



## Talking to Your Manager about Your Career

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### Career Planning for Employees

#### **Why would you want to talk to your manager about your career development?**

- Your manager may know about job opportunities that are a good fit for you.
- Your manager is in charge of assigning work to you and your coworkers, so if he/she knows your career goals, he/she can assign work to you that fits those goals
- Your manager can give you positive and constructive feedback that will help prepare you for the future roles

#### **What can you do before discussing your career development with your manager?**

If you don't have a comfortable working relationship with your manager, please refer to the myLearn course "Managing Your Career: You and Your Boss." Typically, no one has more influence over your immediate and long-term success than the person to whom you report.

Additionally, make sure to get feedback from your supervisor about your current performance and whether or not you're meeting expectations before asking for more tasks. Most managers won't assign extra responsibilities if they don't feel like their direct reports can handle the work they already have. Setting up semi-regular meetings with your manager is a proactive approach to jumpstarting your career development that will both show your manager that you are dedicated to this as well as help you stay on track in terms of self development.

#### **How can you approach your manager about your career development?**

Get some time on the calendar with your manager and be prepared to discuss the following:

- Your potential career goals
- Assignments that you feel have aligned with your career goals as well as new job tasks for which you'd like to be considered in order to develop your skills
- How taking on those extra or stretch assignments would positively impact the department

One of the most important aspects of this conversation is to be open to your manager's feedback. Openness to feedback shows that you're flexible, proactive, and self-aware. Try these questions to get specific feedback:

- Are my goals realistic?
- Would you recommend a different path for me?
- What do I need to do to be qualified for future roles?
- Are there any developmental opportunities that I can be a part of in the next year?

### **What if the conversation doesn't go like you hoped it would?**

Did your manager seem uncomfortable with the topic? Was he/she unsure of the suitability of your career goals? Did he/she think that you're not ready for more or different types of job tasks?

Try leaving him/her to think about it for a while and then follow up. If that's not successful, try asking for permission to take on smaller tasks or sit in on some of the projects. Patience and creative approaches can go a long way.

In addition to seeking help from your managers regarding your career development, you can take a more general approach, including:

- Seeking help or guidance outside of your department to get additional perspectives. Having more than one person to go to for questions and feedback is a good idea as different people may see your skills differently.
- Connecting with your peers. Your coworkers may have information or tips that you need to know as well as creative ways to achieve your goals. Plus, they work closely with you and may have different insights than your manager.

#### **Resources and Links**

*myLearn Course:*

- [Managing Your Career: You and Your Boss](#)