

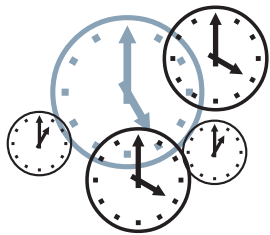
Knowledge Transfer



Right People,



Right Time,



in State of Alaska Agencies

**State of Alaska,
Department of Administration,
Division of Personnel & Labor
Relations**

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Introduction

Workforce planning is a broad strategy that influences a department's, division's, or agency's entire workforce. Defined by the International Public Management Association for Human Resources, workforce planning is "the strategic alignment of an organization's human capital with its business direction." It is a process of analyzing the current workforce, determining future workforce needs, calculating the gaps that will exist due to surpluses or deficits in employee skills now and in the future, and creating and implementing a plan to close those gaps. Knowledge transfer is one small piece of the entire workforce planning strategy.

Many State of Alaska agencies, when faced with the overwhelming possibility of losing valuable employees through retirement, transfers, and other forms of attrition, often get bogged down with the idea of all that knowledge transfer could entail. Knowledge transfer often works hand-in-hand with succession planning concepts, since developing new leaders through succession planning means that the knowledge of current leaders will be shared before retirement, promotion, or other attrition with those who will follow in their footsteps. As managers and supervisors develop and implement their workforce plans, it is helpful to see how different components all work together.

Fortunately for the State of Alaska, knowledge transfer as a process has been promoted and supported throughout executive branch departments by the legislature, current and past administrative orders, and the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations. In fact, many of the tools developed for use by State of Alaska agencies have been shared with other state governments throughout the United States. What this document does is to put all of the tools in to one easy-to-management guide.

This document contains all of the tools that are currently in use as well as some articles that further explain the kinds of activities an agency may select in order to put knowledge transfer into practice and some sample plans. It is hoped that agencies will find the information contained here to be useful as they start or continue with their workforce planning efforts.

Section One: Identifying Knowledge to be Transferred

Knowledge Transfer Plan Worksheet

Employee Name:	PCN:
Hiring Manager / Appointing Authority:	Management Services Consultant:

Needed Material:

- Position Description of record

Step 1

Using the analysis worksheet below, identify the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's) the employee possesses that the other applicants would not be able to acquire by the end of the probationary period. Record the identified KSA's in the first column of the worksheet below:

Step 2

Using the position description of record, connect the KSA's identified in Step 1 to the critical components of the position. The components should be articulated in the position description of record. Indicate which KSA's are linked to which critical components in the second column of the Analysis worksheet below:

Step 3

Using the information gathered in Steps 1 and 2, identify the development area(s) in the workplace that must be addressed to assure that staff is trained to take over work when a particular individual separates from service. Record the identified development areas(s) in the third column of the table below:

Analysis Worksheet		
Employee's Knowledge, Skills, Abilities	Position's Critical Component Linked to KSA	Development Area for Others in Knowledge Transfer Plan *

* This will be the starting point of the Knowledge Transfer plan.

Step 4

For each development area identified in Step 3, answer the questions below to develop the knowledge transfer plan. (See appendix A for a sample plan format)

Question #1: Which knowledge transfer technique(s) or activities will be used?

Question #2: Who will be the recipient(s) of the knowledge that must be transferred?

Question #3: Who will be responsible for transferring the knowledge?

Question #4: How will it be determined that the knowledge has been successfully transferred?

Question #5: What is the target completion date for the transfer of knowledge?

Section Two: Selecting the Appropriate Knowledge Transfer Techniques and Activities

Types of Knowledge Transfer Techniques and Activities

There are many ways to transfer knowledge from one employee to another one or more employees. The tables below provide samples of different activities with examples and practical information about using that activity in a knowledge transfer plan.

