferences and more. Only correlating career success with securing a job or promotion has concrete implications for the development, delivery and measurement of public goods and services.

How might the meaning of career success

differ between a recent newcomer, an Indigenous employee and a laid-off mid-career resource sector worker? What role do family, community and geographical considerations play in determining perceptions of career success?

Consider the complex challenges associated with transitioning oil and gas workers into emerging clean energy industries. Training programs and secure job opportunities are certainly required to facilitate this type of transition, but are

not sufficient on their own. Hope- and resilience-based initiatives are equally important to weathering uncertain and disruptive transitions. Attention to personal agency, aspirations and skill sets are also critical, as a one-size-fits-all or “a job is a job” approach will see workers left behind and long-term resentment and hostility grow.

How can focusing on careers/career success instead of jobs/retraining inform employment and labour programs and services across Canada?



## Itinerary B: 1 hour a week

If you can find one hour a week, consider adding the following activities to your weekly career management plan. Other options for managing your time include choosing two or three activities each month or identifying a few activities to conduct during quarterly manager meetings.



### Brainstorm

*Goal: Identify new, positive actions to take*

Think about the importance of listening to employees and reflecting on their concerns. Consider which questions, priorities and issues routinely emerge in discussions. Which career-related needs seem to be organization-wide and which are unique to an individual or group of employees? What can you do to leverage diversity, equity and inclusion? List three questions that you have about the issues and consider asking more questions in a future 10-minute check-in with an employee (or a supervisor if you need input and advice).



### Share

*Goal: Develop a culture of learning and exploration that encourages employee development*

Share an article or tool that focuses

on soft skills critical to your employees' success. Consider subscribing to CERIC's *CareerWise* newsletter, which provides a free weekly summary of career-focused articles from a variety of sources to your email inbox: <https://careerwise.ceric.ca>. The CareerWise website has five sections – 1) Tips and Training, 2) Diversity, 3) Students and Youth, 4) Workplace and 5) Research and Trends. Use these weekly newsletters to identify an article or topic that can be circulated to your staff. The “Conversation Activators” provided in Section 5 of this Playbook are another resource from which you can draw.

Is there an employee intranet, network or portal available to you that may have career-related articles or similar materials? The federal government has GCcollab and GCconnex. The Government of British Columbia has @Work. The Government of Nova Scotia has TheHub and MyHR. Smaller organizations may list employee resources and programs on their public website.

Good sources for career-related

articles may also be LinkedIn Groups (search for “government career” or “public sector career” to get access to relevant discussions and resources) and the following types of public sector websites:

- Canada Revenue Agency – Student and Graduate Hiring: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/corporate/careers-cra/browse-job-types/student-graduate-hiring.html>
- Canada Mortgage and Housing

Careers: <https://careers.cmhc-schl.gc.ca>

- Institute of Public Administration of Canada: <https://www.ipac.ca>
- Federal government Indigenous employee resources: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/jobs/services/gc-jobs/indigenous-recruitment-information-hiring-managers.html>
- IndigenousWorks: <https://indigenousworks.ca/en/resources/indigenous-organizations>

### Recommended additional activities for organizations with a team of people managers

**Think about the role that people managers play.** What development or exposure have they had to career-related tools and theories? Most employees assume their direct manager can provide good career guidance. However, most career discussions only focus on job fit, either for the current role or for roles in the future. Job fit is only one element of a career discussion. As you start to manage a larger team or workforce, strategic concepts, frameworks and tools can help you make better investments and develop as a stronger career manager. How





many of the following terms are familiar to you?

- Change management
- Life stage/life course theory of careers
- Positive psychology
- Brain science of the workplace

It is okay if these terms are not familiar. Your organization’s core mandate is (likely) not in the career development field, although career development theories and tools *can* have a positive impact on program/service delivery and policymaking for a range of public sector mandates. See Section 5 on page 64 for additional reading on the usefulness

of career development in the execution of public sector mandates.

When you have needs in other areas outside your core organizational mandate, you look externally for free and affordable resources. There are career management resources available to help build your internal competency with coaching, career conversations, career path planning and employee engagement. Consider if this is an area that should be added to the development goals for your people managers and whoever else might take on the role of “Career Champion.”

- Government of Canada Jobs:  <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/home>
- Government of Quebec Employment:  <https://www.quebec.ca/en/employment/>
- Ontario Public Service Jobs:  <https://www.gojobs.gov.on.ca>
- City of Mississauga Jobs:  <https://jobs.mississauga.ca>

### Recommended additional activities for organizations with a team of people managers

#### Ask your employees to share one article that made them think about their own career.

Set a deadline, and have them share the article with a couple “key takeaways” or questions that were raised for them. Once you have 12 or more articles with employee comments, consider creating an online folder or booklet that you can share with new hires as part of the onboarding process to generate career-related conversations.



## Discuss

*Goal: Connect the dots to align organizational goals with your team’s day-to-day experiences*

Discuss what you are working on and your top priorities for the next month. Explain how your work aligns with the work your employees are doing.

Solicit questions that draw out common interests, curiosities or issues.

Discuss new opportunities for your employees to learn from each other, share their work differently and/or explore a new topic they don’t fully grasp but is related to your success. Take turns having employees share what they are working on, what they have learned and how it relates to organizational priorities.

Core work responsibilities and tasks are often seen as separate from career interest conversations. The former is viewed as day-to-day while the latter is viewed as future-focused and aspirational. This activity shows that if day-to-day work is intentionally linked to personal career development interests and goals, everyday tasks and work become career management activities. In other words, career management is a core work responsibility.



*Goal: Take action that fosters a culture of meaningful communication as a foundation for better career management*

As workplace conditions and demands change, managers often shift how they communicate with their teams. Shifts in frequency, quality or focus of communication can become fodder for speculation among employees. But they don’t have to.

Leaders can have close relationships with employees that are professional and productive. Over time, good leadership discipline around communication, respecting work-life boundaries and so on may loosen as you grow more

confident that your employees understand what needs to be done and are willing to go the extra mile. When relationships become more trust-based, it's natural for the frequency of communication to drop – including positive reinforcement and acknowledgements. However, everyone needs to know their efforts are recognized and their future matters.

Consider how much attention you are paying to your flexibility (in how and when work gets done), open communication and organizational culture. A focus on retention ensures long-term relationships and understanding are at the core of every interaction. Retaining good employees is critical, and how you communicate greatly influences how long they will stay with you.

First, recognize that your own growth may lead to changes in your communication and leadership style. These changes may be very welcome by your team. Or they may be confusing. Consider how your leadership style has changed as you've grown, using the questions below to begin.

- Has your focus or stance on flexibility and communication shifted over time?
- If so, do your employees know why you've made changes that affect how they interact with you and each other?
- What assumptions have you made about the frequency and focus of communication? For example, have you assumed that employees are too busy for a weekly update that used



### TAKE ACTION

On a quarterly basis, identify key employees who would be hard to replace if they decided to leave your organization. Identify if it's their skills, relationships or other qualities that make them so valuable and consider who might be able to step into their role, either internally or externally. Make sure you keep these employees in mind as you review your Career Management Itinerary. Have you focused on engaging them in ways that will be meaningful?

to occur, or that they'd prefer to receive an email update rather than attend a web-based meeting?

How and when you communicate conveys volumes about your degree of trust, openness and commitment to employee success. Being aware of your own growth can also help you identify times when unconscious attitudes and beliefs about specific employees may have been activated. Often, it results in unequal access to information.

Second, use your responses to consider the following – and build a communication checklist you can use:

1. What is a sustainable frequency for communication that you can commit to, ensuring employees feel you are invested in their career success when things are going well and when there are issues to address?
2. How can you make sure information, relationships and communication are not commodities shared with different groups of employees based on unfounded assumptions or bias?

### Recommended additional activities for organizations with a team of people managers

**Discuss the concept of having various people managers or team leads become “Career Champions”** with a focus on providing good career-focused resources to the rest of the managers and staff. Record concerns that are raised, such as limited time. Discuss if having one or two people focused on this topic might free up time for everyone as new tools and practices are brought into the organization to replace current ad hoc methods.

3. How might sharing any changes in your own leadership and communication approaches be presented to your employees as an opportunity to demonstrate your own career growth, vulnerability and/or belief in their abilities?



### Reflect

*Goal: Take time to focus on what you and your team need to keep growing*

Find career-related videos and podcasts that you can reflect on from your own personal perspective. For example, TED Talks are a great source for materials that challenge us to reconsider commonly held assumptions about a variety of topics (and include practical tips to try):

- How we communicate: Mark Bowden’s “The Importance of Being Inauthentic”
- How we value happiness and positivity in the workplace: Shawn Achor’s “The Happy Secret to Better Work”
- How we approach career exploration and skills development: David

- Epstein’s “Why Specializing Early Doesn’t Always Mean Career Success”
- How we understand the “tech- tonic” shifts to employment and work caused by COVID-19: Mary L. Gray’s “COVID-19 Unraveled the Workforce. Here’s How To Fix It”

There is also a seemingly limitless number of podcasts that can help you reflect on your current needs and opportunities related to your employees, their engagement and their careers. Just Google “podcasts for public servants” and take your pick.

I especially like “Transform Your Workplace”: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/transform-your-workplace/id533673516?mt=2>. There are great episodes about diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), stepping into new management roles without official training, leadership and much more.

Consider also checking out the “Best Part of My Job” podcast, which features different people sharing their career stories: <http://www.bestpartofmyjob.com/podcast/>.

Use these types of external resources to inspire and motivate yourself to think creatively and positively. The journey

that you've started on can be extremely rewarding – and it's personal as well as organizational. We all get tunnel vision when we're deep into our organization's specific workplace cultures, needs, goals and processes. External resources are great for helping you reorient to what matters most, and what everyone has to grapple with in their workplaces – regardless of organization or employer.



## Measure

*Goal: Identify good data that can help you make better decisions*

Take yourself through a thought exercise by first considering the following:

- What career-related metrics or goals do you set for your employees?
- Do your employees have to demonstrate they've learned something over the course of the year?
- Do your employees have to identify new skills or competencies that they will acquire?
- How do your employees demonstrate their growing professional maturity over time?
- How does your employees' work align with organizational goals?
- What goals do your employees want to measure and track (and aren't currently)?

List your top organizational goals and consider how the career plans of each of your employees may make them qualified or interested in helping

you with a project about one of the following:

- Client services or program delivery
- Risk assessment
- Accelerating new service development
- Building new stakeholder or community relationships
- Conducting new research
- Decreasing costs
- Fostering diversity, equity and inclusion
- Informing Canadians on government programs, policies or public interest issues

Given the wide range of organizational mandates in the public sector, you may need to modify or customize the project topics above. But no matter what you choose, big or small, focus on matching it with the strengths and talents of the employee.

With limited time, funds and personnel, which of the following activities promise the strongest ROI?

- Peer mentoring with a knowledgeable expert
- More frequent career conversations
- New exposure and experiences, such as attending conferences or community events
- Training
- Time-bound job shadowing

The purpose of this activity is for you to start considering various career-related actions and activities that align with organizational goals so you can make good trade-off decisions.

## Itinerary C: Half-day every few months

If you can carve out half a day every few months, or as part of your annual employee development activities, consider adding the following activities to your career management action plan.



