

WE ARE ALL TALENTED

At the City of Calgary, talent management is our commitment to hire, manage and retain talented employees to develop a superior workforce. What does this mean? It means that despite differences in education, experience, jobs, and aspirations, we all have natural abilities, skills and aptitudes that provide us with the capacity to achieve and be successful. Why is this important? By identifying potential, utilizing the different and unique talents that people bring to the workforce, we create a positive environment, exemplary results and quality public service for all Calgarians.

Talent at Work

What does talent look like? You know a person has a particular talent or skill when an issue arises, and everyone you talk to says, "You should speak to Bob. He is the expert in this area". Talent may rest in our education. We all come from different educational backgrounds, professions, training, and interests. A productive workplace leverages these differences to provide different perspectives and approaches to an issue or challenge.

We also have different skills sets. Some we have learned through formal education, some through on-the-job training and experience, and some skill sets are hobbies that may not be part of our job description, but still add value to the workplace.

For example, Kim has graphic design abilities, and while she is the go-to person to make reports and presentations 'sing', her unit also employs her creative talent in designing posters, invitations, and decorating the office for different employee celebrations be they birthdays, weddings, retirements, or Halloween!

Got a green thumb? A former City employee was a recognized expert in gardening in Calgary, and she used her talent to take care of the plants in the office, giving advice and tips for keeping them healthy.

Using people's talents in creative ways not only acknowledges the depth and breadth of skills we bring to the workplace, but also gives us insight into different and interesting aspects of our fellow employees.

Finally, our experiences also inform who we are and what we bring to the workplace. A parent may be good at juggling deadlines and competing demands, an athlete may bring focus and motivation to any project, and an immigrant may bring a different perspective and determination to succeed.

Inclusion is about looking for those hidden talents that reside in all of us and for creative ways to use those talents on the job. When we recognize the diversity of talents and include them on our teams, the result is increased creativity and innovation, which have a positive impact on our products and services.

In the same way that we all have unique personalities, we all have natural and learned talents, aptitudes, and abilities. Here are some examples of different types of vocational personalities (you may find yourself aligning with more than one of these types):

Investigative – prefers scientific, research and intellectual pursuits
Artistic – prefers creative, imaginative, and intuitive pursuits
Social – prefers helping, developing others and interpersonal pursuits
Enterprising – prefers leadership, influencing, and persuasive pursuits
Conventional – prefers data management, numerical and organizational pursuits
Realistic – prefers technical outdoor and athletic pursuits

Further to these vocational personalities, we each have natural preferences resulting from our personality that influence the diversity of talents and skills we bring to our work teams, consider the following examples:

You may find two predominant styles of decision making on your team. Some people will think first about the impact of the decision on people while others will naturally think first about the impact of the decision on the 'bottom line' or the objective. Some people thrive when gathering information while others are very skilled at making decisions.

What is your particular talent and how do you utilize it in your workplace and on the job?

Tips for Inclusive Behaviours

Remembering that people bring different talents to the workplace helps us not only understand and appreciate our fellow employees more, but also may serve as ways to identify common interests and pursuits. How do we leverage these hidden talents?

- Create a positive and comfortable work environment where everyone feels safe in bring his or her talents to the forefront.
- Host a talent day and encourage your employees to give a 5-minute demonstration of their special talent.
- Managers and supervisors can use performance reviews to ask their employees about any skills or experiences they think they can bring to the workplace that are currently under-utilized.
- Brainstorm creative ways to use different talents on the job. How can these abilities make a difference to our organization?
- Useful insights about how to move from a training-focused to a learning based organization can be found in research on high performance workplaces (HPW). This literature documents a "robust" relationship between the use of flexible work organization practices (such as teams, multi-skilling, reduced hierarchy, downward delegation of responsibility) and increased training. Betcherman and his colleagues elaborate: "Firms can only benefit from the skills employees gain from training where the organization of work allows them to apply these skills in practice. Flexible job designs that encourage employee initiative and innovation are a key condition for effective training programs. See <http://www.longwoods.com/content/16995>

More information?

External resources:

[See what the Royal Bank of Canada is doing about diversity and talent in the workplace](#)

[Diversity drives innovation and attracts top talent](#)

[Article on how to develop workplace talent](#)