

Employee Development

When working with an employee, it is helpful to put together an Employee Development Plan. The purpose of the plan is to translate goals into specific action steps. Employees develop through a combination of education, experience, and exposure. About 70 percent of employee development comes from job experience (working on tasks and problems), while about 20 percent is the result of feedback from role models, mentors and coaches. Coursework can be used to provide specific skills that an individual is lacking, but genuine development comes from the job.

Promoting Employee Development

Employee development is one of the most important elements of the supervisor and employee relationship. Employee development can be focused on enhancing the employee's required skills and knowledge and/or on gaining the qualifications to meet the employee's future career goals.

Employee development can occur through:

- Structured learning experiences such as workshops, professional conference and academic classes.
- Unstructured learning experiences such as observing others, gathering information from the Web or participating in discussions.
- Challenging job assignments such as leading a project or improving a process.
- Receiving meaningful feedback and advice from a coach or mentor.
- Participating in assignments outside of the employee's typical job duties, such as sitting on a problem solving team.
- Coaching a less experienced co-worker.
- Creating a structured learning/training session.
- Reading specific publications on relevant topics.
- Temporary assignments.
- Cross-training or job sharing.
- Conducting meetings.
- Preparing and making presentations.
- Participation on a large-scale committee.
- Job shadowing.
- Networking

Supervisor Support

Supervisors can support their employee's development by:

- Consistently offering feedback and encouraging feedback from others.
- Suggesting and supporting attendance at conferences and workshops.
- Temporarily “freeing up” the employee from work obligations; allowing time for outside assignments.
- Asking the employee about “lessons learned” from formal and informal professional development experiences.
- Connecting people for purposes of coaching, mentoring and networking.
- Discussing career goals with your employees. Some possible questions to ask:
 - Where do you see yourself in 3-5 years?
 - What steps will get you there?
 - What skills and/or knowledge would you like to obtain to position yourself for the future?
 - What tasks would you like to be involved in to increase your skills?
 - In what new ways would you like to see yourself contributing to this unit?