

Reflections on the 2018 IPAC NCR New Public Servant Workshop

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I had the pleasure of attending the 2018 Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) in the National Capital Region (NCR) New Public Servant Workshop. It took place on Thursday, May 17, 2018 at 111 Sussex Drive from 8:30 am to 5 pm. Following the workshop, I wanted to share key learning points and reflections with the members of our NMD Geographic Coordination and Mission Support Bureau. The theme of this year's workshop was "*Embracing Change - Shaping the Future*." Click [here](#) to view the workshop agenda. The event's presentations were tailored to equip new public servants with the knowledge and skills they need to become effective change agents throughout their careers. The workshop examined the following changes, all of which are related to Blueprint 2020 priorities and public service renewal:

- leveraging new technologies;
- engaging citizens;
- integrating user experiences;
- advancing innovation in our work;
- focusing on results and impact that new public servants can shape their future.

Kevin Page, Founding President and CEO of the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy, provided the keynote address. He also served as Canada's first Parliamentary Budget Officer. Kevin compelled us to find our higher purpose. If we do not, we won't be working to our full potential. Each of us needs to find what connects us to service. We have to ask ourselves how we want to shape the future. And whenever we find our calling, we need to make a difference. He reminded us to never give up on our values. Furthermore, we need to be comfortable in who we are and what we do.

Participating in the session enabled me to attend three panels directly applicable to my work. Presentations were facilitated by experts and thought leaders from the public, private and non-profit sectors who have faced similar challenges. Please see below for a description of these workshop panels and two interactive workshops. I have also paired the panels with their related Blueprint 2020 vision principles.

Panel #1: Embracing Changing Technology & Innovative Approaches

Related Blueprint 2020 Vision Principles: A modern workplace that makes smart use of new technologies to improve networking, access to data and customer service.

This panel explored the challenges and opportunities related to the successful incorporation of new and innovative technologies into the workplace. This included the role of emerging technology in the public sector, incorporating the user-experience into government policy and service improvement, adapting innovative technologies. Panelists provided participants with both a sense of how to prepare for changing approaches, and how to remain successful while technological and contextual environments change within our professional setting.

Chad Hartnell, Director of Operations with the Impact and Innovation Unit at the Privy Council Office (PCO), works for the Task Force on Public Sector Innovation. The Impact and Innovation Unit supports Canadian Federal Departments interested in leveraging the [Impact Canada Initiative](#) to pursue outcomes-based approaches. Announced in Budget 2017, the Impact

Canada Initiative is a Government of Canada (GC) wide effort that will help departments accelerate the adoption of innovative funding approaches to deliver meaningful results to Canadians. This Impact Canada challenge platform is a core component of the initiative. It allows federal departments to issue challenges on a common site and reach a diverse group of problem solvers and innovators. The two initial program streams comprise a [Smart Cities Challenge](#) and a [Women in Cleantech](#) with 10 challenges in total.

Chad Hartnell is also working on artificial intelligence (AI) and implementing its related privacy concerns. He is working on an AI translation project as well. Chad also serves as a member of the GC Entrepreneurs Task Force. Composed of an eclectic team of 17 federal public servants who have accepted the challenge to work on innovative projects, the task force's ultimate goal is to improve the lives of Canadians. The members consist of low to mid-level professionals working together with a team of Deputy Ministers. All members of the task force sit at the same level.

Jacob Akrouche, Manager - IT Advisory at Ernst and Young Canada, is implementing new technologies at work. Jacob believes we need to know what each new technology means and how they can be applied to our work. We need to define and develop an applicable use case for the new technology. Now that we are in the intelligence age, computers are much better with processing raw data. Jacob explains that we need to align our efforts around our strengths to get things done.

Lisa Fast is the Co-Founder of Vation Inc. Lisa believes we have to design government processes for smart phones. This is where you will find citizens congregating. Lisa's urged our audience of young professionals to do the hard work to make it simple for Canadians. Furthermore, she believes government systems are not agile enough and they do not sufficiently test users. We must build, test and try. Then we must learn and keep going. We need to create a better feedback loop between citizens and government processes. We need to improve our responsible regulatory processes. Lisa reminds us to constantly ask ourselves how we can use future technology to improve operational efficiency.

Panel #2: Embracing New Skills to Successfully Adapt to Change

Related Blueprint 2020 Vision Principles: A capable, confident and high-performing workforce that embraces new ways of working and mobilizes the diversity of talent to serve the country's evolving needs.

This panel delivered career advice to public servants and focussed on what leadership skills are required to succeed. Two Deputy Ministers provided career advice to new professionals on how to succeed in public administration and provided insights on what skills they either gained or improved upon to successfully adapt to change in the workplace such as organizational, technological, and innovation or policy-driven changes. One Assistant Deputy Minister from Statistics Canada also participated and provided her advice on how to succeed in public administration.

Jody Thomas, Deputy Minister of National Defence began by stressing the need to maximize the time we have when employed with our respective organizations. She believes we need to learn everything we can while we occupy our positions. Il faut être humain et un dynamique membre de l'équipe. Always put up your hand to claim your space. Define your own goals. Seek out change when you are ready. Take on opportunities that are right for you. You need to find

jobs that support your work-life balance and the need of your family members. Do not be afraid to embrace change. Adapt your leadership style based on your work location and style of working. Learn, listen first, and respect the culture where you find yourself situated. Respect the history and values of the workplace where you work. Work with your team and tell the truth. Always strive to be horizontal rather than territorial. Be client oriented because senior managers know who are too career oriented in their workplaces. See the future and yet be in the moment. Treat everyone with fairness, dignity and respect. It matters how you treat people. There is a zero tolerance for harassment in the public sector.

