



University of
South Australia

Development Conversations

A GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE
FOR MANAGERS



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Introduction

The world of work is constantly evolving. The impact of globalisation, new technologies, new ways of working and the need for individual organisations to retain relevance, vitality and competitiveness means that work roles, and the skills and knowledge required to be successful in them, are subject to increasingly shifting expectations.

Managers and the people who report to them have a reciprocal responsibility to ensure that professional growth and development is given high priority in the performance conversation:

- *Managers and leaders* - to ensure that a staff member's expertise continues to develop to meet current and future work expectations
- *People who report to them* - build career resilience and actively develop their own career in line with their needs, interests and the organisational requirements

To assist managers engage in good practice in professional development, this information toolkit contains expert tips and advice as well as pointers to other resources that many provide further insights.

Further information is also available from the People, Talent and Culture team. Feedback on the usefulness of these resources is always welcome, along with any suggestions for improvement.



Responsibilities of Managers and Leaders

Staff development is a shared responsibility; it is a collaborative process between managers and staff.



The key role for a manager in developing staff is to work with their staff members in:

1. clarifying expectations and capabilities required for effective performance in their role and as the role evolves, so staff remain 'current' in their knowledge and skill sets while continuing to contribute to organisational goals and strategy
2. recognising and building on their strengths as well as working with them to identify areas for development
3. setting action plans for progressing learning and development needs
4. clarifying any future career aspirations and what these may mean in terms of capability development and learning opportunities
5. sharing how the organisation's needs are evolving and informing staff how they can best contribute to these developments.

Underpinning the above actions is the need for:

- regular, constructive two-way feedback
- understanding staff motivators, and
- maximising the learning of staff on the job, for example coaching your staff through problem solving issues on the job.

Using a coaching approach

Development conversations are most effective when run from a coaching mindset because:

the core purpose of a development conversation is to **facilitate the staff member to take responsibility** for managing their own learning, development and career.

It is about setting goals and a plan for development that is mutually beneficial to the staff member and the organisation, so that the staff member can continue to grow and evolve their knowledge and skills so that they remain 'current' *now and in the future*.

The manager's role is to ask questions to prompt consideration and reflection by the individual around their future aspirations and development needs.

Points to remember when coaching are listed below:

- Coaching is about facilitating the performance, learning and development of another.
- You are not trying to 'teach' or advise a person when coaching. It is about facilitating the person to take ownership of their learning and development and their future.
- A coach helps people to see opportunities for improvement and identify practical ways forward for themselves.
- A coach uses a blend of observation, talking, listening, questioning and reflecting with the staff member.
- The focus of the manager is on enabling staff to perform independently and to take personal responsibility for their own success and professional satisfaction.
- Managers who coach well improve staff productivity, morale, job satisfaction, and ownership, to facilitate growth and learning.

(adapted from: APS Talent Management Toolkit, January 2015)

"Development should be self-directed, employee driven (allowing) employees to help themselves"

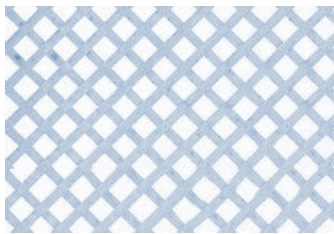
- (Modernising employee development for today's workforce, www.chronus.com, 2016)

The Contemporary view of 'Career'

The way we work today is vastly different from previous decades. Organisations have flatter structures, are more globalised and connected than ever, there is much greater diversity in our workforces, technology plays a significant part in how we work, and people are experiencing longer working lives.

In today's world of work the term 'career' is seen as a continuous process of learning and development. It is seen to be based on developing collaborative workplaces where staff move between locations and teams, and staff are able to connect and share information and knowledge with a wider network of colleagues.

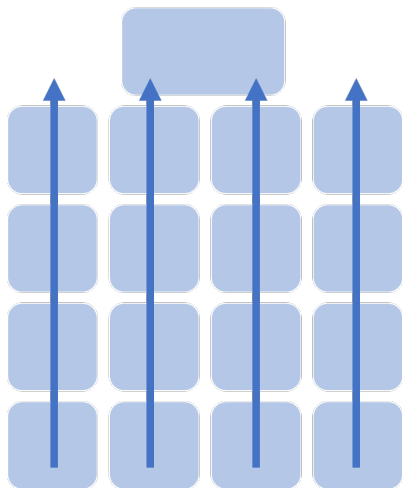
Think career lattice, not career ladder.



