

Northwestern | HUMAN RESOURCES

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: SAMPLE

Name: Sample

Date:

Section I: Defining Your Strengths

Identify your top 3 strengths. Think through the different career successes you've had, feedback you've received from peers or managers, and your assessment results to reflect on and identify your career strengths:

1. Networking - I am good at connecting with people and helping others connect based on their interests
2. Research - I enjoy researching additional tools, resources, podcasts, etc. that can help me learn new skills or help others around me
3. Active Listening - I am great at asking questions when others approach me with ideas or concerns

Reflection Point: How have these strengths helped you achieve success in your career already? Which strengths will you leverage moving forward?

My networking skills have helped me connect with others across the university and understand opportunities for collaboration. My research skills help me to continue to learn, and my active listening strength allows me to build trust with others and be an approachable colleague. I would like to leverage my networking strength and research skills to aid in my developmental goal.

Section II: Setting Professional Development Goals and Action Planning

DEVELOPMENT GOAL 1:

To learn how to give effective feedback to my team members

Connection to overall career goals or career development How does this goal connect to your other aspirations you might have for your career progression, development, or passions?

I want to learn how to give effective feedback because I aspire to become a manager in the next two years. I currently do not feel comfortable giving feedback, but I see it as a core skill for managers.

Action Plan

What actions will you take to work towards this goal? Which actions are short term (30-90 days), and which actions are long term (6-12 months)?

As you create your action plan, think about the strengths you identified in Section I and identify how you might leverage these strengths to accomplish your actions.

Short Term Action Steps:

- Take a LinkedIn Learning class on how to deliver effective feedback (this action step leverages my research strength)
- Research and purchase 2 books about delivering effective feedback

- Ask my manager and peers for their best practices for delivering effective feedback (this action step leverages my networking strength)

Long Term Action Steps:

- Read both books about feedback and identify skills that I will try. Ask for feedback on these skills as I put them into practice
- Provide feedback to one team member each week

Accountability: Who can you involve with helping you stay accountable or supporting you with this goal? How can they help you? How can your manager help you?

My teammates - let them know I am working on this skill and that I am open to feedback on how I am doing

My manager - ask for feedback as they observe me working on my goal and ask about resources that have worked for them

My friend - grab a coffee and share an update about what I am learning (quarterly)

Appendix A: Example Action Steps

Short-Term Actions (30-90 Day Projects)

- Volunteer to lead a new project or team initiative
- Identify and champion a process improvement
- Lead a post-project assessment and summarize lessons learned for future initiatives
- Assemble and lead a cross-functional team to solve a business problem

Long-Term Actions (6-12 months)

- Transition to a new role to expand skills, leadership responsibilities, or broaden professional experience
- If changing roles is not reasonable or desirable, job crafting may be another avenue to explore for longer term actions. Job [crafting](#) actions could include making small or large changes to how you spend your time at work in order to more closely align with your motivations, passions, and interests.

Developmental Relationships

- Seek out a mentoring relationship
- Identify a role model - observe behavior relative to a particular strength and adopt 2-3 behaviors in your own day to day practices
- Actively build a broader network – seek out individuals with relevant desired skills/expertise inside and outside of Northwestern
- Join and actively engage in a professional association to learn more about specific areas or broaden your knowledge, skills, and experience base

360 Degree Feedback & Assessment

- Solicit 360-degree feedback from your manager, direct reports, superiors, and peers to enhance self-awareness
- Solicit feedback from a trusted colleague/faculty member

- Practice a new skill (e.g., speak up 2 x in every meeting or review calendar weekly to check for over-scheduling) and ask for feedback or take time to reflect on this new practice

Education

- Attend a conference to broaden industry knowledge
- Attend a course to improve a particular skill or strengthen knowledge (e.g., presentation skills)
- Identify books or resources and apply learnings from these sources to your daily work
- Pursue a college degree

Community Involvement

- Assume a leadership position, lead a project, or drive a campaign in a volunteer organization, professional association, religious institution, non-for-profit organization, etc. to build and strengthen leadership capabilities