Knowledge Transfer Techniques and Activities Tables:

- Job Aids
- Process Documentation
- Communities of Practice
- Critical Incident Reviews
- Story Boards
- Document Repositories
- Knowledge Fairs
- Structured on the Job Training
- Mentoring Programs
- Best Practices Meetings or Studies
- Job Shadowing
- Electronic Performance Support System
- Double Fills
- Job Rotation
- Knowledge Maps

JOB AIDS	
What	Anything that helps people perform in real time. Knowledge can be stored in the job aid and accessed through low-tech methods by performers when the need arises.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no additional training required to perform task • Can be easily accessible to users • Can be used by multitude of users • Job aids can be used as is, require little or no additional explanation
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardized process exists • Process may be performed periodically
How	Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Develop step-by-step instructions.
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do keep your Job Aids current.
Example	Checklist – Desk Manual – Process Map – Guide – Instructional Sign

MENTORING PROGRAMS	
What	Mentors offer advice in a situation on what to do, how to do it and why it is worth doing. A mentor is an experienced performer and rarely the mentee's supervisor, since effective mentors should have no performance management interest in the development of another person.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customized training for specific situations and developmental needs • Effective method for transferring organizational culture information • Establishes reliable experienced contact outside supervisory chain • Develops higher level of proficiency
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill set(s) to be developed is best learned through one-on-one transfer • New employee or employee new to work level (e.g., entry level professional, manager, etc.) has specific skill set gap and/or the need to quickly and effectively have knowledge of organizational culture and norms
How	Determine what knowledge or competency needs to be mastered. Identify experienced mentor with coaching and knowledge transfer skills. Allow mentor and mentee to establish mentoring contract (typically 6 months to start)
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in mentor program should be voluntary, for both the mentor and the mentee • Specific skill set or competency to be developed should be identified and agreed upon at the beginning • Mentee's supervisor should not be involved in the mentoring program, beyond receiving reports from mentor • Mentor and mentee should respect confidentiality of their mentoring sessions
Example	Team Leader advises, works with new supervisor in process problem solving, root-cause analysis and collaborative problem solving skills

PROCESS DOCUMENTATION	
What	Process documentation involves flowcharting how work is performed. It may include special variations in what performers should do or how they should do it based on special circumstances such as deviations from the norm.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captures big picture; can see entire process from start to finish • Facilitates discussion about process; can help performers identify their skill gaps in process • Can help performers to identify areas for improvement in the process itself • Can be used by multitude of users
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardized process exists • Process is being developed, modified, or examined during problem solving root cause analysis • Performer roles in process are being developed or modified
How	Identify steps and roles in process. Document process in a flowchart, map, or linear outline.
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document the process from start to finish • Include process roles and tasks • Avoid partial process documentation • Keep the process documentation flexible and up to date • Include special circumstances / options when possible • Make it an employee standard practice to review process documentation
Example	Workflow Chart – Process Map – Linear Outline

BEST PRACTICES MEETINGS OR STUDIES	
What	Best practices meetings or studies look for different processes or systems to perform work that have had measurable success and effectiveness and are likely transferable. Best practices are found in a variety of ways; through meetings of similar functional groups, polling employees or surveying for best practices.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies practices that have worked in other organizations and may be transferable • Can spark innovation • Can broaden network and increase performer expertise
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New process, task or competency needs to be developed • An existing process, task or competency needs modification • Success depends on staying up-to-date; focus is on gathering info
How	Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Identify sources of information to be accessed. Establish the meeting or study parameters, develop and implement project plan
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the best practices to be researched and evaluated • Define scope and role of project and performers • Avoid vague or ambiguous goals and research topics
Example	Sample topics: Workforce Planning, Public Administration Practices, Office Safety, Government Accounting

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE	
What	A group of individuals sharing a common working practice over a period of time, though not part of a formally constituted work team.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a sanctioned mechanism for sharing knowledge • Leads to improved network of contacts • Provides peer recognition and continuous learning • Provides a mechanism for sharing tacit knowledge
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When sharing tacit information is important to achieving better results • When knowledge is being constantly gained and shared it is beneficial to meeting organizational goals
How	Determine the purpose of the group (e.g., solving everyday work problems, developing and disseminating best practices). Clarify roles and responsibilities and provide resources and support.
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership should be voluntary • Recruit those who are seen as experts and trusted as information sources • Management should not dictate action • Focus is on gathering information rather than making decisions or taking action
Example	Finance officer meetings, cross departmental IT meetings, Admin managers network, MS Excel and Access user group

