



National Managers' Community

The NMC Network Start-up Toolkit

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Introduction

Introduction

This document is a testament to collaboration in the sharing of ideas, sample documents, tips and practical advice contributed by National Managers' Community (NMC) Regional Coordinators and managers across the country.

Congratulations!

If you are reading this document you have either taken the initiative to start a network of managers or you may need additional information to move your network forward. The Toolkit is designed as a step-by-step approach and includes tips and ideas, sample letters, meeting agendas and other tools you might need.

Please let us know if you require additional information. You may send questions and feedback at any time to NMC@tbs-sct.gc.ca.

Remember that your NMC [Regional Coordinator](#) (RC) is eager to help you get started!

Why start a network?

Managers learn from each other and help foster a positive atmosphere. Providing managers with real opportunities to dialogue on issues that matter to them will create a dynamic within a department/region to move issues to a new level. There is also great value, with often similar and sometimes different perspectives, in discussing issues with colleagues of other departments.

A network provides an environment to come together. It facilitates dialogue and the sharing of best practices with others within one's own region, across departments, knowledge areas and communities of practice.

In the NCR, communities are formed at the department level. Due to smaller groupings of employees or the issue of distance, networks in the regions are often interdepartmental in nature.

TIP

Passion and dedication must exist to network and for the community to remain vibrant. The most engaged managers spend time at their desk in conference calls with their network peers - often through a working lunch.

Role of your network

The role of your network is to be inclusive and representative of your department or region.

Becoming part of a larger community

In addition to networking within the Government of Canada (GOC) and the NMC, partnering with other organizations is not only best practice but highly informative. You may find you have much in common and yet learn from each others' experiences.

Introduction

NMC Community

The National Managers' Community was started around 1998 as a grassroots organization in the regions and has grown since into a national Community comprised of managers' networks across Canada. You can read details in the [About the NMC](#)¹ PPT presentation deck.

The NMC enables managers to connect and learn through sponsored events. The Community promotes the needs and interests of managers to decision makers—the NMC gives managers a voice.

By creating a network and attending NMC events you will learn new skills and you will have the opportunity to network with colleagues. You will also ensure your voice as a manager is heard by senior management. NMC is a recognized consultative body on policies and initiatives impacting managers.

The NMC continues to be proud of its ability to deliver:

- Partnerships and connections
- Innovative and creative approaches
- Community building
- High quality, affordable learning and networking events
- Communities of practice
- Tools and practices for leadership and learning
- Professional development opportunities
- Results for central agencies and other stakeholders
- A growing community of skilled managers with the competencies to meet the twin priorities of achieving results and managing and developing people

NMC definition of manager

The Treasury Board Secretariat defines a public service manager as an employee who forms part of a management team and is accountable for exercising delegated authority over human and financial resources to accomplish the objectives of the organization in the Public Service of Canada.

The NMC includes managers who meet this definition as well as those without accountability for exercising delegated authority. The NMC also welcomes public servants who aspire to be managers.

¹ This link opens the NMC presentation deck in a viewer. To see or present the deck in Power Point, right-click the "À propos de la CNG" file on http://www.managers-gestionnaires.gc.ca/documents/about_us/aproposCNG-AboutNMC.ppt and select Save.

Introduction

Forming partnerships

Partnering with other departments and organizations is even more important in smaller communities in the regions. In many areas recruitment is on the forefront and invitations to NMC events are extended to professional organizations, universities and colleges.

The NMC is developing powerful partnerships that support federal government priorities. Some of our networks, particularly in smaller communities, work with the three levels of government to put on events and cost share expenses.

The NMC has many other important partners. Federal Councils work hand in hand with regional manager networks on key priorities and horizontal initiatives. Using input from the NMC, the [Canada School of Public Service](#) (CSPS) has developed and is delivering, learning events and a core curriculum for managers, to interdepartmental groups across the country.

The National Managers' Community Secretariat is co-located with TBS.

The NMC has also undertaken many initiatives in support of the regional and national youth networks.

Check out some of our [strategic regional alliances](#).

