

MyPerformance Guide to Employee Engagement

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Where ideas work



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Overview

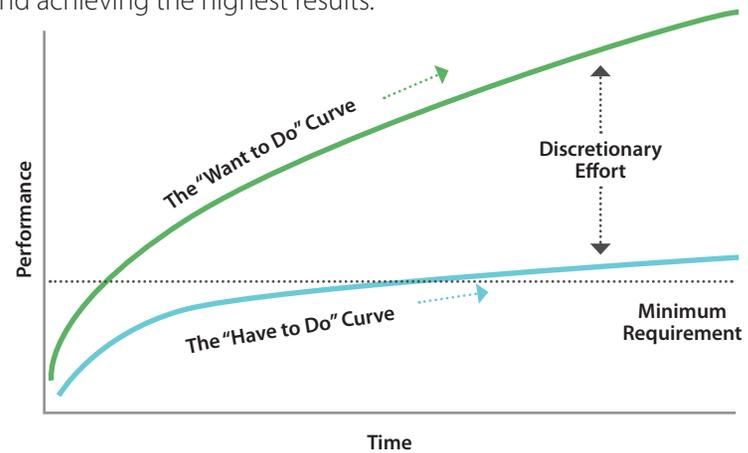
The [MyPerformance Guide to Employee Engagement](#) is written for both the supervisor and employee. This guide provides an overview of employee engagement and why engagement matters to both the organization and the employee. The guide shows you how to use MyPerformance to enhance engagement for both you and the people who report to you. The guide also describes best practices for having conversations that lead to an increase in key drivers of engagement.

What is employee engagement? Some people think it means happy employees, and while that's true, it's more than that. Engaged employees feel a connection to their jobs and to the success of the organization. Because of the connection, they go beyond the minimum expectations of their jobs. The engagement experts call that "discretionary effort." When employees want to work towards their own and their organization's success, they reach higher levels of performance and personal satisfaction.

Engaged employees drive the organization forward towards achieving its vision, mission and goals. Engaged employees are more productive, committed to the organization, motivated, healthy, and satisfied. Within the BC Public Service, engaged employees are more likely to continue their career with government, recommend the organization to others as a career of choice, and perform at higher levels. Engaged employees lead to higher client satisfaction, which in turn, leads to increased trust from the citizens of British Columbia and confidence in government. The investment in employee engagement benefits all British Columbians. Employee engagement may be the best example of a true "win-win" for both the employee and the organization.

Because of all of these important factors impacting employee and ultimately organizational performance, the BC Public Service undertakes a Work Environment Survey (WES) every two years to measure our levels of employee engagement across several key areas.

The BC Public Service Engagement model identifies the key areas or drivers of employee engagement for our organization with the foundation being executive-level and supervisory-level management. In other words, the relationship between a supervisor and employee is key to having an engaged employee. Relationships between supervisors and employees are created and maintained through ongoing conversations, which are at the center of MyPerformance. By having conversations that are geared towards engagement, employees will be motivated, committed, and achieving the highest results.



DISCRETIONARY EFFORT MODEL Source: Aubrey Daniels International

Learn more about employee engagement.

Visit the BC Public Service's [Wikilumbia](#) site. You will find the BC Public Service's Engagement model and learn about the key drivers of engagement at the BC Public Service. Drivers of engagement are measured on the BC Public Service's Work Environment Survey (WES). Each driver covers a particular aspect of an employee's experience and has the potential to effectively increase or decrease overall engagement.

There are other resources outside of our organization to learn more about employee engagement. For example, the video below demonstrates what happens when satisfaction meets contribution.

[The 'X' model of employee engagement: Maximum Satisfaction meets Maximum Contribution](#)

Measuring Employee Engagement

The Work Environment Survey (WES), the BC Public Service's tool for measuring employee engagement, provides employees an opportunity to contribute confidential feedback about their work environment. It provides the organization and supervisors with information on what it's like to work in the BC Public Service – what is going well, what are the work challenges, where there has been improvement, and what are the opportunities for further improvement.