JOB SHADOWING	
What	A less experienced performer is paired up with a veteran performer to transfer knowledge. The veteran is asked to share knowledge (and perhaps hands-on practice) in dealing with everyday problems in addition to the most difficult situations he or she has faced on the job.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides “real life” exposure to the job • Could be offered to several individuals; expanding the organization’s overall knowledge • Can be helpful in succession and workforce planning efforts
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allow opportunity for individual(s) to learn about a particular occupation • Exposure to the job itself can enhance knowledge transfer, particularly with effective coaching
How	Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Identify veteran performer who possesses competency in coaching and knowledge transfer. Identify individual(s) who will shadow veteran performer. Establish timeline and knowledge transfer goals.
Do’s & Don’ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Shadowing should not be used as a comprehensive on-the-job training program • Clarify roles and expectations up front • Avoid pairing less-experienced performers with slightly more experienced performers • Use debriefing sessions for coaching opportunities • Discuss educational requirements; the career ladder for the job and related positions
Example	Attending strategic planning meetings with veteran performer; Observing veteran performer for a day on the job

CRITICAL INCIDENT REVIEWS	
What	A critical incident is a difficult situation. By documenting and/or discussing the critical incident experiences for the organization's most experienced performers, the organization can capture lessons for knowledge transfer.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents veteran performers' expertise and approach to problem solving • As critical incidents are captured, creates a more comprehensive set of lessons; continuously evolving • Allows for open discussions about what worked, what could be improved (document if appropriate) • Focuses on finding root cause or causes which are often process issues that result in performance issues
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing individual knowledge and skill is critical • Situations are not encountered routinely; documentation of previous solutions and lessons learned is vital to knowledge transfer
How	Determine what constitutes a critical incident. Identify who should be involved in the review. Identify and capture the things that went well and the things that could be improved so that team members are aware of and can use the broader team's learning in their future projects.
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly document the details of the incident and how it was resolved • Pay special attention to identifying whether the incident requires a process fix or a developmental fix • Avoid brief, sketchy documentation that would make it difficult for a future performer to understand what happened • Be sure you can find and review the documentation when you need it
Example	Incidents might include: citizen complaints; exposure to hazardous materials; unsuccessful project; complex program implementation

ELECTRONIC PERFORMANCE SUPPORT SYSTEM	
What	This system combines artificial intelligence, an expert system, real-time e-learning methods, and a computer-based referencing system. As a user encounters a problem, he or she can access all organizational policies and procedures through the referencing system, gain advice from past experience from the expert system, and even learn in real time using the training component.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-stop shopping • Available 24/7 • Can be used by multitude of users
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, procedures, problems, solutions and training are documented and can be combined into one system • Organization is wide-spread and distance learning is more efficient than in-person training
How	Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Document knowledge and collaborate with programming experts to create system.
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System should address a broad range of issues • E-learning should relate directly to the problem being resolved • Additional troubleshooting options should be offered
Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division of Personnel & Labor Relations transcripts for Train Alaska

STORYBOARDS	
What	A story board is a group of pictures that tell a story. It is a graphic representation of what to do and how to do it.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can convey big picture quickly • Creates a visual cue in the learner's mind – can enhance knowledge transfer
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an executive summary or white paper to convey a concept or overview of a complex process concisely • To document instructions for a task that does not require written instructions
How	Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Develop step by step illustrations to convey information.
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storyboards should be able to stand on their own when conveying information • Storyboards should use easy to understand symbols and pictures
Example	Emergency information cards on airplanes

DOUBLE FILLS	
What	Double fill employs the experienced performer and the less experienced performer in the same position simultaneously. Usually for a set period of time.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer an established portion of knowledge • Can reduce amount of supervisor's training time • Can provide intense, one-on-one training in all situations encountered on the job
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget allows for double fill • Departing employee gives enough advance notice to allow for recruitment, selection and appointment to happen prior to his or her leaving the job
How	Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Develop timeline and action plan to assure knowledge is transferred in the time allotted for the double fill.
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The action plan and timeline should be achievable and detailed • Knowledge transfer alternatives should be available in case there are unforeseen circumstances (e.g., separating employee leaves early) • Avoid vague, ambiguous descriptions of knowledge to be transferred • Clarify roles up front
Example	Two week overlap to focus on program specific information. Computer skills, phone etiquette, and general office skills will be trained after double fill time is completed and by a different experienced performer.

