

SECTION 5: MAKING MANAGEMENT MORE EFFECTIVE

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5.1 Enhancing leadership skills

In the Canadian Government, the Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission have set out a "Profile of Public Service Leaders and Managers" which serves as the model or basis for defining the skills which are to be developed and enhanced. It emphasises the following areas:

- *Leadership*: Mobilising energies and talents towards a shared purpose;
- *Thinking Skills*: Identifying, defining, and analysing problems and situations;
- *Organisational Awareness*: Using formal and informal systems and contacts in order to get results;
- *Interpersonal Relations*: Developing respect, mutual understanding, and productive working relationships;
- *Communication*: Shaping others' understanding in ways which capture interest, inform, and gain support;
- *Action Management*: Achieving expected results through successful and timely completion of activities and delivery of products or services;
- *Knowledge of the public service environment*: Understanding government systems and operational policies, and the programmes and policies of one's own department.

These are defined in progressively more demanding terms, depending on the level of management, ranging from supervisors and middle managers to directors, directors general, assistant deputy ministers, and ultimately the deputy minister. At higher levels, the requirements become both more rigorous and more general, and they also include all of those skills which were developed and practiced at the previous levels.

There are certain basic qualities or characteristics which do not change across the different levels of management. These include: judgment; integrity; self-confidence; flexibility; initiative; and perseverance.

The context for change

The above profile reflects the approach and impact of Canada's public service reform initiative (originally called "PS 2000", and now simply called public service renewal). The next step in this initiative is to ensure that the underlying philosophy and values will be embedded in the culture of the public service, particularly at the management level. It is significant that the Principal of the Canadian Centre for Management Development is the person with the responsibility for the continuing co-ordination of the reform initiative.

A central theme in the reform initiative is that for the public service, "people are the greatest asset". This points to the central importance of leadership and "people management". This, in fact, is a pre-requisite for improving service to the public. Only if the employees are trained, motivated, supported, and valued can they provide top quality service to the public.

In addition to the general skills identified above, there are more specific skills associated with particular functions and responsibilities, such as finance, information, marketing, and process improvement.

In Canada, there is also a renewed emphasis on the policy dimension and the importance of policy skills. This reflects the need to develop and adapt policies to cope with Canada's fiscal situation, the updating of Canada's social programmes, and the problems of inter-governmental relations and national unity.

Implementing change

A first step in developing leadership skills is to recruit the right people and to identify the particular areas where improvement is required. To this end, the government has programmes and services for screening and assessment, which is done at the entry level in particular.

There is also a personal assessment component to some of the courses. For example, colleagues, supervisors, and subordinates will be asked to provide an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the persons enrolling in the course, who in turn compare this with their own assessments.

The most thorough-going assessments are done as part of two cross-service programmes, the Management Trainee Programme and the Career Assignment Programme, both described below.

Development of leadership skills is a continuous process, with longer-term benefits, stretching over one's entire career. It is the responsibility of both the individual

and the organisation. Much of the management training in the Canadian Government (particularly the cross-service training) is done by the Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD), which is a departmental corporation reporting to the Prime Minister.

CCMD has a range of programmes for different levels. Its core programmes are as follows: (For other programmes, please see entry 5.4 - Management Development.)

At the entry level, there is the Management Trainee Programme (MTP), which is the fast-track programme for university graduates with masters degrees. This is a five-year programme structured as follows: (1) a two-week training session; (2) a one-year work assignment; (3) a one-week training session; (4) further one-year work assignments interspersed by two-week training sessions.

Another programme which helps to bring people into the management ranks is the Career Assignment Programme, which takes people just below the management level and fast tracks them to middle management positions. This consists of a series of work assignments preceded by a nine-week educational component.

For people who have been promoted into the executive level, there is the Executive Leadership programme, which is mandatory. The first course (Executive Leadership I) is taken within six months of assuming position, and the second course (Executive Leadership II) is taken five years after. These are two-week residential courses.

