



Client Profile: City of Tacoma

Supervision Management – SMG Certificate/Credit Courses

The Need:

The City of Tacoma has maintained a long term training partnership with Tacoma Community College (now Invista Performance Solutions or IPS) since City employees first participated in management and supervisory courses at Downtown Tacoma Community College (DTC) campus in 1981. The longevity of the program reflects the City's important need for employee management and supervisory development and the College's ability to respond with a high quality professional training program. It further demonstrates the positive collaboration between the City of Tacoma and Tacoma Community College (now IPS) for over 30 years to support this client-based program.

As City employees advance into supervisory and managerial positions, they are required to have college degrees. Working with TCC, the City envisioned a program to both support supervisory and managerial practical skill growth and educational achievement. The SMG certificate program fulfills both those needs for the City and its employees.

The Solution:

IPS has established five customized client-responsive Supervisory and Management (SMG) courses for the City.

These courses include:

- 1. SMG 101: Effective Supervision (5 credits)**
This course examines supervisory/managerial approaches to improving employee engagement and retention. It builds participants' familiarity with best practices to help strengthen one's ability to build positive, productive workplace relationships, manage competing interests and function as a change agent. This course explores how supervisors can ensure that not only the work gets done within budget but that the organization functions professionally and ethically, with high functioning work teams and engaged employees.
- 2. SMG 120: Managing Challenging Employees (3 credits)**
This course will provide participants with various strategies for managing challenging employees. Course content emphasizes the importance of both performance coaching and developmental coaching, in addition to implementing progressive discipline techniques in conjunction with HR to help change behavior and improve performance. Participants will learn intervention techniques, and will use workplace employee problem scenarios to practice new skills.
- 3. SMG 201: Manager Communications (3 credits)**
Supervisors will learn to communicate more effectively to improve employee satisfaction and heighten employee retention. Course content includes analyzing and practicing basic communication principles and techniques, and will provide methods for overcoming

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obstacles to effective communication. Participants will also be introduced to effective listening techniques with emphasis on practical workplace application.

4. SMG 261: Dynamics of Leadership (3 credits)

This course compares and contrasts the role of leaders, managers, and front-line supervisors in an organization. Participants will examine the traits, qualities, skills, and workplace actions of effective leaders, supervisors and managers. Participants will self-assess their leadership style, and evaluate their effectiveness, after reviewing individual strengths and weaknesses.

5. SMG 264: Motivation and Productivity (3 credits)

This course examines methodologies used in the workplace to obtain sustained peak performance from employees. Participants will examine alternatives to “command-and-control” and “management-by-compliance” management approaches. The concepts of feedback and intrinsic (as opposed to extrinsic) rewards are emphasized as the foundation for a highly motivational work environment. Emphasis is on the role of the supervisor and the interaction between supervisor and the employee in building a highly motivational workforce.

The complete program is accredited by Tacoma Community College and participants earn college credit towards a 17-credit Supervision and Management certificate from TCC. IPS partnered with the City to build course objectives, course syllabi, and select training materials and course content relevant to City managers that also meets WA State credit course requirements.

IPS and the City jointly select the instructor for the five courses and set up an instructional schedule for on-site trainings in the City Building, which responds to the City’s need for convenience. In addition, the course curriculum is continually revised to meet new employee needs—new knowledge, concepts, skills, activities, and course content are added annually.

In 2015 IPS converted SMG 101, the entry level supervision course, to a five-credit course to create more of an intensive introductory approach to the certificate program. As the City now requires this course for all supervisors and managers, IPS flexibly offers the courses in several sections determined by the City. In order to keep interaction and feedback at a high level, a maximum of 20 students enroll in each section.

The Results:

End-of-course evaluations have been obtained since IPS began to manage the certificate program. Participants rate the program highly, 95% saying that they would recommend it to others in their organization and 98% rate the instructor as excellent.

“As a City of Tacoma employee, I was fortunate to take the Supervision and Management courses. Having an MBA from the University of Washington, I found Invista’s classes to be an invaluable and practical supplement to my graduate-level studies. People from all professions, levels in an organization, or stages in their career can benefit from the topics covered. I find myself to this day routinely reviewing class materials presented by Invista’s SMG.” – Clay Krauss, former City of Tacoma manager and current Director of IT at Tacoma Community College.