vs

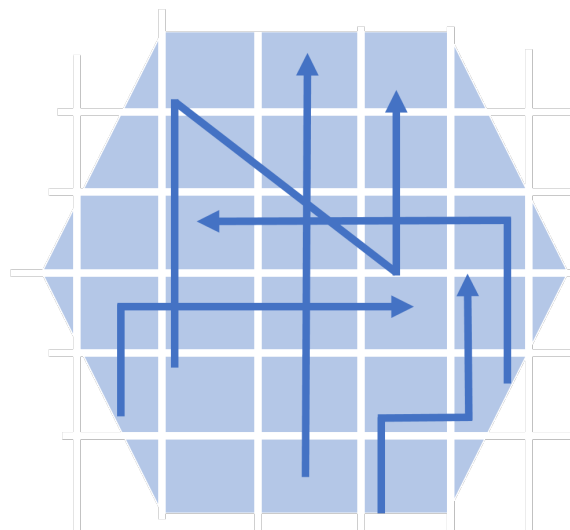


Career Ladder



- Hierarchical, top down
- Work is where you go
- Narrow career paths & jobs
- Homogeneous workforce
- Career vs life
- Low workforce mobility

Career Lattice



- Flatter, collaborative
- Work is what you do
- Multidimensional career paths & jobs
- Heterogeneous workforce
- Career & life
- High workforce mobility

In today's working environment, having a career doesn't necessarily mean changing jobs or climbing up the career ladder to increased responsibility. It can also mean the following as key ways of helping people continuously learn:

- continuing to grow in the current role by being exposed to new systems, new ways of working, different teams/work groups etc,
- shifting the focus of current work into a new area at the same level,
- developing new knowledge and/or skills,
- expanding current skills/building on strengths and taking them to the 'next level',
- moving sideways/laterally across a function,
- shifting to a new career path,
- taking a career break to study and/or start a family,
- blending work and life as experiences in both build capacity that benefits organisations and individuals e.g. volunteering experiences, parenting skills, travel,
- sharing knowledge/mentoring others, and
- phasing in retirement.



Career ladder

follows a hierarchical structure that governs the way information flows in organisations, defining career success as a linear climb to the top with increasing expertise in skills possessed by employees as they progress to different roles.



Career lattice

is meant to represent multiple paths to advance an employee's career. It provides opportunity and flexibility to switch job roles entirely, and make cross-functional movements to different roles that are not necessarily a level higher or even in the same domain.

Source :[Business Process Incubator](#)

70:20:10 Approach to Learning

The 70:20:10 framework describes how best to structure professional and career development to maximise learning and is useful to consider in your conversations with staff on how they might develop most effectively.

Ideally,

- 70% of learning takes place through experiences “on the job”, including observing others in action, participating in workplace activities, undertaking challenging tasks
- 20% is social or relationship-based learning, including mentoring and coaching (often from a manager)
- 10% from formal learning, including courses, programs, and study.



Experiential Learning:

Learning and developing through day-to-day tasks, challenges and practices
e.g. workplace projects, higher duties opportunities, secondments

Social Learning:

Learning and developing with and through others
e.g. Coaching, Mentoring, Conference attendance

Formal Learning:

Learning and developing through structured modules, courses and programs
e.g. Further study, formal workshops or seminars, online learning

Learning and Development Methodologies – *aligned with 70:20:10*

The 70: Experiential Learning				
Development Methodology	Description	Target Development	Success Factors	Benefits
Job Enrichment or Higher Duty Opportunity/ Acting Position Opportunity	The practice of assigning a staff member a job responsibility that is not typically associated with his/her current role. Provides an opportunity to work on 'next-level' job responsibilities. Usually undertaken within current work department or team but can go beyond this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific functional or role-specific capabilities/skills • Career development/progression • Increases flexibility within department/team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying talented early career staff • Determining with staff the 'on the job' opportunities that would be of interest/aligned to their learning style • Establishing with staff members the developmental goals of a stretch assignment or higher duty opportunity • Providing logistical & coaching support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops talent with broader experience • Supports organisational succession planning, including retention of talented staff • Improves performance • Boosts staff motivation within current role
Job Challenges	The practice of providing individuals with 'stretch' in their current role. Includes handling unfamiliar responsibilities, starting a new direction, making a change, fixing an existing problem, taking on 'high visibility' work, managing the interface with external people, working across cultures, or influencing without authority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role-specific capabilities/skills • Career development • Increases flexibility within department/team • Broader knowledge/experience • Visibility/exposure • Specific capability development e.g. project management, influencing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining with staff the 'on the job' opportunities that would be of interest/aligned to their learning style • Establishing with staff members the developmental goals of a stretch assignment • Providing logistical & coaching support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops talent with broader experience • Supports organisational succession planning, including retention of talented staff • Improves performance • Boosts staff motivation within current role
Workplace projects/ Participation in Task Forces or Committees	Being involved in a specific project or being a member of a committee or taskforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader workplace knowledge • Networking/exposure • Specific skills development e.g. project management or cross-functional collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management support • Opportunities to put learning into practice after project finished 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides development without taking staff out of their role • Increased exposure in the University or Sector
Secondments	Where an individual makes a temporary move to another area or into another level or type of role in the University, or visits / attends another University / campus to learn about their approach or practice in an area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain cross-functional / organisational knowledge and strengthen collaboration • Further research, scholarship, professional practice • Career development • New work skills and building transferable skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being clear about the goals and duration of the secondment • Management support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured, hands on experience • Increased exposure • Increased self confidence in ability to learn new capabilities • New knowledge and ideas

