

An Employer's Guide

CAREER DEVELOPMENT COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

"As competition for talent heats up, companies are prioritizing employees' career development as a low-cost way to keep them around."¹

The bad news: According to the Conference Board of Canada, only 27% of Canadian employees are highly engaged.² The good news: Career development is a cost-effective mechanism for increasing your employees' engagement and productivity, decreasing turnover and attracting/retaining talent.

The career development competencies introduced in this guide support individuals to be successful in life, work and learning. Having employees with these competencies helps you to be successful as well.

There are a number of ways that you, as an employer, can use this guide. The career development competency framework can provide structure and serve as an assessment and planning tool throughout an employee's time with you, even as the needs of your business change. This guide offers tips and strategies to help you find, hire, welcome, develop and keep your employees and, when necessary, it can also help you facilitate "gracious exits" when it's time to let someone go.

As an employer, you're likely already helping your employees to develop the competencies in this framework. This guide can serve to highlight and enhance those efforts, provide common language and raise awareness of why these competencies matter and how to demonstrate them at work. Without adding any additional tasks to your already long "to-do list," this guide will help you name, acknowledge, build and celebrate your employees' strengths in thinking, connecting and managing.



Meet Adriana

Adriana completed two co-op terms within the sales and marketing department of a food-processing plant. She was hired immediately after she graduated. Throughout her co-op terms, her manager and the co-op coordinator from her school had worked together to assess Adriana's general competencies. They all found the Career Development Competency Framework useful in identifying Adriana's strengths and development goals.

¹ Source: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/careers/ct-career-development-perk-0330-biz-20160329-story.html>

² Source: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/press/newsrelease/16-07-13/Canadian-Organizations-Struggle-to-Engage-Employees.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

Framework at A Glance

This framework includes competencies that help navigate and propel learning, work and transitions across the lifespan. The framework is clustered into three categories: thinking, connecting and managing. Together, these competencies contribute to an individual's lifelong career development (i.e., capacity to know oneself, be aware of educational and labour market opportunities, make informed decisions, access and maintain work, balance life roles and resiliently manage transitions and unexpected events). Although these are all individual competencies, recognize that they are developed and nurtured in context, through partnerships with educators, employers, and families. See the Appendix for an expanded description of these competencies, complete with performance indicators.

Each of these competencies is described in more detail in the Appendix and in targeted toolkits. The toolkits (for high school students, post-secondary students, and workers/work seekers) include prompts for self-assessment, reflection and planning.



Thinking

This cluster of competencies relates to how you engage in self-reflection, think, make decisions and come up with creative approaches to solving problems.

This includes:

- Self-Awareness
- Problem Solving
- Creativity & Innovation
- Entrepreneurial Mindset
- Critical Thinking
- Decision Making



Connecting

This cluster of competencies supports relationships with others.

This includes:

- Social Awareness
- Social Support
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Global Citizenship



Managing

This cluster of competencies relates to how you take responsibility for your thoughts, feelings and behaviours to maintain health and wellbeing and how you navigate school, work and other life responsibilities.

This includes:

- Self-Management
- Wellness
- Lifelong Learning
- Career Transition
- Work Ethic
- Financial Literacy
- Technological Fluency

Tips & Strategies

The following tips and strategies can help you use the career development competency framework to foster a culture of excellence and build your business.



Getting Started

- Identify competencies from the framework which are most relevant to your organization
- Consider how existing initiatives, programs, systems and supports help to develop these competencies
- Identify gaps (relevant competencies that need to be strengthened)
- Propose/develop new initiatives, programs, systems or supports to address gaps
- Use/adapt the self-assessment tool from the toolkit for workers and work seekers to identify specific employee strengths and development needs
- Keep in mind – the framework and toolkit were not designed to complete in one sitting; rather, focus on relevant competencies one at a time
- Competency development is lifelong; encourage employees to use the framework and toolkit to assess new competency needs and to track changes over time

Getting the People You Need

- Commit to helping employees develop their careers and continue to grow
- Identify the most relevant competencies for each position you need to fill
- Integrate relevant competencies into job descriptions and postings
- Use performance indicators for relevant competencies to assess and evaluate job applicants
- When new employees join your team, use the framework to introduce common language and priorities
- Help new employees use the performance indicators to recognize their strengths and set goals for growth and development
- Create and model a culture that recognizes and rewards relevant competencies

