

Your Name and organization: Rebecca Schneider, Meteorological Service of Canada (Training and Career Development Division)

Organizational Context Analysis *Template*

The mission of your organization and how training contributes to the mission

- The mission or mandate of my organization, the MSC, is to provide weather forecasts and warnings 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, to help protect the safety and security of Canadians and their property. Training contributes to this because my particular division is in charge of coordinating the approach and delivery of training and career development in line with the MSC's People Plan and quality management principles. Our People Plan aims to continue to attract and *retain* a competent, highly skilled, and specialized workforce that is committed to continuous learning. (The fact that learning is mentioned in our People Plan shows its importance to MSC!)
- We are also responsible for integrating a competency based approach to our training, and providing certification to support training and development of staff. We must also coordinate with other training and education programs (including those supported by the WMO). Basically, my organization does recognize the importance of training as since our reorganization on April 1st, 2014, we have a national training division. Prior to the reorganization it was more regionally based and the managers in training for a particular field of employees were distinct in the organization from those who trained other types of employees. Now, all the managers wear national «hats» and are united. This is helpful as best practices in management transcend the various employee groups.
- *A general statement about the mission of the organization of which your department is a part*

Stakeholders

- My primary stakeholders are certified operational meteorologists (the forecasters who work the desk and the decision-support staff who are called WPMs or Warning Preparedness Meteorologists). For others in my division their primary stakeholders are more technical staff, such as those employees who work in monitoring or research. My secondary stakeholders are the operational meteorological interns (we call them MT-1s) who take a seven month course before entering their designated office. (I do not manage them specifically as I deal more with those meteorologists who are beyond this course-so more of the continuous training than the ab initio training. Still, it is crucial that I keep up to date with what they are learning because I am responsible for *continuing* their training.)
- The learners I serve are certified operational meteorologists. These include those working in the Storm Prediction Centres (we call our «public forecasters»), our CMACs (Canadian Meteorological Aviation Centres, thus our aviation forecasters) as well as those in Defense Weather Services whose main client is the Canadian military.

- *Who are your primary and secondary stakeholders?*
- *What audiences of learners do you serve?*

How you promote your education and training services

- This is a fun one to answer as I do like the idea of marketing training. Internal strategies include a Training Working Group that I co-lead with another manager. This group consists of all the training supervisors in the local weather offices (public, aviation and defense) as well as a member from the training team of the main tool (NinJo) used by operational forecasters. We also have one member of the team who is from the Canadian Meteorological Centre, and represents the development side of things. I send twice monthly communication emails that the group then forwards on to their staff. We also have teleconferences once every 2 months. To reach a larger audience (MSC as a whole) I am currently working on the 1st draft of our TCDD (Training and Career Development Division) newsletter.
- *Update since my initial analysis: The first ever issue of the «TCDD Times» came out during this course, in March 2015. It was a challenge in terms of getting myself trained on the tool I used (Microsoft Publisher), as this was the first time I had used it. I decided not to start from scratch and contacted a colleague across the country who herself had used this tool in making a newsletter for her division. That was helpful. As well, I did many iterations of the newsletter (getting feedback from colleagues and my manager). The last challenge was of course making sure that the format looked good in both English and French. See attached for the 1st edition.*
- To promote ourselves outside of the organization I am leading an Outreach team that goes to universities to promote future job opportunities within MSC and that highlights the skill set we will need in the future. This explains to future employees how MSC hires and what the initial training period is like. (Here I find it helps to have recent graduates amongst the Outreach team.)
- *Update since my initial analysis: Just a couple of weeks ago (March 12th) I gave a tour of the weather office to a group of undergraduate students at a nearby university. That was enjoyable on my part as I saw their enthusiasm. And all the forecasters who contributed to the tour were fully engaged! It is exciting to see your office (that you are quite used to) from a different perspective. I also think it gave the forecasters a chance to see the importance, and interest in what they do.*
- *Strategies you use internally and externally to promote your services within and outside your organization*

Factors causing change in your organization

- Change management is nothing new to MSC! As we are a federal organization we are at the whim of our federal government, and an election is upcoming this fall. We have had training sessions on change management quite recently. (The ADKAR model.) In fact, we just went through an organizational restructuring last April (2014).
- In terms of social changes as an organization we are going to lose much of our more experienced staff in the next five to ten years, so succession planning is foremost in our minds. It is crucial that we document what we are doing (though this is labourious and time consuming) so that others can pick up our work and knowledge is captured, not lost.

- Sadly, I find that while technological changes happen quite rapidly outside of my organization, within it, I find these changes are quite slow and often behind the «rest of the world». Change may come quickly outside of the office doors but due to governmental policies the implementation of change is often slow within the office. We all have to learn to be patient at the MSC.
- We are at the whim of our economy so I prefer to think in terms of what I can control versus expressing frustration over what is outside of my control.
- *What political, economic, social, and technological changes determine what your organization will be doing in the near future?*

Trends in education and training the impact you

- *Which trends are you adapting to or implementing for how you conduct training?*

One major trend we are implementing is offering more and more training virtually, via WebEx for instance. So, distance learning and learning on your own time is becoming much more popular within MSC. This is why I am so concerned with how to fully engage staff when they cannot see you and they may be going through a training module on their own time in an isolated cubicle.

Your strategic learning plan

- At present we have a draft of a strategic learning plan. We started one and then discovered that another division (since the reorganization we now have an Office of Transformation) was also crafting one. As such we are planning to work together to create a sole learning plan. (This has yet to happen.) In the draft my division composed we are looking at training in a holistic manner. This includes the knowledge and competencies required at the start of one's career; how to maintain these, adjust or develop as a function of the evolution of work objectives or changes in career paths; and transfer of knowledge near the end of one's career to ensure that the employee's contributions to the enterprise, knowledge and experience is shared prior to retirement.
- *Do you have a strategic learning plan? If so, share how it describes your strategy for meeting organizational goals.*

Facilities and technologies

- I am not aware of any key technological decisions made recently, but some facility decisions have been made recently. For instance, we had an office relocate (which also holds one of our training centres for meteorological interns). And in the future we will have a 2nd office relocate but there is much uncertainty in the timing of the move. To be honest, neither move had a clear intention to deliver any benefit to staff. I believe the moves were (will be) more of a result of the economy (saving funds) than improving upon the organization.
- I do not anticipate any new changes in facilities/technologies beyond those mentioned above.

- *What key facility and technological decisions have you made recently? Are they delivering the benefits anticipated? Why or why not?*
- *What new changes in facilities or technologies do you anticipate making in the near future?*

How do you ensure the quality of your services?

- To do this we have internal and external audits and are providing quality management system training to staff (including to myself!). Even though part of my division is ISO certified we have taken to doing more and more documentation following the QMS standards to ensure we document changes and improve on what has been done. We also have a means (through a CPAR or Corrective Preventive Action Request) of acknowledging weaknesses in the internal running of our organization. I have seen this in action.
- **Update since my initial analysis:** Since taking the course I would say that to ensure the quality of our services, I have to think of what makes my division one of high quality-I would have to say the knowledge, expertise, and passion of its individuals! Expertise takes time (and patience). Passion is something you either have or you do not, for a given topic. If you can tailor someone's work objectives to what they are most passionate about then you will likely get high quality results. Knowledge can be learned. Here is where I think it is crucial that three members of my division are taking this course (myself, Brad Snyder and Stephen Kerr). If one is lucky and if one seeks out learning opportunities then we as a division can become more knowledgeable and hopefully transfer that knowledge on when we plan future training activities. This course will help us on that path.
- *List the procedures you have in place for quality assurance.*