Supervisors can have conversations with their work units to better understand the results, explore their employees' underlying concerns, and be aware of what is going well. For example, a supervisor may see a low WES score for staffing practices. When the supervisor discusses hiring practices and merit with the team, the supervisor may discover that employees are actually happy with those areas. The supervisor may then discover that the underlying issue for employees are perceived limitations in professional development and growth. Sometimes the real issue isn't what it appears. The [WES Coaching package](#) is a valuable resource for supervisors to have conversations with their teams to discover what is underneath the results and what will lead to greater results for the team and organization.

Take action to understand WES results.

- ▶ Visit the BC Public Service's [@Work site](#) to find corporate results and several resources, including a [WES Coaching package](#) to support your conversations.
- ▶ Supervisors and employees – Have a conversation together to understand the results, celebrate strengths, identify any underlying concerns, and opportunities for further improvement.

Employee Engagement in Government

Working in public and private sectors are different employment experiences. According to Robert Lavigna, author of "Engaging Government Employees", there are at least 11 key dimensions that make working in government a unique experience, and make employee engagement more important than ever. He talks about a public sector working differently with shrinking resources, political leadership that changes frequently, limited financial tools to influence employee performance, public visibility of government actions, budgets that require teams to do more with less, a workforce that is intrinsically motivated toward public service, and more. Sound familiar?

Under these circumstances, supervisors may find it more complex and challenging to engage their employees and create the best employee experience than supervisors in private sector without those factors. For example, with political leadership and priorities changing, understanding the organization's vision is even more important so that employees can stay connected to their work. Read on for more examples and best practices for taking ownership over your own and your employees' engagement at work.

Relationship between MyPerformance and Employee Engagement

The relationship between the supervisor and employee, which is built and strengthened through on-going conversation, is one of the key methods by which supervisors engage their employees. Both internal and external research confirms the significance of the quality of the relationship and trusted feedback between supervisor and employee. MyPerformance conversations work to engage employees and create higher performance.

What is meant by the “relationship” between a supervisor and employee?

The supervisory relationship can be defined as an authentic interpersonal relationship between two people based on regular and friendly business interactions and open communication. The supervisory relationship doesn't mean “best friends” or two people who avoid each other in order to be civil. Talk to each other about what supervisory relationship means to you.

What does MyPerformance and Employee Engagement look like?

Our Work Environment Survey results have demonstrated that the supervisor can have the greatest impact on employee engagement. What might MyPerformance conversations look like when employees are engaged, or not?

ENGAGED - I have ongoing conversations with my supervisor. I see the results I'm making to the organization and I feel empowered. I access performance coaching services when I am facing an especially challenging goal and I succeed. I don't tell people what to do; I coach them.

ALMOST ENGAGED - I have begun to prepare for and have MyPerformance conversations. I get a sense I'm making a difference to the organization and I'm starting to feel empowered.

What might an employee's experience of MyPerformance conversations look like depending on their level of engagement?

NOT ENGAGED (OR HAPPILY DISENGAGED) - I sign off on my MyPerformance Profile every year and have a conversation here and there but get nothing out of it. Just let me do my work - the very minimum so no one talks to me about my work.

ACTIVELY DISENGAGED - I sign off when my supervisor tells me. I don't initiate any conversations with anyone, except to complain. People avoid me.

Let's look at some real examples to get a picture of how employees and supervisors can use MyPerformance conversations as a tool to enhance employee engagement.

Picture an employee supervised by someone whose main method of communication is email. The employee and supervisor complete the MyPerformance Profile with goals and comments that are positive and reflect that the employee is achieving expectations. However, the employee and supervisor never have a true conversation about what they write into the Profile. While the employee is performing to the best of their ability on the tasks they've been given, they believe they could do more, achieve more, and further develop and grow their strengths and competencies. In this situation, the employee takes the initiative and requests a meeting. During this meeting, the employee talks about their interests and the kind of work assignments that they would like to work on that are part of their roles and responsibilities. The supervisor discusses the emerging opportunities for work assignments, and the employee requests to work on the one that best fits their interests and strengths. The supervisor considers the request and the other employees on the team. In the end, the employee receives a project that interests and challenges them. The supervisor and employee set up regular conversations with each other. The supervisor is able to have conversations with the employee to check progress toward work goals, provide support, offer coaching and recognize the employee for their contributions.