Persons who have been promoted to the level of Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) are expected to take the ADM Orientation course (two days). There is also a four-day course for Heads of Agencies, dealing with the main characteristics and relationships of federal agencies.

In addition, there is the Advanced Management Programme, for selected participants at the ADM level. This is an intensive course consisting of three modules offered over several months, interspersed with work. The objectives are: to instil a broad perspective about Canada and the world; to develop leadership vision and qualities; to strengthen top management skills and experience; to encourage intellectual and personal renewal; to reinforce corporate vision and professional recommitment; and to increase mutual understanding among managers in the public and private sectors.

Supporting Material

Canadian Centre for Management Development: Calendar

5.2 Improving management information systems

In June 1993, the Canadian Government underwent one of the most significant re-organisational changes in recent history. A key element of the change was the reduction in the number of departments. However, to the information systems community the most important change was the creation within Treasury Board of an Office of Information Management Systems and Technology, which incorporated parts of the former Comptroller General's Office and sections of Treasury Board. The Chief Informatics Officer heads this office.

The mandate ranges from policy development and implementation, administrative re-engineering, to what has been called "the care and feeding of the information technology community".

The activities of the Chief Informatics Officer (CIO) support the Government's restructuring objectives and provide a vision for transformation. The following elements are included:

- service and support functions rationalised across departments and programmes to reduce duplication and streamline operations;
- services delivered directly to the clients, or made easily accessible to them, through electronic means;
- a standard suite of interconnected management and employee system tools available at the finger tips to support decision-making and service delivery;
- a standards-based tele-computing infrastructure in place to enable integrated government operations across the country;
- routine processes (80 per cent of all business activities) automated to reduce costs and the need for human intervention.

The context for change

Judiciously applied, modern information technology can significantly transform the way in which government programme and administrative services are delivered and help achieve the government's restructuring objectives, i.e. to improve services to the public while significantly reducing programme delivery and overhead costs.

Developments in the field of human resource information systems are an integral part of this transformation and are described in entry 1.12. Also, the transformation discussed here works hand-in-hand with the developments discussed in entry 5.3, Improving Information Technology Support.

Implementing change

The vision (or transformation) can only be achieved with an enterprise-wide focus for effective planning and management of information, systems, technology and business process re-engineering. The CIO will provide this focus. The CIO will articulate the vision, and map out a migration strategy of continuous improvement.

Full implementation of the vision is a long-term proposition. The approach to implementation is as follows:

- CIO will provide government-wide leadership by:
 - selecting and managing, in consultation with the community, common systems and ensuring that they are shared across departments;
 - identifying opportunities, and providing implementation support, for departments in the same geographic locations to share administrative services;
 - directing, and facilitating implementation of, re-engineering of business processes;
 - establishing business context, strategic direction and standards for information technology and information management infrastructure development; and
 - ensuring that Government Telecommunications and Information Services (Government Telecommunications Agency) telecom network services support the government's renewal objectives and architectural direction.
- Departments will fulfil their corporate and community responsibility by:
 - participating in shared systems, locally-shared support services, and business re-engineering initiatives endorsed by the CIO;

- fully exploiting the benefits of using the government-wide telecom network services offered by Government Telecommunications and Information Services (Government Telecommunications Agency); and
 - adhering to information management and information technology standards, principles, and development direction endorsed by the CIO.
- CIO will provide timely, effective intervention, at the Executive level, in cases where corporate objectives are ignored or misinterpreted.
 - CIO will promote alliance with other jurisdictions and the private sector when supported by a solid business case.

Supporting material

- (i) Presentation to The Implementation Board On The Activities of CIO To Support Government Restructuring, Office of Information Management Systems and Technology, Treasury Board Secretariat, 1993
- (ii) Shifting The Paradigm: A conversation with the Federal Government's First CIO, HUM - The Government Computer Magazine, Walter Cooke, 1994

5.3 Improving information technology support

Treasury Board's newly created Office of Information Management Systems and Technology has recently released a blueprint study paper suggesting ways of using new information technology to deliver improved service to the public.