Helping Your Employees Develop and Grow

- Recognize that lifelong career development is relevant for all levels of your organization
- Assess your workforce, identifying strengths and opportunities for development
- Embrace a continuous learning approach to competency development
- Encourage employees to reflect on their competencies, through self-assessment and inviting feedback from others
- Use the framework to structure coaching and career conversations, using performance indicators in goal setting and action planning
- Identify opportunities for learning and strengthening competencies – consider cross training, special projects, lateral transitions, promotions or demonstrations within or outside current departments/areas of responsibility
- Foster employee engagement by identifying needs for support and preferred areas for growth
- Support employees to self-manage their careers, recognizing and accommodating their other life roles

When Employees Leave

- Use the framework to identify, address and document specific performance issues
- Facilitate career transitions and “gracious exits” by highlighting employees’ strengths and the competencies that they are taking with them

Adriana's Career Development

Adriana really appreciated working with an organization that supported her career development. She enjoyed meeting quarterly with her manager to consider where she had achieved her development goals, where she needed additional support, and what to work on for the next quarter.

Adriana soon recognized that there would always be something else to learn at work. Even when she thought she'd mastered a competency, her manager would help her identify how to take it to a new level.

This continuous growth kept Adriana engaged and excited. She felt supported and was inspired to bring her “best self” to work each day.

Notes



Appendix: Career Development Competency Framework

Thinking

This cluster of competencies relates to how you engage in self-reflection, think, make decisions and develop creative approaches to solving problems.

Self-Awareness

Recognize and articulate personal strengths, limitations, goals, biases and emotions and assess personal readiness for responsibilities and challenges in diverse life roles.

Performance Indicators:

- Engage in realistic self-appraisal: know what you're good at, care about and like to do; and know your limitations
- Be confident and positive about your identity
- Identify the skills, interests, talents and attitudes that you develop through diverse life/work/learning experiences
- Envision yourself in the future and take responsibility for getting there
- Describe necessary education/training and/or other experiences to prepare for your preferred future
- Invite, evaluate, reflect upon, and, when appropriate, integrate feedback from multiple sources
- Initiate discussions with others to expand your thinking on your preferred future
- Recognize the interconnectedness of your personal identity, life roles and community
- Confront your personal biases, recognizing their impact on self and others
- Recognize how your feelings, thoughts and actions influence each other
- Recognize when you are not ready for work, school or additional responsibilities

Problem Solving

Use a range of sources to gather, evaluate, organize and effectively use information to solve problems.

Performance Indicators:

- Understand that problems may be simple or complex
- Determine the specific problem that you need to solve
- Explore and integrate various sources of information (e.g., people, online, your past experience) to identify possible solutions, taking into consideration multiple perspectives
- Analyze information to assess its credibility and accuracy
- Examine the pros, cons, ethics and impact on others of potential solutions
- Try out solutions; reflect on how they work and how your approach might be improved next time
- Apply learning from one situation to other situations

Creativity and Innovation

Actively engage in, and demonstrate openness to and respect for imaginative, creative and innovative approaches.

Performance Indicators:

- Understand what it means to be creative and innovative
- Use your imagination and curiosity to look for new ways to think, do things and tackle problems
- Stretch beyond your comfort zone in imagining what's possible
- Persist through challenges and learn from mistakes
- Critically reflect on and refine creative and innovative works and processes

Entrepreneurial Mindset

Embrace the qualities of an entrepreneurial mindset in learning, work and life.

Performance Indicators:

- Recognize that an entrepreneurial mindset involves embracing change, being resilient and demonstrating grit
- Find ways to incorporate an entrepreneurial mindset into your learning, work and life
- Take calculated risks, validating ideas and accepting constructive feedback
- Reflect on, and learn from, successes, mistakes and failures

Critical Thinking

Think clearly and rationally about what to do and what to believe.

