



How to Talk to Employees about Career Management Career Planning for Managers

Why support employees in their career management?

See: Taking an Active Role in Employees' Career Management

How do you begin?

Some direct reports may eagerly approach you about their career aspirations and openly ask questions or for your help. Others may *not* initiate this conversation for a variety of reason. Even so, that doesn't mean you should ignore their career development. You can initiate the conversation in some of the ways mentioned below.

Never Talked to Your Direct Reports Like This Before?

Talking to direct reports about the career management process doesn't have to be stiff and awkward. It can be as simple as bringing up some simple questions during your periodic meetings, such as:

Starter Questions

- What do you like most about your position right now?
- What are some responsibilities or projects you would like to do more of or try out?
- What other experiences are you looking for?

More in-depth Questions

- What are some of your thoughts on your future career moves?
- Is there any way this department could help you achieve some of those goals? •
Are you interested in any training, certification or coursework?

How to Tell A Direct Report “No” (or “Not Yet”)

You may feel that your direct report isn't ready to jump into some of their goals or to take their proposed next steps. If this happens, let them know tactfully and gracefully that they have to work on other things before starting their process at that particular spot. Be clear and specific by telling them:

- Why they may not be ready
- What skills they should work on developing
- What personal traits they should be aware of
- What experiences they should be taking part in

One of the challenges managers face is when their direct report isn't proficient in a current position and already wants to move into a position with greater responsibility. In this situation, regular and honest feedback is important. Highlighting an employee's strengths is essential when assessing whether your direct report's aspirations are realistic. At the same time, discussing your direct report's weaknesses is just as important. Looking into why they feel their work is stagnant may lead to some changes that produce better results and get the process rolling.

Resources and Links

- [5 Steps to Creating Employee Development Plans That Truly Work](#)
- [How to Communicate Employee Expectations Effectively](#)

- [250+ Employee Goals](#)