Developing Others

Planning and supporting the development of individuals’ skills and abilities so that they can fulfill current or future job/role responsibilities more effectively.

Key Actions

- **Collaboratively establishes development goals**—Works with individuals to identify areas for development, understand need for improvement, and set specific development goals.

- **Collaboratively establishes development plans**—Works with individuals to identify options for meeting development goals; explores environmental supports and barriers to development; jointly determines appropriate developmental activities.

- **Creates a learning environment**—Secures resources required to support development efforts; ensures that opportunities for development are available; offers assistance to help individuals overcome obstacles to learning.

- **Monitors progress**—Gives individuals specific feedback on their performance related to established goals; highlights key positive and negative performance issues; adjusts plans to ensure development.

Quick Tips

- Put employee development at the top of your daily to-do list. Investing the time now will lead to long-term gains in the future.

- Identify special assignments that go beyond what an associate can already do.

- Assign a task to someone who will learn from the experience, not to someone who already knows the task well.

- Set development goals that are specific, challenging yet realistic, and measurable.

- Give associates the freedom to learn from their successes and failures.

- Support associates in leveraging their strengths.
Developmental Activities

Self-Directed

- Meet regularly with individuals to discuss their progress, issues, obstacles, and adjustments with development plans.

- Maintain a development file for each individual. Keep track of review sessions and specific behavior issues (exceptional and rejectable); use this information during scheduled feedback discussions.

- Review upcoming projects and assignments. Think about how to incorporate opportunities for individual development goals when making resource assignments.

- Collect articles and development tips that could help your staff. Share them with appropriate individuals.

- Look for patterns in your records. Are you providing feedback equitably to all individuals? Is the ratio of positive and negative feedback appropriate?

- Read books and articles about performance management, goal setting, removing barriers for development, training, and organizational development.

Partnerships

- Invite individuals to participate in the development planning process. Encourage them to identify areas for improvement and areas of interest that are not part of their current jobs. Work with each person to plan how his or her interests can be developed.

- Talk to leaders in other teams, departments, and locations to establish specific activities that will help a person develop in an area of interest.

- Begin the development planning process with an individual who is a solid performer. Work together to identify developmental needs and establish a plan to strengthen these areas. Once you feel comfortable with this process, use it with someone who has a performance problem.

- Explain the reasons for recommending specific developmental activities. Include information about support and barriers.

- Talk to someone you feel is strong in developing his or her staff. What does this person do to provide developmental opportunities and to remove barriers that prohibit development?

- When your attempts to develop others have not been successful, ask your manager for help in overcoming obstacles that might be interfering with their development efforts.

- Include staff in creating a development handbook of activities, readings, etc., related to your work unit’s function. Ask your staff to review the completed handbook and select actions they would like to work on.
**Targeted Assignments**

- Structure your development plan, highlighting future goals, areas of strength, and developmental needs. Determine a plan to reach your goals and develop your skills. Note the difficulties and the rewards you encounter during this process. Use this information to assist your staff with their development.

- Learn the particulars of your organization’s developmental planning process.

- Research the formal training and development opportunities offered in your organization.

**Workshops**

Look for a workshop that addresses the following:

- Providing support and removing obstacles when developing others.

- Giving feedback.

- Diagnosing others’ strengths and developmental needs and working out strategies to meet goals.

- Delegating assignments for developing others.

- Creating and documenting a development plan.

- Managing the development of others.

**Readings**

**Books**


This development guide is designed to help readers fill in the gaps in their skills by targeting specific areas such as goal setting, diversity issues, career planning, delegating, and more. It provides exercises and action items, group activities, ideas for helping others develop, and Internet links to provide learning opportunities outside the organization.


According to the author, when managers become mentors, they become part of a learning partnership. Bell summarizes each chapter at the beginning of the book and encourages the reader to move on to the chapter(s) that pertains to his or her current situation.

This easy-to-read book asserts that managers must actively seek exceptionally talented people and create a workplace where these people want to work.


This book offers advice to senior managers on how to identify and develop future executives. Real-life examples are used to show how executives can link development and the company’s future needs. The book also discusses how executives can take control of their own development.


This concise guide to developing the behaviors of a successful mentor concentrates on seven areas of interaction with protégés. It features steps to follow as well as questions to answer. The workbook style makes it easy for the reader to record, assess, and change behaviors.


The developmental coaching model in this book is designed to help managers encourage self-development and to refocus the manager-employee relationship from evaluation to learning and growth. This book contains real-world examples, self-assessment tools, and checklists, and is written for leaders of all levels.

**Articles**


This article covers the results of a study about managers as facilitators of learning. The researchers interviewed managers to discover their perceptions about their roles as facilitators of learning. The article includes an extensive bibliography about the topic.


This article lists best practices in succession planning and includes case studies of several companies. Within these case studies are specific questions that leaders must answer to develop talent based on competencies needed by the organization.


The author details ways that managers can foster self-development and suggests soliciting feedback, clarifying needs, and providing adequate time and encouragement to make it easier for employees to initiate developmental activities.

The author relates his personal experience of being managed by the reputed “best people developer in GE” and passes along the whys and hows of being a people developer. He also counters many of the reasons managers use to avoid developing their people.


This article shows managers how to evaluate their employee development values and presents employee development models. It focuses on the coaching, mentoring, and counseling aspect of employee development and discusses strategies for addressing specific employee development needs.


This article discusses the skills required of developmental managers. A section titled “A+ Employees Need A+ Managers” lists the things that great managers do to continually develop people.


This article discusses the problem areas that rookie managers encounter and examines how their leaders must take responsibility for supporting them as the rookies learn to navigate their new position. This article also describes how leaders can provide support by creating a learning environment, giving constructive feedback, and monitoring progress.