Let's look at another example and this time with the focus on the supervisor. The supervisor works with their employees to show the connection between the work that they're doing and the difference that they are making in the organization. They also talk about how their work is aligned with their own personal priorities and values, and supports their employees in finding balance with the organization's vision. For example, if their employees are spending more time than needed with each customer, they would have a conversation with their employees.

They may tell the employee that they see how much the employee cares about the individual customers and ask the employee to consider all of the ministry's customers. The supervisor and employee could then have an interactive conversation and talk about how the employee could serve and care for more customers. Through this conversation, the supervisor would recognize the employee for a personal value of caring and discuss the organization's vision of meeting the needs of more customers. Later, the supervisor could recognize their employees for their progress and the difference that their work is having on their customers and the organization. Through these kinds of conversations, this supervisor is able to support employees in feeling a connection to their jobs and the organization.

Best Practices for MyPerformance Conversations to Enhance Employee Engagement Drivers

This next section focuses on key drivers of employee engagement where the supervisor and employee can have the most influence in their MyPerformance conversations.

SUPERVISORY-LEVEL MANAGEMENT

DEFINITION: Employees believe that the person they report to leads with an understanding of others' perspectives, keeps them informed, consults them on decisions that affect them, and provides clear work expectations.

Employees are engaged one at a time, and it is the supervisor who can make the biggest difference. As a supervisor, your role is to build trusted relationships with your employees through ongoing conversations.

Trust is the basis for all conversations. With trust, you can talk about interests, strengths, challenges, concerns, and more. How do you build trust? That is a big question! Check out the MyPerformance Guide to Building Trust for practical tips and strategies for both supervisors and employees.

Knowing your employees and believing in their success can make a huge difference. Hearing the words, "You can do this" is sometimes all it takes for an employee to take on a challenging task or assignment. When a Supervisor understands an employee's strengths, interests, and aspirations, the relationship strengthens again.

KEY ACTIONS

- ▶ Develop trusted working relationships by having both informal, frequent conversations as well as regular one-on-one meetings.
Supervisor: Take the time and invest in your employees. Expect your employees to perform exceptionally and bring their full selves to work. Have coaching conversations. If you're not sure how, take the "Coaching Approach to Conversations" course and sign up for coaching yourself on MYHR. Be present to answer questions, provide trusted feedback, and listen to their goals, ideas and opinions. Ask how the employee likes to be recognized so that you can recognize and celebrate the employee's contributions.
Employee: Take ownership of your engagement at work. Request meetings and initiate conversations with your supervisor. Talk about your interests and strengths. Bring your goals, questions and ideas to your supervisor.

- ▶ Have a conversation so that performance expectations are clearly understood and accountability is created. Focus on the needs of the ministry and the customers it serves. When an employee knows what needs to be done and how to do it (through demonstrating the **Public Service Values**), they are more likely to deliver and be recognized for their contributions. To be fully engaged, employees need to understand their roles and responsibilities and receive continual feedback on their performance. Performance expectations will be different for each role and it is best for these conversations to include discussions about what milestones an employee can strive for on the continuum of performance: not performing, developing, achieving, and exceeding. Document the highlights of your conversation in the MyPerformance Profile. See the **MyPerformance Guide to Assessing Employee Performance** for more assistance in the review phase.
- ▶ Find out what conditions need to be present to be engaged. Ask yourself or your employee: Recall a time when you were highly engaged at work. What conditions were present? What were you doing? Who were you doing it with?
- ▶ Where possible, it is ideal to align work assignments with strengths, interests and desires for growth – **Supervisor:** Find out which assignments they enjoy more and what areas they want to develop. Recognize employees for remaining positive and hardworking while making contributions to the team that may not align with their strengths or interests. **Employee:** Don't wait to be asked. Ask for work assignments you are interested in. If the answer is no, ask questions so that you understand the reasoning behind those decisions and find out what is possible.

EXECUTIVE-LEVEL MANAGEMENT

DEFINITION: Employees believe that senior leaders communicate decisions in a timely manner and that they provide clear direction for the future.

Engaged employees are able to work towards organizational goals and priorities with confidence because they are supported by executives. The supervisor represents the organization to their employees and can typically be the connection point between executive and employees. In addition, personal interaction with executive, where employees hear directly from executive about the organization's vision, goals and culture, will also support employees to identify with and gain a better understanding of executive actions and decisions. Employees thrive when there is consistent and transparent messaging that flows through all levels of the organization (up, down and across).



