



# Workplace Learning and Career Navigation Tools

Manager–Employee Career Discussions



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Managers, human resources team member or occupational health and safety representative



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# Key terms

- **piliriqatigiinniq/ikajuqtigiinniq:** “Working together for a common cause.”<sup>1</sup>
- **inuuqatigiitsiarniq:** “Respecting others, relationships and caring for people.”<sup>2</sup>
- **pijitsirniq:** “Serving and providing for family and/or community.”<sup>3</sup>
- **Two-Eyed Seeing:** A Mi’kmaq principle about learning to see the world from multiple perspectives.

<sup>1</sup> Government of Nunavut, *Public Service Annual Report 2020–21*, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



# Conversation guide

Employee retention is a concern for all employers, and career development is one of the most important things people consider when choosing to accept a position or stay with an organization.<sup>4</sup>

To keep employees in the organization, supervisors need to understand how people want to take part and grow, creating pathways for advancement. This is important for all employees, but understanding the specific cultural circumstances that motivate Inuit career paths is important in meeting an organization's reconciliation, diversity, Inuit engagement, or IIBA goals.

This tool can be used to:

- support manager–employee career discussions
- coach employees and create career development plans
- establish leadership programs
- recognize leadership roles outside of the organization



<sup>4</sup> Sitel Group, *Future of Work and Employee Learning*.

# Manager–employee career discussions

Career development doesn't look the same for every employee. Not all employees want to climb the organizational ladder. Some may prefer lateral movement within the organization.

Get to know your employees. How do they see themselves developing in the organization?

Some questions to explore in a career discussion:

- How do you feel about your current role?
- In what ways would you like to develop in your role?
- Do you imagine a future with our company? How so?
- When you think about the company, where would you like to see yourself next year? In five years? What about 10?
- Are there other roles in this organization that interest you?
- What motivates your desire for career development? How can we build on this?
- What does leadership mean to you, and do you have a leadership role as part of your career goals?
- What strengths do you feel can help you achieve collective goals? What would you like to learn more about to help fulfill your role to support the team?
- How do you want to be supported in your development?
- If you want to move up in the company, what challenges do you foresee? Are there challenges in your work or life that might create obstacles to your development?

Supervisors may need to have regular conversations about career planning with employees. Career pathways may change as new prospects arise or the employee's desires change.

Employees should be empowered to navigate their career paths and encouraged to share their visions for growth and priorities. Encourage employees to identify strengths and areas they would like to improve. Encourage them to explore ideas related to how they can grow. What new skills can be developed? What new opportunities could they try?

Many Inuit are already community and family leaders and may show great leadership potential within your organization. Others may aspire to these roles. For Inuit who want formal leadership roles, what professional development support do you offer?

Inuit research participants told us that more Inuit representation is needed in leadership roles in Inuit Nunangat. This lack of representation is reflected in data on the Canadian workforce.<sup>5</sup> Having Inuit leaders in the organization can increase innovation, and they can become community role models, which may encourage future community interest in your organization.

When employees are comfortable having these career navigation conversations, you can move to more formalized career development plans.

<sup>5</sup> Florko, "Canadian HR Benchmarking: Diversity."

## Career development plans

Building on your career discussions, encourage employees to communicate their development plans and include goals with milestones. This could be done through discussion, writing, or other creative options.

Some Inuit employees may be hesitant to discuss personal achievements and strengths due to a cultural emphasis on the collective. Consider coaching on goals that could benefit the team, such as how the employee can help make processes more efficient or how to improve working relationships across departments. Open and supportive communication is essential for this process. If possible, include Inuit peer mentors to help coach employees through this step.



Work together to develop plans that help employees reach their goals. Some ways to encourage career development include:

- Arrange job-sharing or lateral moves. Give Inuit employees the chance to explore different roles in the company.
- Map possible career paths throughout your organization and document how skills and competencies build upon each other. Highlight the stories of people's career paths, particularly atypical ones.
- Make training and development opportunities available all year. Offer them in a variety of mediums to accommodate work-life balance. Include both soft skills and technical, applied skills.
- Have Inuit support personnel and mentors as part of your development strategy.
- Promote Inuit leadership strengths within teams. These opportunities may be project-specific, allowing employees the chance to shine without creating power imbalances that may affect community relationships.
- Encourage Inuit employees to take part in committees, such as wellness committees, where they can bring their perspectives and lead from within the organization. Ensure this work complements their work portfolio, rather than adds to it.
- Provide mentorship and leadership training for Inuit employees in senior positions.

# Community service leaves

Community service can be part of your career navigation conversation with Inuit employees. Leaves for community service bring to life inuuqatigiitsiarniq (“respecting others, relationships, and caring for people”<sup>6</sup>) and piliriqatigiinniq/ikajuqtigiinniq (“working together for a common cause”<sup>7</sup>).

Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated (NTI) provides secondment opportunities for employees to work for another Inuit organization for up to two years when approved by the CEO.<sup>8</sup> NTI also offers awards for individuals who support career development for Inuit in Nunavut.

The governments of Nunatsiavut and Nunavut both support opportunities for community service. To accommodate their employee’s involvement in community service, the Nunatsiavut Government allows political leaves to individuals seeking nominations in elections.<sup>9</sup> The Government of Nunavut provides paid and unpaid leaves for a range of public services. These include serving on government-mandated boards, co-management boards, and municipal councils. Public service also includes firefighting and participation in search and rescue organizations.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, the Kativik School Board in Nunavik, grants employees up to five paid days per school year to partake in community search and rescue operations.<sup>11</sup>

These practices highlight the competing demand for an employee’s time and priorities. Individuals are needed in their communities in different capacities, and there is an opportunity in career discussions for organizations to support the community and Inuit employees, and increase retention.



6 Government of Nunavut, *Public Service Annual Report 2020–21*, 4.

7 Ibid.

8 Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., *Human Resources Manual* (Also Known as Personnel Policy Manual).

9 Nunatsiavut Civil Service, *Employees Division Regulations* (2017).

10 Government of Nunavut, “Human Resources Manual: Public Service Leave.”

11 Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, “Directive on Leave of Absence for Search and Rescue.”



# Where insights meet impact

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