### Brainstorm

*Goal: Identify new, positive actions to take*

Think about how you motivate your employees. It's sometimes assumed that money is the only motivator – but research indicates otherwise. For example, a LinkedIn study found that the top reason why employees left their job was their concern about the lack of career advancement opportunities.<sup>17</sup> Research by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) found that 85% of new employees joined the public sector because they were looking for a stable job, 62% because they expected to help

others and make a difference and 56% because they found it a good fit with their education.<sup>18</sup>

What type of experience or exposure would be meaningful to each of your employees? Some may value attending an event with you. Others may want to be challenged to solve a new type of problem. Remember also that motivators are influenced by a range of background influences, including cultural, socioeconomic, and personal beliefs and experiences.

To properly understand your employees' motivators, it's essential for you to talk with them openly without making assumptions or judgments. Consider also having your employees



#### DID YOU KNOW?

In our research with public sector leaders, we found that 53% think they should be spending at least one meeting per quarter working with employees on career-related goals and activities. Similarly, 39% think employees should review their career goals at least once a quarter (followed by 35% who chose annually). But because managers – and employees! – find these conversations challenging, they are often avoided or delayed. If you find yourself doing this, check out the “Share” activity in this itinerary for help getting started.

## CAREERS AND CANADIANS

An important part of any career journey involves exploring options, opportunities and possibilities. These are dynamic and evolving, and they require continuous adaptation and resilience through multiple life transitions. Understanding Canadians and their career motivators is a complex task. A good starting point is recognizing that Canadians of all ages and stages want to make informed choices about their life and career path.

Every Canadian child at some point is likely asked, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” The focus on job titles and educational courses is limiting. A better question might be, “What are you curious about in how the world works?” Being able to explore

the possible answers to this type of question should not be confined to a young person’s school curriculum, or to young people at all. Being able to change paths is growing more and more important. Having the tools and resources to do both throughout life and career transitions may offer a range of innovative directions for Canadians and public sector organizations.

Consider the following tools that focus on facilitating career exploration:

- **Become Education:** an Australian-based careers education service that helps raise awareness, aspiration and agency in young people for lasting impact – <https://www.become.education>

- *Who Do I Want To Become?* This children’s book by learning architect Dr. Rumeet Billan asks not what but who you want to be – <https://www.whodoiwantto.become.com>

- **WorkWords:** an online encyclopedia created by the Labour Market Information Council (LMIC) that provides definitions of key labour market terms – <https://lmic-cimt.ca/projects/work-words/>

How can these types of tools be used to establish a culture where asking *what else is possible* becomes standard practice? What impact could this have on Canadians?

take an online assessment or other tool that will help them identify their key values and motivators. A free test is available here: <https://testyourself.psychtests.com/testid/3153>. (I prefer to use the assessments provided by TTI Success Insights – [www.ttisi.com](http://www.ttisi.com). There is usually a per person fee for the assessment, but I’ve found them to be accurate, practical and easy for managers and employees to use.)

Create or revise a plan to motivate your employees without relying on

financial rewards. You may want to consider what rewards may enhance the following:

- **Public recognition** – In your organization, in the public sector or in your community. How can you showcase great work in your internal or external communications? Can an employee represent your organization at a public event?
- **Employee appreciation** – Not all employees want the spotlight of





### DID YOU KNOW? TRIADS AND INTERGENERATIONAL MENTORING

“Why triads? Research shows that organizational cultures are shaped by the relationships that small groups of employees build. Natural, interconnected networks of people come together and disband continually in the context of work and social relationships. In a high-performing triadic relationship, everyone gives and gains with common, often unspoken, values at the core of the work. Each person is clear about the specific expertise they can offer. They are also tuned into the health of the relationship of the other two parties in the triad. Triads provide a stable yet dynamic structure to implement learning, change and growth programs in the context of the actual working environment. In today’s intergenerational workforce, they offer a unique opportunity to align onboarding, leadership development and succession management.”

– From Challenge Factory’s *Triadic Mentoring Handbook*

recognition, but everyone wants to feel valued. Which employee would welcome a one-on-one conversation about the great work they’re doing? Would they prefer an email that expresses your appreciation of their work?

- Workplace – Some of your employees will value something that makes their work environment special. What visual rewards can you provide?
- Interesting work – Is there a unique project or new area to explore? Which employee would enjoy spending an hour or two helping with something different than their everyday work?

For more ideas and suggestions, refer to this “What Really Motivates Employees?” infographic: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/225560>.

### Recommended additional activities for organizations with a team of people managers

#### Think about network development.

Can you identify three employees (a Triad) who do different work but who would benefit from knowing each other? Perhaps they work in different parts of your organization and could become a cross-functional team. Perhaps some of your employees have well-developed internal and external network connections, while others may have specific skills or life experience to share. Strong evidence suggests that if these Triads come from different generations, intergenerational knowledge transfer and innovation emerges faster than in most formal 1:1 mentoring programs. To get started implementing a Triad program where three employees come together to develop a stronger network (internal and external), develop their skills and support each other’s career-related activities, identify (or have employees self-identify) to be part of the first groups of three.



## Share

*Goal: Develop a culture of learning and exploration that encourages employee development*

Establish a regular schedule to have career conversations with your staff. Most employees value having a consistent monthly or quarterly check-in. Ensure that employees know the frequency and stick to the schedule. Skipping these meetings conveys that their career and engagement is not a priority for you. When preparing for a career conversation, consider asking the employee for topics that are important to them. Keep in mind that job performance issues or concerns should be addressed as they arise and are not the focus for these more strategic career management conversations. See the Travel Tip on page 23 for a reminder of the difference between performance management and career management.

Here is a short list of common questions that you can use as a starting point for structuring career conversations:

1. Gauge your employee's engagement and levels of reflection and intention: "Since our last conversation, when have you been...  
...most proud of your work?"  
...curious about something new?"
2. Gauge the challenges facing your employee, their feelings of 'stuckness' and issues that need to be addressed. This question also offers an opportunity to ensure

the employee is not held back by obstacles: "Looking forward, what might get in the way of you accomplishing your career goals?"

3. Gauge your employee's mindset and attitude: "What's one or two words you would use to summarize where you are at on your career journey?"
4. Show your commitment to your employee's ongoing support, growth and engagement: "How can I help you between now and our next formal discussion?"

For more guidance, check out the "Having Better Career Conversations" resources on page 76.



### FROM THE SECTOR:

*"If this whole 'broaching a career conversation' feels daunting or challenging, think about it in terms of the relationship with the person you're managing rather than a micro-moment."*

– Manager in a municipal government



## Discuss

*Goal: Connect the dots to align organizational goals with your team's day-to-day experiences*

Discuss career-related topics when getting together with other leaders. If you're not already part of a network or small group of peer leaders that meets regularly, consider finding one to join.

For some, these are formally structured networking and support opportunities. Others try to meet for coffee, lunch or after work with trusted colleagues. Virtual options include video calls and direct messaging chat groups.

Arrange a meeting with three or four other leaders from different teams or organizations. Discuss how you might collectively support the career growth of your employees. Here are some activities as a network or group that can be very worthwhile for developing your own understanding of people and career management:

1. Share success stories and challenges.
2. Spend a day shadowing each other to get broader organizational or sector exposure.

3. Identify priority projects that you can work on together, such as evaluating new systems/tools or developing a common training class.
4. Explore the diversity experience: Collect and reflect on learnings from the unique career experiences of your fellow leaders and various employee groups within your respective teams. Ask about their career experiences with an intention to understand how diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) has informed their view of work, career and leadership.

Set out clear expectations, available funding (if any), timelines and responsibilities.



### FROM THE SECTOR:

*“We have tools that explicitly address the intersection of career development and diversity, equity and inclusion. It’s content that we developed internally with curated content. So, a lot of what we did was best practices research. We incorporated tools from articles, webinars, videos and podcasts with content around how do we remove biases and how do we be inclusive in having career conversations with staff. It’s very practical. We wanted content that would really click with managers. An example of a situation is when an employee tells a manager that they’re happy in their job and they don’t have any interest in going somewhere else. There might actually be a cultural preference, or there might be another factor in their lives that could affect that. And it’s about understanding the importance of not making any judgments on that. The toolkit is very simple things. And it’s all founded on the concept of biases. We all have biases and it’s very natural for us to go back to what we know, and to make judgments based on what we know without having a really good picture of what the lived situation is for that individual.”*

– Manager in a municipal government



### DID YOU KNOW?

We asked public sector leaders who they turn to when they need career management support. Some leaders really do feel like they're an island, isolated and on their own. Some go to their human resources department, while others go to external consultants. Peers and colleagues in either their own organization or in professional networks give some leaders a comfortable or less formal source of support. Others have mentors, sometimes within their organization and sometimes outside it. Yet others seek support from their direct supervisors and other leaders. And, finally, some engage with their local career development association to connect with support and resources. What options do you have for people who can support you?



### Do

*Goal: Take action that fosters career opportunities for your team*

Review your current organizational structure. Do you have good, relevant descriptions of each employee's core responsibilities and duties? This activity is concerned only with how you and your employees understand and view their roles and work, not with how they are described for formal, regulated job postings. Prepare a description for each employee, including the following elements:

- A position title or "headline" that resonates as exciting with the employee. This gives you a good "gut check" that the current employee is in the right role. If the headline doesn't excite them, find out why.
- A description of the employee's general duties and what the role is accountable for.
- The competencies needed to do the job well (e.g., foster teamwork, oral communication, analytical thinking,

etc.). Here's a list of 31 competencies you can select from: [https://](https://www.workforce.com/news/31-core-competencies-explained)

[www.workforce.com/news/31-core-competencies-explained](https://www.workforce.com/news/31-core-competencies-explained). Public sector organizations may also have their own competency frameworks that you should refer to if available.

- Finally, include how you know the job is being done well. What are some of the results or outcomes that would indicate the employee is doing a great job?

Once you've identified competencies and measurements of success for your employees, start considering how they can build their own career pathways. A career pathway ensures employees know their career will move forward within your organization or wider institution. Remember also that recognition of career development is important. No one wants to feel stuck in the same role without recognition for what they've learned and accomplished.

Learn more about career pathways:

<https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/career-path-guides/public-sector-government/4-paths-in-public-sector/>



## Reflect

*Goal: Take time to focus on what you and your team need to keep growing*

Reflect on how your organization will change over the next 12-24 months and what critical skills (hard and soft) you need to succeed. Facilitate a “Best Part of My Job” internal campaign to allow your employees to reflect on and share their own career stories.

Be sure to include diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practices as one of your organization’s ongoing skills-based needs. Mention that if there is a DEI lens to employees’ stories, they are safe and encouraged to discuss it. Here are three articles to help you think about concrete ways to facilitate open dialogue and safe sharing in your teams:

1. “Creating a Safe Space at Work for Discussing Social Justice Topics,” from SHRM: [https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/](https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/creating-a-safe-space-at-work-for-discussing-social-justice-topics.aspx)

[creating-a-safe-space-at-work-for-discussing-social-justice-topics.aspx](https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/creating-a-safe-space-at-work-for-discussing-social-justice-topics.aspx)

2. “Make Your Meetings a Safe Space for Honest Conversation,” from Harvard Business Review: <https://hbr.org/2019/04/make-your-meetings-a-safe-space-for-honest-conversation>
  3. “15 Ways Your Organization Can Create a Safe Space in a Divisive World,” from Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachingcouncil/2017/11/02/15-ways-your-organization-can-create-a-safe-space-in-a-divisive-world/#450d3feofcab>
- Discuss how their jobs may change in the coming years. Have them reflect on what story they want to be able to tell in 12 or 24 months. Have them consider how sharing this story shifts their perspective on their work and career. What’s the best way to share these types of stories?