KEY ACTIONS

Supervisors:

- ▶ Engage your supervisors! If you have other supervisors reporting to you, engage them! When supervisors are engaged, their employees will likely be engaged.
- ▶ Hold supervisors accountable for engaging their staff. Ensure you have the conversation about what they are doing to engage their employees. Track their progress. This is a key role for all supervisors.
- ▶ Give your employees a voice with executive. Listen to your employees' ideas and opinions. In your MyPerformance conversations, identify opportunities and barriers for engaging employees. Bring forward your employees' concerns, questions, and ideas to executive.
- ▶ Involve employees in decisions that you can influence. Explain the context for decisions and translate them into operational steps. Employees need to understand the 'why'. Even if employees don't agree with decisions, explaining the reasons can go a long way toward maintaining and improving engagement.
- ▶ Create opportunities for members of executive to interact directly, and ideally face to face, with your employees. Examples include inviting executive to your team meeting and inviting skip-level meetings between executive and your employees.

Employees:

- ▶ Identify what support you are looking for from executive and your supervisor to enhance your own engagement, and discuss at your MyPerformance conversations.
- ▶ Ask questions to understand the rationale for decisions that affect your work.
- ▶ Through conversations with your supervisor (or executive), bring your questions, ideas and opinions that you believe executive may want to know.
- ▶ Get to know your executive. Your MyPerformance conversation is a great place to brainstorm how to make that happen.

Vision, Mission and Goals

DEFINITION: Employees believe that their organization's vision, mission, and goals are well communicated and that their organization is taking steps to ensure its long-term success.

Engaged employees feel a connection to their work and the organization. They see themselves in the vision, or understand how they are connected to the vision. The MyPerformance conversation is a way to talk about government's direction and priorities, how employees see themselves in that direction, and how their work connects to the bigger picture.

Robert Lavigna, the author of *Engaging Government Employees*, talks about examples where "regulatory agencies have abruptly morphed from strictly enforcing rules to advocating for the industry they regulate." As a result, employees may lose some belief in their work and their engagement may suffer. This example illustrates the importance of supervisors and employees having meaningful conversations about vision, any changes, and why the change truly matters to both the organization and the employee.

Engaged employees also demonstrate the organization's values, which basically reflect an organization's culture. The **Public Service Values**, developed through broad consultation, describe the qualities that employees value in their colleagues and in our organization and provide a common language for describing how we do our various jobs.

In addition to the **Public Service Values**, individuals also hold their own personal values, which are deep intrinsic motivators and where people draw personal fulfillment in life. Personal values are different for everyone.

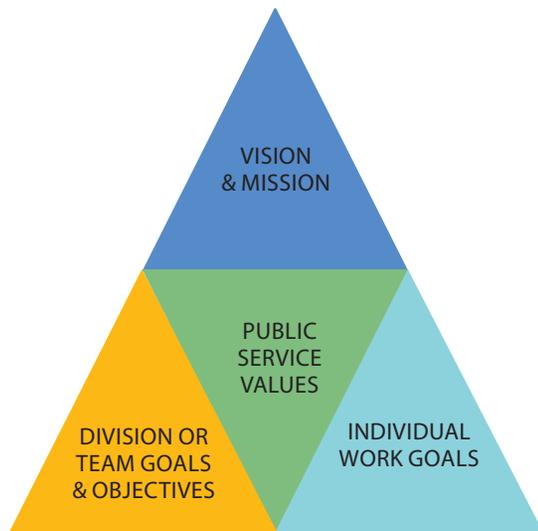
Examples include things like family, health, education, achievement, environment, and more. It is both the supervisor's and employee's job to find the connections between the vision and the work they're doing, as well as where the employee finds meaning in their work. The best way to do this is to understand what drives an employee. Discover why the vision, goals and work matter to the employee on a personal level. If there's misalignment between their work and personal values, talk about it. What is missing for the employee? Talk about the vision and where the employee can find meaning and know that the work that they're doing matters. Help connect the dots and discover why they, the employees, need to care about the vision.

