

# Developing a Professional Development Plan (PDP)

## ***Reflecting***

Taking time to write and reflect on your career can increase your self-awareness and help you organize and synthesize your thoughts. Set aside regular amounts of time to journal. You will need to make your PDP a priority.

## ***Gaining Self-Awareness***

A professional development plan is a concept that emphasizes gathering input from many sources. First, you will need to do some self-analysis on aspects of work that give you satisfaction and aspects that do not bring satisfaction. A suggestion would be to continue to use your PDP book to write about other events and to analyze those to learn more about what elements you would want to include and emphasize in your career. You may want to write about work you've done in the community or volunteer work or other jobs you've held in the past in order to look for nuggets of information about the important areas that future jobs should include in order to bring you satisfaction.

## ***Seeking Outside Input***

Work to gain more information from others in order to have the full picture about yourself. Talk to your supervisor, your mentor or coach at work, your peers or staff at work to gain information. Each PDP should be uniquely tailored to the needs of the individual and the organization. You might identify extensive skill training; or might emphasize a more academic approach. There is no set pattern—the term “individual” is basic to the concept—especially as it applies to your willingness and capacity to learn and grow.

## ***Developing Action Steps***

How can you get from where you are to where you'd like to be? How can you improve your satisfaction with your career? First, determine something you would like to change in the very short term. Then list concrete steps you can take to move yourself toward that change. ***Here are some examples of action steps:***

- Update my résumé
- Ask for new assignments in my current job
- Rotation to a different project/job
- Seek a mentor(s)—volunteer for a task force or process action/reengineering team
- Obtain on-the-job guidance from someone who is more expert in a specific area
- Attend seminars/conferences (on site and off site)
- Enroll in university courses
- Attend commercial/contracted courses
- Experience self-paced learning (books, videos, computer-based instruction)
- Pursue an academic degree or certification program
- Conduct informational interviews
- Move to a new job within my division
- Move to a new job within the college or university
- Read EDUCAUSE publications
- Join a discussion group on topics I want to learn more about

## ***Setting Longer Term Goals***

After you have begun to test out new areas you want to explore, work with input from your supervisor and coach/mentor to set goals which cover the bigger picture for the next three years. The worksheet on page 14 may be helpful in guiding this process.

## Self-Assessment Worksheet (10 Minutes)

To gain a better understanding of yourself, answer the following questions.

1. Of the new and recent developments in my organization or field, **what interests me the most?**  
**What are my current skills and strengths for pursuing these interests?** (See page 11 for suggestions.) What do I need to do to reposition my career so that I can get involved in these new areas?
  
2. **What is most important to me in my work?** What values guide the kind of work I want to do?  
Examples of guiding principles include: must agree with the organizational mission, must be allowed innovation and risk taking, and must honor family values for a balanced professional life. (See list of values examples on page 13.)
  
3. **What things are “must haves” for me in a job?** Examples might be flex time, on-site day care, etc.
  
4. **What are my limiting factors?** These are things that put limits on the type of job you can take.  
Examples could be health concerns, geography, not willing to move, must not involve extensive travel, must stay in place until kids graduate, I need an advanced degree, or maybe a barrier or challenge such as a poor relationship with immediate supervisor. If you have none, you are most flexible and positioned for change.
  
5. **Is it time for me to consider working outside of my institution?** If I am considering a complete career change, what experiences and learning would help reposition my career in the direction of my new interests?

# Professional Development Worksheet

*Complete with input from a mentor, coach, or supervisor.*

Answer the following questions to identify what is currently going on around me, and what changes I expect to occur in the near future:

1. How is the mission of my organization changing? What other changes are occurring regarding our customers, services, work processes, organizational structure, reporting relationships and personnel?
  
2. What are the organization's changing needs regarding the workforce, and what new expertise and skills will be required or desirable?
  
3. What opportunities are available for developing this new expertise and skills (work experiences, training, rotational assignments, professional conferences, mentoring, and so forth)?
  
4. How might my role (job) change in my organization? How can I prepare for or develop new skills for these changes?
  
5. New expertise and skills my organization wants me to learn include:
  
6. What new missions or projects appeal to me? What are the organization's future needs? What kinds of development activities would help position me for participation in another work project?

## Professional Development Worksheet (continued)

7. In what areas do my interests and personal plans overlap with the changing needs of my organization?
8. What knowledge, skills, or abilities are important for increasing or maintaining the quality of my performance in my present assignments?
9. What knowledge, skills, or abilities would help prepare me for opportunities or roles I might have in the future?
10. Compared to the development needs suggested by these factors, other interests for development that are important to me include:

## Goal Development Questions for My Journal

*Complete using the journal pages at the end of this booklet.*

A goal is a statement of a desired outcome or accomplishment that is specific, observable and realistic. Based on the data you have generated about yourself on the previous worksheets *and* your specific career issues, write some career goals for the next one, two, and three years and answer the following questions in your Professional Development Plan Journal.

1. What I want to accomplish and the knowledge/skills I want to acquire or improve by this time next year are:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What I want to accomplish and the knowledge/skills I want to acquire or improve by the end of the second year are:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What I want to accomplish and the knowledge/skills I want to acquire or improve by the end of the third year are:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What barriers or obstacles might prevent me from accomplishing my goals on time (e.g., time, money, and other commitments)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What can I do to overcome these barriers or obstacles? What resources are available to help me?