- A bulletin board (or online version) with an image that represents each employee’s story



### TRAVEL TIP:

Safety and perception of safety have a significant impact on any journey. This is also true in the context of career-related conversations and management. Just as physical safety is a requirement in workplaces and teams, so too is psychological safety. Dr. Amy Edmonson, a professor at Harvard Business School, defines psychological safety in the workplace as “a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking.”<sup>19</sup> Standards for psychological safety include mental health and well-being supports, open expression and acceptance in interpersonal and team interactions and managerial competence for creating an environment in which they are upheld. Employees need to feel they can speak freely without fear of retaliation. This is an essential component of cultivating inclusion and diversity of thought. Check out the resources listed in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion section on page 81 for learning more about psychological safety at work.

- A newsletter that spotlights a story each month
- A shared document that compiles what each employee's tweet or quote would be if they had to summarize their career in 140 characters or one sentence



## Measure

*Goal: Identify good data that can help you make better decisions*

Previous activities have asked you to identify metrics for training and career-related activities. Bring all those metrics together and create a dashboard that ties together employee participation, the investment of time and funds and key organizational goals. This should be a team effort that emphasizes open collaboration and

communication – not a wider institutional tool.

Make sure you get employee feedback on how this career management work has enhanced their skills and competence in everyday responsibilities. You may want to start by gathering anecdotal evidence about how your employees are advancing their career and organizational goals, including the perspectives of members from DEI groups. After a few quarters, examine the patterns emerging and create a more quantitative dashboard to help you decide which activities deliver the best overall employee and organizational ROI.

The goal is to clearly articulate meaningful metrics that tie career management activities to key organizational goals. After all, as Peter Drucker first said: “There is nothing quite so useless as doing with great efficiency something that should not be done at all.” ■



## TAKE ACTION

This activity is best for teams or organizations that do employee engagement surveys (and leaders who have the capacity to affect them). Often these types of surveys focus on how involved employees feel in certain activities and how likely they would be to refer a friend or colleague to work in the organization (part of what is called the net promoter score). Employee engagement

surveys can be enhanced to help measure your team or organization's career management maturity by adding the following to the end of any question that's asked: *How important is this to you when considering your career goals?*

When examining the responses, you will see not only where employees are engaged in their work and your culture, but also where they feel an important

item is being undervalued or overlooked. A lot of involvement in areas that don't tie to individual career goals may foreshadow engagement issues. Conversely, low engagement in areas that are very important to employee career plans can be linked to retention risk. In both cases, a career conversation that aligns organizational and employee goals is a good next step.

## Template to Build a Career Management Itinerary – Your Action Plan

My Career Management Itinerary: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
 (month) (year) (month) (year)

From Itinerary A: I will do **1** of the following any time I have 10 minutes free in my schedule – list as many activities as you'd like to choose from:

	I Want to Do Next	I Am Doing	I'm Done	I Should Do Again
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

From Itinerary B: I will schedule a few hours per month to work on 2-3 of these activities each week for the next few months:

	I Want to Do Next	I Am Doing	I'm Done	I Should Do Again
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

From Itinerary C: Every few months, I will schedule a few hours in a block and work on 1 of these projects:

	I Want to Do Next	I Am Doing	I'm Done	I Should Do Again
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Checklist:

Have you included activities from a variety of categories?

Number of activities selected: \_\_\_\_\_



**Brain-storm**



**Share**



**Discuss**



**Do**



**Reflect**



**Measure**

If 1 activity leads to another, have you listed the follow-on activity as part of what you want to do next? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you feel confident to start all of the activities you have listed in the “To Do” or “I Am Doing” columns? If not, what questions do you have or what resources do you need?

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Who can help you answer your questions or find good resources? (**HINT: Page 72** of this Playbook has a long list of resources for you in addition to your own colleagues, sector organizations and institutions)

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## Template to Build a Career Management Itinerary – Your Action Plan

My Career Management Itinerary: September, 2021 to June, 2022  
(month) (year) (month) (year)

From Itinerary A: I will do 1 of the following any time I have 10 minutes free in my schedule – list as many activities as you'd like to choose from:

	I Want to Do Next	I Am Doing	I'm Done	I Should Do Again
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Call to check-in with a staff member</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Review staff training evaluations</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Write my own career story and share it</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

From Itinerary B: I will schedule a few hours per month to work on 2-3 of these activities each week for the next few months:

	I Want to Do Next	I Am Doing	I'm Done	I Should Do Again
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Listen to "Transform Your Workplace" podcast</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Set career-related organizational goals</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Consider having Career Champions</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>







From Itinerary C: Every few months, I will schedule a few hours in a block and work on 1 of these projects:

	I Want to Do Next	I Am Doing	I'm Done	I Should Do Again
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Focus on better career conversations</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Engage staff in designing ways to recognize career learning</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Learn more about trends and plan to intro to team</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Checklist:

Have you included activities from a variety of categories?

Number of activities selected:

					
<b>Brainstorm</b>	<b>Share</b>	<b>Discuss</b>	<b>Do</b>	<b>Reflect</b>	<b>Measure</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>

If 1 activity leads to another, have you listed the follow-on activity as part of what you want to do next? Yes

Do you feel confident to start all of the activities you have listed in the "To Do" or "I Am Doing" columns? If not, what questions do you have or what resources do you need?

Not sure how team will react to adding those activities to busy schedule

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Who can help you answer your questions or find good resources? (HINT: Page 72 of this Playbook has a long list of resources for you in addition to your own colleagues, sector organizations and institutions)

My managers and leaders - what excites them about these ideas? Build on that  
Ask Ron how his organization has used these tools  
Ask Paulette to craft great internal emails to spark curiosity





## Section 4: Special Situations

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# Special Situations

**Sometimes situations arise that require unique career management approaches.**

This section takes a thematic approach to special situations that present challenges in the public sector. Not all public sector organizations will experience each situation. However, some will be experienced by all organizations and are special because of the circumstances

surrounding them – and the unique approaches or solutions needed to address them. After exploring this section, consider going back to your Career Management Itinerary and making additions or modifications for the topics that are particularly relevant to your organization.

## When Managers Are Not Comfortable or Capable of Having Career Conversations

**A total of 51% of public sector leaders told us they believe managers find career conversations difficult, while an additional 27% believe managers find them difficult “sometimes.”**

Although professional development training of some type is commonly found across the public sector as a whole, significant gaps still exist within individual organizations and teams. Of the leaders we interviewed, 55% report receiving no training for the people or career management part of their job. As a result, they are often left to navigate different relationships, roles and conversations on their own. The sources of their difficulties or concerns about having career conversations often fall into two categories: constraints and confidence.

- It's difficult guiding employees when they themselves aren't sure of their career aspirations or direction.
- It's awkward when employees ask for help or support but leaders have no good suggestions or solutions to offer.
- It would be demoralizing for employees if they realized there are no opportunities available that match their competencies or interests, which would only hasten their departure.



### TAKE ACTION

In your Career Management Itinerary, there are activities that address these suggestions (for example, see the “Share” activity in Itinerary C on page 41). Leaders play an essential role in facilitating the type of environment in which meaningful, ongoing career conversations can take place.

- It’s a challenge to find time to properly prepare for career conversations, let alone conduct them and then follow through on any action items that emerge.



### FROM THE SECTOR:

*“Start the conversation; dialogue is important. Don’t be shy; you have to start somewhere. Make it a regular thing, even if it’s only once or twice a year. Make sure it happens. Take time to have those conversations. And use the right resources – use ALL the resources. It’s a win-win. Anything you find out can be used for your employees’ careers, and whatever employees come up with, you can use for your own career as well. There’s no loss in career development or conversation.”*

– Manager in the federal government

In the face of these constraints and confidence challenges, it can feel easier for leaders to not have the conversation at all. Coupled with the constant struggle to meet high operational demands and fulfill organizational mandates with limited resources, career conversations can quickly slide right off the side of everyone’s desk.

So, what can leaders do when career conversations seem so complicated? Remember the basics:

- Remind employees that you may not have all the answers to their career questions or needs, but you’re committed to working together to find them.
- Remind *yourself* that it’s not necessary for you to have all the answers going into the conversation. Your first job is to listen and learn.
- Employees will likely be just as nervous as you. Explain or remind them what a career conversation is and why it’s different from a performance-based evaluation.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Good preparation for career conversations is critical, even when a manager and employee know each other well and have worked together for a long time. Here are seven pitfalls to avoid in career conversations (adapted from *Managing Human Resources: A Guide for Small Business Managers*):

1. **Ignorance:** Prepare for the conversation by reading the employee's file or reviewing their work. Look for unexplained gaps, contradictions or unfinished business. If this leaves you with questions, ask them and listen carefully to the answers.
2. **Inattention:** Do not allow interruptions during the conversation. Answering the phone or permitting disruptions insults your employee and undermines the value of the discussion.
3. **Verbosity:** Try not to talk too much during the discussion. Let the employee speak and listen carefully. Ask the employee what they want to talk about instead of dominating the agenda.
4. **Inconsistency:** Treat everyone the same. Stick to the same schedule or trigger point for career conversations. Maintain regular frequency.
5. **Aimlessness:** Covering irrelevant details reveals more about you than the employee. Stick with specific experiences and on-the-job examples to support your discussion.
6. **Mismanagement:** Always stay on track in the conversation. Stick to the time you allotted, recognizing that you are committing to regular conversations. There should not be urgency to the discussion – this is a long-term, ongoing relationship and discussion.
7. **Procrastination:** Don't take too long to make a decision. Keep your discussion process reasonable and non-bureaucratic. If you agree to do something, set short- and long-term time commitments for followup.

Based on these findings, senior leadership can also help enhance the quality of career conversations by:

- Providing options to managers for non-financial recognition and rewards that could be given to employees (e.g., an assignment on an interesting project, committee or taskforce, lunch with a difficult-to-access leader, an email thanking the employee for the specific contribution and impact of their work, etc.).
- Considering how the organization's priorities and projects over the next 6-12 months might provide career-building opportunities for employees. Ensure that managers know which of these opportunities are available to them.
- Helping managers prioritize career conversations as a critical strategic activity. ■

# Dealing with Life Events and Leaves of Absence

As work-life balance took on new meaning in the wake of COVID-19, there has been a growing recognition that life events trigger unique career-related needs.

Sometimes an employee takes maternity or parental leave, or asks for a leave of absence to care for a family member. Other times, a medical emergency or death in their family leads to an interruption in their work. The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges to working parents with children at home in need of more hands-on childcare and education. Being flexible and addressing the career needs of your employees when they are off or juggling disruptive life events, as well as after they've returned to work, can be difficult.