DOCUMENT REPOSITORIES	
What	A collection of textual showrooms that can be viewed, retrieved and interpreted both by humans and by automates. A document repository adds navigation and categorization to the information stored.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages the intellectual property that is locked up in the documents of an organization • Can be used by multitude of users • Different from an expert system; can be paper, electronic or both
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes have been / are being documented • Historical knowledge of an organization's practices is important to current business needs • Performers use and need to be able to find documents in order to perform their tasks
How	Determine which documents need to be categorized and stored. Develop system to manage the entire life cycle of a document from creation through multiple revisions and finally into storage and records management.
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard use of the repository should be established • Repository should be kept up to date
Example	Workplace Alaska

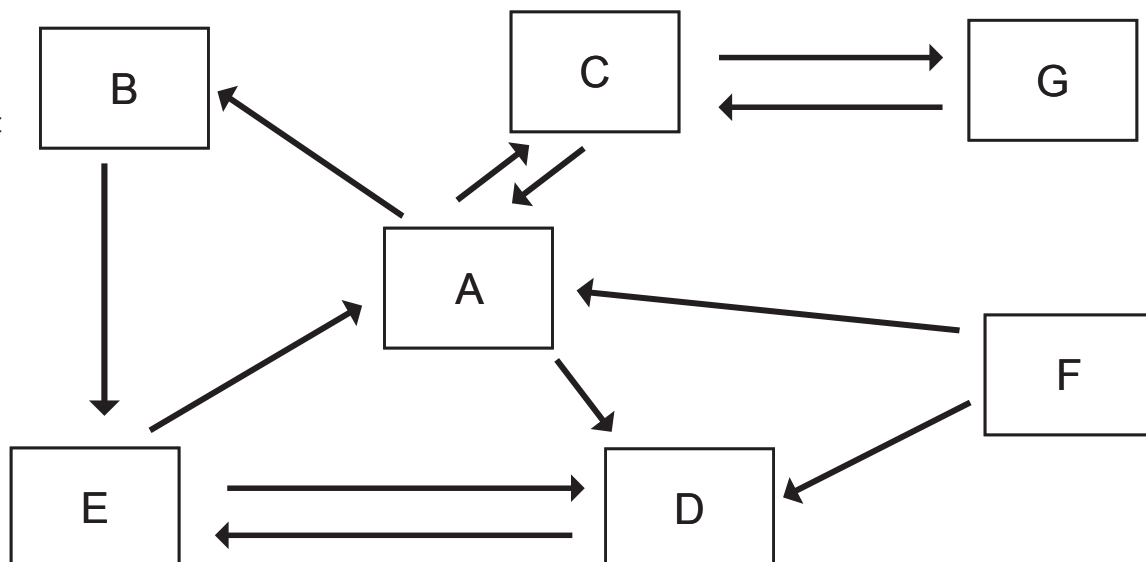
JOB ROTATION	
What	A formal program in which a person or group of persons experiences a variety of tasks and responsibilities in several different positions. Typically designed to develop an individual's knowledge base to prepare him or her for positions of increasing responsibility and scope.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can develop a pool of qualified applicants for positions of increasing responsibility and scope • Decreases the impact of “brain drain” when individuals leave key positions
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career development requires knowledge and experience in several different areas or programs • On the job experience is the most effective method of knowledge transfer
How	Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Develop formal program that assures individuals will experience full variety of identified knowledge and tasks. Clarify requirements for successful completion of program.
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program should have clearly defined requirements for acceptance and successful completion • Program purpose and goals should be clearly communicated to all potential participants • Program should be available to all who qualify for acceptance
Example	Areas that might use a job rotation program include: HR management team; Agency management teams; Expert programming positions

KNOWLEDGE FAIRS	
What	An event that showcases information about an organization or a topic. Knowledge fairs may be one-time events hosted by a specific user group.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To share knowledge with a targeted audience or group • Far-reaching; can be used with the public, other state agencies, or within a department, division or program • To increase awareness of and knowledge about a program, topic area, or agency
When	Information can be shared easily via displays, brochures, etc.
How	Determine what knowledge needs to be shared and with whom it will be shared. Schedule fair, prepare documents and displays, market event, and clearly communicate purpose of the event.
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify and communicate the goal or purpose of the fair • Avoid confusing a knowledge fair with a recruitment fair
Example	State Call Center Fair, featuring all of the state's call centers – Public Protection Fair, featuring information from Public Safety, Corrections, DMVA, HSS, etc.