Performance Indicators:

- Reflect on your beliefs and values, and how they shape how you think and reason
- Analyze information to assess its credibility and accuracy
- Understand logical connections between ideas, information and arguments
- Recognize that various points of view may or may not be valid
- Ask questions that clarify various points of view
- Detect inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning
- Evaluate evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs
- Draw conclusions based on thorough analysis

Decision Making

Make decisions, evaluate outcomes, be accountable for choices and reflect on how personal priorities, beliefs and culture influence decisions.

Performance Indicators:

- Examine how you make decisions
- Understand ethical considerations when making decisions
- Recognize the influence of personal qualities, culture and context in making informed career, life and educational decisions
- Make an informed decision by evaluating ideas, solutions and opportunities
- Take responsibility for your actions and decisions
- Reflect on and refine your own decision-making process

Connecting

This cluster of competencies supports relationships with others.

Social Awareness

Demonstrate interactions with others that show respect for, openness to and appreciation of diversity.

Performance Indicators:

- Demonstrate acceptance of and respect for diverse ways of thinking and being
- Show understanding of, and empathy for, others
- Understand and value Indigenous traditions and knowledge, including the belief in the interconnectedness of everything
- Understand, value and take pride in the contributions of diverse cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups, including your own, to Canada
- Understand how culture, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, language, national origin, race, ethnicity and religion affect personal identity and influence lives and opportunities
- Recognize that privilege, prejudice and oppression are widespread and damaging
- Promote and demonstrate fairness, social justice, human rights, equity and respect for all

Social Support

Establish, maintain and call upon healthy supportive relationships as needed.

Performance Indicators:

- Establish, maintain and nurture a supportive network of healthy relationships
- Seek support from others (e.g., friends, family, Elders, teachers, role models, mentors, coaches)
- Support others' learning by being a positive and encouraging role model, mentor, coach or tutor
- Identify and seek appropriate support to address harassment, bullying and mistreatment in all its forms
- Take appropriate steps to support others who are struggling with physical, emotional, mental, environmental, social and/or spiritual challenges

Communication

Demonstrate effective and positive communication and social skills.

Performance Indicators:

- Recognize non-verbal communication cues in yourself and others, including tone of voice, facial expressions, posture and use of hands
- Respectfully consider the ideas, thoughts and feelings of others through listening, reading, and viewing
- Know and ask for what you want in a reasonable and specific way
- Clearly express your ideas, thoughts and feelings through speaking, listening, writing, reading, viewing and other ways of representing
- Communicate clearly and confidently in public
- Recognize and respect that there are many languages used in Canada
- Continuously improve and refine English and/or French language skills
- Communicate respectfully and effectively across linguistic and cultural differences
- Recognize the advantages of being multi-lingual, continuing to practice languages to stay fluent
- Communicate using different forms of media
- Tailor communication, considering your purpose and audience
- Recognize that accepted terminology shifts over time

Collaboration

Embrace the benefits of working together, resolve conflicts, accept personal responsibility for your own behaviour and, respecting diversity, negotiate acceptable compromises and solutions.

Performance Indicators:

- Interact respectfully and purposefully with others, as part of a team/group in formal and informal environments
- Clearly share your own beliefs and values while respecting and appreciating those that differ
- Celebrate the benefits of working with others, recognizing the value of collaboration
- Understand and respect others' needs
- Recognize privilege and challenge discriminatory behaviour in self and others
- Compromise in working towards common goals
- Constructively negotiate and resolve conflicts with others, acknowledging and addressing biases
- Be prepared to reassess your position based on new information and/or the input of others
- Engage in collaboration using a variety of media/tools

Global Citizenship

Actively participate in and contribute to local, regional, national and/or international initiatives.

Performance Indicators:

- Volunteer, participate in and contribute to community-building activities and projects, locally, regionally, nationally and/or internationally
- Take environmental and social responsibility to make your learning or work environments, community and the world better
- Recognize the political, environmental, economic and social realities of living in a global world
- Engage with diverse cultures, places, experiences and people to learn about the world
- Use a global perspective to create opportunities and address challenges

Managing

This cluster of competencies relates to how you take responsibility for your thoughts, feelings and behaviours to maintain health and wellbeing and how you navigate school, work and other life responsibilities.

Self-Management

Manage thoughts, emotions and behaviours in a variety of circumstances and, when appropriate, advocate effectively for self.

