Capability and Development

Introduction

Building and sustaining the capability of managers and their employees is central to ensure the ongoing success of the organisation in meeting its business objectives. Managers are expected to professionally develop and actively progress the capability of their teams.

The organisation should provide staff with opportunities for training and development. Employees are encouraged to develop through a mix of formal training, on the job training, coaching and mentoring.

Key Principles and Objectives

Statistical organisations should provide training and development opportunities for staff to achieve results and manage performance. Organisations should support learning, innovation and high performance to build an organisation that, through individual learning, drives itself to becoming a "learning organisation", able to meet challenges of the future.

Organisations that invest in the ongoing training and development of their employees are rewarded with a more dedicated, professional and capable workforce. Organisations should encourage staff to take personal responsibility for their development including career enhancing opportunities across the organisation. There is an expectation that managers will support and encourage employee development. The employer recognises that manager support is critical to engaging and retaining high performing staff and maintaining specialist knowledge to the advantage of the organisation.

Learning and development are a blend of formal and informal activities designed to enhance our knowledge acquisition and competency development. In addition to the structured learning of online and classroom training, a range of resources and tools to support employees’ learning and development in an informal manner should also be available.

Your Role

Managers are the key facilitators in ensuring all staff, including new starters and probationers, are provided with the relevant training and on-the-job developmental opportunities to make sure they get 'up to speed'.

Managers are responsible for actively assisting staff identifying current and emerging capability requirements to add value to their current role, and assist in career planning and progress.

Managers are expected to do this through:

- ensuring the staff understands performance expectations and receives ongoing performance feedback (see chapter on Performance and Underperformance)
- discussions about capability, skills and career development
- using succession planning strategies wisely to help with team knowledge management and individual career development
- providing access to appropriate learning opportunities (e.g. on-the-job training, access to development opportunities like seminars, approving course attendance)
- being a role model of the organisation and commitment to learning (being a coach or mentor to staff).
- continuing dialogue within the organisation with the unit in charge of training, in order to build training paths and initiatives that meet the needs of their staff

As a manager you will need to balance work priorities against staff development requests and opportunities. This may include deciding what format of learning and development best suit staff's current needs and how to manage reasonable future aspirations. Encouraging on-the-job multi-skilling and using team meetings to aid problem solving will help transfer knowledge and emphasise that learning can occur in many ways, not only in training rooms.

Having clearly defined roles, responsibilities and performance standards will maximise learning, and ongoing performance feedback will help you and your staff define developmental requirements and the best way to obtain them: Attention to the specific needs of your team will improve their current capabilities, performance, and enable career progression.
Key Processes and Issues

Ongoing skills development is encouraged in the following general areas:

- the core business of the organisation
  - statistics and methodology: basic and advanced training on topics such as survey design and development, questionnaire design, sampling, data analysis, time series methods, non-response, imputation, quality assurance, longitudinal surveys, and the interpretation and presentation of data
  - subject matter: for example System of National Accounts, business surveys, household surveys, Census
- people management (managing and leading others)
- project management
- effective communication, professional relationship development and client management
- technical expertise (IT systems and infrastructure, programming)
- corporate management (people, budget, legal, financial)
- second language training (if applicable)
- client service (website and data dissemination, client interactions).

Programs including face-to-face training and on-line development are useful tools. Training may be in the classroom or self-paced through the desktop, which allows managers and staff to organise learning in line with work priorities and ensures that all staff members have training opportunities.

Coaching, mentoring and on-the-job training

Managers can be effective coaches in the workplace to support formal training with:

- one-to-one guidance
- sharing workplace experience
- sharing technical expertise
- effective performance feedback to sharpen staff skills and improve their performance

Managers can also invest in having their most experienced employees take part in coaching and mentoring programs. It may also be useful to have a team of coaches and mentors who are able to support newly recruited and less experienced employees.

National Statistical Organisations should encourage mentoring in order to:

- share knowledge
- provide guidance and advice about work and the workplace
- discuss career and courses of action

You may be a mentor or assist your staff in finding one that is suitable to their requirements. Managers can provide on-the-job training and development as part of the regular working environment. For example, holding information sessions when a person returns from training to share what they learned can be beneficial, as is involving the team in work related problem solving. It is also useful to 'buddy up' team members to share knowledge and skills. This is also effective to maintaining work program continuity if an employee is absent from the workplace for a period of time, leaves the work group, or the organisation.

Examples from the countries:

Statistics Canada - Example of the Talent management plan

- Consider developing Talent Management Plans for employees that surpass expectations.
  - Talent Management Plans are meant to well beyond the focused job related learning and development found in an employee's learning and development plan.
  - Talent Management Plans concentrate on developing the skills, competencies and experience of employees with outstanding performance to position them for future career possibilities.
- Be a role model of the organisation and commit to learning (being a coach or mentor to staff).
Examples from the countries:

**Italian National Institute of Statistics** - is investing in coaching and mentoring initiatives aiming at the objectives mentioned in the Guidelines. Such initiatives are carried out at two levels:

a) some executive coaching sessions are addressed to managers in order to help them to fully develop their potential;

b) managers themselves, being aware of the value of these tools, invest in having their employees trained on mentoring and coaching programs: at the moment, we are carrying out the second edition of a training path (10 days, 80 hours) on one-to-one HR development tools and methods (in addition to coaching and mentoring, also competences evaluation).

The aim is to provide our Institute with a group of trained employees that are able to support HR department in capability and development programs. This is highly valuable in this moment, since at Istat we are facing a modernization process and we need to take personnel to properly tackle new tasks they will be given.

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**Examples from the countries**

**Italian National Institute of Statistics** - is carrying out English lessons on the phone. It’s a training program that is organised in addition to classroom lessons, and is addressed mainly, but not only, to managers. Students benefit of 20 lessons of 30’ each, during which they talk on the phone with English-speaker teachers about topics they agreed on previously; they also can benefit of an online platform to carry out exercises and tests and to access to other training resources.

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**Tips**

- A specialized training curriculum for recruits is strongly encouraged. This curriculum should include:
  - Orientation (to the public service and /or the agency specifically)
  - Confidentiality for new employees
  - Survey skills development course (business or social)
  - Statistical analysis software training (e.g. SAS, SPSS, etc.)
  - Part-time second language training (if applicable)

- Work with your team members to develop a career pathway and individualized learning plans.
- Provide staff with the opportunity to practice their new skills.
- Sometimes, mistakes can be used as learning opportunities. Ask staff what can be learned? and how can we improve?
- Encourage staff to become involved in work-related development such as personal study, committees, and networks.