In Canada, 35% of the workforce is involved with caregiving for a family member.<sup>20</sup> The federal government has put together this list of practices that organizations of various sizes are using to help meet the needs of their employees, while addressing concerns related to productivity, staffing and turnover: [http://www.publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2015/edsc-edsc/Em12-8-2015-eng.pdf](http://www.publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/edsc-edsc/Em12-8-2015-eng.pdf).



## TAKE ACTION

Before COVID-19, it was likely that 1/3 of your staff members were maintaining their current work schedules while balancing caregiving responsibilities. Since COVID-19 disrupted work, that proportion will have only increased and placed greater pressure on caregivers to make tough career

choices. For example, a September 2020 survey by FlexJobs found that 40% of working parents had to make changes to their jobs.<sup>21</sup> For 25%, that meant voluntarily reducing their hours and for 15%, it meant quitting their jobs. Of those who quit their jobs, 38% said they do not plan to rejoin the workforce.

Decide if you want to add any actions to your Career Management Itinerary to research what the implications are in your organization, what your employees need and if there are hidden opportunities to satisfy their needs while growing your organization.

CERIC has also published guides that specifically address career-related considerations that need to be taken into account when employees take maternity or parental leave. Many of the suggestions and recommendations in these guides are applicable to employees taking leaves of absence for other reasons.

Learn more at: [http://ceric.ca/maternity\\_employer](http://ceric.ca/maternity_employer) and [http://ceric.ca/maternity\\_employee](http://ceric.ca/maternity_employee).

Remember, dealing with life events and leaves of absence is part of

everyone's career journey – not separate from it. This means leaders have an obligation to support their employees through these times, rather than hit pause until they are back in the office. ■



## CAREERS AND CANADIANS

Most Canadians will – at some point in their lives – find themselves living with a chronic condition or serious illness themselves or providing caregiving for someone who does. Sick leave tends to be viewed as an emergency measure or exceptional circumstance, and illness as a time when careers are put on hold. In truth, however, sick leave is a regular part of workforce management and often an unavoidable experience for employees:

- 44% of Canadian adults suffer from at least one chronic condition,<sup>22</sup> and one in eight Canadians suffers from two or more.<sup>23</sup>
  - Those Canadians who suffer from three or more chronic conditions are more likely to be women in the lowest wage bracket.<sup>24</sup>
  - Over two million Canadians aged 15 or older – or 7.3% of the population – have a mental health-related disability, and 31 years is the average age at which a person with a mental health-related disability begins to feel limited in their daily activities.<sup>25</sup>
  - 52% of those with mental health-related disabilities consider themselves disadvantaged in employment because of their condition.<sup>26</sup>
  - Two in five Canadians are expected to develop cancer in their lifetime.<sup>27</sup>
- How might normalizing the intersection of health and careers shift policy discussions and directions? Remember that career development is a lifelong process that blends paid and unpaid activities, requires support, guidance and resilience through multiple transitions and involves making informed choices that are shaped by internal and external constraints.

# Precarious Employment Practices

This Playbook focuses on how career ownership can be a powerful tool for better employment in the public sector.

Precarious employment can often be confused with the freelance or gig economy. They are not the same. Precarious employment refers to exploitative practices that result in work characterized by poor pay, insecurity and few protections. It can include situations where employees lack an employment contract or have no access to basic employment rights such as paid leave or breaks.<sup>28</sup>



This type of work has been recognized in the private and non-profit sectors, but it can occur in public sector organizations as well. According to PIPSC, the federal government is one of Canada’s largest users of contractors, consultants, temporary help, term workers and casual workers.<sup>29</sup>

The Canadian Centre for Policy

## CAREERS AND CANADIANS

It’s estimated that one in five Canadians have precarious jobs, despite high levels of education, credentials, skills and experience.<sup>32</sup> Consider this observation made by Francis Fong, former chief economist for CPA Canada:

*“[The] process of officially defining precarious work and collecting official data is an important first step to take before policy prescriptions can be discussed – even though debate around*

*this topic has already moved on to that second step. Many have called for policy changes including mandated limits to continuous contracts, a higher minimum wage, increased funding for upskilling and training programs, and even the introduction of a basic minimum income...But without full recognition of who is truly precariously employed, we may be designing policy around people who do not necessarily need our*

*help. Or, we may be leaving out entire segments of the population who do need help.”<sup>33</sup>*

How might career development principles activities or services open new considerations and approaches to the challenge of precarious employment? Can a careers focus bring a useful dimension to charting a path through unstable labour markets or employment insurance and minimum income solutions?

Alternatives has found that as many as half of the employees in Ontario's university and college workforce are working in precarious conditions, and indicators of precarity – including workers holding multiple jobs, more temporary work and unpaid overtime – are on the rise.<sup>30</sup>

Another study led by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women has shown that women, particularly marginalized women (Indigenous women, racialized woman, women with disabilities, younger and older women, and LGBTQIA+ women), are especially negatively impacted by the shift toward precarious employment practices in Canada's public sector.<sup>31</sup>

Across a variety of resources and studies on this topic (which are listed in the Resources section of this Playbook on page 72), it becomes clear there is a perception that in an environment of scarce resources, there are often few options to provide environments supportive of decent work for all. By building a Career Management Itinerary and implementing some of the activities contained in this Playbook, you may find that your team(s) (whether team members are full-time permanent, part-time, contractors, temporary workers, etc.) can help you challenge this underlying assumption and identify new ways to improve overall working and employment conditions within your organization. ■

## CAREERS AND CANADIANS

A federal government report on developing appropriate, relevant policy to address precarious employment takes up several career development principles:

- The nature of work is changing, yet the blueprints for Canada's labour legislation and social safety net were developed in a time when many Canadians expected to spend their lives working for a single, large employer.
- The specific ways in which work is changing – including radical technological shifts – means simply reforming skills policies is not sufficient. A fulsome approach is needed that incorporates lifelong learning, thriving through disruption, adapting social safety nets, building resilience and embracing a culture shift in mindset.
- Resources must be targeted to where they are most needed, including specific groups (e.g., Indigenous students, persons with disabilities, freelancers). The specific, appropriate resources and who is in need will continue to shift at a pace that is too fast for traditional program implementation, measurement and evaluation cycles.
- Workers need support that helps prepare them to take advantage of new opportunities while operating within and exploring the boundaries of their own internal (financial, cultural, health) and external (labour market, technology) constraints.<sup>34</sup>

How might adopting this type of focus on the full career circumstances and needs of Canadians shift policy development?



# Career Considerations for New Graduates

With job security becoming less certain in society, students and young professionals alike continue to view the public sector as one of the few larger or more stable employers able to offer secure employment.<sup>35</sup>

Despite this positive view, there is a recurring perception that younger generations don't want government jobs or can't be bothered to stay for the long haul when they do decide to join. This leads to concerns about the time and effort it takes to onboard younger employees and the potential for a low return on investment.

When we asked public sector leaders about the amount of support provided to employees at different stages of their careers, new graduates and employees in their early career (0-5 years of service) were identified most frequently (89%) as receiving the strongest support. This contrasts with IPAC's finding that only 46% of public servants were satisfied with the support they received when they first joined the public sector.<sup>36</sup> (If you need help developing an onboarding plan for new hires, check out the tool available here: <https://challengefactory.ca/publications/the-canadian-guide-to-hiring-veterans/>. This resource was developed with Veterans in mind, but it is easy to adapt for any new hire.)

There are many resources available to help ensure you establish good working relationships with younger



employees, without relying on stereotypes or generational assumptions that colour your interactions. It's important to learn about each other's work ethics, values and capabilities before making judgments. As Harvard Business Review notes, "a growing body of evidence suggests that employees of all ages are much more alike than different in

their attitudes and values at work. To the extent that any gaps do exist, they amount to small differences that have always existed between younger and older workers throughout history.”<sup>37</sup>

It is important to remember that the changing world of work will affect how younger generations view their workplaces and employers, and what their expectations are from them. According to Deloitte, a main difference in Generation Z – those born between 1995 and 2012 – is the cohort’s requirement for greater personalization in how they move through their career journeys.<sup>38</sup> For organizations in need of Gen Z talent, attracting and retaining them will require a shift in mindset that prioritizes speedy evolution and adaptation to changing work and society conditions. Examples of initiatives for this type of evolution include:

- Creating latticed career paths and multiple work formats
- Setting up internal marketplaces to match projects with needed skill sets
- Leveraging intergenerational expertise to help mentor young professionals into strong leaders
- Developing robust training programs that have a real and tangible focus on diversity
- Planning how to build the attractiveness of your organization as a whole ■



#### DID YOU KNOW?

*“Young professionals seek opportunities for professional growth, which can take many forms. The purported advantages of a public service career include the training and development provided. Many participants, however, have experienced the contrary, with tight budgets and limited information serving as common barriers. Navigating the wide range of career pathways can also be overwhelming. To effectively meet expectations for talent development, public services need to consistently provide employees with career information, guidance and support. A unique example is the Government of Nova Scotia, where public servants have access to a Career Development Specialist who provides tailored advice on professional growth.*

*Attractive career development options for many young public servants include rotational programs and project-based secondments, where individuals are deployed to other teams, departments, governments and even sectors for a set period of time. Lateral mobility can be an appealing alternative when rigid classification schemes and long approval processes slow advancement. Although public service leaders should not hesitate to promote high-performing young professionals, some participants caution that other avenues for growth must be available for those who may not be well-suited for or interested in managerial roles.”*

– Public Policy Forum, “Building a Dynamic Future: The Next Generation of Public Service Talent”<sup>39</sup>

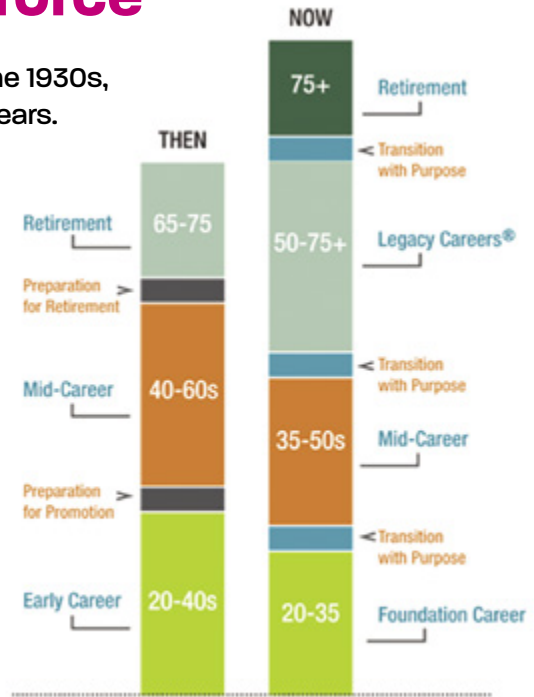
# Career Considerations for the 50+ Workforce

The retirement age was set in the 1930s, when life expectancy was 62 years.

Today, life expectancy reaches into the mid-80s. It's only natural that we see more and more employees choosing to work past the traditional retirement age. What's more, we know many employees are worried about finances and need to continue earning income for longer than they expected or would choose for themselves.