The MyPerformance approach recommends direct, collaborative conversations to help employees shape their own work related goals, as described in the **MyPerformance Guide to Conversations**. Seeing a connection between their contributions and the vision of the organization promotes meaningfulness and an understanding of the employee's purpose in the organization. It is up to all employees to understand where government is headed and find the meaning to know how their work is connected to the bigger picture. Employees WILL be more productive as they will invest their efforts in the work that matters to the organization and to them.

KEY ACTIONS FOR VISION, MISSION, GOALS

Supervisor:

- ▶ Have a conversation about how your employee's work aligns with the vision of the ministry, branch and team and the Public Service Values. Talk about how the work is aligned with your employee's own personal priorities and values. Connect all the dots together so that the employee understands why the work matters.
- ▶ Use stories and examples to explain the vision.
- ▶ Support your employee in creating key work goals that are aligned with the vision of the ministry, branch and team. Talk about shifting priorities and any changes to vision or goals.
- ▶ Regularly discuss and acknowledge progress and results.
- ▶ Enlist the support of a team coach through our [Performance Coaching Services](#) to support you to create alignment between organizational objectives, team vision, and individual goals.



Employee:

- ▶ Ask your supervisor questions to understand how your work aligns with the vision of the ministry, branch and team. Reflect on and discuss how your work is aligned with your personal priorities and values. Connect the dots and understand why the work matters to you.
- ▶ Create key work goals that align with the vision of the ministry, branch and team. Ask questions about shifting priorities so you understand any changes to vision or goals.
- ▶ Have a conversation with your supervisor and talk about your progress and results towards reaching the organization's vision, mission and goals.
- ▶ Enlist the support of individual coaching through our [Performance Coaching Services](#) to understand personal values and how they align with the work and the vision of the organization.

For more strategies and tips, refer to the following guides:

[MyPerformance Guide to Motivation](#) provides you with several strategies to motivate yourself and your employees towards higher performance with purpose, initiative and drive.

[MyPerformance Guide to Maximizing Results](#) offers several strategies for aligning the employee's work with the vision of the ministry, branch and team.

[MyPerformance Guide to Goal Setting](#) provides employees and supervisors with several principles, ideas, and steps to create effective and motivational goals that drive individual employee performance and support organizational results.

Respectful Environment

DEFINITION: Employees experience a healthy and diverse atmosphere free from discrimination and harassment.

Employees need a respectful work environment to be engaged and perform at their best. For instance, a respectful work environment allows employees to bring forward and discuss new ideas, take calculated risks, and collaborate with their colleagues.

To create a respectful work environment, everyone must be able to recognize it, own it and contribute to it daily. Knowing what respect means to each team member is crucial.

Supervisors have a greater responsibility because they model and put into effect the conditions and expectations necessary for a respectful work environment. The **Public Service Values** support a respectful work environment, and Supervisors are responsible for reinforcing and recognizing the behaviours that demonstrate the values. When all employees understand their responsibility for and demonstrate the values, a respectful work environment can be created.

What does the Public Service Act, Oath of Employment, and Standards of Conduct have to do with employee engagement?

You guessed it! They all promote a respectful workplace. The BC Public Service has a framework and policies in place to ensure that all employees are working in a positive and respectful work environment.

By signing the Oath of Employment, we all as public servants made a promise to abide by the standards of conduct, act with integrity, and conduct ourselves honestly and ethically. The standards of conduct guide our behaviour to ensure a safe, productive work environment. The standards are clear that all workplace behaviour must contribute to a positive work environment. Be proud of the Oath you made to the citizens of British Columbia!

KEY ACTIONS TO CREATE A RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Have a conversation with each other to clarify what respect means to each of you. Refer to the **Respectful Workplace resources** available on MyHR.
- ▶ Create a positive and respectful work environment by being a role model for each other, focusing on the possibilities. Not only does positivity promote a respectful work environment, engaged employees will flourish as they are better able to see more possibilities for their work.
- ▶ Celebrate what's right rather than only focusing on what's wrong.
- ▶ Talk about and focus on the **Public Service Values**. What behaviours does your team consistently demonstrate that aligns well with the values and contributes to a positive work environment? What behaviors does your team need more of, or less of, in order to demonstrate the values? A set of team values could also support your team in identifying optimum behaviour for your team's work environment.