The 70: Experiential Learning

Development Methodology	Description	Target Development	Success Factors	Benefits
Action Learning / Participation in Multi-disciplinary projects	Where individuals work on real problems and issues that have the possibility of having action taken on them in the workplace.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem solving • Cross-functional knowledge & increasing understanding of the 'whole' organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs top level management support and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping to develop solutions/solve real problems • Networking /exposure • Can make a major contribution to freeing up inflexible or traditional thinking
Job Rotation or Job Exchange	Where two or more staff members exchange job roles and responsibilities. Typically this can be from 3 months to a 1 year timeframe and occur within the same department or team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-functional knowledge • Career development • Succession planning • Lateral thinking/problem solving • Enhancing collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying staff at similar levels • Being clear about the goals and duration of the rotation/exchange • Providing adequate support, particularly during shorter timeframes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates cross-functional knowledge sharing and best practice

The 20: Social Learning

Development Methodology	Description	Target Development	Success Factors	Benefits
Coaching	A collaborative relationship between a staff member and a manager, or a staff member and an external professional, which enables learning and development to occur, usually to enhance capability, confidence and performance in the current role Can also facilitate career development. Generally structured over a defined period (1 month to 1 year) and linked to specific goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical or interpersonal skills • Management or leadership development • Increased ability to problem solve and find creative solutions to new problems • Build professional know-how and confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching the right people as coaches • Selecting an internal or external coach • Deciding if the coaching is formal with specified learning outcomes or more informal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerates 'on the job' development • Potentially provides an opportunity to work with someone outside of the University • Provides an opportunity for reflection and creative problem solving

The 20: Social Learning

Development Methodology	Description	Target Development	Success Factors	Benefits
Mentoring (being mentored or being a mentor)	Provision of support between two people, normally by one with knowledge/experience of a subject area and sector in which the other person wants to 'grow'. It can be a formal or informal, structured or unstructured arrangement, but generally covers 'whole of life' and enhances career, personal and professional growth and development.	<p><i>For person being mentored:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal effectiveness • Organisational / sector knowledge • Career development <p><i>For person mentoring:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership skill development • Time to reflect on own knowledge and practice • Feedback/communication skill development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deciding if the mentoring is formal, with specified learning outcomes, or more informal • Method of matching mentor and staff member • Being a genuine partnership based on mutual respect and trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and retention of talented staff • Knowledge management • Clarification of future career directions
Conference participation	Attendance at relevant conferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional or role specific knowledge • Keeping up to date with thinking and gaining new ideas • Getting exposure for own practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management support and funding • Opportunity to apply new thinking and learning soon afterwards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an opportunity to reflect on current practice & identify innovation opportunities • Broadening/strengthening networks
Community of Practice	Where individuals meet to share know-how and learning around current workplace issues and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace problem solving • Build know how and confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring focus so that it leads to practical learning • Co-ordination to monitor effectiveness of Community of Practice and to keep focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping to solve real problems • Networking with colleagues • Building a learning culture
Membership of and Active Involvement in Professional Organisations and Networking Groups	Participation in relevant external professional bodies and/or networks such as relevant Australian Societies e.g. ATEM. Includes access to professional activities organised by the Associations and often access to resources on the Internet, publications, databases, and current research materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broader industry / professional knowledge • Keeping up to date with current thinking and practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing time to engage in related activities e.g. attendance at conferences or networking functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening and broadening networks • Increased professional exposure • Keeps knowledge current • May open up career opportunities