The result is that a new phase of people's careers is emerging. Instead of moving from mid-career to retirement, people are now transitioning with purpose from work they did in their 30s and 40s into new work arrangements or positions that better align their talents, what they care about, their lifestyle and other needs, and the market.

Like new graduates, there are many stereotypes, age-based assumptions



Career Timelines have Changed

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and ageist language that dominate how “older workers” are considered. Ageism in hiring practices is common, although we believe it to be unintentional in most cases. Simply put, none of us are



## TAKE ACTION

Consider how your organization is taking advantage of Legacy Career® talent. American-based “This Chair Rocks” and its blog “Yo, Is this Ageist?” provides free resources and current examples of how ageism affects everyone, every day: <https://thischairrocks.com/>. For workplace-specific questions, Challenge Factory is a North American leader in helping organizations capitalize on shifting demographics. There are many courses and resources for your staff and managers at: <http://www.challengefactory.ca/>



conditioned to consider our 60s and 70s as some of our most productive years. But career timelines are changing and employers need to be aware that there are carrots (productivity gains, employee retention gains) and sticks (legal action, bad reputation) associated with outdated careers thinking.

Our interviews with public sector leaders revealed that sometimes they may feel awkward or find it difficult providing career support to employees who are older than them. Remember that an important part of your responsibility is 1) to listen and learn during career conversations, 2) to ensure employees remain engaged in their work – for both their personal career satisfaction and for organizational success and 3) to foster a workplace in which they are valued and respected. You don't need to have all the answers, but showing all your employees – regardless of age – that you are there for them can go a long way to giving them a sense of safety, connectivity and purpose. ■



#### DID YOU KNOW?

Myths about aging workers are deeply rooted in society, and often lead organizations to perpetuate ageist practices and ideas even when they don't mean to do so intentionally. Here are five key myth-busting facts to help you combat ageism:

1. Older employees do not cost more than younger employees.
2. It is not smart business to set a “best before date” for working life.
3. Training employees over a certain age is not a waste of precious investment dollars.
4. Older employees are just as productive as younger employees.
5. Performance issues cannot be mapped onto generational cohorts.<sup>40</sup>

# When There Are Few Opportunities for Knowledge Specialist Advancement

Career advancement in the public sector is often associated with increased people management responsibilities.

This leaves employees who are knowledge or technical specialists, or have little interest in people management roles, at something of a loss as they try to chart a fulfilling career path for themselves in the public sector. This also leaves their current managers at something of a loss as they struggle to provide good career support.

Of the leaders who participated in our research, 37% said there are “very few opportunities” to advance into knowledge specialist positions rather than people management positions in their organization. Only 8% said there are “many opportunities” while 44% said there are “some opportunities.”

How do you help an employee when there are no clear opportunities that align with their interests and skill sets?

**Get creative:** Brainstorm new ways to put your employees’ expertise to work in their current position. Can they help you with a knowledge-based project? How can you show them that their

specialized knowledge is valued? Promotions are not the only path to career growth or organizational recognition.

**Get competitive:** If there are few opportunities to advance into knowledge specialist positions in your organization, focus on helping your employees improve their competitive advantage. This will allow them to stand out when advancement opportunities



## TAKE ACTION

The COVID-19 pandemic placed a stronger and more urgent spotlight on the need for resilience in our workplaces and personal lives. For public sector organizations, building resilient operations and workforces is essential to being able to continue to provide services that Canadians rely on. Consider assigning an employee to research methods of enhancing resilience in your team or organization. This could act as a knowledge-based project for their own career growth while benefitting your team or organization as a whole. Check out this infographic as a starting point: <https://www.bdo.ca/en-ca/insights/industries/public-sector/building-a-resilient-public-sector-covid-19/>

do arise and help them excel in and enjoy their current role. It will also show them that you are committed to their career success.

**Get resourceful:** Do your research so that you have a thorough understanding of both the (potentially limited) advancement opportunities and the other professional development resources available to your employees that will keep them engaged and fulfilled (training, secondments, networking, mentoring programs, etc.). Make sure to communicate relevant information to

them, including organizational trends, objectives and issues.

**Build resilience:** When employees feel stuck, unfulfilled or burned out, it's especially important for them to be able to cope and even thrive in the face of obstacles or stress. Consider integrating resilience-building activities into your Career Management Itinerary. Check out <https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-in-the-workplace/> to learn more about resilience in the workplace and download three resilience exercises for free. ■



#### FROM THE SECTOR:

*Let's consider human resource policy about the public sector itself, using a historical example from the federal level. A study from 1999 found clear evidence of frustration among the federal government's knowledge workers "because they felt that their department's culture and the culture of the PS itself did not support career development (i.e., too hierarchical, preoccupied with protocol, unrealistic workload, no focus on people, little support for education/training) and inhibited their ability to enhance their breadth of knowledge – a career tactic which seems to be strongly associated with career development and career success in the minds of [employees]."*<sup>41</sup>

What type of career development culture exists in your organization? Has the context changed for managers and employees in the past 20 years? How might a focus on employee interests and competencies benefit public sector policymaking?

Have the roles that the individual employee (career owner), managers (career enabler) and organizations (career supporters) play in career development policies and activities been recognized as a way forward to better overall performance and the execution of a public service mandate in your organization?

# Navigating Employee Investment and a Public Service Mandate

As one of the leaders we spoke to noted, “The public sector isn’t supposed to be investing in itself. We are here to serve the public. Going too far into our own development carries some risk for public support and trust.”

Navigating the perceived tension between serving Canadians and investing in employees can be a struggle for leaders tasked with driving operational success and providing career support to their employees. This is similar to the non-profit sector, where investing in the workforce is often viewed as diverting funds and resources away from the mission or people who are being served.

The leaders who participated in our research understand that this perceived tension is not accurate. Three-quarters (75%) also believe improving career development practices, resources and tools would positively impact their organization and provide benefits to advancing their mandate that could be measured.

How can managers navigate the perceived tension between fulfilling a public service mandate and investing in employees? Advocate for career management to both your employees and your superiors:

## Recommended additional activities for organizations with a team of people managers

### Having leaders who can build a business case

and demonstrate how employee-related programs can be measured is an important capability. Funding demands today often require that programs demonstrate strong, hard returns. Consider asking your finance or accounting staff to help you put together an ROI model that identifies good metrics to use when evaluating people-focused investment decisions. Rely on their expertise to help you define what is actually measurable, how you would measure it and how you can collect the data needed.

- Emphasize that career development activities should not be viewed as separate from activities that concern operational requirements. Reframe career development as an integrated part of “regular workload activities.”
- Emphasize that career development enhances work productivity and quality, which will only improve

employees' ability to serve the public. The business case for career development is sound.

- Emphasize that the issue of career development needs to be addressed if your organization – and the public sector as a whole – wants to be able to attract, motivate and retain top talent who can meet the needs of Canadians, as well as the challenges facing Canadians and the public sector.

How are budgets set for career development activities in your organization? With our research participants,

a “yearly amount” and “by request” are the most common methods, with “per employee” and “percentage of overall budget” bringing up the rear. In some cases, there is no specific budget line item for career development. If this is the case in your organization, is there a possibility that submitting a request could prove worthwhile? By advocating to your leadership for better career development resources (financial or otherwise), you may be exactly what your organization needs to meet a range of goals: operational performance, employee engagement, retention, leadership development, DEI and resilience/adaptability. ■



#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

A Public Policy Forum report identifies three strategies for addressing public sector recruitment, retention and engagement challenges in the face of demographic change, increasing competition for talent and fiscal constraints:

1. Broaden talent pools to bring diverse skills, expertise and perspectives to the public sector.
2. Align performance management with organizational goals to incentivize productivity.
3. Prioritize learning and development, as government must adapt to evolving demands.<sup>42</sup>

These are compelling and powerful elements of a careers-focused approach to renewing and advancing Canada's public sector. They also begin to highlight the importance of valuing difference and uniqueness rather than homogeneity and standardization, even in the context of large workforces. Leveraging diversity, focusing on innovative ways to incentivize productivity and prioritizing learning and development will all produce greater results by anchoring them to the individual employee's career needs and aspirations.

An organization is only as strong and successful as its employees, and managers are uniquely positioned 1) to bring up and advocate for the needs of their employees with their organizational leadership and 2) to interpret the policy and practices being set from the top-down in ways that accommodate difference.



## Section 5: Careers and Canadians



# Careers and Canadians: Take a Trip Through the Public Sector

Throughout this Playbook, we've posed a number of "Careers and Canadians" questions meant to provoke thought and conversation about the value of connecting careers thinking and planning to the development, delivery and measurement of public goods and services.

In this final section, we invite you to explore examples across Canadian jurisdictions where career development principles can be surfaced in public sector portfolios. Consider setting up a lunch-and-learn session and use these



examples – with the “conversation activators” below them – as springboards for reflection and discussion with your team.

## **Opportunity in Action:**

### **The Gitxsan Nation**

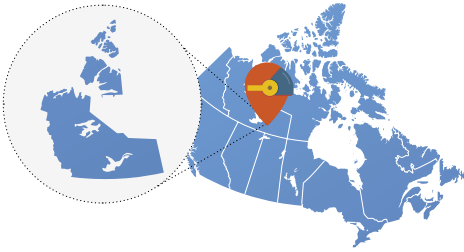
The strategic mission of the Gitxsan Development Corporation (GDC) is “to create profitable, sustainable economic development that leads to job creation and training opportunities, ultimately creating economic resilience for the Gitxsan people.”<sup>43</sup> Owned and operated by the Gitxsan Nation in northwestern British Columbia, the GDC’s activities include youth initiatives, career supports and business ventures in a range of industries – including safety, forestry, transportation, heating systems, bioenergy and environmental services.

Explore how the GDC is fostering a healthy Gitxsan economy with community at its core, focusing on youth career exploration, by watching the video at <https://gitxsanbusiness.com/index.php/pages/career-discoveries>



#### **CONVERSATION ACTIVATOR:**

Gitxsan Development Corporation’s Career Discoveries Program is not a “skills training program,” despite exposing youth to skills. Pride in self and hope for the future are at the heart of this program. What can you learn from this model in the context of how to approach advancing your own careers?



**Literacy is More Than You Think:**

## Lifelong Learning in the Northwest Territories

For the NWT Literacy Council, literacy is much broader than the ability to read and write. As described by the Government of the Northwest Territories in its Literacy Strategy 2008-2018, literacy is “the lifelong development of a broad range of skills with one or more of the NWT official languages for the purpose of expanding an individual’s potential for optimal health, personal success and positive participation in community wellness and development.”<sup>44</sup> One of the

resources provided by the Council is its Career-Life-Work series of manuals and workbooks, which covers career development, communication and soft skills, dealing with conflict and stress, job searches and success strategies, career planning and goal setting.

Check out the NWT Literacy Council’s Career-Life-Work series of manuals and workbooks: <https://www.nwtliteracy.ca/resources/youth-and-adult-literacy#35>



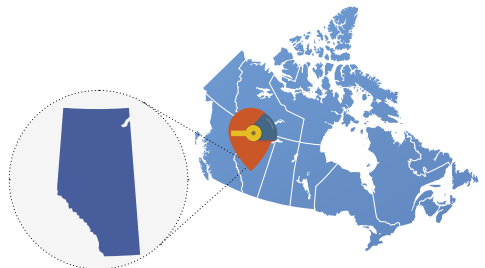
### CONVERSATION ACTIVATOR:

What career development principles are evident in the NWT Literacy Council’s understanding of literacy and its Career-Life-Work series? How many public sector departments, functions and services intersect in this example? Can you make similar connections in the topics, subject matter or services that your team or organization works on?