Our Public Service Values

How you do your job is as important as what you accomplish. The BC Public Service has six corporate values that describe how to effectively do your work:

- Curiosity
- Service
- Passion,
- Teamwork
- Accountability

Integrity has been placed above all the other values as an overarching quality that strongly affirms the Standards of Conduct for the BC Public Service. Putting focus on our corporate values is a great way to create and enhance a positive and respectful work environment.

Stress and Workload

DEFINITION: Employees perceive that their work-related stress and workloads are manageable.

Leaders who care about and take action to support an employee's well-being will make a difference in an employee's engagement. Again, it all starts with building relationship. Genuinely asking an employee, "How are you doing?" can make a huge difference to an employee, especially when they are experiencing high workload and stress. Simply knowing that the supervisor sees their efforts can make a world of difference.

When MyPerformance conversations are occurring regularly, employees are more likely to have a mechanism to tell their supervisors when they are reaching capacity. For example, an employee may be working week-ends continuing to take on more assignments from their supervisor, who is unaware of the full extent of the employee's current commitments. Through a coaching conversation, the supervisor could learn about the impact of any added stress or workload. The supervisor could then support the employee in identifying priorities and possibly opportunities for reassignment or delegation to another employee who may be under-utilized.

There is a **MyPerformance Guide to Stress and Workload**.

Having conversations about health and safety supports the overall well-being of the individual and organization. The guide provides strategies for starting conversations, which get ahead of issues and challenges with a focus on relationship building and open communication.

KEY ACTIONS TO MANAGE STRESS AND WORKLOAD

- ▶ Have regular conversations about work goals and workload. Check in with each other and be open to adjusting work goals based on priority and reality of what is needed.
- ▶ Have a conversation about priorities. What work has the greatest value to the organization? What has the least? Know what work can come off your plate and/or be reassigned to someone else.
- ▶ When workload is high and it's not possible to readjust goals or delegate the high priority work, take a step back for a moment and recognize that you are doing your best. Take advantage of the resources available through the BC Public Service Agency and Homewood Solutions as there are courses and tools to support you in building more resiliency and managing the personal impact of stress.
- ▶ Have a conversation about processes and identify any opportunities for **Lean**.
- ▶ In your conversations, ask for help – there may be a co-worker who is interested in the work. The supervisor will know because of ongoing MyPerformance conversations with all their staff.
- ▶ Enroll in Individual Coaching or Supervisor Partnered Coaching through our **Performance Coaching Services** to support you in identifying priorities and creating balance.
- ▶ Talk about the importance of taking breaks, and then take them. More work will be completed in the long-term.

What is Lean?

Lean was introduced in the BC Public Service to enhance customer service, save employee time and build internal capacity. Lean focuses on shifting to the efficiencies that can be found in employees' daily work and the employees are at the center of those improvements. Visit **Lean BC** for more information.

Job Suitability

DEFINITION: Employees believe that their work is both meaningful and a good fit with their skills and interests.

Engaged employees must find meaning in their work in order to fully invest their strengths and efforts into their roles and do what it takes to get the job done. They find meaning in their roles when they believe that their contributions provide value to the organization. They also find meaning when they have clear roles and responsibilities as well as challenging work.

When supervisors and employees have an open line of communication with each other, both can work together on creating more meaning in specific roles. They can talk about the employee's interests and strengths, what makes a role meaningful and a good fit to the employee, and the opportunities available. By exploring these questions together, the supervisor and employee can come up with ideas to see or create more meaning in the employee's role.

There are also times when a role is not suitable for an employee's strengths, values, competencies, knowledge and skills. This employee's strengths and interests may not align with the job's responsibilities and/or work environment. This will result in poorer performance which could become "Mismatched Talent" or "Not Performing" if not addressed. Moving to a job and/or work environment that aligns with the employee's strengths and interests will support the employee to thrive and perform well in their role. It is the employee's responsibility to perform satisfactorily in their current role, but through a conversation on job suitability a supervisor can assist an employee in taking the steps necessary to better match their talents.

There are situations where a supervisor may believe they're limited in addressing poor performance and may tolerate it believing there are few options. Tolerating poor performance has a negative impact on the work unit, does not support the employee, and decreases overall performance.