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## Employee Career Worksheet

Name:	
Current Position:	
Date:	

### **Part 1: Knowing Yourself**

The first step in planning your career is evaluating and understanding your aspirations, strengths, interests, drivers and other influences. Please indicate which aspects of the planning process you have evaluated:

- ☐ My Key Strengths
- ☐ My Technical Skills
- ☐ My Work Values
- ☐ My key fields of interest

Briefly record these here:

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For an objective assessment, seek guidance from others as well. A discussion regarding your career aspirations, strengths and development needs during a performance review is highly recommended. Informal discussions throughout the year with various people are encouraged.

Who have you discussed your career with?

- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Professional Leader
- ☐ Educator
- ☐ Mentor
- ☐ Career Development professional
- ☐ Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_

Through your self assessment you may have identified particular skills or areas of knowledge you wish to develop. What are these?

Development Opportunities:

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## **Part 2: Explore Possibilities**

Research the development possibilities and career paths that are open and attractive to you. Consider your self assessment outcomes and future position needs.

**Pathway Option 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prerequisites and requirements to achieve this option:**

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**Pathway Option 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prerequisites and requirements to achieve this option:**

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**Pathway Option 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prerequisites and requirements to achieve this option:**

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## **Part 3: Making Choices**

Consider the suitability of each option and decide (with the assistance of the person you report to) which one is the best match to your aspirations and workforce needs. Before making the decision, consider also:

- What are the perceived barriers/obstacles and how can they be overcome
- Outside of work commitments
- The level of involvement required
- Which of my options responds best to my employer and workforce needs?

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Based on the choices you have made, and the development opportunities you have identified now write your goal(s). Aim to make each goal as specific as you can.

**Goal 1**

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Required to achieve goal 1:

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**Goal 2**

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Required to achieve goal 2:

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**Goal 3**

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Required to achieve goal 3:

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**Part 4: Make it Happen**

In order to achieve your goals you need to have an agreed course of action. You and your manager need to have a clear understanding of what steps you will be taking, the commitment needed by both you and your manager and relevant timeframes.

**Agreed course of action/action plan:**

Discussion date	Action	Result

**Progress Review**

Progress on the agreed course of action and results should be reviewed at least annually to determine success and any adjustments to the plan. Progress will be reviewed on/around \_\_\_\_\_.

*Date*

**Manager/Supervisor Signature:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Employee Signature:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_





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## Employee Development Plan

This tool is to be used as a resource for tracking development based on a two-way dialogue with the employee and their manager (*See Employee Career Worksheet as a tool for employees to prepare for dialogue*)

Name:	
Current Position:	
Date:	

### **Information for Development Plan Completion:**

A development plan should be an outline of goals, course of action and identified timeframes. Both the manager and employee provides input, understands the goals and are both committed to action. It is recommended that an employee has 3-5 development goals and is updated at a minimum of once annually. It is strongly encouraged that the development goals are discussed and/or updated on a quarterly basis.

### **The development plan is part of this form and descriptions/definitions are as follows:**

**Discussion Date** – Date goal has been discussed and agreed upon by the manager and employee

**Development Category and Development Type** (*See category and type definitions below*)

**Timeframe** – Timeline for completion ie. 30, 60, 90 days and/or date of event or completion

**Result** – Was the result of the goal/action positive or provided development that was anticipated; if yes or no, note reason as to why

**SMART Action** – The development goal should be written as Specific, Measurable, Action oriented, Relevant and Time Based. (Goal Example: Joe should complete his MBA degree coursework by semester end spring 2017 with a B or above average in order to meet the minimum requirement to advance to the next level of leadership within the Financial Services department.)

### **Definitions for Development Category:**

**Mastery in Current Role** – Actions that would improve or provide mastery in current role and skill set

**Job Expansion in Current Role** – Actions that would provide experience or skill building beyond the existing job by taking on an additional projects or duties

**Job change Outside of Role** – Actions that would prepare an employee for a lateral or promotional role outside of their current role

### **Definitions Development Type:**

**Experiential** – Learning gained through additional tasks or projects geared toward development in a certain skill area (technical and/or soft skills)

**Coaching/mentoring** – Learning that may occur through observation, discussion and feedback that is geared toward development in a certain skill area

**Classroom** – Learning that may occur through formal education and/or class that provides knowledge in a specific area



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## Development Action Plan:

Discussion date	Development Category	Development Type	Timeframe	Result
	<input type="checkbox"/> Mastery in current role <input type="checkbox"/> Job expansion in current role <input type="checkbox"/> Job change outside of role	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiential <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching/mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom		
SMART Action:				

Discussion date	Development Category	Development Type	Timeframe	Result
	<input type="checkbox"/> Mastery in current role <input type="checkbox"/> Job expansion in current role <input type="checkbox"/> Job change outside of role	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiential <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching/mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom		
SMART Action:				

Discussion date	Development Category	Development Type	Timeframe	Result
	<input type="checkbox"/> Mastery in current role <input type="checkbox"/> Job expansion in current role <input type="checkbox"/> Job change outside of role	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiential <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching/mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom		
SMART Action:				

Discussion date	Development Category	Development Type	Timeframe	Result
	<input type="checkbox"/> Mastery in current role <input type="checkbox"/> Job expansion in current role <input type="checkbox"/> Job change outside of role	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiential <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching/mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom		
SMART Action:				



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Discussion date	Development Category	Development Type	Timeframe	Result
	<input type="checkbox"/> Mastery in current role <input type="checkbox"/> Job expansion in current role <input type="checkbox"/> Job change outside of role	<input type="checkbox"/> Experiential <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching/mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom		
SMART Action:				

### Progress Review

Progress on the agreed course of action and results should be reviewed at least annually to determine success and any adjustments to the plan. Progress will be reviewed on/around \_\_\_\_\_.

We both acknowledge and agree that we have discussed and developed this plan of action

Manager/Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_