KNOWLEDGE MAPS	
What	An effort to discover the location, form, ownership, value and use of knowledge. To learn about people's expertise; to find opportunities to make better use of existing knowledge in the organization; and to identify barriers to knowledge flow.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlights areas of specialty knowledge and expertise • Encourages better use of information and knowledge and reduces "reinventing the wheel" • Saves time searching for experts in a particular area • Saves the time of experts by helping others locate needed information quickly
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance learning by drawing a picture of available resources and when to use them • For more complex situations; the map can help less experienced performers learn who and when to use resources
How	Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Interview experts to identify the resources they use and construct knowledge map. Educate less experienced performers in how to use the map (link to document repository).
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the type of knowledge transferred at each point in the map • Avoid using the map as the answer to a situation • Clearly describe the parameters around the map's use (e.g., only in certain situations)
Example	Your Personal Map – Starting with a "node" representing yourself, map the people with whom you share information, both internally and externally. Try to represent whether you are only receiving information, whether you are only giving information, or whether it is a two-way exchange.

Sample

Employee A:



Arrows show direction of information flow. Employee A receives information from sources E and F (can be people, documents, etc.). Employee A gives information to sources B and D. Employee A gives and receives information from source C.

STRUCTURED ON THE JOB TRAINING (OJT)	
What	Instruction takes place on the actual job site, usually involving learning skills or procedures in a hands-on manner following a defined structured learning process.
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides less experienced performer, or trainee, with real-job experience • Allows work of agency to be accomplished during training
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasks have developed procedures and aids for teaching • Real-life experience needs to be developed
How	Determine what knowledge needs to be shared. Develop step-by-step instructions. Identify trainer. Establish learning objectives and timeline for completion.
Do's & Don'ts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use good performers who can also teach and coach • Provide training and resources for those coaching • Analyze the job, breaking into tasks, and develop procedures and aids for teaching • Describe, Describe and Demonstrate, Trainee performs, Trainee describes and performs, Trainee practices • Tell trainee where to go for help • Follow-up with trainee • Avoid assumptions about the depth, level and scope of knowledge already possessed by the trainee
Example	Data entry into program database – Writing monthly status report – Processing employee payroll

Section Three: Additional Articles about Transfer Techniques and Activities

These articles have appeared in HR Update. They are reprinted here for easy reference.

After Action Reviews: An Effective Way to Transfer and Manage Institutional Knowledge

Knowledge transfer can be defined as a toolbox of various tools that can be used to assist an agency preserve its organizational memories. For agencies, decisions about future and current plans are more effective if past actions, experiences, and knowledge are taken into account. The After Action Review is one tool that you may find useful in your Knowledge Transfer toolbox.

The concept of After Action Reviews is not a new one. This idea has been used successfully by the US Army for the past three decades as a vehicle to encourage thoughtful reflection of an event, which, in turn, helps the memory become a valuable lesson. The After Action Review is a process that helps cement experiences into lessons learned, with practical implications for the next experience.

When a person takes special notice of an experience and draws connections to other information already held in memory, the experience becomes a long term memory. In other words, when a person reflects upon the experience, he/she remembers it in greater detail and with greater clarity. To take this process one step further, when personal reflection includes attempts to identify the practical implications, change for the better occurs.


Reflection is just as useful to groups as it is to individuals. When groups or teams take the time to reflect upon an experience, they are able to draw lessons from the immediate experience that will enable them to more adequately handle the next similar experience. Reflection is the premise behind the After Action Review.

Usually the After Action Review involves a dialog group who meets immediately after a project or an event to answer these questions:

- What did we set out to do?
- What actually happened?
- Why did it happen?
- What are we going to do next time?

This is a formal process, though brainstorming and discussion are encouraged and allowed. However, this discussion is not intended to be an exploratory dialog. A facilitator helps ensure that the discussion stays tightly focused on the event; ground rules, including a schedule, should be established before the group begins discussion. These steps will help the group know when to move from one question to the next and will help prevent the group from circling around a topic endlessly.

The group spends a relatively short period of time on these questions, with most of the focus on the last one. The project or the event determines the length of time needed for the dialog group. If the group is discussing a regularly occurring event that changes only a little from time to time, the After Action Review should take less time than if the group is discussing a brand new project that had never been tried before. The greater the uncertainty or unknown, the greater the need for a more thorough reflection.