What to do before setting up a Network

Most of this work is about ensuring that you have the right information:

1. Call your RC to check if there is an existing network and to discuss related details:
 - a. There needs to be support from senior management to initiate the network and to maintain involvement.

Is your DM's commitment to the NMC known? Your network's strategy will differ greatly depending on how your DM perceives the NMC.
 - b. There is also a need to demonstrate the NMC value in the eyes of the government.
2. Recruit a helper or helpers until the Steering Committee is formed
3. Make a list of managers you know to begin a mailing list and that you will hand over to the Network Administrator
4. Create or adapt a poster to recruit managers
5. Secure a place to meet
6. Read up on [NMC regional communities](#) and see what activities are popular
7. See what [NMC sponsored events](#) are promoted on its site

Setting up your Network

An open and inclusive network is easier to promote and manage. Your network will have to be promoted to your ADM or DM for funding and to other managers in your department or region.

Defining your Network clearly

In order for your network to grow it will have to appeal to a wide range of managers.

Remember that the definition of a manager adopted by the NMC includes those without accountability for exercising delegated authority and that the NMC also welcomes public servants who aspire to be managers.

Naming your Network

Naming your network is easy.

1. Department | Managers' Community
2. Department | City | Managers' Community
3. City | Managers' Community
4. Region | City | Managers' Community

Forming a Planning or Steering Committee

A Committee should include managers from different sectors and regions in your organization. An average of 8 to 10 managers is a manageable size for a steering committee.

It is encouraged that Committee Representatives have alternates because Governance must have continuity. People stay 2-year overlapping terms and pass on the knowledge. A Region may opt for 2 alternates due to size of region.

The Committee determines the purpose, vision, mission, goals and objectives of your Network. It also agrees to a common understanding of role and expectations and establishes operational guidelines including frequency of meetings and time commitment.

Sample vision statements

1. To create a dynamic, supportive and knowledgeable managers' network.
2. Managers are leading inspired workplaces in every public sector organization in (location). Inspired workplaces inspire creativity, learning, wellness and teamwork.

Sample mission statements

1. To facilitate the learning and development of managers through sharing, collaboration, and networking.

Setting up your Network

2. The network will take initiative on behalf of the community of public sector managers in (location) to provide opportunities for community members to acquire new learning, share ideas, develop new partnerships, and support each other in the delivery of public services.

Network Administrator role

It is strongly recommended that at least one part-time resource be identified to manage and administer the network. It is very important to recruit a dynamic, client-oriented and engaging person to take on this role. With the support of the Champion, this person's main focus in the early stages will be to:

1. recruit managers for the Committee
2. organize events that would engage the network and get input on issues of interest to managers
3. participate in the regional or the National Capital Region's interdepartmental manager's steering committee meetings as your departmental representative
4. ensure that information at the regional and national level is relayed back to the network

Calling on managers to join the Committee

Prepare posters stating that a managers' network is being formed and volunteers are needed for the Committee:

What

- State NMC role
- Outline some of the duties

Where

- Place on poster boards
- E-mail to managers you know

Selecting your champion

A champion is there to promote understanding, seek support and resources from other ADMs, DMs and Senior Executives, and to advocate on behalf of the Network.

The Committee will need to nominate an ADM Champion and send a letter to that effect to the nominee.

Seeking funding support for Network resources

Ideally your Network should be allocated funding to support and subsidize Network activities and events. This may also include the services of a part-time or full-time resource, a Network Administrator, to plan and organize meetings and events.

The Committee with the help of the Champion would seek this support from the Deputy Minister and Senior Executives of your organization or organizations in your region.

Setting up your Network

How to conquer the DM

Communicate strategic importance of engaging managers:

- Reference the Clerk of the Privy Council's [16th Annual Report](#) to the Prime Minister
 - Quotes on pages 11, 12, 14 and 15
- Reference the results of the 2008 PS Employee Survey

With the establishment of the new Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO) on March 2, 2009, the Prime Minister reiterated the DM role within the new HR structure as recognizing “that Deputy Ministers have the primary responsibility for human resources management and provides them with flexibility to respond to their specific business needs.”