**No Fixed Employment:**

## Temporary Work in Alberta

The number of temporary workers differs by industry, with construction (92%), natural resources (83%) and agriculture (60%) having the highest proportions in Canada.<sup>45</sup> All three are found heavily in Alberta, where



the unique combination of traditional and emerging sectors means the province is a hotspot for temporary

employment arrangements (including seasonal, term or contract, part-time and casual work) while its capital city of Calgary is also ranked one of the best cities in the world to be a freelancer, especially in good economic times.<sup>46</sup>

Today's freelance (or gig) economy sees the increasing use of freelance contractors on a short-term basis and includes the growth of gig-based work arrangements in fields such as financial services, law and healthcare. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the conditions of precarity experienced in the gig economy, with the possibility for change in large part dependent on governmental policy and new legislation.<sup>47</sup> Career development emphasizes individual career ownership and self-directed career exploration, facilitated and supported through

community-based partnerships and services. Consider the value of combining top-down and ground-up approaches to find innovative, effective solutions to precarious employment that place the career aspirations and agency of Canadians at their centre.



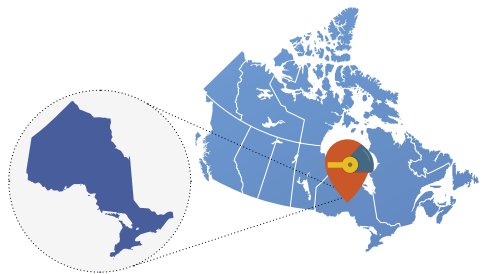
#### CONVERSATION ACTIVATOR:

How many people in your team have worked in the freelance economy (and for how long)? What were their motivators, challenges and successes? What is the difference between freelance and precarious employment? What jurisdictions and policy areas need to be a part of creating sustainable freelance careers for Canadians?

### Leveraging DEI:

## Labour Shortages in Kingston, Ontario

Like most cities and towns in Canada, the impacts of shifting age demographics and labour shortage concerns are becoming more and more evident in Kingston. It's predicted that by 2036, Kingston employers will have a collective shortage of about 9,000 workers. To combat this, a collaborative partnership between the city and KEYS Job Centre (with support from Heritage Canada) led to the creation of the Workplace Inclusion



Charter. The purpose of the Charter is to promote employment practices and provide strategies that will improve DEI in the workplace. At its core is the recognition that improving workplace DEI will 1) help individuals realize



**CONVERSATION ACTIVATOR:**

Kingston and KEYS Job Centre have created a way for local businesses to commit to diversity as a solution to labour shortages. Shortages are often the result of shifting skill requirements and/or shifting demographics as the workforce ages. How have you seen a focus on diverse candidates address strategic workforce challenges in your workplace?

their full potential, 2) help employers benefit from the wide-ranging skills, perspectives and experiences of a diverse workforce and 3) help Kingston take advantage of community labour pools and improve its competitiveness in a global market.

Learn more about the Workplace Inclusion Charter: <https://keys.ca/employers/workplace-inclusion-charter.php>

**Career Development  
Cross-Pollination:**

## Health and Veterans

Health-focused principles have become the cornerstone of many other types of policy. For example, the model that Veterans Affairs Canada uses to define Veteran well-being draws directly from Health Canada’s social determinants of health and serves as the foundation for transition support services, policies and programming.<sup>49</sup> Just as these health determinants have been valuable in adjacent policy areas, the guiding principles of career development can also serve as foundational to how complex priorities, programs and policies might be considered – with emphasis on life-long engagement, continuous learning, resilience and connecting interests, beliefs and values to market needs.



**CONVERSATION ACTIVATOR:**

How do the eight career development principles (see pages 22-23) relate to the services delivered to Canadians by your organization? Is the connection easy to make or does it feel like a stretch? (For more, see the “Careers and Canadians” heading on page 13.)

**Prioritizing Agency:**

## The Canada Training Benefit

Introduced in the 2019 federal budget, the Canada Training Benefit provides an example of career development thinking and planning in public policy.<sup>50</sup> It is a collection of supports that would help Canadians aged 25 to 64 engage in ongoing learning and retraining. In turn, this would 1) ensure employers have workers with continually upgraded skills who are confident in their ability to succeed and 2) give Canada's economy a jumpstart on adapting and growing in response to the changing world of work.

The Canada Training Benefit does not require applicants to pursue a specific training course or enter a certain field

or sector, prioritizing Canadians' agency to make their own choices and pursue the opportunities they seek. However, it's important to note that Canadians over the traditional age of retirement – 65 years – are an increasingly dynamic part of the workforce and must also be included in careers thinking and planning.



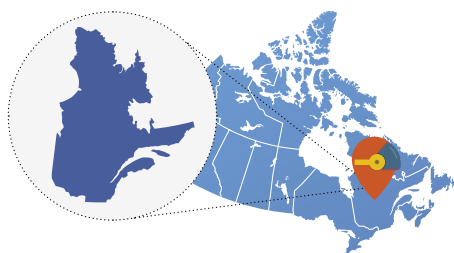
### CONVERSATION ACTIVATOR:

How might this training benefit (including its strengths and weaknesses) be used as a model for offering or seeking out training opportunities for your team? (For more, see the “Careers and Canadians” heading on page 31.)

**Innovation in Job Creation:**

## Public-Private Cooperation in Quebec

Going beyond the traditional format of job creation policy, Quebec's *Programme d'aide à l'entrepreneuriat* (“Entrepreneurship Aid Program”) provides assistance and mentorship to business incubators and start-ups, encouraging risk-taking and innovation.<sup>51</sup> In addition, it aims to contribute to the development of new



technologies and their marketing and support the creation of highly skilled jobs. The program is an example of the links that can be made between career development and public-private cooperation, such as the integration of a

“career success” mindset, job creation and future-focused innovation.

This Playbook has shown the intersecting, collaborative roles that the employee (as career owner), manager (as career enabler) and organization (as career supporter) play in fostering intentional careers thinking and planning. These roles can be applied in the context of government initiatives like the *Programme d'aide à l'entrepreneuriat* and other public-private cooperation.



**CONVERSATION ACTIVATOR:**

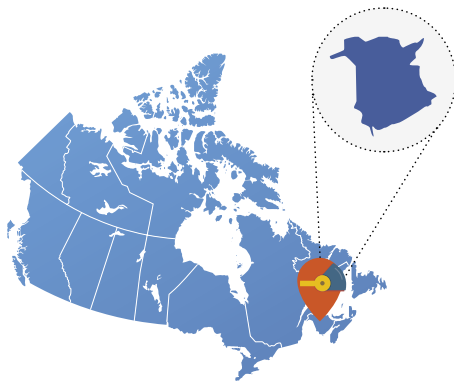
Are there opportunities to apply careers thinking and planning to the partnerships (internal or external) that your team or organization engages as part of the execution of your public sector mandate? (For more, see the “Careers and Canadians” heading on page 31.)

**Universal Design for Learning:**

## New Brunswick's Approach

Reflect on your own career journey, including how you got to where you are today and where you want to be in the future. How did you end up on your current career path? Would you have benefitted from a culture in which asking *what else is possible* was encouraged?

New Brunswick's Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach helps



teachers improve engagement, representation, action and expression for their students.<sup>52</sup> UDL emphasizes integrating education with agency, self-direction and creativity and making learning more versatile and inclusive to students' respective abilities, interests and cultural backgrounds. One size does not fit all, and options are embraced as key to finding what works best for each individual.

Learn more about UDL:

<http://www.cast.org>



**CONVERSATION ACTIVATOR:**

How might a UDL approach be applied in your workplace or team setting? How might employees be empowered while still ensuring operational requirements are met? (For more, see the “Careers and Canadians” heading on page 39.)

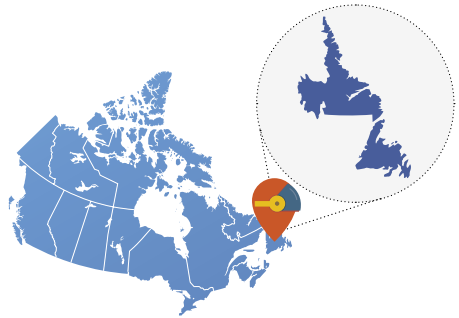
**Throwback:**

# The 1992 Cod-Fishing Moratorium in Newfoundland and Labrador

Nearly 30 years ago, overfishing in the Grand Banks of Newfoundland forced the Canadian government to implement a moratorium on cod-fishing. This effectively terminated one of Newfoundland and Labrador’s principal economic activities, upended the cornerstone of many communities and resulted in at least 30,000 jobs lost (on top of an already high unemployment rate).

In 1994, the federal government announced a \$1.9 billion program, the Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS), designed to provide income support, labour market adjustment and training options for those affected by the moratorium. Although the program did provide some career services, it was not conceived with a holistic careers lens.

To learn more about the moratorium and its career development implications, check out “Why We Need a



Careers Lens in Public Policy” at <https://challengefactory.ca/2020/11/06/why-we-need-a-careers-lens-in-public-policy/> ■



**CONVERSATION ACTIVATOR:**

What types of program considerations might have been missed because of the absence of a holistic careers lens in TAGS? How do you think the program was received and experienced by the people and communities affected by the cod-fishing moratorium?





## Section 6: Listed and Additional Resources



# Career Management Resources for the Public Sector

Many of the following resources have been referenced throughout this Playbook. They are organized here by topic for easy reference, according to the various phases of your employee lifecycle.