The Blueprint for Renewing Government Services Using Information Technology, could result in substantial changes in the way technology is implemented throughout government and in how public sector workers do their job.

The Blueprint's vision is that government services should be affordable, accessible and responsive. The overall benefits of applying this blueprint will be more efficient and effective programme delivery, reduced overall costs across government(s) and maintained or even improved customer service in the face of fiscal restraint.

The Blueprint envisions bringing services to clients and providing them with "single-window" access for multiple services.

The context for change

In the private sector, the pressure for restructuring and renewal has come from increased competitiveness and the unforgiving nature of high costs. Many argue that consumers have become more demanding as they look for better service and quality at a lower price. This applies to both the public and private sectors.

Implementing change

The front-line workers, the people who are going to end up owning and operating the new processes, must be involved in the conceptual design stage of the project and then participate in the project as a member of the team. Unions should be involved throughout the process.

The transformation envisaged in the Blueprint will be achieved through continuous improvements. There will be ongoing measuring and monitoring of government service delivery.

Achievement of this vision of renewal requires five sets of key architectural principles. They are:

- *Business:* Government services will need to be transformed to focus on serving clients, on sharing solutions for common functions, on seeking innovative business partnerships, on exploiting information technology and on facilitating accountability.
- *Work:* Service delivery processes will need to be automated, seamless, efficient and convenient, free from such constraints as functional stovepipes, organisational barriers, red tape, time and location.
- *Information:* As a valuable national resource, government information will need to be accessible, secure, captured once and validated close to source, properly maintained to ensure privacy and integrity, and electronically distributed to authorised users.
- *Applications:* Applications will need to interact freely with one another, have a consistent look and feel, and be modular, re-usable and broadly shared across the government.
- *Technology:* Information technology will need to be open and capable of supporting distributed and accessible computing environments.

A particular initiative in improving information technology support: The Software Exchange Service

Initiated in April 1988, the Software Exchange Service (SES), offered through Government Telecommunications and Informatics Services (GTIS) of Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC), promotes and facilitates the sharing of government-owned application software, information, related documentation and systems.

The objectives of SES are to reduce government expenditures by stimulating and encouraging the sharing of the sizeable inventory of government-owned applications software; create and foster an environment for sharing ideas, information and technology; open new opportunities for the private sector to provide software customisation, installation, maintenance and enhancement services; and identify commercially marketable government-owned software for licensing. One of the measures of the performance of SES is an estimate of development and other costs avoided by organisations who use the service. It is estimated that these transfers now represent more than \$30 million annually (1992/93) in cost avoidance to the government.

SES has an inventory of over 200 government-owned software products and related documents donated by government organisations. They are available for evaluation and use by any other interested department, agency or Crown Corporation.

GTIS co-ordinates the organisation of user groups, product demonstrations and presentations, as well as provides advice to groups who wish to share working tools among themselves.

SES has a catalogue of its current products available in hard copy, and on diskette. A new bulletin board service allows clients to browse or download the electronic catalogue, make requests and leave messages 24 hours a day.

Clients, which include government organisations at all levels across Canada (mostly federal, but increasingly provincial and municipal), receive a newsletter, *Give and Take*, of announcements of upcoming events, new products and other topics of interest.

Software Exchange has established itself as a focal point within the government community for the sharing of government-owned software and related information. Demand for the services of SES is steadily increasing, from approximately 200 "transfers" in its first year of operation (1988/89) to over 1700 in 1992/93. As the number of participants continues to grow, so does the awareness and appreciation of the value of the Software Exchange option. SES intends to continue increasing its inventory of applications software, as well as the rate of client participation. Its aim is to cultivate products of high quality and applicability to meet common client needs. SES will continue its involvement in co-operative development initiatives, and examine opportunities for expanding the scope of its service to regions and provincial governments.

