Guide to Writing a Career Development Plan

Part 1: Employee Instructions

Step 1:

Write down your primary career interest.

Tip: A primary career interest is usually described in terms of a general vocation. For example, "My primary career interest is marketing within the automobile industry."

Step 2:

Identify long-term professional goals (including positions desired within the company).

Tip: Long term professional goals are often conveyed in terms of specific positions ("become a regional sales manager") or major accomplishments ("write a book").

Tip: List any lateral moves or promotions that will help you meet your long-term professional goals. For example, "I want to move from sales associate to sales manager, and finally to regional sales manager."

Step 3:

Identify the short-term goals that contribute to long-term interests and the challenges that must be overcome in order to reach these goals.

Tip: Identify barriers, both personal and external, that prevent you from accomplishing your short-term goals, then create ways to overcome them. For example, "My short-term goal is to acquire advanced computer skills. The barrier is the time constraints on my job in mechanical engineering which leave me little or no time to receive the additional training I need. The way I could overcome this barrier is to find more efficient ways to complete my tasks or to delegate them to others while I attend the August training sessions."

Step 4:

List 2-3 activities that will help you reach each goal. Be sure to specify how you will accomplish the activity, including any resources you might need, and when you will start and finish it. (Resources may include other people's time/expertise, funds for training materials and activities, or time away from your other responsibilities).

Tip: Common Development Activities

- Identify and cultivate a relationship with a mentor/role model.
- Read relevant material.
- Engage in training and education.
- Keep a journal.
- Attend appropriate seminars.
- Take on special job assignments or job rotation.
- Receive coaching from a skilled co-worker.
Increase customer contact.
Incorporate activities into ongoing work assignments.

Step 5:

Describe tasks in your current job that are contributing to long term goals and that you would like to emphasize or perform more frequently.

Step 6:

Describe tasks in your current job that are not contributing to your long-term goals. Suggest ways to minimize, remove, or delegate them to others.

Step 7:

Write down any additional skills, knowledge or experience you would like to acquire that may directly or indirectly help you in your current job or future positions.

Step 8:

Describe when and how progress checkpoints will occur (e.g., memos, phone calls, meetings) and what developmental activities will be completed or discussed at these times.

Part 2: Manager Review

Questions to ask....
1. Are you aware of your employee’s career interests and values? Do you know which of your employee’s strengths contribute to these career goals and what areas need to be developed?

2. Do you feel that the short-term goals your employee has suggested are unrealistic, given the employee's abilities or other external factors? Is there anything standing in the way of the desired goals?

   **Tip:** Convey what you know about organizational realities to help the employee set short-term goals. If you think there are outside barriers which will inhibit the attainment of their goals, describe them and help the employee work around them.

3. Do you know of other activities that would help the employee reach the developmental goals? What has helped you in the past in this area?

   **Tip:** Help the employee select at least one development activity for each short-term goal. Scan the Employee Appraiser Coaching Advisor for action suggestions.

4. Are there people you know who could help your employee meet their career development goals? Can you provide the resources identified?

   **Tip:** Help the employee meet their goals by offering your ideas, contacts with people, and resources. Think of at least one person who could help the employee in a mentor or advisor role.

5. Can you make changes to the employee’s job to replace routine tasks with new work that is more closely aligned with the employee’s goals?

   **Tip:** If you agree with the employee’s suggestions for expanding their responsibilities, work with them to define any additional knowledge or experience they will need to meet the new set of expectations. Also take a close look at how their workload will be affected, and discuss any responsibilities they will need to give up.

   **Tip:** When employees mention tasks they no longer want to be involved with, ask them for specific suggestions on how to get the same result without their involvement, e.g. delegate, eliminate, or find more efficient ways of accomplishing the tasks.
6. Have you and the employee agreed on dates for progress checkpoints and what will be measured at each one?