## Hiring and Interviewing

A classic list of 31 competencies and related behaviours that can shape job descriptions, career conversations and development plans: <http://www.workforce.com/2002/09/03/31-core-competencies-explained/>

Variety of talent-related articles, tools and tips for small organizations: <https://www.marsdd.com/tag/talent/>

Articles focused on employee recruitment and management: <https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/employees/pages/default.aspx>

A report on public sector recruitment, retention and engagement challenges in the changing world of work, with key recommendations: [https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Opt\\_jan28\\_EN.pdf](https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Opt_jan28_EN.pdf)

A wealth of articles focused on new graduates in the workplace: <http://talentegg.ca/incubator/>

A report about young people's changing perceptions of public sector careers in Canada, and what this reveals about talent recruitment and retention: <https://ppforum.ca/publications/building-a-dynamic-future-the-next-generation-of-public-service-talent/>

“4 Ways to Hire More People with Disabilities,” from SHRM: <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/behavioral-competencies/global-and-cultural-effectiveness/pages/4-ways-to-hire-more-people-with-disabilities.aspx>

An assortment of resources for hiring people with disabilities, from the Ontario Disability Employment Network: <https://odnetwork.com/businesses/resources>

A list of diversity recruitment resources, including job posting boards and professional associations: <https://hr.mcmaster.ca/employees/employment-equity/diversity-recruitment-resources/>

A reference guide for working with Inuit: <https://ceric.ca/resource/reference-guide-career-development-counsellors-working-inuit-clients/>

A Canadian guide to finding, hiring and retaining Veterans, with tools, myth-busting research and additional resources compiled in one place: <https://challengefactory.ca/publications/the-canadian-guide-to-hiring-veterans/>

The Veteran hiring toolkit from the Government of Canada's Job Bank: <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/hiring/veterans>

Resources for Indigenous hiring and recruitment in the federal government: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/jobs/services/gc-jobs/indigenous-recruitment-information-hiring-managers.html>

The federal government's report on the hiring, retention and promotion of Indigenous employees: <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/knowledge-circle/many-voices>

Over 50 published sources related to Indigenous recruitment and retention: <http://caid.ca/IndRecRet2017.pdf>

## Building Your Culture

Variety of talent-related articles, tools and tips: <https://www.marsdd.com/tag/talent/>

A list of practices that organizations of various sizes are using to help meet the caregiving and work needs of their employees: [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2015/edsc-esdc/Em12-8-2015-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/edsc-esdc/Em12-8-2015-eng.pdf)

An employer's guide for maximizing the talents of visible minorities, from the Conference Board of Canada: [http://triec.ca/uploads/356/business\\_critical\\_maximizing\\_the\\_talents\\_of\\_visible\\_minorities.pdf](http://triec.ca/uploads/356/business_critical_maximizing_the_talents_of_visible_minorities.pdf)

“Women and the workplace – How employers can advance equality and diversity,” from the 2019 Symposium on Women and the Workplace: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/reports/women-symposium.html>

Resources for building a culture that's attractive to young professionals: An article about generational similarities in values and aspirations: <https://hbr.org/2016/04/what-do-millennials-really-want-at-work>

A report focusing on employee engagement tactics for changing demographics: <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/consumer-business/articles/understanding-generation-z-in-the-workplace.html>

Guides for addressing the intersection of career-related considerations and leaves of absence:

<https://ceric.ca/resource/making-work-effectively-manage-maternity-leave-career-transitions-employers-guide/>

<https://ceric.ca/resource/making-it-work-how-to-effectively-navigate-maternity-leave-career-transitions-an-employees-guide/>

An article about building resilience in the workplace:

<https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-in-the-workplace/>

An infographic about building resilience in the workplace: <https://www.bdo.ca/en-ca/insights/industries/public-sector/building-a-resilient-public-sector-covid-19/>

Resources and current examples of how ageism affects everyone, every day: <https://thischairrocks.com/>

A virtual talk from the National Managers' Community's about best practices for showing appreciation to employees: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMknJxGcAxQ>

A podcast that covers a wide variety of HR-related topics: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/transform-your-workplace/id533673516?mt=2>

Podcasts that focus on everyday employees sharing what they like about their jobs: <http://www.bestpartofmyjob.com/podcast/>

TED Talks that challenge our assumptions and provide practical tips: Mark Bowden's "The Importance of Being Inauthentic": [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zpf8H\\_Dd4o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zpf8H_Dd4o)

Shawn Achor's "The Happy Secret to Better Work": [https://www.ted.com/talks/shawn\\_achor\\_the\\_happy\\_secret\\_to\\_better\\_work](https://www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work)

David Epstein's "Why Specializing Early Doesn't Always Mean Career Success": [https://www.ted.com/talks/david\\_epstein\\_why\\_specializing\\_early\\_doesn\\_t\\_always\\_mean\\_career\\_success](https://www.ted.com/talks/david_epstein_why_specializing_early_doesn_t_always_mean_career_success)

Mary L. Gray's "COVID-19 Unraveled the Workforce. Here's How To Fix It": [https://www.ted.com/talks/mary\\_l\\_gray\\_covid\\_19\\_unraveled\\_the\\_workforce\\_here\\_s\\_how\\_to\\_fix\\_it](https://www.ted.com/talks/mary_l_gray_covid_19_unraveled_the_workforce_here_s_how_to_fix_it)

## Having Better Career Conversations

If you work for the federal government, consider reaching out to the GC Career Community of Practice to request a copy of their career conversation guide for managers.

“Talk The Talk: How Ongoing Career Conversations Drive Business Success,” from Right Management: [https://www.right.com/wps/wcm/connect/728860eb-e39f-4d31-a75c-aae2810e8864/RM\\_TalkTheTalk\\_Whitepaper\\_1o.pdf?MOD=AJPERES](https://www.right.com/wps/wcm/connect/728860eb-e39f-4d31-a75c-aae2810e8864/RM_TalkTheTalk_Whitepaper_1o.pdf?MOD=AJPERES)

The Career-Life-Work series of workbooks and manuals, by the NWT Literacy Council: <https://www.nwtliteracy.ca/resources/youth-and-adult-literacy#35>

Article with 5 steps that managers can take to lead a career conversation: <https://www.fastcompany.com/919177/dont-run-career-conversations>

Checklist and tools for managers to address performance management issues: <http://hr.berkeley.edu/hr-network/central-guide-managing-hr/managing-hr/managing-successfully/performance-management/concepts>

Articles focused on employee recruitment and management: <https://www.bdc.ca/en/articles-tools/employees/pages/default.aspx>

A practical guide to career conversations in the workplace: [https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/ao-downloads/AO\\_E-Book2\\_online.pdf](https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/ao-downloads/AO_E-Book2_online.pdf)

A reference guide for working with Inuit: <https://ceric.ca/resource/reference-guide-career-development-counsellors-working-inuit-clients/>

Glossary by CERIC of career development terminology. May be useful to managers seeking to use sector-specific language in career conversations: <https://ceric.ca/glossary-of-career-development/>

## Retaining Talent

Checklist and tools for managers to address performance-management issues: <http://hr.berkeley.edu/hr-network/central-guide-managing-hr/managing-hr/managing-successfully/performance-management/concepts>

Article presenting data on the cost of turnover among senior staff: <http://www.aarp.org/work/employers/info-06-2013/costs-of-employee-turnover.html>

Variety of talent-related articles, tools and tips: <https://www.marsdd.com/tag/talent/>

A report about recruitment and retention of new public servants in Canada: <https://s3.ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/ipacreports/np-survey-eng.pdf>

A report about young people's changing perceptions of public sector careers in Canada, and what this reveals about talent recruitment and retention: <https://ppforum.ca/publications/building-a-dynamic-future-the-next-generation-of-public-service-talent/>

A report about engagement in the federal government, chock full of learnings and strategies applicable to the public sector as a whole: <https://apex.gc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/engagement-eng.pdf>

A study about why and how people change jobs: [https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/business/talent-solutions/global/en\\_us/job-switchers/PDF/job-switchers-global-report-english.pdf](https://business.linkedin.com/content/dam/business/talent-solutions/global/en_us/job-switchers/PDF/job-switchers-global-report-english.pdf)

An infographic to help managers understand what motivates employees: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/225560>

Surveys that show why flexible work models increase employee retention: <https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/survey-flexible-work-job-choices/>  
<https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/flexjobs-survey-flexibility-support-parents-pandemic/>

An article about generational similarities in values and aspirations: <https://hbr.org/2016/04/what-do-millennials-really-want-at-work>

A report focusing on employee engagement tactics for changing demographics: <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/consumer-business/articles/understanding-generation-z-in-the-workplace.html>

A report on public sector recruitment, retention and engagement challenges in the changing world of work, with key recommendations: [https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Opt\\_jan28\\_EN.pdf](https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Opt_jan28_EN.pdf)

The federal government's report on the hiring, retention and promotion of Indigenous employees: <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/knowledge-circle/many-voices>

Over 50 published sources related to Indigenous recruitment and retention: <http://caid.ca/IndRecRet2017.pdf>

“How to Make Workplaces More Welcoming for Employees with Disabilities,” from Forbes: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewpulang/2019/11/04/how-to-make-workplaces-more-welcoming-for-employees-with-disabilities/?sh=651fc93053d8>

## Career Management Training

Challenge Factory’s online learning platform with career management courses for individuals and teams: <https://www.centreforcareerinnovation.ca>

The Canadian Career Development Foundation’s training centre: <https://voco.myabsorb.ca>

MaRS Library with resources including this sample evaluation form to measure the impact of training programs: <https://www.marsdd.com/mars-library/training-evaluation-sample-feedback-questionnaire-for-trainees/>

CERIC’s suite of tools for understanding the guiding principles of career development: <https://ceric.ca/guiding-principles-of-career-development/>

CERIC’s guide for strengthening mental health through effective career development: <https://ceric.ca/publications/strengthening-mental-health-through-effective-career-development-a-practitioners-guide/>

CERIC’s literature search on the public sector and career development: <https://ceric.ca/wpdm-package/public-sector-and-career-development/>

The Career-Life-Work series of workbooks and manuals, by the NWT Literacy Council: <https://www.nwtliteracy.ca/resources/youth-and-adult-literacy#35>

Useful starting points for career development planning and career exploration, including an “Individual Career Development Plan” template: <https://hr.ucmerced.edu/training/careermanagement>

An article to help you think in terms of “career paths” in the public sector: <https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/career-path-guides/public-sector-government/4-paths-in-public-sector/>

An article about building resilience in the workplace: <https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-in-the-workplace/>

An infographic about building resilience in the workplace: <https://www.bdo.ca/en-ca/insights/industries/public-sector/building-a-resilient-public-sector-covid-19/>

A study about the career development of knowledge workers in the federal government: [http://www.optimumonline.ca/pdf/29-4/career\\_development.pdf](http://www.optimumonline.ca/pdf/29-4/career_development.pdf)

Good types of sources for career-related articles:

Canada Revenue Agency – Student and Graduate Hiring: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/corporate/careers-cra/browse-job-types/student-graduate-hiring.html>

Canada Mortgage and Housing Careers: <https://careers.cmhc-schl.gc.ca>

Institute of Public Administration of Canada: <https://www.ipac.ca>

Federal government Indigenous employee resources: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/jobs/services/gc-jobs/indigenous-recruitment-information-hiring-managers.html>

IndigenousWorks: <https://indigenousworks.ca/en/resources/indigenous-organizations>

Government of Canada Jobs: <https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/home>

Government of Quebec Employment: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/employment/>

Ontario Public Service Jobs: <https://www.gojobs.gov.on.ca>

City of Mississauga Jobs: <https://jobs.mississauga.ca>

## Developing Leaders

Free, online assessment focused on career motivators: <http://testyourself.psychtests.com/testid/3153>

Online assessment tools for leadership development (Challenge Factory is a certified Canadian provider): <https://www.ttisi.com>

Best-selling book that supports leaders through having career conversations and engaging with employees: <https://www.amazon.ca/Help-Them-Grow-Watch-Conversations/dp/1609946324>

A classic list of 31 competencies and related behaviours that can shape job

descriptions, career conversations and development plans: <http://www.workforce.com/2002/09/03/31-core-competencies-explained/>

Communication firm focused on internal/employee communication. Provides training for managers and owners to be better communicators: <https://www.innerstrengthcommunication.com/>

Variety of talent-related articles, tools and tips: <https://www.marsdd.com/tag/talent/>

Public relations, communications and media training: <https://www.precisionmarketinggroup.ca>

