

BYU Manager's Toolbox



Development Planning

There are two kinds of people in organizations—those that have 20 years of experience and those that have one year of experience repeated 20 times.

- Gene Dalton, BYU

in which they can develop their skills and their career.

You should ensure that each employee has a viable development plan based on development needs you and the employee have discussed (more on how to put together a development plan later). You should also follow up during the year

to ensure that the employee is making progress on his or her development plan.

The Manager's Responsibility For Development

As a manager at Brigham Young University, you are responsible for the development of each of the employees who reports to you or is a member of your organization. Each employee also bears a responsibility for his or her own development but your job is to help them get the opportunities they need to grow and develop in their careers.

There are a number of things you can do as a manager to help your people develop:

Development Planning:

First, you should have frequent development discussions with each of your employees to understand their needs and goals for development and to help them identify ways

On The Job:

The job itself is the single most important tool you have for developing an employee. Try to structure jobs to ensure challenge and opportunity to learn and develop. Delegate significant responsibility to each employee to increase their learning and contribution to the department.

Facilitating Job Movement:

Managers should also look for opportunities for people to rotate or to move to other positions in the department or outside the department based on the interests of the individual and the needs of the department. Promoting job rotation and movement provides vitality to the

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organization and development opportunity to the employees.

Supporting Training:

Second, you have a role in supporting training. You should make sure that you are budgeting appropriately for the training needs of each of your employees. Training that the employee attends during the year should be directly tied to the development plan that you and the employee have discussed.

Support your employees in attending training and ask for a follow-up report after training. Ask employees to share significant learnings with the department after returning from training. You should also hold employees accountable for using the new skills they learn during training. Give them positive feedback when they use their new skills appropriately.

Career Pathing:

Establish clear career paths in your organization by creating clear competencies for each job family. These can serve as a guide to professional and skill development. Where possible, identify job ladders or progression paths with clear criteria to help people understand what they need to do to advance within the department.

Succession Planning:

One last development responsibility you have is to help prepare your successor as leader of the department by identifying those with the potential to replace you and by helping them get the kinds of development opportunities that they need to be prepared when you move on to your next career opportunity.

Putting Together A Development Plan

Every year all BYU employees are expected, with the help of their manager, to put together a development plan. This plan is intended to address the question of what each employee will do to develop his or her professional skills during the year.

Although it is part of the annual BYU Performance & Development Plan, a development plan is different from an annual performance evaluation. A performance evaluation is intended to assess an employee's contribution and performance over the year and evaluate that performance for the purposes of making pay decisions. It is usually tied to key objectives set early in the year as well as to ongoing job accountabilities and dimensions. The annual development plan asks a key question that is fundamentally different from the performance evaluation:

What experiences, knowledge, or skills does the employee most need to better perform his or her current job or to be prepared for other opportunities?

There are two primary steps involved in creating a development plan. One is to identify an employee's key development needs and the second is to plan what actions can be undertaken to ensure his or her development.

Step One: Identifying Development Needs

A development plan is based on a clear understanding of a person's development needs. A development need may arise from a performance improvement need, from changing job requirements, from a gap between a person's current skill set and a desired future job, or from other personal needs. A development need can be surfaced by any of the following:

- ◆ Feedback From The Boss
- ◆ Performance Gaps – Objectives Not Met
- ◆ Feedback Instruments or Surveys
- ◆ Inputs From Peers
- ◆ Strategic Planning – Gaps Between Future Job Needs And Current Skills

A development need may involve a technical or business skill like the following:

- ❖ Improving C language programming competency
- ❖ Learning computer applications needed in the job

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- ❖ Basic finance skills
- ❖ Need to improve knowledge of project management tools and approaches
- ❖ In depth knowledge of statistical process control

Or it may involve a leadership or interpersonal skill like the following:

- ❖ Greater coaching/performance management skills
- ❖ Building influence or negotiations skills
- ❖ Giving effective presentations
- ❖ Strategic thinking and planning skills
- ❖ Greater communication and listening abilities



- ◆ From Training or Education Programs
- ◆ Through Self Help Activities

The first step in development planning is to be clear on what performance related skills your employees need to develop that would make the most difference in their capabilities and performance. You should focus on three development needs at most in the plan. More than this is simply too many to tackle in one year. Use the Texas Instruments saying in your development planning:

“More than two objectives is no objectives.”