The 10: Formal Learning

Development Methodology	Description	Target Development	Success Factors	Benefits
Further Study	An arrangement whereby a staff member can apply to take time off with or without pay for a specified duration of time to pursue an educational course, including tertiary studies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth education / research • Up to date / best practice knowledge • Networking • Usually accredited courses that add to a person's credentials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and rigorous application and selection / approval processes • Ensuring management support • Relevance of educational course to learning and development needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases staff engagement • Encourages cutting-edge organisational knowledge through strong links with industry or academia
Formal Workshop or Seminar (face to face)	Classroom based workshops or seminars often targeted toward specific staff groups or development areas. Can be delivered by internal or external presenters. Includes attendance at the University's staff development programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional or role-specific knowledge • Management and leadership capability development • 'Soft' skill development e.g. specific communication skills, conflict management skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the appropriate staff capability gap and clarity about what is to be developed • Matching to appropriate course • Ensuring full course attendance and completion of course activities • Opportunities to put learning into practice straight afterwards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides focused and targeted learning and development • Can be 'just in time' development
Self-paced online learning	E-learning courses or access to online guidance to develop specific knowledge or development in a specific area. Often targets a specific staff group and can be external or internal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional or role-specific knowledge • Management and leadership capability development • Gain ideas on an approach or way to re-orientate current practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the appropriate staff capability gap and clarity about what is to be developed • Ensuring completion of course activities • Access to assistance to clarify queries • Opportunities to put learning into practice straightaway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides focused and targeted learning and development • Often is 'just in time' development
Reading	Individual reading of relevant books, articles and other relevant literature that builds further knowledge of a specific topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional, role or sector specific knowledge • Best practice knowledge • Provides opportunity to self-reflect on current practice • Can be done at a pace that suits the individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing time to engage in reading as a development activity • Opportunities to showcase new knowledge and learning • Opportunity to discuss new ideas and how they may be applied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps knowledge current • Enables access to 'best practice' thinking • May lead to innovation opportunities.

Understanding Motivators

The word motivation is derived from the Latin word “movere”, which means moving. It can therefore be seen as a driving force that encourages us to undertake a certain action or inaction. Motivation is a mental process that will align to our aspirations, needs, or values. Motivators may encourage us toward or away from certain outcomes. We may be motivated to gain a promotion; we may be motivated to avoid conflict.

Whilst there are many different motivational theories and concepts a simplified 3 tier career motivator concept may be useful for managers and their staff to understand:

1. Interests/Passions = what people enjoy doing.

Managers may ask:

- What activities energise you?
- What skills do you enjoy using?
- What kinds of tasks engage you so completely that you lose track of time?
- What kinds of knowledge areas are you drawn to?

2. Work Environment = things that are important to people in their workplace (can be physical aspects like location, work culture like collaborative, the way work is structured like hours, how they like to work with others like being a subject matter expert or a leader)

Managers may ask:

- What type of environment energises you?
- What type of people do you enjoy working with?
- How do you like working with others e.g. as a subject matter expert, a support person, a leader, a project manager, a colleague?
- How much structure do you like in your work?
- How much autonomy do you enjoy?

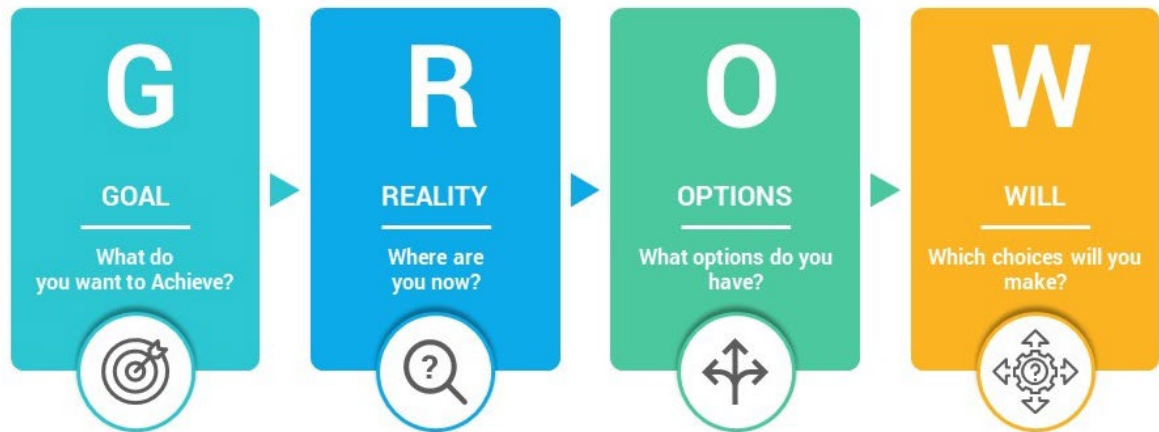
3. Lifestyle = what their professional life allows them to do in the other areas of their life (can be time, travel, relationships, flexibility that enables work/life integration)

Managers may ask:

- What does your professional life need to provide you with so that it will fit with and enable the other important aspects of your life?
- What might we need to consider external to work that could support you to be successful in your role?
- What does work/life blend look like, so you experience a sense of ‘balance’?

A Development Conversation Framework

Below is a framework that enables a collaborative development conversations with staff, thereby facilitating shared responsibility.



The GROW model

This model was created by Sir John Whitmore in the 1980's and he then published the GROW Model in his 1992 book Coaching for Performance. It has since become the most popular coaching model for goal setting, problem solving and performance improvement, globally. GROW offers a framework for conversations that contains four simple steps. GROW is an acronym for the four steps in the conversation: **G-oals, R-eality, O-ptions, W-ill.**

Using questions to explore each of the 4 stages sometimes in a linear fashion, other times with some back and forth, the employee is encouraged to fully explore their goals, their perceived reality, potential options and plan next steps.