KEY ACTIONS TO STRENGTHEN JOB SUITABILITY

Supervisor:

- ▶ Discover through coaching conversations what most interests employees about their work, and where their professional passion can be engaged in their current role. Show the connection between the work they're doing and the difference they are making in the organization.
- ▶ Enroll in **coaching** for enhancing performance of direct reports. This service will support the supervisor in creating a strategy for engaging employees in meaningful work.
- ▶ Anticipate challenges and get ahead of them. You built a relationship through ongoing conversations, and this opens the door for talking about challenges and concerns. Always have the trusted relationship at the center of all conversations, including these ones.
- ▶ Use the probationary period to identify mismatched talent and support them in finding work that is more aligned to their strengths and interests, while noting that all employees are expected to achieve expectations in their current roles.

There is a **MyPerformance Guide to Assessing Employee Performance** to learn more about strategies for supporting employees who may be in roles that are not aligned with their strengths and talent. Contact MyHR for support and guidance on working through a particular situation.

Employee:

- ▶ Talk to your supervisor to clearly understand your roles and responsibilities, and how your work provides value to the organization.
- ▶ Enroll in **coaching** for expanding professional career opportunities. This service will support you in discovering what's important to you in your career as well as create an action plan for aligning your career with your values, strengths and interests.
- ▶ Identify the work that interests and challenges you the most and be clear on your strengths. Talk to your supervisor and enter them into your MyPerformance Profile.
- ▶ Get ahead of any challenges you are experiencing. Talk to your supervisor about them. Ask for support!
- ▶ If your supervisor is talking to you about not performing in your role, listen to understand first and ask questions. This is not an easy conversation for either of you. Seek to understand what it will take to get your performance to a satisfactory level so that you know how your work is valued.

Professional Development

DEFINITION: Employees believe their organization supports their learning and development, provides good quality training, and offers adequate opportunities to develop their skills."

The BC Public Service's Corporate Learning Strategy, **Developing the Best**, demonstrates the importance that our organization places on professional development. Professional development is also a key theme in MyPerformance. In 2010, BC Stats sent a Professional Development and Performance Management survey to a random sample of employees across the BC Public Service. The results showed that when employees are having regular, formal conversations with their supervisor, they also tend to have more positive perceptions around professional development. The research also confirmed that performance reviews are most valuable when supervisors provide quality feedback and support throughout the entire performance period.

During MyPerformance conversations, supervisors and employees can talk about various options for meeting professional development goals, such as job shadowing, mentoring, courses, reading books, performance coaching services and more. Supervisors can provide clarity around what conditions must be in place in order to support the employee's professional development, including adequate workload and budgets.

This conversation is very different from a disengaging scenario where a supervisor either tells the employee that the budget does not support them to attend courses and leaves it at that or the supervisor is fully supportive at the beginning of the MyPerformance cycle and then later does not support the employee in attending a course.

By coaching and being clearer with employees on their learning goals and options, employees are more likely to take ownership of their professional development as they understand that there are several ways to accomplish their goals and understand which options are most likely, taking in all variables.

KEY ACTIONS TO SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Reference the BC Public Service Behavioral Competencies and Aboriginal Relations Behavioral competencies to identify different areas for development.
- ▶ Model how to request and use feedback. Request and discuss how you each plan to use the feedback you receive from one another.
- ▶ Create and/or access development opportunities, including both specific training needed for the current job and broader skill development.
- ▶ Create and/or access opportunities to develop and grow, such as developmental job assignments. Create development plans or goals.
- ▶ Take time to track your achievements, key learnings and successes in the MyPerformance Profile. You and your employee will be able to use this information over time to track career growth, look for competency gaps and find the best examples of work for future interviews.

Empowerment

Definition: Employees believe that they have opportunities and freedom to provide input, make decisions to do their job well and implement new ideas.

Empowerment is another key driver in creating engaged employees. Engaged employees are able to use their strengths and have the space to apply their own mastery in their abilities. They have the autonomy to take calculated risks with the supervisor's support. They are able to fully perform the responsibilities of their position and fully contribute to the direction of government.

“A great boss hires talented people and then gets out of their way.” Scott Carbonara, author of *Manager's Guide to Employee Engagement*

Supervisors who coach their employees empower their employees. Coaching looks at what is possible and builds on strengths. Through asking questions and making observations, the supervisor supports the employee to come up with their own answers. When empowered, employees own their actions and results. They also tend to be more optimistic and focused on possibilities and solutions.

