

# Develop or Strengthen Your Peer-Learning Network Via Action Learning

Managing by Network

Distance Learning Course

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# What is Action Learning?

Action learning involves working on real problems, focusing on learning and actually implementing solutions.

Action learning is a process of inquiry, beginning with the experience of not knowing 'what to do next', and finding that answers are not available through current expertise.

**Definition from the Canadian Chapter of the  
International Foundation of Action Learning**

# Facing Challenges Together

When expertise fails to provide an answer, collaborative inquiry with fellow learners who are undergoing the same questioning experience is always available.

To be effective, this partnership in learning needs to be both supportive and at the same time challenging, deeply caring yet questioning.



# Creating A Culture of Inquiry

Such partnerships actually create themselves when different people with different ideas engage whole-heartedly with each other to resolve each other's problems.



# Honest Inquiry

This is a profound shift: from dependence on available expertise and pride in the steady accumulation of knowledge to learning with and from fellow learners, honestly disclosing doubts and admitting ignorance.

# Action Learning Equation

Action learning is based on a this concept:

$$L = P + Q.$$

Learning requires Programmed knowledge (routine knowledge in use) and Questioning insight.

The process integrates research on what is obscure with action to resolve a problem, and personal and communal reflection.

# The Role of the Group

Action Learning is an ongoing, highly focused process among group members that includes members helping each other to solve current, real-world problems -- and learn at the same time.

The learning comes primarily from the learner's continued actions toward current, real-world goals in their lives or work and from continued reflection on those actions.

Reflection is primarily based on addressing powerful questions posed by group members.

# An Ongoing Process

In Action Learning, learners work in cohort groups to enhance the learning of each member by sharing highly focused questions, supportive challenges and ongoing support.

This is in contrast to the traditional approach of learning by collecting large amounts of knowledge and materials that might be used later on somehow.

# Build a Peer-Learning Network Based on Desired Competencies

Knowledge + Skills + Abilities + Behaviors + Attitudes =  
Competencies

Who in your peer-learning networking will assist you in developing partnership and collaboration competencies ?

Identify one or two individuals, including yourself, that demonstrate the following competencies and who you would welcome into your peer-learning network.

<b>Partnership &amp; Collaboration Competencies</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Partnering		
Conflict Management		
Influencing/Negotiating		
Teamwork		
External Awareness		
Vision		
Accountability		
Planning & Evaluation		

Consider colleagues outside the federal agency.  
Consider friends and family from whom you seek advice.

<b>Partnership &amp; Collaboration Competencies</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Collaborative Leadership		
Leveraging Partnerships		
Partner Cultural Awareness		
Community Collaboration		
Team Building		
Entrepreneurship		
Financial Management		
Partnership Management		

Look for individuals that possess more than one competencies.

<b>Partnership &amp; Collaboration Competencies</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
Strategic Thinking		
Facilitation		
Political Savvy		
Consensus Building		
Developing and Managing Agency Agreements for Partnerships		
Policies for Donations and Fundraising Partnerships		

# Questions to Ponder

1. Who's in your peer-learning network?
2. What partnership and collaboration competencies are missing from the individuals in your peer network?
3. Are you using your peer-learning network to develop the partnership and collaboration skills you need as a manager?