Performance Indicators:

- Identify and manage your emotions and actions
- Be adaptable, open to and ready for change
- Develop strategies to effectively manage transitions within learning, home, support communities, work and life
- Engage in self-advocacy by understanding your own needs for accommodations and requesting them as necessary
- Anticipate and prepare for challenges and potential barriers (e.g., transportation, finances, personal or family responsibilities, health, criminal record checks)

Wellness

Demonstrate personal resilience and the use of effective and safe self-care strategies in managing all dimensions of wellness throughout life transitions, including following health and safety policies.

Performance Indicators:

- Recognize that everyone faces challenges
- Care for your physical, emotional, mental, social, environmental and spiritual wellbeing, seeking help when needed
- Be resilient and persistent when faced with biases, disappointments, setbacks and pressure from others, understanding that they are a normal part of life
- Recognize that managing life transitions includes challenges, new learning, and sometimes, culture shock
- Follow appropriate health and safety policies and procedures

Lifelong Learning

Demonstrate the ability to be an independent learner, engaging in formal and informal learning to effectively navigate changes and transitions.

Performance Indicators:

- Approach every experience as a learning opportunity
- Continue to learn throughout your life
- Learn from diverse people and develop cross-cultural and cross-generational understanding
- Be open to feedback and see mistakes as opportunities for learning
- Use effective strategies to support lifelong learning

Career Transition

Combine self-knowledge and educational/labour market information to make informed career decisions and to navigate career transitions in today's ever-changing labour market.

Performance Indicators:

- Understand and leverage the influence of family, friends, culture, government policies and regional economic development on your career exploration and choices
- Use a variety of strategies and sources of information to explore options for learning and work
- Identify possible career paths through research (e.g., print, participation, online)
- Actively pursue and engage in work experience (e.g., job shadowing, co-ops, internships, youth apprenticeship, volunteering)
- Embrace opportunities to get, combine or create work (e.g., apprenticeship, part-time, full-time, self-employment, "gigs" and contracts)
- Recognize what impacts, and is impacted by, seasonal work
- Examine how rural and regional economies can impact career opportunities and decisions
- Create your own personal marketing strategy (e.g., write targeted resumés and cover letters, interview with confidence)
- Gather and evaluate detailed information resulting from your career exploration process
- Discuss, share and evaluate your career options with others
- Explain your reasons for choosing a career pathway based on who you are, the opportunities you have explored, and labour market information
- Be resilient and able to maneuver through transitions, always having a Plan B (and C and D...)

Work Ethic

Understand, explain and demonstrate ethics and follow the expectations, rules and policies where you live, learn and/or work.

Performance Indicators:

- Understand what is meant by, and demonstrate, integrity
- Be loyal, dependable and accountable so that others can count on you
- Prioritize commitments
- Observe, support and model expected attitudes and behaviours
- Meet or exceed reasonable expectations by doing the best you can in school, extracurricular activities, volunteering and work
- Show and take initiative when appropriate
- Respect those with whom you live, learn and/or work
- Demonstrate leadership skills

Financial Literacy

Demonstrate financial management knowledge, skills and awareness necessary to navigate school, work, transitions and other life responsibilities.

Performance Indicators:

- Understand what is meant by financial literacy and its importance
- Recognize that financial literacy is a lifelong endeavor
- Identify the costs and funding sources associated with various education and career pathways
- Develop a personal financial plan to support the achievement of education, life and career goals
- Evaluate and set short- and long-term financial goals to support making healthy financial decisions that lead to financial security (e.g., saving and investing money, debt financing and sources, contractual obligations)
- Know how to develop and manage a budget
- Know how to keep personal information safe and secure, to prevent and protect against fraud and financial abuse
- Maintain financial records, as required, to assist with calculating, submitting and supporting reports (e.g., income tax, loan applications, requests for financial assistance)

Technological Fluency

Integrate and apply technologies to work with others, communicate, learn and solve problems; manage social media presence responsibly and safely.

Performance Indicators:

- Use technology in a respectful, legal, safe and ethical way
- Access and critically evaluate online information and resources
- Manage social media presence responsibly and safely
- Create a positive digital footprint, recognizing the permanence of online data
- Recognize the benefits, limitations and challenges of using technologies