Resilience is how you handle pressure and stress. Success is about recovering from failure and coming back strong. Criticism should not be personal. It is all about the quality of work we do. It is about delivering a consistent product. Work on growing your physical and emotional resilience. Speak truth to power. Yet Ms. Thomas speaks rarely in meetings. She listens, observes and only then adds value. Decide the style that works for you. Add value when it is important. There is more than one way to take up space. When faced with moving people who are resistant to change, determine what their fears are. Seek out their concerns and what is motivating their fears and then defeat them. Make them part of their change process. Make them own some of the process.

Christiane Fox is the Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Youth with the Privy Council Office. She is the youngest Deputy Minister employed with the Federal Government. She encourages us to get to know people in our organization and look for the alignment. Pursue coursework to benefit us both inside and outside of work. Become the go to person at work. Go where you will shine. Strive to create a two-way fit between you and your employer. Be enthusiastic. Know what to do and what not to do. If you are female, define your space as a woman. Adhering to workplace values is essential, beginning with respect. Find gaps and fix the gap. Get a third party validator to evaluate your values. There are moments when you can fix your values and ethics. Live your values. Talk and participate at work. Go to events, meetings and town halls. Ask questions and become part of the dialogue.

Jane Badets is the Assistant Chief Statistician at Statistics Canada. She explained that Statistics Canada is a science department – it produces data, not policy. She also explained that change is part of the values and raison d'être of Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada is results driven and has a matrix style of management. It produces data for policy that is developed by other departments and other governments, while understanding the policy context and the issues. Statistics Canada communicates to average Canadians and the media. Statistics Canada is constantly asking whether it is inclusive, and whether it knows the inside and outside context.

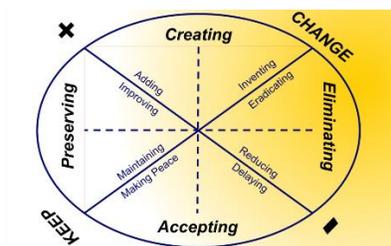
Interactive Session #1: Managing your Career as a Free Agent (even if you're not)

The Canada's Free Agents is a GC program which offers a new model for talent mobility that allows public servants the freedom to select work that matches their skills and interests. This interactive session provided an overview of the basics on managing our careers, defining boundaries and developing our personal brands. Etienne's Laliberté, a Free Agent himself, lead us through 30 steps on how to manage our careers as Free Agents. Refer to his [website](#) to read through them all. The steps can be summarized into four categories:

1. Get the basics.
2. Set your boundaries
3. Build your brand

4. Become the agent (of your own career)

Later during the session, Etienne led us through Marshall Goldsmith's "*Wheel of Change: Becoming the Person that We Want to Become.*" See the diagram below and refer to this [website](#) to learn more about the Wheel of Change.



Panel #3: Driving Change from the Ground Up

Related Blueprint 2020 Vision Principles: A capable, confident and high-performing workforce that embraces new ways of working and mobilizes the diversity of talent to serve the country's evolving needs. A whole-of-government approach that enhances service delivery and value for money.

This panel presented new ideas from private and public sectors leaders and new professionals that have successfully driven change from the ground up. The panel demonstrated how new professionals can be agents of change and make meaningful contributions in public administration in their current positions.

Thiago Fernandez de Lima, Senior Advisor, Social and Cultural Sector with the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat reminded us to be ourselves to attract opportunities.

Jill Piebak, Digital Strategist, Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada asked us the following questions inviting personal responsibility to affect change? "If not us, then who? If not now, than when?"

Katie Miller, Managing Director, Impact Hub Ottawa encouraged us to figure out what we want to do. She then recommended reading "[Impact: Six Patterns to Spread Your Social Innovation](#)" by Al Etmanski to help us achieve that aim. In his book, Mr. Etmanski recommends we begin by thinking and acting like a movement. We then need to create a container for our content. Next, we will need to convene with allies, adversaries and strangers. Mobilizing our economic power follows next. Finally, who we choose to partner with is more important than how we partner.

Raphaël Gave, Policy Analyst, Skills and Employment Branch with Employment and Social Development Canada shared with us his IPAC journey. Raphaël encouraged us to volunteer with our federal youth networks within our respective departments and agencies. Our employers need to value inclusion and diversity. He reminded us there is a dynamic tension at play in our workplaces between a fluid social structure and the formal structure. We will have to successfully navigate between both structures throughout our careers.

Interactive Session No. 2: Shaping the Future with Policy Horizons Canada

Policy Horizons Canada is an organization within the GC that conducts strategic foresight on cross cutting issues that informs public servants today about the possible public policy challenges over the next 10-15 years. This interactive session introduced us to cascade diagrams, a tool that Policy Horizons uses to explore sources of surprise that contribute to

uncertainty in the future. During the session, we explored the following [five change drivers](#) within five small breakout groups:

1. Future of work
2. Future of personal and commercial transportation
3. A borderless digital world
4. Algorithms run the world
5. Canadians can live to 110

A change driver is something that causes significant change in the system under study. The indicator of a useful change driver is how it impacts or influences elements of its related system and, as a result, the system behaves in new and/or unexpected ways. This interaction is one of the main sources of insight in strategic foresight.

The 2018 IPAC edition of the NCR New Public Servant Workshop presented an excellent opportunity to gain additional training I need to help improve operational excellence in our division. The workshop's three networking opportunities with federal public servants and thought leaders based in the National Capital region also proved very valuable. I look forward to attending to attending the 2019 New Public Servant workshop and future IPAC NCR events.