**Individual Development Guide – Employee**

**How to Create an Individual Development Plan**

**What**

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is an action plan used to leverage your *current* strengths and talents, and to help you identify and develop *new* skills and behaviors for the future. Its primary purpose is to help you improve your current job performance and to help you reach short and long-term goals. The IDP fulfills the mutual goals of individual career development and organizational enhancement by aligning employee development with your company’s mission and goals.

**Why**

Reason 1: You have professional and personal goals. To reach those goals, you’ve got to learn, grow, and develop. Your IDP is a roadmap to accomplishing your goals.

Reason 2: We live in a dynamic world. Today’s expert must continue to build knowledge and skills to be tomorrow’s expert. Your IDP helps you stay ahead of the curve so you can thrive in our changing workplace both today and tomorrow.

**Who**

You are responsible for your professional development and career track. Your manager will provide resources and will support you in identifying appropriate goals and developmental opportunities. How quickly you accomplish your goals is determined by your commitment and actions.

**When**

Your IDP is revised once each year. During the year, you discuss your progress with your manager, adjust as necessary, and celebrate your successes.

**How**

This document will lead you through the steps needed to complete your Individual Development Plan. Your Manager and HR can assist you if you have additional questions.

1. Think it Through

2. Identify Development Goals

3. Determine Steps to Reach Your Goal

4. List Potential Obstacles

5. Identify Necessary Resources

6. Define Measures of Success

7. Create a Schedule of Checkpoints

8. Set Deadlines

9. Record Outcomes/Comments

10. Revisit and Evaluate

**Step 1: Think it Through**

A successful IDP requires preparation and continuous feedback. The questions below will help you to prepare as they prompt you to assess where you are and where you want to be. Additionally, these questions require you to think about the changes you need to make in order to get to where you want to be, all the while matching your individual professional goals with your company’s goals.

1. Think about your current role. Identify three to five tasks or responsibilities at which you consistently excel. Be prepared to share examples with your manager.
2. Think about your current role. Identify three to five tasks or responsibilities in which you feel you need to improve. Why? What would be the impact? Be prepared to share examples with your manager.
3. Identify one to two *specific behaviors* that you need to demonstrate or change in order to be more successful both now and in the future. Why? What would be the impact? Be prepared to share examples with your manager.
4. Consider what you need to improve in your current role and what you need to develop to ensure future success. In the chart below:

* List the knowledge, skills, and capabilities you know you do not have. Be specific: What do you need to acquire?
* List the knowledge, skills, and capabilities you need to strengthen. Be specific. What do you need to expand?
* Working with your manager, select the most critical developmental needs. These are your developmental priorities. Place a checkmark next to these items

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  | | --- | | **Knowledge, Skills and Capabilities I need to *Acquire*** | | |  | | --- | | **Knowledge, Skills and Capabilities I need to *Strengthen*** | |
|  |  |

**Step 2: Identify Development Goals**

Review your developmental priorities identified on the previous page. With your manager, select two to three to focus on this year. These are your development goals. Record these on your IDP form.

For each goal, state specifically what you will do or accomplish when you have developed these areas. Ensure that each goal is SMART.

**S** Specific

**M** Measurable

**A** Attainable

**R** Realistic

**T** Time bound

**Step 3: Determine Developmental Steps**

Work with your manager to identify steps that will help you accomplish each goal. Steps might include additional training, and should focus heavily on on-the-job experiences. (For suggestions, see “Ideas for Developmental Opportunities” at the end of this document.) You will have several steps for each goal and they should move from easier to more difficult. For example, a goal around presentation skills might include role playing a presentation, to making a presentation to a small group of known people and finally a formal presentation to a larger group. Record the steps on your IDP in the “Steps to Reach My Goal” column.

**Step 4: List Potential Obstacles**

With your manager, discuss and identify any obstacles that may prevent you from accomplishing the goal or the steps to reach the goal. An obstacle might be limited time, people (access to or difficulty in working with), or lack of resources. Record on your IDP in the “Obstacles” column.

**Step 5: Identify Necessary Resources**

Work with your manager to identify resources you will need to overcome potential obstacles and to achieve each goal. Resources might include: people, time, money, equipment, technology, training, coaching, etc. Discuss how these resources can be provided, who can provide the resources, and when they can be provided. Record on your IDP in the “Resources” column.

**Step 6: Define Measures of Success**

Work with your manager to determine what method of measurement will be used to evaluate progress in reaching your goal. Sample options include, observation, quantitative results, requested feedback from internal customers, peers and other managers and supervisors. Record on your IDP in the “Success Measures” column.

**Step 7: Create a Schedule of Checkpoints**

With your manager, determine specific meeting dates, times and locations to discuss progress towards reaching your goals. Record on your IDP in the “Checkpoints” column.

**Step 8: Set Deadlines**

Jointly identify the deadline for each step in reaching your goal, including the final due date. Record on your IDP in the “Deadline” column. Finalize your IDP, make a copy for yourself and then forward it to your manager.

**Step 9: Record Outcomes/Comments**

Once completed, use the outcomes/comments section to capture thoughts and discussions on goal progress and completion.

**Step 10: Revisit and Evaluate**

An IDP is not a performance evaluation tool or a one-time activity. It is intended to be a partnership between you and your manager. It requires continuous feedback and evaluation of the usefulness of the development opportunities. The IDP allows you to continue to build knowledge and skills so you can thrive in our changing workplace both today and tomorrow. Some suggestions to revisit and evaluate your IDP include:

* Post your IDP where it is visible.
* Once a month, revisit your progress on your IDP. Record data sources to determine progress and identify areas where more attention may be necessary. Determine the specific actions you will take this month.
* Once a month, look for areas where priorities might have changed, goals may have shifted, or additional resources, strategies, or tools may be available. Schedule time with your manager to discuss your ideas.
* Celebrate your accomplishments throughout the year.

**Ideas for Developmental Opportunities**

**Job Enrichment:** Assume more responsibility; execute higher level tasks that were previously done by someone with more skill or experience.

**Individual or Team Assignments:** Complete specific assignments designed to build knowledge, skills and competencies. Work on a team to learn from peers and experience real-life problem-solving.

**Temporary Replacement, Job Rotation:** Relieve others when they are on vacation, sick leave or leave of absence. It helps enrich understanding of how the organization functions.

**Assessments of Style or Skill:** Participate in leadership assessments to help gain more self-awareness and a clearer understanding of interpersonal dynamics, communication style, and leadership impact.

**Meetings:** Look for opportunities to lead meetings (presenting at quarterly staff meetings is a good way to hone your presentation skills.)

**Higher Level Meetings:** With your manager’s approval, observe meetings and brainstorming sessions within your organization.

**Experts:** Schedule time to talk with and shadow experts, whether in your organization or another organization.

**Training Courses:** Participate in training courses offered inside and outside your organization. Enroll in College & University Courses, Webcasts and Webinars, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses – sites for free education through elite universities.)

**Internet:** Use tools and resources available online, such as TED Talks, YouTube, podcasts, and online professional discussion groups.

**Books and Articles:** Read respected books and articles to learn about your developmental areas.

**Mentor/Coach:** Identify a possible mentor or coach that is not your manager. Build a relationship and engage this resource to get feedback and support as you focus on your professional and personal development.

**Technical/Professional/Developmental Associations:** Participate in an association dedicated to your profession. Volunteer for leadership and other interesting positions within this organization. Join organizations that feature member development, such as Toastmasters.

**Extracurricular Opportunities:** Seek opportunities in your outside interests to build skills such as teaching a class, giving presentations, or running meetings. Examples include PTA, your church, or a club.