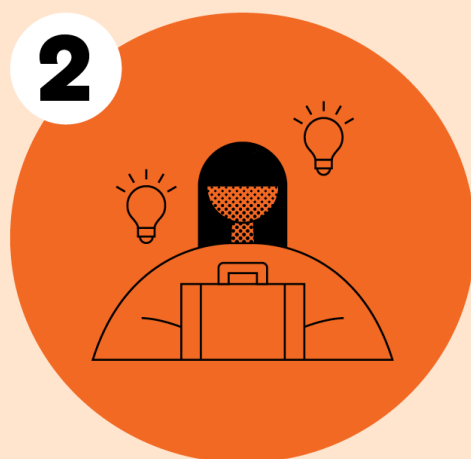


NAWO Mentoring Program: Mentoring Conversation Map

Business & Technical Acumen

Five Key Learning Priorities

Future Focused & Adaptive Learning



Business & Technical Acumen

- Creativity & innovation
- Metrics & measures that matter
- Business partnering
(Cross functional collaboration)
- Project management
- Problem solving



Overview

General business acumen involves the ability to effectively communicate with all functional areas in the organisation to develop strategies or deal with “business situations” (both risks and opportunities). Whether it is through **cross-functional collaboration** with business partners or **managing the project timeline**, individuals with business and technical acumen are always looking ahead to gain insight into opportunities with the confidence to get the best outcomes.

Sound decision-making results from a combining of **metrics and measures that matter**, the co-ordinated efforts of everyone involved and a level of **creativity and innovation** to identify the best outcomes.

Vision for this Mentoring Conversation Map

Before you start, consider your vision for this conversation. These questions might help you to ‘begin with the end in mind’:

- Why are you interested in developing your business and technical acumen?
- What concerns do you have about tackling this topic?
- What do you want to be different as a result of exploring and developing your business and technical acumen?
- How will you know/measure that you (we) have achieved this?

Questions to Facilitate Conversation (70%)

These questions contribute to the exploration of **Business and Technical Acumen**:

- What do you understand about the level of business acumen needed in more senior roles in your organisation? What would you need to know more about in order to take that next career step?
- How do you build strong relationships outside of your own work/functional area?
- Consider the skills, knowledge and attitudes that you currently use to work with senior management and key stakeholders on projects. Ask yourself and discuss:
 - What skills do you use that enable you? Hinder you?
 - What knowledge do you demonstrate or apply that enables you? Hinders you?
 - What attitudes do you show that enable you? Hinder you?
- Think of a leader you've worked with who has strong business acumen. How do they demonstrate that knowledge and how have you seen it impact outcomes and results?
- How do you apply creativity to problem solving in your team?

Actions or Activities to Enhance Growth and Development (20%)

The following actions and activities can enhance growth and development of your business and technical acumen:

- Identify someone who you consider a technical specialist in an area you are less familiar with arrange to speak with them with a view to building relationships and learning more about what they do.
- Identify the key business/financial metrics and measures for your organisation and learn more about how they are calculated.
- Increase your knowledge about how the company operates. Ask if there are any reports you could be copied on which would build your understanding and knowledge.
- Get curious. Identify one new thing outside your area of expertise to learn each week.
- Stay abreast of the financial press and current affairs. It's a low-cost way to familiarise yourself with the wider business community and gain an understanding of the current economic climate and how it is impacting your industry and sector.



Research & Development AND/OR Formal Training that Contributes to Development (10%)

The following actions might help you to learn more about developing your business and technical acumen:

- Identify courses that you might attend to learn more about the fundamentals of finance including how to read financial statements.
- Research who your organisation's customers are, any threats it is coming up against such as technological advances, shifting customer preferences, environmental and sustainability issues, or any economic factors that could impact the organisation and its market.