## Promoting from Within

Focused on career motivators: <http://testyourself.psychtests.com/testid/3153>

An infographic to help managers understand what motivates employees: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/225560>



Focused on the power and complexity of defining career success: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/terinaallen/2020/08/31/a-definition-of-career-success-and-why-so-few-people-ever-experience-it/?sh=667d41314dd2>

Best-selling book that supports leaders through having career conversations and engaging with employees: <https://www.amazon.ca/Help-Them-Grow-Watch-Conversations/dp/1609946324>

Interchange Canada, a federal program that facilitates temporary assignments of individuals in and out of the core public administration: <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/professional-development/interchange-canada.html>

## Career Exploration

An Australian-based careers education service that helps raise awareness, aspiration and agency in young people for lasting impact: <https://www.become.education>

The American-based organization that created the Universal Design Learning (UDL) framework: <http://www.cast.org>

The work of learning architect Dr. Rumeet Billan, author of “Who Do I Want To Become?” (including her TEDxNovaScotia talk): <http://www.rumeetbillan.com/stats>

An online encyclopedia that provides definitions of key labour market terms: <https://lmic-cimt.ca/projects/work-words/>

An article to help you think in terms of “career paths” in the public sector: <https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/career-path-guides/public-sector-government/4-paths-in-public-sector/>

The Gitxsan Development Corporation’s approach to fostering a healthy Gitxsan economy through youth career exploration: <https://gitxsanbusiness.com/index.php/pages/career-discoveries>

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

A bibliography of diversity and work literature: <https://ceric.ca/wpdm-package/diversity-and-work/>

The World Economic Forum's in-depth business case for diversity in the workplace, including a number of additional sources for further learning: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/04/business-case-for-diversity-in-the-workplace/>

The Ontario Human Rights Commission's introductory manual for anti-racism and anti-discrimination in municipalities: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/anti-racism-and-anti-discrimination-municipalities-introductory-manual>

The federal government's report on the hiring, retention and promotion of Indigenous employees: <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/knowledge-circle/many-voices>

Over 50 published sources related to Indigenous recruitment and retention: <http://caid.ca/IndRecRet2017.pdf>

The federal government's Accessibility Strategy: <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/accessibility-public-service/accessibility-strategy-public-service-toc.html>

How to Reduce Unconscious Bias in the Workplace: <https://lattice.com/library/how-to-reduce-unconscious-bias-at-work>

10 Keys to Everyday Anti-Racism: [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/ten\\_keys\\_to\\_everyday\\_anti\\_racism](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/ten_keys_to_everyday_anti_racism)

A starter guide to becoming a more thoughtful and effective ally: <https://guidetoallyship.com>

An article that offers two concrete ways of combatting racism and sexism at work: <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-09-28/how-to-be-a-better-ally-against-racism-and-sexism-at-work>

Articles that look at career from the perspective of different groups in the workforce: <https://careerwise.ceric.ca/category/diversity/>

50+ ideas for cultivating diversity and inclusion in the workplace: <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/diversity/2020/50-plus-ideas-for-cultivating-diversity-and-inclusion>

A resource for recruiting, hiring and employing people with disabilities: <https://ceric.ca/resource/difference-ability-recruiting-hiring-employing-people-disabilities/>

A reference guide for working with Inuit: <https://ceric.ca/resource/reference-guide-career-development-counsellors-working-inuit-clients/>

The City of Kingston's Workplace Inclusion Charter, designed to combat labour shortages by leveraging diversity: <https://keys.ca/employers/workplace-inclusion-charter.php>

Articles about creating safe spaces for open and honest conversation in the workplace:

<https://www.shrm.org/resource-sandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/creating-a-safe-space-at-work-for-discussing-social-justice-topics.aspx>

<https://hbr.org/2019/04/make-your-meetings-a-safe-space-for-honest-conversation>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/11/02/15-ways-your-organization-can-create-a-safe-space-in-a-divisive-world/#450d-3feofcab>

Learn more about psychological safety at work:

<https://www.myhrfuture.com/digital-hr-leaders-podcast/2020/7/13/how-to-create-psychological-safety-at-work>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/karlynborysenko/2018/09/30/create-your-own-psychological-safety-work/>

<https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/what-is-psychological-safety-at-work/>

## The Public Sector and Future of Work

A documentary-style video capturing Canadian career practitioners discussing the Future of Work: <https://challengefactory.ca/services/research/future-of-work/>

Report about navigating the shifting talent landscape in the public sector: <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/public-sector/future-of-work-in-government.html>

A guide to having conversations about career development and the Future of Work with your teams: <https://challengefactory.ca/publications/employment-services-and-the-future-of-work/>

Statistics Canada's findings about working seniors in Canada: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016027/98-200-x2016027-eng.cfm>

A report by Canada Beyond 150 designed to support the development of new public servants and to drive a culture of change within the public sector: <http://canadabeyond150.ca/assets/reports/Future%20of%20Work%20-%20EN.pdf>

An online encyclopedia that provides definitions of key labour market terms: <https://imic-cimt.ca/projects/work-words/>

A report about young people's changing perceptions of public sector careers in Canada: <https://ppforum.ca/publications/building-a-dynamic-future-the-next-generation-of-public-service-talent/>

A report on public sector recruitment, retention and engagement challenges in the changing world of work, with key recommendations: [https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Opt\\_jan28\\_EN.pdf](https://ppforum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Opt_jan28_EN.pdf)

The Canada Training Benefit, introduced in the Government of Canada's 2019 budget: <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2019/docs/themes/good-jobs-de-bons-emplois-en.html>

The City of Kingston's Workplace Inclusion Charter, designed to combat labour shortages by leveraging diversity: <https://keys.ca/employers/workplace-inclusion-charter.php>

Resources about Canada's increase in precarious work:

What is precarious work: <https://www.workrightscentre.org/what-is-precarious-work>

Precarious work in the federal government: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/december-2019/federal-union-members-reject-new-organization-for-gig-workers/>

Precarious work in the Ontario government: <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/12/12/public-sector-workers-feel-sting-of-precarious-jobs-data-shows.html>

Precarious work in Ontario's colleges and universities: [https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2018/02/No%20Temporary%20Solution\\_CCPA%20report.pdf](https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2018/02/No%20Temporary%20Solution_CCPA%20report.pdf)

Precarious work and women: [https://www.criaw-icref.ca/images/userfiles/files/Women%20and%20Public%20Sector%20Precarity%20FINAL\(1\).pdf](https://www.criaw-icref.ca/images/userfiles/files/Women%20and%20Public%20Sector%20Precarity%20FINAL(1).pdf)

Precarious work and Canadian professionals: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/newsroom/news-releases/more-1-5-canadian-professionals-precarious-jobs-report>

A federal report about addressing precarious work in Canada: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/HUMA/Reports/RP10553151/humarp19/humarp19-e.pdf>

# Notes and References

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# Endorsements for Retain and Gain: Career Management for the Public Sector

“This Playbook is full of resources that managers and staff can use to help create more meaningful career development experiences. It provides the information and practical tools to retain and engage employees and leaders. It also offers simple steps that can be customized to individual needs and aspirations in order to grow the talent we need to best serve the public as public servants. We especially appreciated the concrete tips for managers and the abundance of additional resources.”

– **Isabelle Racine**, Executive Director and Valérie Plourde, Regional Lead, Quebec & Nunavut, National Managers’ Community, Government of Canada

“Retain and Gain masterfully connects the dots between career management and a meaningful employment path in Canada’s public sector. If you’re looking for a helpful travel guide that assists your career journey, this excellent Playbook is it.”

– **Dan Pontefract**, best-selling author of *Lead. Care. Win. and Open to Think*

“Absolutely excellent publication! As with the other Playbooks in the series, the engaging travel guide metaphor and format makes this a very useful resource. I’m impressed with how well the career development guidance has been adapted to and customized for the public service context and I believe managers across the public sector will feel it speaks to their reality. It’s uniqueness as a guide for Canadian public service managers – on a topic of such importance to employee engagement and organizational culture – will make it an instant hit.”

– **Susan Osborne**, CDDP, Career Development Consultant, Province of Nova Scotia

“I found it a very interesting read, very appropriate and easy to follow. Looking back at my own career and the many leaders who inspired me through my journey in the public sector, I now realize they employed many of the action steps identified within this Playbook and I am glad they did.”

– **Doug Ball**, Executive Director, Ontario Municipal Social Services Association

“Attracting, retaining and developing the next generation of municipal staff leaders must be a priority to meet the needs of our cities and towns. In light of the disruptive change that will face municipal workforces over the next decade, this Playbook helps to mobilize talent through practical career management strategies that reduce skills gaps and enable responsiveness. Managers will find this to be an invaluable and easy-to-implement guide to leading more engaged teams.”

– **Tony Haddad and Jim Pine,**  
**Co-Chairs, ONWARDS - Building**  
**Tomorrow's Ontario Municipal**  
**Leaders**

“As career development professionals, we often hear that managers are afraid to have career conversations with their employees because they do not want to create expectations, lose talent or they simply don't know how. We refer to managers as career enablers and we believe that effective talent management begins with managers having career conversations with every single employee. We love this Playbook because it includes navigation tools that will equip managers with the career coaching skills, inclusive and agile career mindsets, and practical know-how needed to initiate career conversations with confidence.”

– **Rachel Haché and Nathalie**  
**Thériault,** Co-chairs of the  
Interdepartmental Career  
Community of Practice, Public  
Service of Canada

“Public sector managers are in the driver's seat of a leadership journey. Guiding a team to serve the public interest is not straightforward. It's no small task for any leader to invite creativity, and support resilience and results. The circumstances for public managers are especially challenging. You are navigating obstacles, changing conditions, roadblocks, speed limits and frustrating traffic signals. The directions can sometimes put you on the wrong path while at other times they are ambiguous. Managers are maneuvering the heavy traffic of competing priorities in a vehicle whose dashboard offers limited information. The brakes are sticky. Your budget can offer fuel but maintenance or an upgrade can be tough to justify. What's more, your passengers are with you but can get frustrated, restless and even car sick. This Playbook is designed to support your journey with compassion for your reality. The travel guide format satisfies a hunger for bite-sized, practical advice to super-charge relationships in a way that mobilizes progress. These tips will help you succeed by engaging the full capacity and talent of a diverse team. Whether you're a veteran or beginner, you'll find ideas to build your confidence and competence for the road ahead.”

– **Alastair MacFadden,** Executive in  
Residence at Johnson Shoyama  
Graduate School of Public Policy  
and Former Deputy Minister,  
Government of Saskatchewan

“Finally! A comprehensive resource that is practical and speaks to the benefits of career planning while providing free tools and pathways that recognize our busy work lives. This should be saved on the desktops of all public service people-management leaders. This compendium is designed for the realities of public service managers and employees; their pressures, challenges and opportunities. We are facing complex demographic challenges, societal movements and digital transformations, which have been fast-tracked over the past year and which deeply influence who we are, what we do and how we serve Canadians. As the public service readies itself for the culture shift for the future of work, and responds to the calls to action on addressing systemic racism, diversity and inclusion, this Playbook comes at a critical time to help understand how career conversations are essential to align talent with the organizational needs of today and tomorrow...now.”

– **Tracey Sametz, Director General,  
Human Resources, Transport  
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