Promote your Network and the NMC

The Committee and the Champion will need the following tools to promote the NMC:

- Regional Coordinator input
- Champion letter to DM
- [About the NMC](#) Power Point presentation deck that describes what the NMC is, its vision, mission and achievements
- NMC 2008-2009 Annual Report (when it becomes available)
- The [Dialogue with senior leaders](#), report that details the e-polling session held on April 22, 2008 at the National Forum in Vancouver

Holding your first Network meeting

This first meeting involves recruiting volunteers for the Committee and one for the position of Network Administrator.

Communicate date and time of your meeting by e-mail and include a proposed agenda (usually drafted by Committee co-chairs or coordinator). You may ask for additions to the agenda if it is a draft. You should also ask them to confirm their attendance.

You may also create a poster in order to boost and promote attendance.

Checklist

Arrange for a representative from a department or the Regional Coordinator to brief meeting participants and tell the story about how their or another network was established, share best practices and lessons learned.

1. NMC representative to give presentation on NMC
 - a. Explain role of Committee members
 - b. Role of Network Administrator
2. Meeting Agenda
3. Poster to promote the event

Ensure that you have the following:

Setting up your Network

1. Room booked according to needs
 - a. Audio visual requirements
 - b. Room capacity
2. Promotional material/printed handouts
3. Pads and pens

Remind your guests to confirm attendance.

TIP

How to find volunteers who will do the work?

Have a meeting with all volunteers and distribute work. Some won't be called back because they were not willing to step up and be involved and do the work. Volunteers need to dedicate time at about three (3) hours per week. This estimate is based on a high activity network.

PWGSC, NCR Community

Communications

Communications need to be easily accessible such as meeting posters on poster boards and may reach new faces. E-mail is user friendly in terms of access and may be used at regular intervals.

Regular communiqués or newsletters are valuable sources of information for managers to receive in order to be kept in the know about issues, activities and network events for managers.

The main criteria in all media is relevance. Ensure all communication is of significance to the Network.

Notes on visibility

In time your network will have the funds and will gain sophistication in promoting itself. You may consider the following examples used by other networks:

1. Have give-aways such as time with the DM!
2. If you have a web site ensure it is up-to-date
 - a. Managers need to know details about the network if they are to engage
 - i. Address additional buy-in gaps by expressing the value of membership
 - Present the [About the NMC](#) generic presentation deck, and the
 - NMC 2008-2009 Annual Report (when it becomes available)
3. Use social media: GCPEDIA
 - a. Start a page to raise visibility and to promote the Network
 - The site is interactive and will keep the conversation going
4. Word of mouth is important
5. Advertise learning events scheduled by your Network
 - a. Check out the [NMC Calendar of Events](#) as an example
 - b. Use [posters](#) (sample poster) on poster boards to promote the event
 - c. In other media such as newspapers
6. Budget for a travelling booth, or a collapsible banner, and set up at other departmental or national events or in-house training sessions
7. E-mail – do not use it too much otherwise it loses effectiveness
 - a. Use a special e-mail subject line tag before the subject heading:
Your Network's Name – Message subject heading
 - b. Remember that an e-mail sent to a group needs to be in bilingual format in bilingual regions.

TIP

You could have a weekly e-mail. In addition to GOC material, many people also appreciate a Monday Morning Motivator. An MMM that is usually refreshing is from [CareerJoy](#) and it is available free of charge through a

Communications

subscription. There may be other items of interest to managers on that site.

Creating a database and mail distribution list

Creating a database of names and a mail distribution list of managers in your network is one of the most important tools to ensure you have quick access when sending information to managers in your network.

The NMC e-mail list

The NMC is building a nation-wide managers' mailing list. Ensure your membership subscribes via the NMC web site. You could also consider setting up a laptop at events so attendees can subscribe to both your mailing list and that of the NMC.

[NMC e-mail notification](#) will be used for notification of special events.

Creating a page on the intranet site

Having a page on your intranet site is another good way to keep your Network informed and up to date on issues, events and activities.

