



Development Planning Guidelines for Managers

Take some time to think about an appropriate mix or set of actions that will help your employees develop their knowledge, skills and experience in a direction that interests them (refer to the Professional/Career Development Planning Guidelines for Employees for suggestions). Even if the development does not immediately or directly impact work in your department, enhancing the capabilities of your employees will help reduce turnover and help build internal talent pools at the college

Reviewing the Plan

A manager's central role in career conversations is to help employees to better understand what they do well, and where they can improve and grow. Managers should also be well informed about the development opportunities in the organization, and be able to identify opportunities where the employee's interests and college needs overlap.

Managers should be genuinely committed to helping their employees build their potential. At the same time, they need to be clear about the limits. Managers shouldn't agree to actions that they can't deliver on. Managers are not expected to provide all the answers or make decisions for employees.

A career conversation is time spent preparing for and discussing where an employee might want to head and how they might get there. It requires an open mind about what the outcome should be, and it conveys interest in the person and their future. Development discussions connect employee career ideas with organization needs, and help employees to see a future for themselves in the organization. Importantly, they increase employees' job satisfaction, loyalty and motivation and develop and retain the skills the organization needs for the future.

Things to Avoid

There are certain issues and statements that you should avoid, such as:

- Guaranteeing or forming a contract with the employee by promising that the college will provide training or any other promised benefit. The best that you can do is to say that you will help support the employee's development, but that economic circumstances, priorities, and goals will have an impact on the employee's desired developmental path, promotions, and career goals. Nothing is guaranteed.
 - The manager owning or having responsibility for carrying out the plan. The career development plan belongs to the employee. Managers can facilitate its pursuit, explore options with the employee, provide opportunities for the employee when possible, encourage the employee to have goals for growth and expansion of his or her career and skills, but the manager cannot do it for them. The employees must own their plan.
 - Overcommitting your time or resources. As much as a manager might be devoted to helping the employee grow, they have a limited amount of time available to help, in addition to the rest of their job. For example, unless a manager is already aware of a great class or resource, researching options for the employee to develop skills is not their job.
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When to Have Conversations

Career conversations ought to be regular and ongoing. They can be shorter or longer depending on the employee's situation. These are recommended to take place each year.

- Conversations can take place as part of regular processes such as progress meetings, coaching or mentoring discussions.
- Career conversations should happen alongside or just after performance assessments
- Short, unplanned conversations can be a useful addition to the regular process. They are a good way to share new information, strengthen your relationship or check whether anything has changed. They may sometimes sow a seed that has a significant impact even though it is not apparent at the time.

In the first conversation start by talking about what a career conversation is and the roles each have in the conversation. Expect that not everyone will be ready to talk about their career ideas or future direction. Make it easy for the person to opt out if that's how they feel. Repeat the invitation for a conversation at suitable times in the future.

How to Prepare

Managers should think about the employee they will be talking to:

- With what projects or tasks have you seen the employee fully engaged with at work? What skills were they using?
- How does their position contribute to the department's strategic goals?
- What opportunities do you see in the future for them?
- What is the department prepared to do to support them to develop their skills?

Review any notes and actions agreed in previous conversations. If necessary, gather information about opportunities in other areas of the organization that might be useful to the employee.

The Conversation

Questions and tips managers could use, include:

- Are the employee's career interests and values clear? Do you know which of your employee's strengths contribute to these career goals and what areas need to be developed?
 - Do you feel that the short-term goals your employee has suggested are realistic and effective? Is there anything standing in the way of the desired goals?
 - **Tip:** Convey what you know about organizational realities to help the employee set short-term goals. If you think there are outside barriers which will inhibit the attainment of their goals, describe them and help the employee work around them.
 - Can you suggest other activities that would help the employee reach the developmental goals? What has helped you in the past in this area?
 - **Tip:** Help the employee select at least one development activity for each short-term goal.
 - Are there people you know who could help your employee meet their career development goals? Can you provide the resources identified?
 - **Tip:** Help the employee meet their goals by offering your ideas, contacts with people, and resources. Think of at least one person who could help the employee in a mentor or advisor role.
 - Have you and the employee agreed on dates for progress checkpoints and what will be measured at each one?
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