Because it focuses on the future, an After Action Review is often more practical than other kinds of post-mortems following a project. Still, as a knowledge transfer tool, there are some questions that should be added to the dialog in order to ensure that the lessons learned are passed along. These questions should become a part of the review:

- **Who** else needs to know what we've learned?
- **What** do they need to know?
- **How** are we going to tell them?

This extra consideration expands the usefulness of the After Action Review beyond the current group. It encourages communication between and among teams in an agency and ensures that the After Action Review doesn't simply become another report to upper management with no useful implications for the future.

An additional step can be added to this process, which, in essence, becomes a *Before* Action Review. Asking these questions *prior* to the event or project, using the same group facilitation method above, can help the group anticipate emerging opportunities and threats and address them before the project or event occurs:

- What are our intended results and measures?
- What challenges can we anticipate?
- What have we or others in the agency learned from similar situations (refer to past After Action Reviews)?
- What will make us successful this time?

Thoughtful reflection is an excellent way to cement experiences into memories, and the After Action Review provides a reflection model for groups to use in making memories and transferring organizational knowledge.

Source: Canada School of Public Service, Roundtable on Organizational Memory, (2007), Lost and Found.

Exit Interviews: An Effective Way to Transfer and Manage Institutional Knowledge

Knowledge transfer can be defined as a toolbox of various tools that can be used to assist an agency preserve its organizational memories. For agencies, decisions about future and current plans are more effective if past actions, experiences, and knowledge are taken into account. The Exit Interview is one tool that you may find useful in your Knowledge Transfer toolbox.

The State of Alaska has an exit survey instrument available on-line. This instrument can be quite beneficial by eliciting feedback about the departing employee's job satisfaction, supervisors, salary, and other information that can be used to uncover issues that pertain to employee retention. However, as a knowledge transfer tool, it lacks a method for capturing organizational memories and knowledge of the job that the departing employee has.

An agency may find that a qualitative questionnaire administered in person to all departing employees will do a better job of attaining information that a successor can use from the first day forward. This observation comes with a word of warning, however—the quality of the information will often depend upon the nature of the employee's departure. Frequently, an employee leaving involuntarily will focus on his/her personal objectives rather than agency needs. Disgruntled employees may intentionally mislead interviewers out of retaliation for being dismissed or out of fear of retaliation if they are perceived to be complaining. And there is even the attitude, upon occasion, of "Why bother? Nothing's ever going to change anyway." These issues need to be taken into consideration by the interviewer.

One way to help minimize biases such as these is to hold the exit interview as far in advance as possible of departure. This step has a dual advantage: it captures knowledge while the employee is still performing the work, and it allows time for the employee to carefully consider if he/she has thought of everything that needs to be passed on to the next person.

Having a neutral interviewer can help—a front line or immediate supervisor may not be the best or appropriate person in many situations. Appointing a person outside of the immediate chain of command to be the exit interviewer for all departing employees may help alleviate some of the concerns by the departing employee. It is also helpful if the interviewer is candid about why the interview is being conducted (to ensure that the employee's knowledge of the agency is not lost) and how the information will be used.

The use of this type of interview/questionnaire to gain knowledge about **what** the departing employee does and **how** he/she does it. This particular kind of exit interview is **not** to find out how satisfied the employee was with the job, the supervisor, or other issues of that nature. Supervisors can encourage departing employees to complete the on-line exit survey to share their thoughts on those issues, but *this exit interview is to gain knowledge of organizational knowledge that can be transferred to other employees.*

So what kinds of questions should be asked in this kind of exit interview? The following are some suggestions, though as an agency with unique needs, you will most likely think of others that may better serve the agency. These samples are to provide you with an understanding of the difference between a knowledge transfer exit interview and a job satisfaction exit interview.