You will need a resource to keep the site up-to-date. It is well known that a stale site is a negative reflection on any organization.

It is also an excellent medium to publish your network's information on:

- Vision
- Mission
- Strategic plan
- Discussion forums on [GCPEDIA](#)
- Committee minutes
- News
- Learning event materials, etc.

The latter three items could also be posted to your network's space on GCPEDIA.

It is recommended that you include the site URL in all your communications.

Generating a feedback mechanism

A feedback mechanism that allows your network to give comments that your Committee could review is a most useful asset.

Knowing what managers in your network want and need is most helpful in developing discussion points and to schedule learning events.

To this effect you may

1. Use [GCPEDIA](#)
2. Have a Network-specific e-mail address created that is either sent to your Administrator's mailbox or to
 - a. A mailbox created for the Network and accessed by the Administrator

Feedback at events

Whatever the event, it will generate opinion and feedback. To catch questions, comments and suggestions you could make a secured laptop available for the duration of the event. See additional information on feedback in the upcoming *Hosting the official launch of your Network* section.

Launching your Network

The official launch of your network is an excellent opportunity to gather managers to interact, exchange ideas and provide input and suggestions for activities and events. You could invite representatives from other departmental managers' networks to talk about their successes and lessons learned (i.e. National Defence, PWGSC, Canada Revenue Agency).

A representative from the NMC could provide an overview of the organization, programs and activities, and discuss the linkages between the NMC and Departmental Managers' Networks or Regional Managers' Networks.

The official launch could include short speeches by your ADM/DM and Champion.

The NMC Champion likes to hear of new networks starting up. Send a note to the Champion to NMC@tbs-sct.gc.ca about your network launch.

Gathering feedback at the event is an opportunity for managers to identify key topics and issues that could form the basis of an Action Plan for your network.

TIP

Have name tags and pens available to attendees.

Make a secured laptop available for comments and self inscription to the NMC e-mail list and to update coordinates. It is best if the laptop is on a counter-height table so people have to stand. It ensures they do the necessary entries and move on.

In lieu of a laptop have [Event Evaluation Form](#) available with specific questions to measure the pulse of the event.

Ensure there are lots of seats and areas where people can talk in small groups or one-on-one.

Hosting an official launch of your Network

Organizing activities & events

Events that will engage and allow managers to express their views on areas of interest to them are bound to be successful.

Remember to not jam too much information into events.

See a sample [bilingual poster](#) promoting an NMC event.

Event suggestions

To maintain a vibrant and dynamic Network it is vital to organise value-added events that will engage your managers. When starting your Network you should organize events that will allow managers to express their views on areas of interest to them.

Continuously promote your Network at every event and gather comments from those in attendance at the end of each session on ways to improve.

Following is a list of typical events that have been held by various regional and departmental managers' networks.

See a sample panellist [invitation letter](#).

Contact your Regional Coordinator for additional information.

1 – 2 day fora

1 – 2 day fora for managers to get together, hear prominent and relevant keynote speakers, attend workshops and get engaged in discussions on issues that are topical and significant to the broader managers' community.

TIP

You may want to host sessions where some managers just talk about where they are and their experience. It will help to engage discussions.

Invite some EXs to have a discussion with managers about their career.

Coaching practices for managers

The NMC offers this session focused on evoking excellence in others and equipping managers with a number of practices that are practical, easy to use and can be implemented immediately.

Armchair sessions

These are short (2 -3 hours) learning events that provide an opportunity to hear and interact with senior federal public service officials from your own department, central agencies or other departments as well as with accomplished professionals and academics.

In an informal setting you will gain knowledge of government and departmental priorities, innovative development and key management initiatives.

Seven simple ideas that could improve public sector leadership

This one day dynamic and engaging session offered by the NMC that addresses the importance of innovation in organization, leadership and learning values and ideas, all rooted in a profound desire to engage people.

Other resources & support

You can get additional information about the NMC including a list of contacts on the [National Managers' Community Website](#) or, you can address all queries to NMC@tbs-sct.gc.ca.