Whilst the model itself offers a structure for coaching it is important to clarify that using the model does not automatically equate to coaching. For coaching to occur, a coaching mindset, the ability to deeply listen, suspend judgement and maintain positive intent to enable growth in the individual will be required.



Sample questions for each of the four stages a coach/leader may ask are:

GOAL

- What would you like to work on?
- What are you looking to achieve?
- What is your goal?
- What benefits you in achieving this goal/outcome?
- Who else will benefit and how?
- What will it be like for you when you achieve this goal?

REALITY

- What is happening now?
- What action have you taken so far?
- What is getting in the way?
- Who else is involved?

OPTIONS

- What options are immediately available to you?
- What options seem further down the path?
- Who could you speak to gain more clarity about options?
- What are the advantages or disadvantages of each option?

WILL

- What is one action you could take to move toward your goal?
- What is another action?
- Who can help you?
- How committed are you to taking these actions on a scale of 1-10?
- If not a 10 what would bring it closer to a 10?
- What help do you need from others?
- How will you ask for that?

The infographic is a vertical rectangle divided into four horizontal sections by dashed lines. The left side has a teal background, and the right side has a dark purple background. Each section contains a title, a brief description, and a list of questions.

GOAL (Teal background, magnifying glass icon):
 There are different levels of goals depending on how far in the future you are looking.
 Identify the inspirational goal to drive success and keep energy and motivation high.
 Questions: What are you looking to achieve? What do we want to get out of this meeting? What's the bigger picture?

REALITY (Teal background):
 Discuss the current situation and what barriers currently exist between now and achievement of the goal.
 Ask questions to help the individual or team find their strengths.
 Questions: What is the current situation? What qualities/resources do you have to help you? What are the internal/external obstacles?

OPTIONS (Teal background):
 Explore the options for moving forward.
 The more imaginative your questions, the more likely the individual or team may have a breakthrough insight.
 Questions: How would you tackle this if time wasn't a factor? What option appeals to you most right now? What else could you do?

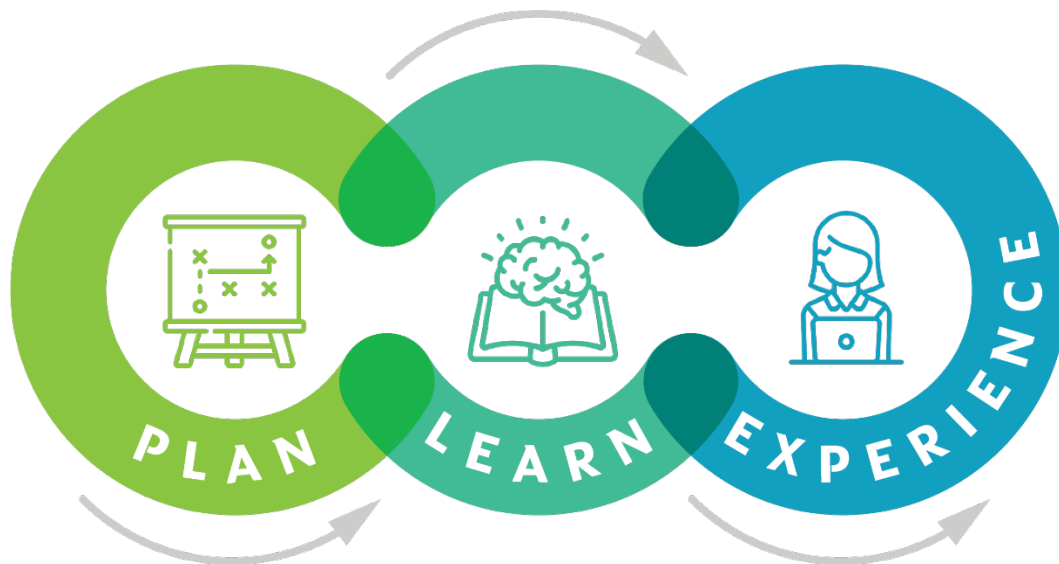
WILL (Teal background):
 Agree specific actions and timeframe and set accountability and reporting.
 Check in on commitment level and revisit the earlier steps if it's lower than 8 out of 10!
 Questions: What will you do now? When will you do it? How will I know when you've been successful? How committed are you on a scale between 1 and 10?

© The Estate of Sir John Whitmore & Performance Consultants International 2019

Image source: [Performance Consultants](https://www.performance-consultants.com/)

Facilitating Self Directed Learning - A Development Model

Similarly, in taking action **following** the conversation, setting up staff with the following model continues to build their responsibility for learning and follow through on development actions.



Plan

Staff member begins to assess and understand their interests, motivators, strengths and areas for development and charts a plan for their future.