KEY ACTIONS TO PROMOTE EMPOWERMENT

Supervisors:

- ▶ Use a coaching leadership style and have coaching conversations with employees. There is a **Coaching Approach to Conversations** course through The Learning Centre and several examples of coaching questions provided under Profile Resources in the MyPerformance Profile.
- ▶ Create an environment that encourages employees to take risks, and then support them.
- ▶ In your work assignments and conversations, provide appropriate autonomy to your employees. Provide your employees with a sense of control over their environment and decisions. Allow them to make decisions without your approval and/or request that they research possible solutions and present their recommendation to you for consideration.

Employees:

- ▶ Be open to exploring coaching questions from your supervisor and/or bring sample coaching questions to your conversations for discussion. See Profile Resources under the MyPerformance Profile for sample coaching questions.
- ▶ Focus on possibilities and solutions. While acknowledging risks, challenges and problems is important, focusing on what is possible and taking risks (with possible contingency plans) will be more effective in creating success.
- ▶ Understand the authority that you have in your role. Talk to your supervisor about what autonomy looks like for you. In what ways can you grow to have more autonomy?

Do you want something and you're not sure if your supervisor will agree?

Put yourself in your supervisor's shoes by following these steps.

First, ask yourself:

- ▶ What is the biggest challenge facing my supervisor? How would my request affect it?
- ▶ What is the impact of my request on my colleagues? Are my colleagues supportive?
- ▶ What precedent would saying yes to my request set?
- ▶ What are the applicable policies in place?
- ▶ How will this request help me improve my performance and achieve results?

Have a conversation with your supervisor about your request or proposal and be clear on what you are asking so that your supervisor knows how to respond.

If the answer is no, great follow up questions include:

- ▶ What do you like about my proposal?
- ▶ What haven't I considered?
- ▶ What from my proposal could I make work?
- ▶ What IS possible, if not this?
- ▶ If not now, when might it be possible?

Adapted from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Recognition

Definition: Employees experience meaningful and performance-based recognition.

Recognition promotes an experience where employees know their contributions are making a difference to the organization. Employees want to know that they are recognized for their unique strengths, perspectives, and contributions. In fact, the experts in employee engagement identified recognition as one of the top drivers of employee engagement.

There are many different ways for an employee to be recognized. Recognition is done best when it is tailored to what the employee finds meaningful. Through ongoing conversations, supervisors and employees build a solid relationship to understand what kind of recognition will most resonate with an employee.

Recognition goes two ways. It is not just for the supervisor. When an employee recognizes a supervisor for their leadership, the supervisor knows what to keep doing and the relationship is strengthened.

Visit the [MyPerformance Guide to Recognition](#) for more strategies and tips to work towards creating a high-performance culture of trusted feedback.

KEY ACTIONS

- ▶ Through conversations, notice and understand what ways you each prefer to be recognized.
- ▶ Show genuine appreciation for each other's strengths, ideas and contributions.

- ▶ Recognize each other for demonstrating behaviours that are aligned with our Public Service Values; be specific and acknowledge exactly what you have observed or heard.
- ▶ Recognize progress and achievements towards reaching challenging goals and aspirations.
- ▶ Tie recognition to the vision. Make the connection around what the person is doing well and the team's vision.
- ▶ Look for positive behaviours. Recognize each other for working towards enhancing a positive work environment.

Summary

Investing in employee engagement, whether your own or your employees', is critical to the organization's success. Having engaged employees is much more than an optional nice-to-have goal. Putting real focused attention on engagement will lead to greater results for both the employee and the organization. Employees will experience more growth and career development, know they are doing their best, and are more motivated, healthy, and satisfied in their careers. The BC Public Service will achieve higher performance, employee retention and citizen satisfaction.

Employees are more engaged and high performing through trusted relationships with their supervisors. As you've learned, this holds true in the areas of empowerment, stress and workload, job suitability, connecting to the organization's vision, respectful environment and more. Now you have key actions to put into practice as an individual and with your team. The researched best practices learned through this guide has, we hope, provided you with examples of the kinds of conversations that lead to greater possibilities and results for both employees and the organization as a whole. Remember, it is all about the conversations ... and the relationship!

For more information, visit:

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