



JOHN ROBINSON CONSULTING SERVICES

eLearning CATALOGUE

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Critical Thinking for Better Outcomes

Critical thinking is a reflective and analytical style of thinking, with its basis in logic, rationality, and synthesis. No-one is a critical thinker all the time, each of us has bouts of ill-disciplined and irrational thoughts. Public servants need to be aware of the elements of critical thinking. You need to be committed to using critical thinking at work.

This program walks you through a range of skills and activities that – if practiced – will improve your ability to evaluate information and identify and question your own and others' assumptions and thinking processes in a disciplined way.

Module written by Kate Delaney.



Decision-making in the Public Sector

Public organisations operate in a complex environment with a variety of stakeholders with conflicting demands (e.g. service recipients and taxpayers' views on small government). This can create pressure to achieve short-term results in order to get problems solved quickly and efficiently. Or, it can give way to a more prudent, time-consuming process of decision-making.

This program lets you explore decision making processes, styles, and tips and traps to help you unpack your contribution to and role in making better decisions.

Module written by Kate Delaney.



Strategy in the Public Sector

Strategic thinking helps to change our mindset, to challenge our assumptions, to open ourselves to possibilities and opportunities before bringing in the constraints that narrow our 'solutions.' Strategists are not merely born – the necessary skills can be learned. Yet it's not the sort of thing you can copy down from a textbook and memorise. That's because strategy is contextual and difficult, because it broaches problems that haven't yet been solved.

This program is about personal development, it helps you think about, engage with and identify ways to build the strategic thinking capabilities you need to respond to increasingly complex demands and public sector settings. You will take away approaches that you can apply at your desk.

Module written by Kate Delaney.



Strategic Leadership

All leaders grow in their jobs as they acquire more experience. Public service leaders – at all levels – work in complex and complicated environments in terms of exposure to legislation, legislatures and public service rules, the goals they have to achieve, the differences in structure and the discretion afforded in this sector. This can and probably will affect how public sector leaders act.

This short program describes relevant skills and capabilities that may change the way you think about and engage in the act of leadership. It encourages you to think about how you perceive the world and your assumptions about how the world works – especially about management and leadership. This program also provides pointers to help you direct your own leadership growth.

Module written by Kate Delaney & John Robinson.



Horizon Scanning in the Public Sector

One of the jobs of the public service is to imagine a future in which the way we live, work and interact today will be different from the way we will live, work and interact five or ten years from now. Horizon scanning is a technique that allows us to spot change early so that decisions we make today are better suited to the future.

This program introduces some of the concepts and practices of horizon scanning that have been used and are useful to and in the public service.

Module written by Kate Delaney.



Planning and Managing Change

People managing change in the public sector need to create an environment (e.g. permission and culture) that allows staff to innovate and use new methods. Change is hard because it does involve judgement – making decisions before high quality information is known, for example. Often it means taking staff with you through major changes that might be difficult for them personally. Technical know-how might tell you what the impact of any decision might be, but it never substitutes for good judgements about what the right or sustainable choice is.

This program will help participants emerge with a fresh, personal and introspective approach to change management and decision making that characterises all good leaders.

Module written by Kate Delaney.



Thinking About your Reaction to Change at Work

This program provides you with another way to think about change. It focuses on helping you develop the capabilities required to respond effectively to the challenges of turbulent times. It takes time for change to take effect. Embedding new approaches and dislodging old ways of life are (clearly) long-term processes, with movements forward and backwards, and change at different levels.

This program emphasises how you might go about strengthening your tolerance for change. It encourages self-awareness and explores how you may think differently about the challenges of change and your personal powers and responsibilities.

Module written by Kate Delaney.



Writing Fundamentals

Effective writing is a crucial skill for most public servants. Whether through emails, reports or specific documents tailored for government, every written message will benefit from a systematic approach to its design and development.

This program provides a framework for planning, drafting and editing a document. Along the way you will find a number of short activities to complete as part of the learning. You may be an experienced writer looking for a timely refresher on your writing technique. You may be a developing writer looking for some easily accessible writing guidelines. Whatever your stage of writing experience, this module covers some key steps and reminders for how to draft an effective document that conveys the intended message in a way that meets the needs of the intended audience.