***Manager focus:** to ask questions and provide constructive feedback on the staff member's plan for action.*

Learn

Staff member begins to research and identify learning opportunities to meet learning needs, build skills needed and to identify options for achieving future goals.

***Manager focus:** to consider the learning / future needs and what opportunities can be supported by the organisation.*

Experience

Staff member undertakes learning options and begins to progress future goals.

***Manager focus:** provide support to staff member's pathway and discuss and recognise learnings/progress.*

5 As Framework

There are five critical keys to holding an effective development conversation with your staff members.

They are the five As: *Appreciate, Assess, Anticipate, Align and Accelerate*.

1. **Appreciate uniqueness** – help staff members recognise their unique talents, skills, abilities, personality traits, passion and accomplishments to tailor their career development choices. **(PLAN)**
2. **Assess capabilities** – help staff members discover their capabilities, build reputation and assess individual and team performance in order to build strong networks in their industry, organisation, profession, job and personal life. **(PLAN)**
3. **Anticipate the future** – help staff members consider and anticipate future trends in an industry, organisation and profession and how the trends will affect future choices. **(PLAN)**.
4. **Align aspirations** – help ensure that individuals see how their aspirations, talent, goals and passion are in “sync” with the goals and direction of the organisation. **(LEARN)**.
5. **Accelerate learning** – connect individuals to mentors, projects and learning opportunities to help achieve their goals and support the organisation’s future directions. **(LEARN)**



Facilitating the process of *Plan - Learn - Experience*

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

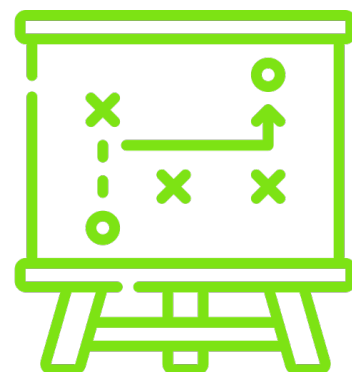
PLAN



- Allow the staff member the freedom to explore options; make them feel comfortable at the start of the meeting.
- Don't judge. Remember, different people will have different aspirations; let them explore theirs.
- Give suggestions and recommendations and, if possible, link them with any available resources to support future action/goals.
- Explore through conversation and then establish expectations through agreement.
- Make sure you follow-up on the actions identified - this will show that you "walk the talk" in supporting your staff members' development.

Suggested questions to help you facilitate conversations at the PLAN Stage

- *What are some of the knowledge, skills and enterprising attributes that you think are most important in achieving your work goals?*
- *What is the most important thing for you to get better at in this role?*
- *What are your short-term career goals?*
- *What are your long-term goals?*
- *What projects or tasks have you done that you're proud of?*
- *Tell me about a time you've felt really good about a day at work? What happened that day?*



LEARN



- Refer the staff member to the many learning options and resources that exist within the University
- Ensure that any identified skills, related learning activities and realistic timelines are incorporated into the staff member's PDM plan.
- Remind the staff member to be flexible and to modify and discuss with you the plan when needed, remembering to encourage them to keep sight of their goals/aspirations.
- Review their growth and accomplishments and above all recognise their progress and successes.
- Give positive and constructive feedback.

Suggested questions to help you facilitate conversations at the LEARN Stage:

- *Which one or two areas do you think you need to develop? Why these?*
- *What type of development do you think you need: Knowledge-based, skills-based, or experience-based? How will you achieve that need?*
- *Which University learning resources have you researched? Which ones seem most interesting to you? Why?*
- *Have you given some thought to assessing your learning style?*
- *What have been some of the key things you learned since we last had a discussion?*
- *What are your timelines for taking your identified action?*



EXPERIENCE



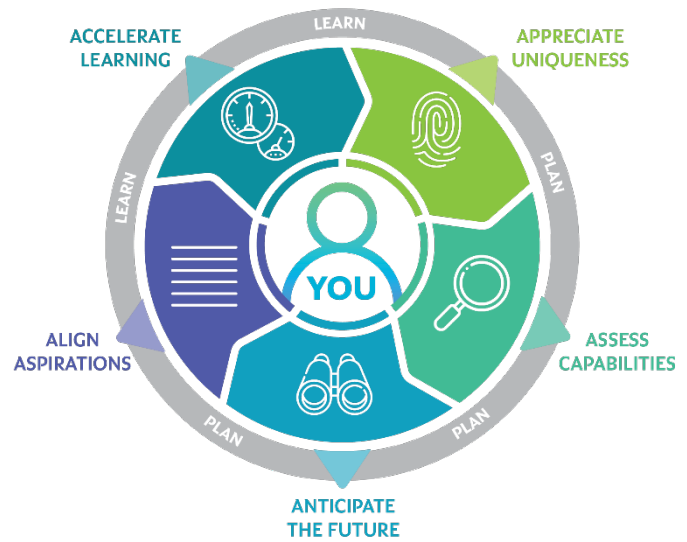
- Ensure relevant resources and information to support development are provided to the staff member as they are available.
- Link the staff member to available resources.
- Encourage staff members to be flexible in relation to their plan but to keep their end goal in mind; remind them that progress sometimes requires taking one step back in order to take two steps forward.
- Check for alignment with University objectives.
- Give constructive feedback and discuss / explore alternatives.
- Keep an active interest in their progress.
- Recognise their achievements.

