

## Employee Growth and Development

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In order for employees to grow and develop, they need to be ambitious and have the commitment of their manager. This is not a one-time commitment, but an ongoing process that requires a manager's support in the form of resources, time, feedback, interest and effort. It includes a review of the employee's current strengths and weaknesses, career aspirations, and the competencies required to succeed. There should be a two-way dialogue that involves the creation of short- and long-term development plans and the creation of activities and events to support them.

### Identify Strengths and Weaknesses

A manager must be honest in their assessment of an employee's strengths and weaknesses. This process will highlight those competencies in need of development. It involves:

- Identifying competencies necessary for success in their current position.
- Comparing their performance against the competency using a 1 to 5 scale.
- Having the employee do the same.
- Meeting to agree on a rating.

### Create a Development Plan

Creating a development plan should be a collaborative effort between the employee and the employee's manager. Development plans should be specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and time-bound (SMART).

- A development plan should be specific and state what will be achieved. Goals should be concrete, so that the manager and employee will know when they have been achieved.
- The plan should be measurable in terms of effectiveness and quality.
- Create action-oriented activities and events that move the employee toward the desired state. Create smaller milestones for the

employee to achieve along the way to reward success.

- The development plan should be relevant and achievable. Select no more than three competencies to work on at any given time.
- A development plan must include specific timeframes for accomplishment of each goal, activity or event.

### Create Developmental Challenges

One of the most powerful ways to develop employees is to create new, challenging opportunities for them that will "stretch" their capabilities and force them out of their comfort zones. Some employees will be anxious to take on these new and challenging assignments. With others, you will need to convince them of the benefits of accepting such assignments. It is your responsibility to know your employees' competencies to ensure the likelihood of their success.

### Developmental Assignment Examples

- Delegate one of your responsibilities.
- Have your employee represent you at meetings/conferences.
- Have them manage part of your budget or a cost reduction project.
- Assign them training responsibility for others.
- Rotate your employee through key positions to gain a broader understanding of your business.

Following the above suggestions is not only good management practice, but ensures the optimal productivity of your employees and your entire company. Companies that support the growth and development of their employees frequently have higher employee satisfaction, often leading to higher customer satisfaction and profitability, as well!