

TIP SHEET: Action Plans – Progressing to New Goals

From *Managing Employee Performance* by Clark Reed and his associates at Netgain Partners Inc. (Cultural Careers Council Ontario and Cultural Human Resources Council, 2003).

An action plan identifies the activities that a manager and an employee have agreed will lead to new improvement or developmental goals. It specifies who will be involved, and the activities they will be involved in during the development period. Examples of activities:

- **Specific Job Actions:** Any action plan geared to improvement in a specific aspect of a job will include performing that aspect of the job correctly, once or several times, during the development period.
- **Project Work:** You may be able to match individual (or group) development needs with a current project, providing a pay-off for the organization. Useful if you want the person to stand back from their current day-to-day activities, or if you want to encourage initiative.
- **Problem Solving:** The total action plan may be built on a problem-solving project, or it could include activities to solve problems. Helps to develop objectivity, reasoning and decision making skills.
- **Self-Appraisal:** Your employee evaluates his/her own performance and needs at each stage. Worth building in to every action plan, to help develop the discipline of critical self assessment. This is the basis for continuing self development.
- **Standing in for You:** A practical way to obtain experience in a management task, through temporary delegation.
- **Undertaking a Different Role:** Doing part of someone else's job, on a temporary basis. Useful for broadening experience, or to prepare individuals for a new job.
- **Information Collection:** An initial activity may be to gather detailed information about what is happening in a particular area. Also useful for developing organizing and fact-finding skills, and attention to detail.
- **Information Analysis:** A follow-up to information collection. Also useful for developing skills in interpretation, evaluation and decision making.
- **Observing Someone Else:** Arranging first hand observation of you, or someone else, working on a task. A useful step in delegating, or in trying to overcome a weakness, by providing a model of required performance.
- **Contact with Others:** Finding out more about other parts of the organization. Useful for gaining better insights from the point of view of another department.
- **Report Preparation:** Useful for improving written communications, and ability to think logically and reason things out.

- **Verbal Presentation:** Making formal presentations to you at stages of the plan (reporting back), or to a group. A particularly good activity for developing the skill of 'coming across' to other people.
- **Self-Study:** Directions to studying relevant websites, other cultural organizations, publications, books, or other materials.
- **Exercises:** Inclusion of practice activities or roleplays, for learning or checking progress. Worth considering only if there is a lack of opportunity for real practice through job actions or project work.
- **Training Course:** If the individual is weak in a critical skill or basic knowledge, the action plan may include attending an external training course.