Suggested questions to help you facilitate conversations at the Experience Stage

- *How has your learning changed the way you are working?*
- *Can you tell me which activities you think would be most useful in helping you make the progress you need?*
- *What can I do to help you get started?*
- *Can you think of how the two of us might create a new experience or project that would fulfil your enterprising attributes?*
- *How might we find other things you could do to help you fulfil the enterprising attributes we just talked about?*
- *What other activities would you like to be engaged in that would align with your interests?*
- *What projects, committees, responsibilities might there be that would allow you to pursue your passions?*
- *Are there any new skills, abilities or areas of knowledge you will need in this project/activity that we have selected?*
- *Which of your strengths can be better used?*
- *What is getting in the way of you learning?*
- *What do you plan on learning next?*

Questions for the 5 As...

Consider incorporating the following questions into your conversations:



Appreciate Uniqueness



Enabling others to **appreciate** their strengths

- What do people say you do best?
- What aspects of your role most interest/excite you?
- When you have had a really good day at work, what have you been doing? What strengths have you been drawing on?

Assess / Identify Capabilities



Enabling others to **assess** their capabilities and development focus

- What do you see as the critical capabilities in your role? How do you see yourself in relation to these? What feedback are you receiving?
- What do you see as your current strengths?
- Where do you see your development focus? What steps would you like to take to improve in these areas/aspects?
- In what ways will you develop the capabilities needed in your area/role for the future?
- Are there facilities that you don't have access to that would enable your development in this area? What are they? How might these be sourced?
- How does your goal fit with the University's priorities?

Anticipate the Future



Enabling others to **anticipate** the future and adapt to change

- What changes are affecting your work? what opportunities does this give you?
- What are the trends in your area and how might they affect your future practice/work?
- What knowledge do you think you will need for the future?
- What changes could you make to your work that would satisfy you more?
- What might you need to stop doing and how might you go about doing this?
- What new challenges will help you grow?
- What new developments do you need to take into account in your work?
- How will you encompass these into your work over the next year?
- In what ways would you like to see yourself contributing to this new area? How can we make this happen?

Align Aspirations



Enabling others to **achieve** their aspirations

- What areas would you like to develop further?
- What are your educational goals?
- Tell me how you best like to learn
- How can your potential best be developed?
- What tasks/work would you like to be involved in to increase your knowledge/know how etc.?
- How will you go about implementing your professional development objectives? What is the most effective course of action for you?
- What is your long term vision?
- What do you see as the next logical step for your career?
- What is working towards you achieving that next step?
- What doubts do you have that you may be able to take the next step?
- Two-three years from now, what would you like to be doing? What do you need to do now to accomplish this?
- Where do you think your best focus would be in the coming year?
- How does that fit with the University priorities?

Accelerate Learning



Enabling others to **accelerate** their development

- In what ways will you develop the capabilities needed in your role/needed for the future?
- How can you most effectively build on your strengths?
- What learning methods and opportunities most interest and enable you? Let's talk about how I might work with you to enable these in your work.
- Who could be a valuable mentor for you?
- What networks might it be useful for you to connect with/build on?
- How can I help you get the support you need?
- What is currently in place that will enable the next step for you?
- In what other ways do you think you could gain recognition for your contribution?

Probing/enquiry statements that can be used throughout the conversation to explore ideas and suggestions

- What leads you to conclude that? What evidence/data do you have for that?
- Can you help me understand your thinking here?
- Where does your reasoning go next?
- Can you give me an example of what that might entail?
- If that obstacle didn't exist, what course of action would you take?

Source: [Corporate Leadership Council](#) (adapted)

Holding Development Conversations with a variety of staff members

As a manager you will work with a diversity of people in your teams who are at different points in their career and who are likely to move around a performance continuum over a period of time.

