

## **Training and Staff Development Opportunities**

Managers and employees are encouraged to review the suggested training and staff development opportunities below in advance of mid-term reviews so that a productive discussion on what option(s) would be best suited for each individual can take place at the mid-term review. Potential training and/or staff development opportunities must be related to the employee's role in the Department of Commerce. The selected opportunity (opportunities) will be incorporated into the work plan, pursued, and reviewed in end-of-year performance reviews.

### Overview of opportunities:

1. Job-Shadowing
2. Cross-training
3. Stretch Assignments
4. Supporting a Cross-Functional Project
5. Mentoring
6. Professional Development Workshops and Skills Training
7. Seminar Series
8. Conferences
9. Academic Assistance
10. Customized Plan

### Details

1. Job-Shadowing
  - Identify a position(s) (either in the same division or a different one) for the employee to shadow. The employee's purpose is to learn (in a broad sense) the duties of another Commerce employee so they will have a better understanding of how they are interconnected.
  - A half-day is the suggested time allotment for this activity, but other arrangements may be made to fit specific needs.
  - This can be a one-time activity, or a recurring exercise for the employee with multiple positions at regular intervals (i.e., once a month, etc.).
  - It is suggested that this activity be done with positions that are related or interact on some level.
  - This activity is also recommended particularly for employees new to Commerce.
2. Cross-training
  - This is more involved than job-shadowing in that the employee will take on the task of learning the more detailed aspects of another position's duties (preferably a related position in the same division) so that they would be able to perform the position's duties on at least a basic level if needed.
  - Time span is variable. This could be an intensive time of training, or it could be a weekly appointment between trainer and trainee for an hour or two at a time until cross-training is complete and successful. "Complete and successful cross-training" is to be determined by manager, trainer, and trainee.

- Benefits all involved: trainer, trainee, manager, and organization. The goal is to avoid any single point of failure within the organization. No one person should be solely responsible for and/or knowledgeable about their work.
- Managers are encouraged to identify the key functions within their division/section, and start cross-training on those first.

### 3. Stretch Assignments

- This is a task or project that goes beyond an employee's current job description and comfort zone, challenges their current set of skills, and requires them to learn one or more new skills.
- Stretch assignments can vary, including leading or supporting an important project, acting as a mentor or leader for other peers, conducting a special research initiative and reporting back to the team, and other opportunities for new skills development.
- Managers should consider what stretch assignments would be available within their organization that support both the team and employee goals, and provide the opportunity for accelerating employee career growth.

### 4. Supporting a Cross-Functional Project

- Consistent with trends in both the public and private sectors, NC Commerce's mission is increasingly being accomplished through cross-functional projects. Examples of this include EDIS, the Commerce website refresh, the Client Relationship Management (CRM) system, and the High Performance Roadmap (HPR) project.
- By participating on these cross-functional project teams, employees gain new skills, build a rapport with other Commerce peers, increase their morale through accomplishing the project goals, and help contribute to the larger strategic mission of the organization.

### 5. Mentoring

- Identify an appropriate mentor for the employee. The potential mentor should be contacted to verify interest and availability.
- The mentoring relationships can be as formal or informal as the parties involved want it to be.
- Mentors should be Commerce employees who have relatively more experience than mentees and should have an advanced knowledge in their field.
- Mentees should be Commerce employees with a desire and intent to develop professionally so they can further contribute to the department.
- Regular meetings between mentor and mentee are strongly recommended and should be a time of problem solving, career exploration, and relationship-building.
- It is suggested that some form of records or notes are kept to document meeting times, topics discussed, activities involved, etc., for use in the performance review.

## 6. Professional Development Workshops and Skills Training

- A variety of professional skills training and workshop options are available through the NC Office of State Personnel, the NCSU Office of Professional Development, the Wake County Public School System, and other training providers. Below are some links to some of the more popular training providers; however, you are not limited to these resources. Please feel free to do your own research if you feel so inclined.
- Office of State Personnel
  - A comprehensive list of **Human Resource Development Programs and Services** can be found at:  
<http://www.osp.state.nc.us/ExternalHome/HRD/HRD.htm>
  - Or go directly to the **training catalog** at:  
[http://www.osp.state.nc.us/ExternalHome/HRD/training\\_menu.htm](http://www.osp.state.nc.us/ExternalHome/HRD/training_menu.htm)
  - An **alphabetical listing** of Available Courses can be found at:  
<http://www.osp.state.nc.us/trancata/AlphaList.htm>
  - If you don't see the topic you're looking for, contact the OSP Personnel Development Center at (919) 733-2474.
- Technical Training – online classes through Element K
  - For a **description of the courses** available through Element K, visit:  
[http://www.osp.state.nc.us/psp/concepts/concepts\\_elemK.html](http://www.osp.state.nc.us/psp/concepts/concepts_elemK.html)
  - The most up-to-date **list of training topics and fees** can be found at:  
[http://www.osp.state.nc.us/psp/schedules/spring2008/online\\_elemkspring2008.html](http://www.osp.state.nc.us/psp/schedules/spring2008/online_elemkspring2008.html)
  - A list of **free resources** concerning technical issues are at:  
<http://www.osp.state.nc.us/psp/freeresources.html>
- NCSU Office of Professional Development
  - A variety of **seminars, conferences, and training** options are detailed at the following site: <http://continuingeducation.ncsu.edu/>
  - Of special interest may be the available **online training**,  
<http://continuingeducation.ncsu.edu/distance.html>
- Wake County Public School System
  - Training on a variety of topics can be found in the Lifelong Learning Catalog at <http://cs.wcpss.net/lifelonglearning>.

## 7. Seminar Series

- Commerce will offer a monthly seminar series covering various subject matters that relate to the department objectives.
- Identify a targeted number of seminars for the employee to attend during the evaluation period. As the scheduled topics are announced, particular seminars may be identified which would be beneficial and interesting to the employee.

## 8. Conferences

- Conferences are a great opportunity for growth, networking, and professional development. Identify a conference for the employee to attend that will be valuable both to the individual and to his/her work, either directly or indirectly.

#### 9. Academic Assistance

- Commerce employees may be eligible for academic assistance for courses taken from an accredited community college, college, or university that are directly related to their present position in the department.
- Refer to Commerce's policy for Academic Assistance for details on the policy: [http://intranet.nccommerce.com/policies/HR\\_8.pdf](http://intranet.nccommerce.com/policies/HR_8.pdf). Policy includes link to paperwork that must be processed for approval.

#### 10. Customized Plan

- Be creative! The above options are only suggestions and are not intended to limit the possibilities in developing a meaningful professional development plan for each individual employee. The goal is provide opportunities that are valuable to both the department and the individuals that and that cultivate an environment of productivity and excellence. A unique, customized plan for each employee is often the most beneficial.