Exit interview checklist

Issue/Item	Possible questions	Necessary follow up
Contact information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With whom do you work on a daily/ weekly/monthly basis outside of the agency? • With whom do you work most closely in this agency? • What is their contact information? 	Touch base with these contacts to introduce the change in personnel
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What files are key to getting the job done? • Where are these files kept? • Are there written instructions for the processes used in your job? 	Ask departing employees to organize their files If instructions have not been written, ask departing employee to assist in writing them—collect information about mission-critical processes as soon as you know the employee is leaving
Ongoing activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What activities are still in progress? • What commitments have you made for the agency that need to be completed? • Are there any loose ends to tie up? 	Identify time-sensitive issues that need to be dealt with.
Future contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where can you be reached in case we need to contact you? • Are you open to answering questions once your successor has settled into the job? 	If time permits, it is helpful to have the successor meet face-to-face with the departing employee
Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you improve the way your job is done? • Are there aspects of the job that can be improved? 	
Follow through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let the departing employee know that his/her knowledge is valued and his/her advice will be used. 	Reassure departing employee that his/her input matters
<p>The use of exit interviews to gain agency knowledge from a departing employee can be a valuable tool in your toolbox. Taking the time to train a neutral agency interviewer in conducting knowledge transfer exit interviews will put your agency at an advantage when an employee with organizational memories leaves for other endeavors.</p>		
<p>Source: Canada School of Public Service, Roundtable on Organizational Memory, (2007), <u>Lost and Found</u>.</p>		

Online Inventories : An Effective Way to Transfer and Manage Institutional Knowledge

Knowledge transfer can be defined as a toolbox of various tools that can be used to assist an agency preserve its organizational memories. For agencies, decisions about future and current plans are more effective if past actions, experiences, and knowledge are taken into account. The Online Inventory is one tool that you may find useful in your Knowledge Transfer toolbox.

As employees learn new practices, create new systems, or develop new ways of performing the work, it can be helpful if past experiences of similar actions are available to provide guidance. One way to provide information about past experiences is to create a database of lessons-learned. This is a common way of preserving others' valuable experiences in a format that is easy to administer and easy to access. Individuals and teams write synopsis of their experiences, detailing the lessons that they learned, and input them into online records for others to reference.


This inventory can take several commonly known forms. One of the easiest to maintain and the most universally used is a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) database. This inventory of lessons learned is written as a series of questions and answers related to a particular topic. Users normally access the database to find answers to issues with which they are working. FAQ databases are built on the premise that most people learning a new system or method have a finite number of questions about it, with most of the questions being similar enough that one query and one answer can be made by pooling several of them together. Once the initial FAQ inventory is built, there is very little maintenance required, with the possible exception being the introduction of new questions along the way.

Another type of database that is gaining in popularity across the nation is the Best Practices inventory. This is a lengthier database than the FAQ database, with well written accounts of methods and lessons learned, often organized into case studies or chapters. Ideally, the written accounts details risks and pitfalls, so that users can avoid similar errors. The accounts are also more useful when they include detailed explanations of what was done, what worked, and what didn't, so that users accessing the inventory can use this information to make comparisons to their own current situation and think about potential opportunities and threats. In a Best Practices inventory, users are encouraged to add to the lesson as they also learn what works for them in their particular situations and what didn't.

With Best Practices inventories, there are several obstacles that need to be overcome. The first one is that employees often don't realize that what they do is a *best practice*. Too often, employees consider what they do to be "just regular stuff" and are not confident that what they do could be considered "best." Supervisors and managers can help by recognizing good work when they see it and by encouraging employees to share their practices.

Another impediment to an online best practices database is that poorly written accounts will not be used. Not everyone is an author and not everyone can explain things accurately and in easy-to-understand and easy-to-use terms. Stories that show when practices are written sequentially and in terms of cause and effect, they are by and large more effective. And of course, some stories are just more interesting to write and are more likely to be read, used, and even enjoyed by others in the agency.

Agencies have overcome this obstacle by appointing a database editor or manager. Employees notify the editor, usually by email, that they have an addition to make to the inventory and the editor helps ensure that the account is well written and useful. In these cases, the editor is also the person who does the actual posting to the website or database. So that end-users know that additions have been made, the editor normally sends out an email update on the inventory regularly.



Since the whole point of the Best Practices inventory is to be useful, it makes sense that end-users help design it. What works for one agency may not work for another, but typically, the inventory has a table of contents, index, or search function that allows the user to jump to that section in the database that contains the practices for which they're searching. Some organizations have automatic email updates—sometimes called “alerts”—when changes are made to the inventory. There are some inventories which provide links within the account to other similar accounts or case studies so that end-users can find more than one solution or practice. Some inventories list other tools or alternatives that can be also be used in certain situations, and all good stories include contact information of the employee or team leader, in the event of questions.

Online inventories can be quite a big project. They take time and commitment to start one and to maintain it. Agencies that are able to take the time and make the commitment, however, will find this to be an extremely useful tool in their Knowledge Transfer toolbox.