Module written by Jaki Halliday.



An Innovator's Approach to Work

Innovation in a public sector context is not necessarily about the next “big thing” in policy or service delivery. Quality innovation is about the exploration of what we have, what we need and how we may get there. This program describes how you can be an innovator at work.

Module written by Kate Delaney.



Navigating Risk at Work

Are you an effective risk-taker?
Does risk shape you or do you shape it?

This course discusses how you can work within the unwritten rules of risk (climate, culture, consequences) at work to achieve better outcomes.

Module written by Kate Delaney.



Connecting the Dots

Have you ever missed something you should recognise – or should have recognised – but didn't pay attention to it? You've probably heard expressions like 'knock on effect'. You have possibly been affected when colleagues from another team have not met deadlines that seriously affected your ability to deliver your outcomes (i.e. their input to your work was driven out by higher priorities with no ill intentions.) This program shows you an interesting technique for 'connecting the dots' and spotting potential problems like these.

Module written by Kate Delaney.



The ABC's of Public Service Professionals

This program outlines an experience based framework canvassing basic skills you are often expected to acquire and then master on the job. We have looked at a range of topics from priority setting to running meetings and more.

The ideas contained within this program point to approaches you could try or that will help build your capability as the professional public servant.

Module written by Kate Delaney.



Performance Management Through Feedback

Public sector managers are challenged to motivate, develop and steer followers who provide good public services. We do know that just sticking to formal annual performance management processes isn't useful nor is it enjoyable. Performance management can't be tick and flick. Managers and staff need to discuss performance more often and, where possible, to treat any work related conversation as a chance for feedback.

This program suggests a different approach (including a framework) that participants can simply adopt and use at work.

Module written by John Robinson.



Sustainable Negotiation

Negotiating is an essential skill; it's the key to success for many public organisations and individual public servants. Public organisations and servants can't lose sight of the fact that the quality of the relationships they build and nurture delivers the outcomes they want. Institutions and individuals cannot deliver outcomes if the relationships they have are superficial and transactional. They need to move beyond shallow relationships.

This program looks at how to negotiate for long-term success – touching on how to embrace, value, understand and collaborate with the 'other side' because they are the people that help you ideate and create viable solutions that last over time.

Module written by John Robinson.



Influencing, Negotiation & Persuasion

One of the most important professional skills is the ability to communicate effectively and influence persuasively in interpersonal exchanges, negotiations, meetings, presentations and briefings. You already have these skills at some level. You would not be in your present position if this was not the case.

This program provides the opportunity to further develop your skills in this essential area of workplace communication.

Module written by John Robinson.



Business Continuity in the Public Sector

This program identifies some of the nuts and bolts of business continuity in the public sector. This short session is designed to raise awareness and understanding of business continuity principles, practices and plans. Knowing the basic building blocks of business continuity will help you prepare to respond to a business disruption in a constructive and timely manner.

Module written by Kate Delaney.



Difficult Conversations

We all have difficult conversations at work.

This module helps you understand why they are 'difficult' and provides advice on how to hold these conversations.

Module written by Jaki Halliday.



Fundamentals of Project Management

Today a lot of us work to produce a unique product or outcome and then move on to produce another unique product (like an ad or a policy paper).

This module introduces the specialised set of knowledge about this type of project work.

Module written by Rod Morrison.



Scenario Planning

You make decisions today. Sometimes it is useful to consider how they might play out over time.

This module explores a structured way to look at possible alternative future settings for today's decisions, and explains when it is useful to do so.

Module written by Kate Delaney.



On-The-Job Training

On the Job Training (OTJ) is a highly effective and yet underutilised method of training.

This module provides the structure and underpinnings of effective OTJ training, to a target audience of managers / supervisors.

Module written by John Robinson.



Machinery Changes in Government

Machinery changes in Government lead to changes in the Public Sector.

This module explores the context of Machinery of Government (MoG) changes and how you can effectively manage such change in your role.

Module written by John Robinson.



Using Storytelling in Government

People remember stories. Stories help people understand your argument(s) and your key messages.

This module explores and explains some ways you can use storytelling in government.

Module written by Kate Delaney.