Supporting material

Blueprint for Renewing Government Services Using Information Technology,
Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada, 1994

5.4 Management development

The intention of management development is to develop leaders who have the capability to manage change by setting directions and aligning and motivating people by articulating visions and defining values.

Much of the emphasis is on people, perspectives, values, mindsets, and cultural orientations rather than specific skills. For example, one of the goals is to create a mindset and a culture that makes the most effective use of persons from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

The focus is on developing areas or themes of competency in the most general sense, e.g. to develop an ability to synthesise, initiate effective action, learn from events, and orchestrate horizontal relations to get things done. Other competency themes include: ability to manage strategic change; develop a customer focus; manage across functions and geography; and articulate a tangible vision - all with a high degree of integrity.

The context for change

Executives nowadays are in the business of both managing change, and leading it. Executive education strengthens the ability of both individuals and organisations to lead and manage change. The priority is to develop a core organisational capacity (or set of capacities) that can handle any sort of future and in whatever organisational form is appropriate.

It is important to improve not only individual talent, but also to define and cultivate organisational values and culture, and to create or strengthen the ability to innovate and improve. This is in line with the approach and the values of public service reform, and it is a challenge to carry it forward in a time of fiscal restraint and restructuring.

Implementing change

The key prerequisite is that the top executives themselves must take an interest in executive education, and must invest time and effort in it. Executive education is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who needs to see it as one of the primary tools for realising the basic strategies of the organisation.

Executive development must occur on a continuous basis, i.e. through continuous learning. It must occur not only through periodic courses, but in everyday work situations.

Given the close relationship between executive development and the strategies of the organisation, as articulated by top management, there is a need to customise executive education programmes and to build up an internal capability to deliver them. There has been a substantial increase in the internal provision of executive education, not only by the Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD), but also by some of the larger departments and agencies.

A number of different but complementary approaches are used. First, there is a wide variety of courses. (For information on the core programmes offered by CCMD, see entry 5.1). At CCMD, these courses are taught by persons who themselves are practising and accomplished executives, who are typically on a two to five year secondment to CCMD.

The courses are designed so that the participants will learn a great deal from each other. Typically, the participants are at the same level of responsibility, but from very different organisations and functions. They work in teams to solve real world problems, which are similar or closely related to those encountered in the workplace itself (e.g. the actual managers of participants may be asked to sign off on a problem for the course). The courses are interactive, peer-based, and action-oriented.

There is a focus on the needs of whole teams of executives, not just individuals. More training is now being provided to intact teams in the work-place itself. Executives of all levels participate in a process of continuous learning and team development.

In addition to courses, there are a number of other programmes and activities which are used to facilitate and reinforce executive learning. These include the following:

- *Briefings*, e.g. "Armchair Discussions" which address a wide range of interesting and topical subjects;
- *Dialogue*, a series of informal meetings with Deputy Ministers;
- *Leadership Link-up*, a national video-conference involving hundreds of senior managers;
- *Public Service Learning and Communications Network (RADIAN)*, which will provide a government-wide service for distance training and development;

- *Expo-Innovation*, which showcases innovative management practices in areas such as finance, human resources, and technology management. The most recent event was attended by more than 15,000 public servants;
- *Research and case studies* programmes for generating and disseminating knowledge about public management;
- *Programmes* for coaching, counselling, and mentoring;
- *Upward Feedback* (or appraisal by subordinates), which is used in an increasing number of departments to provide useful information for managers seeking to improve their performance, particularly in the area of "people management".

Supporting material

- (i) Canadian Centre for Management Development: Calendar
- (ii) CCMD Research Publications: (1) Leadership for a Changing World: Developing Executive Capability; (2) Upward Feedback in the Public Service of Canada