Source: Canada School of Public Service, Roundtable on Organizational Memory, (2007), Lost and Found.

Appendix A

Knowledge Transfer Plan Form					
Development Area	Transfer Type	Responsible for Transfer	Recipient(s)	Target Completion Date	Successful Transfer Measurement

Knowledge Transfer Plan Sample: Retiring Human Resource Manager I

Development Area	Transfer Activity	Responsible for Transfer	Recipient(s)	Target Completion Date	Successful Transfer Measurement
Considerable knowledge of the State's HR practices	<p>Documentation – policies, procedures, arbitration decisions, personnel memoranda, statute, regulations, etc.</p> <p>A list of resources and reading materials will be provided.</p>	Human Resource Manager I	All professional level DOP staff	x/xx/09 (6 months)	<p>Discussions with supervisor including question and answer sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate location of knowledge • Articulate and act on when appropriate to use knowledge
Considerable knowledge of the State's HR practices	<p>Community of Practice – discussions across teams and programs of recent issues, discoveries, policy changes, etc.</p> <p>A bi-monthly meeting will be held.</p>	Human Resource Manager I	All professional level DOP staff	x/xx/10 (12 months) NOTE: ongoing knowledge transfer process	<p>Supervisors observe ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulate knowledge to others • Apply knowledge appropriately to situations • Educate others
Collaborative Problem Solving Skills	<p>Critical Incident Reviews – debrief with senior management</p> <p>Sessions will be held as needed.</p>	Human Resource Manager I	<p>Payroll Supervisors</p> <p>Assistant Human Resource Manager</p>	Ongoing	<p>Supervisors observe ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance a focus on task with attention to relationships • Share plans, information and resources • Promote a friendly, cooperative climate • Spot and nurture opportunities for collaboration

Knowledge Transfer Plan Sample: Retiring Human Resource Manager I

Development Area	Transfer Activity	Responsible for Transfer	Recipient(s)	Target Completion Date	Successful Transfer Measurement
Collaborative Problem Solving Skills; Project Management Skills	<p>Mentor Program – provided by senior staff not in chain of command</p> <p>Sessions will be held as needed.</p>	Human Resource Manager I	DOP employees who meet mentor program requirements	<p>x/xx/09 (6 months)</p> <p>May be extended</p>	<p>In addition to collaborative problem solving behaviors cited above, Mentor and Supervisors observe successful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Agreement • Project Planning • Project Performance
Collaborative Problem Solving Skills; Project Management Skills	<p>Structured On the Job Training – with senior management</p> <p>Weekly update meetings with supervisor; supervisor or expert sit in on particularly challenging situations</p>	Human Resource Manager I	Replacement incumbent	x/xx/10 (12 months)	<p>In addition to collaborative problem solving behaviors cited above, Mentor and Supervisors observe successful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Agreement • Project Planning • Project Performance

Additional Resources

Division of Personnel and Labor Relations, State of Alaska publications:

[Workforce Planning Desk Reference and Guide](#)

[Workforce Planning—Quick Reference for Managers and Supervisors](#)

[Skill Gap Analysis Power Point](#)

[Succession Planning For State Agencies](#)

[HR Update \(published monthly\)](#)

[State of Alaska Workforce Profile \(published annually\)](#)

Division of Personnel and Labor Relations offers open enrollment classes designed to assist managers and supervisors. For a list of the classes, dates, and times, go to <http://dop.state.ak.us/website/index.cfm?fuseaction=TrainingDevelopment.main>

Division of Personnel and Labor Relations management services consultants are ready to assist you with workforce planning efforts. Contact information for the HR Service Centers is below:

Resource Group Service Center, serving the Departments of Fish and Game, Natural Resources, and Environmental Conservation can be reached at 465-2463.

Public Protection Service Center, serving the Departments of Corrections, Public Safety, and Military and Veterans' Affairs can be reached at 334-2606.

General Agencies Service Center, serving the Departments of Law, Administration, Commerce Community and Economic Development, Education and Early Development, Revenue and Labor and Workforce Development can be reached at 465-2498.

Transportation and Public Facilities Service Center can be reached at 465-6956.

Health and Social Services Service Center can be reached at 465-2308.

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The Knowledge Transfer in State of Alaska Agencies is written by and produced for the employees and clients of the State of Alaska, Division of Personnel & Labor Relations.

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