

Career Development Tool 1:

Understanding Career Development

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Tags

Who is this for?

High Priority:

- Direct Line managers

Practical Information:

- **DEI** and HR Professionals

What guidance does it provide?

- How to build on current career development practices to ensure all employees are planned and managed for their future goals

Take home points

- Career development should be considered from the perspective of both the organization and the worker
 - Organization: what skills and knowledge do we require to achieve our business goals?
 - Worker: what are the skills and knowledge I think are critical to my current and future career plans?
- Career development strategies bring employers and employees together to explore how the interests and potential of employees aligns with the needs and strategy of the business. Career development conversations can convey your interest in your worker and their future, help your worker see their future direction more clearly and help you, as an employer, get the “right” person in the right seat at the table
- Managers should never assume that a worker with a disability has reached the limit of potential at work

What is Career Development?

Career development is a process that empowers workers to drive their careers forward. It involves long-term planning, focused on learning and skill improvement, so that workers may not only perform their jobs better, but progress further in their career path. Direct line managers should talk to every worker, including those with disabilities, about their career trajectory and help them identify the skill-building and professional development opportunities.¹

Changing Perspectives Over Time

In recent decades, there has been shift in how **career development** is viewed. Historically, an organization held the responsibility to ensure that its workers had the skills to meet the company's long-term goals. Nowadays, workers can exercise more control over their career advancement and identify their need for professional development opportunities.

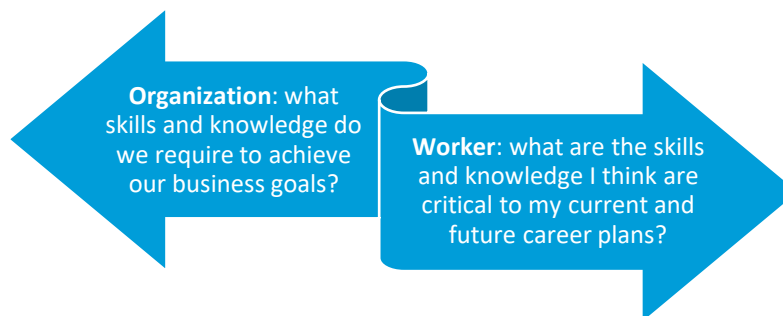
*As such, **career development** is viewed as a partnership with employees.*

*Pop Up: **Career development** is also a key component of a company's attraction and retention strategy. Many potential candidates with disabilities will not consider employment with an organization unless it offers **career development** as a basic component of its culture.*

Exceptional managers recognize the value of career development. Although **career development** is often thought of as a worker-directed process, managers play a critical role in facilitating growth and skill advancement among all employees. Broaden your understanding of performance management processes to include **career development** planning.²

Career Development as a Shared Investment

The beauty behind career development lies in its duality. **Career development** should be considered from the perspective of both the organization and the worker:²



Above all, the goal of career of development is to harness the full potential of each worker to enhance the person's quality of work life and maximize the growth and success of the business. Keeping this in mind, **career development** strategies bring employers and employees together to explore how the interests and potential of employees aligns with the needs and strategy of the business. **Career development** conversations can:

- Convey your interest in your worker and their future
- Help your worker see their future direction more clearly
- Help you, as an employer, get the "right" person in the right seat at the table

A unionized environment likely already has a mechanism in place concerned with promotion, equitable pay, and career development, designed to ensure fairness and representation. The union, prioritizing accessibility, will be a collaborator in revising any existing processes to not disadvantage persons with disabilities.