In your teams, you may have at any point in time staff who are:

- Solid performers
- Emerging leaders
- Unrealised potential
- Top talent
- Under performers

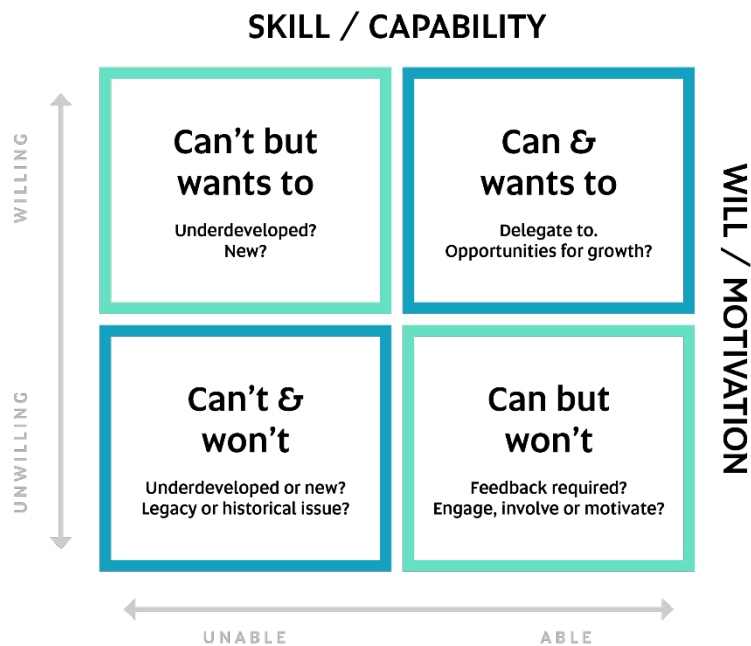
You can have productive development conversations with all staff wherever they sit on a continuum. The following planning and conversational tool can be valuable for leaders to have the most appropriate conversation dependent on the outcome of the continuum.



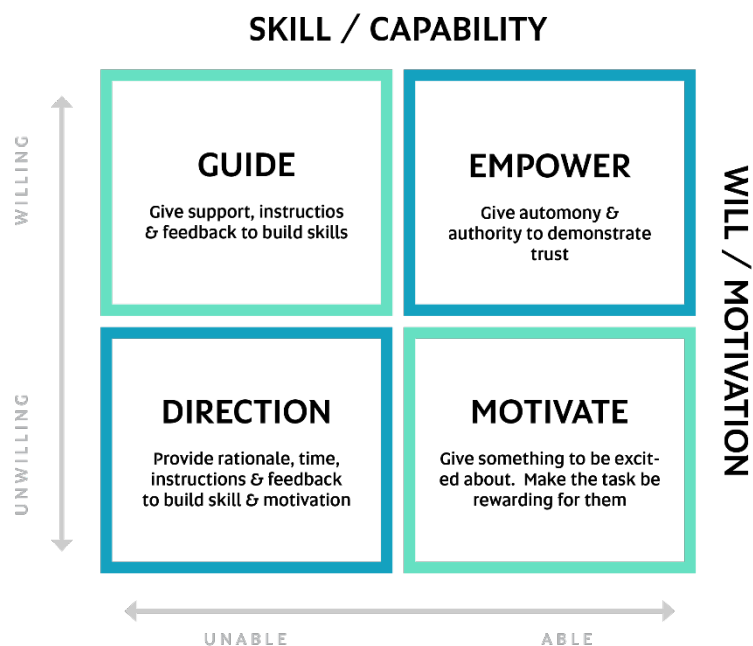
SKILL/WILL Model

The Skill/Will matrix/model is a useful diagnostic tool for leaders to use highlighting what approach the leader can take relative to the staff member and the task to be completed. The concept was introduced by Max Landsberg in his book, The Tao of Coaching. It is used extensively in the world of coaching and can offer a framework for development conversations.

The model is shaped by two axis. The X axis highlights the **skill** of the employee to complete the task involved. The Y axis highlights the **will** or the motivation level the employee has to complete the task involved.



Based on the diagnosis undertaken regarding the skill and will level of the employee relating to the task. The leader then adopts the appropriate style to support the development or motivation of the employee.



Feedback Bank

Providing effective feedback on a regular basis is critical and a key responsibility of managers: to reinforce a staff member's strengths and excellent performance and to develop capabilities and provide learning for ongoing and future growth. Again, you can provide valuable feedback to all staff wherever they sit on a continuum of performance.

An article published in the Harvard Business Review cited the ideal praise to criticism ratio based on research by academic Emily Heaphy and consultant Marcial Losada. Whilst the research confirmed both types of feedback were required to support employees success, the ratio for the highest performing teams was approximately six positive comments for every negative (constructive) comment. Since the publication of that article the ratio has been questioned, other ratios touted as being relevant are 4:1 and 3:1. While the exact number may still be up for debate, what is consistent is the need for a greater ratio of positive feedback and reinforcement over negative feedback.

Positive feedback can motivate people to continue doing what they do well, do it with more vigor, determination and creativity. Clearly both negative and positive feedback have their place and time. If inappropriate behavior needs to be stopped, a conversation relating to this must occur.

Managers will always have a choice about how they develop their team members and by ensuring positive recognition occurs as part of this process we will reinforce successes, and build a culture of appreciation and support regardless of where people may sit on the development continuum.