Step Two: Identifying Development Actions

Having identified the employee's development needs, the next step is to decide what specific actions the employee can take to accelerate improvement of his or her development needs. Remember that there are four primary ways in which we develop our professional skills:

- ◆ By Experience On The Job
- ◆ Through Relationships

As you put together a development plan, think through each category to identify actions that can be taken to develop the skill or knowledge area you are working on. Here are some key questions to ask as you try to identify development actions:

1. *What experience or added responsibility on the job could help development?*
2. *Are there special assignments such as task forces or focused projects that could help in development?*
3. *Who are the key people that could help the employee's learning and development of this skill?*
4. *Would the assignment of a mentor or professional coach be appropriate?*
5. *Are there internal or external training programs that may fit the need the employee has?*
6. *What do employees do on their own in the way of reading or research or through personal reminders to develop this skill?*

Look at the sample development plan at the end of this article to see the kind of development

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actions that can be taken. Remember that on-the-job development accounts for 50-60% of a person's development. Don't restrict your plan to attendance at training programs. Focus especially on what can be done on the job to give you the kinds of responsibility, experiences and projects that will accelerate your development.

Holding A Development Discussion

Most often a development plan will arise out of a mutual discussion between you and your employees and will be put together jointly with inputs from you and the employee. A format for a development discussion with your employee may look like this:

First, outlining the purpose and format for the discussion: This kind of discussion usually has four purposes:

- ▲ Discussing the employee's career direction and goals
- ▲ Reviewing your perception of the employee's strengths and development needs
- ▲ Discussing the employee's assessment of his or her strengths and development needs
- ▲ Agreeing on action steps needed for development

Second, discussing the employee's inputs on his or her own career: Several key questions should be addressed here:

- ▲ What perspective does the employee have on his or her own career? What direction have they set for themselves? What key jobs would they like to have in the future?
- ▲ What do they see as their own strengths both against the needs of their current position and in order to meet your future goals?
- ▲ What do they see as their own development needs, both for the current position and for future goals?

Third, give feedback to the employee. You should give your inputs on how you see the employee's strengths and development needs.

- ▲ Validate any strengths that the employee has shared, adding any others that you see.
- ▲ Identify any development needs that you see in addition to what the employee has shared. Remember that a development need could include any of the following:
 - ❖ A gap in performance that needs to be addressed
 - ❖ A key experience that the person may be lacking to get to the next level
 - ❖ Any people or leadership skill you may lack
 - ❖ Knowledge or competence the person may need more depth in a functional area such as finance, or operations or a particular technology

Fourth, agree on key development actions: What actions are needed to shore up development plans? Remember that development plans may include on-the-job activities, added responsibilities, special assignments or projects, mentoring, training or other self help activities.

Lastly, discuss follow-up: What will you both do in following up on the plan?

- ▲ What will the employee do to take ownership for the plan?
- ▲ What can you as the manager do to support the employee's plan for development?
- ▲ How will you and the employee follow up on progress against the plan?

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A development discussion can be held any time during the year but should at least be held as part of the Performance & Development Plan discussion in December or January. Ensuring an employee's development progress starts with a well thought out development plan. Make sure to take the time both in the planning and the time it takes to discuss this through with your employee. Though the plan may change and be modified, it helps to start with a plan that you can then execute.

Executing The Plan

Once you have a plan defined, you then need to carry it out. Discuss with the employee what may be needed for training, coaching, or travel that is part of your plan. You should meet with the employee on a periodic basis and review his or her progress on the development plan. Make the necessary arrangements to provide the job experiences and assignments you have outlined in the development plan.

You will find that the urgencies of getting the job done and meeting the milestones your department is responsible for can often get in the way of carrying out the development plans you have established with your employees. Take responsibility for following through on the commitments you have made and make your own development and the development of your employees a priority.

To Do List

√ Get everybody in your department on a development plan that you and they can buy into. Then follow through and ensure that the action plans for development are carried out.

- √ Open up the development toolbox and pick out a few tools for your people. Assign a mentor to someone who's new. Line up people with some of the seminars they need. Make sure that everyone has at least 40 hours of development planned for the year. You can do much to grease the skids.
- √ Plan some development for yourself based on your development needs, at least forty hours' worth, and set a tone for development for your organization.

The Bottom Line

Establishing a development climate in your organization is up to you and, by and large, within your control. Increase your emphasis on development and you'll be likely to increase the commitment and motivation of your employees.