Career Development Considerations for Workers with Disabilities

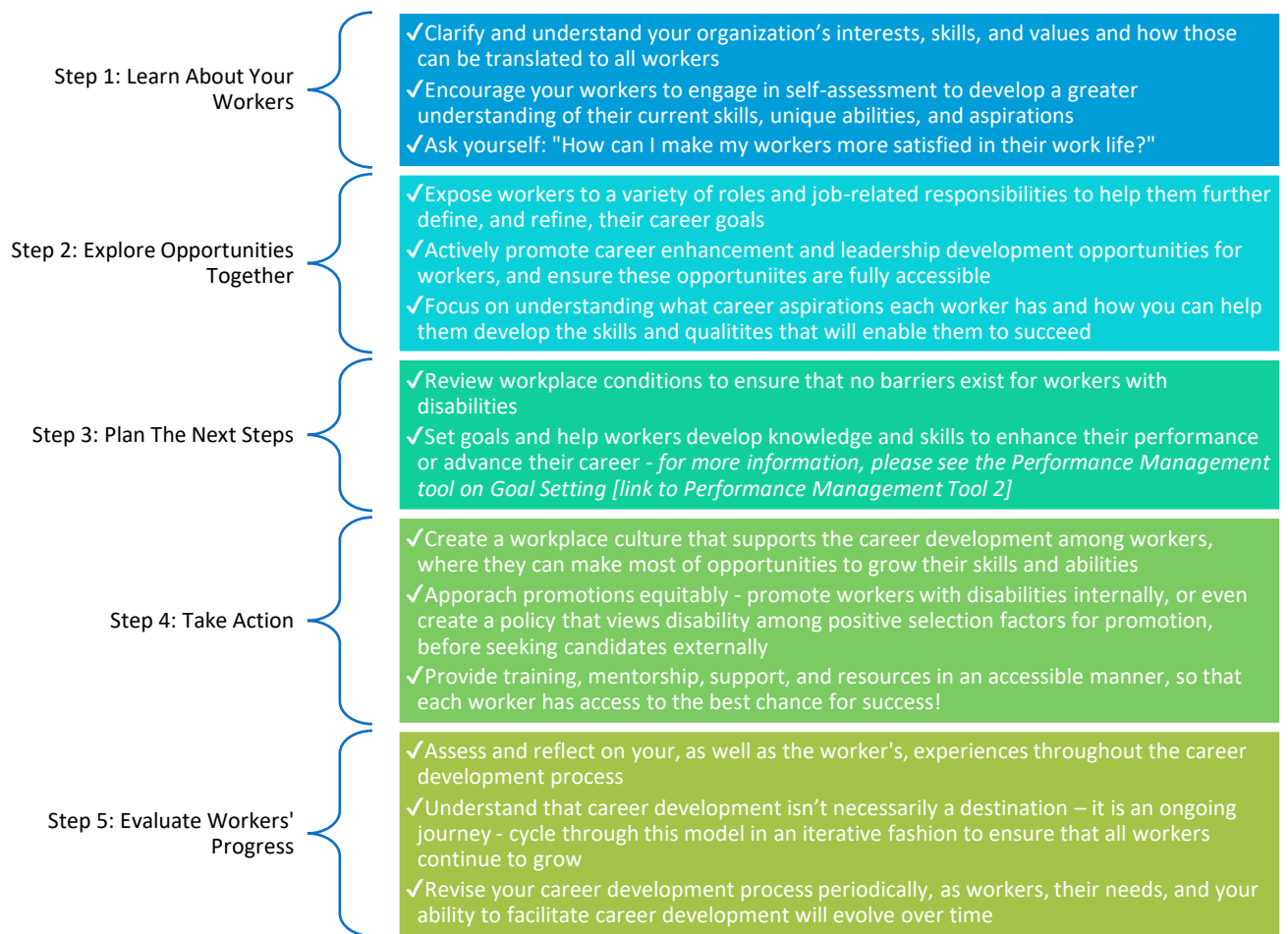
Managers must be careful when it comes to assessing career potential among workers – they should not make assumptions about the capacity of any worker to learn, develop, and grow. If you are unsure of whether a worker with a disability wants experience additional challenge in their role, or has interest in changing their position, simply ask!

In a similar vein, managers should never assume that a worker with a disability has reached the limit of potential at work. If the worker expresses the desire to improve, identify or create novel opportunities for them to trial new roles that may be higher in pay, or take on more responsibility within the organization. The choice to actively support career development, instead of letting opportunities pass a worker by, can be the vital difference between successful and unsuccessful retention of workers with disabilities³. Here are some additional best practices to guide you:³

- Always consider accessibility needs of workers with disabilities, as well as any agreed upon accommodation plans, when speaking about career development
- Do not assume that workers with disabilities are content with simply being employees – all individuals have aspirations and goals
- Recognize that with the right adjustments, whether it be in the work environment, workplace culture, or with workplace accommodations, all employees can develop their talents and better contribute to the company's success
- Place a greater emphasis on a worker's performance and career potential, rather than their current skill level, when communicating feedback and carrying out discussions of growth

Building Disability Confident Career Development Practices

Leading organizations find out how to help their workers thrive on the job. They help workers hone their existing skills and identify areas where career advancement opportunities will enhance the worker's competencies. Take a look at this framework for career development:^{4,5}



How Does Career Development Benefit Your Company?¹

All organizations will benefit immensely from retaining a workforce that is motivated to continually learn, diversify their skills, and contribute to the overall success of the company.⁶

1. **It is an investment in your future workforce:** Mentoring individuals with disabilities builds human capital. Mentoring experiences prepare individuals for advancement by strengthening their skills and providing them with confidence. This will enable workers to excel in their current and future positions. In today's labor market, this is an advantageous strategy.
2. **It sends workers the message that you care:** Career development represents a commitment of time and energy, devoted directly to your staff. It demonstrates that a value is placed on professional development and growth. Mentoring people with disabilities sends a message to all staff that the company really does care about their people.
3. **It creates positive attitude changes in your workplace culture:** Supporting workers with career development can often be an eye-opening experience for employers. In some cases, employers may not be sure about how to support the advancement of a worker with a disability. When managers invest the time and effort to help all workers succeed, there is a ripple effect that can be felt across the organization.

TD reports that long-standing employees with disabilities are very valuable resources for training and mentoring new employees” – Gibbard et al., 2018⁷

The outcomes below show what you can gain from using accessible and inclusive **career development** strategies in your business.⁸ Which of these are important for your business right now?

Immediate Outcomes	Workplace Outcomes	Business Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reduced absences- Reduced staff turnover- Improved person-to-job match- Increased productivity- A value reward strategy- Ability to do more in-house	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Positive work environment- Intelligent use of skills/talents- Retain knowledge of business- Higher skilled team- More flexible workforce- Smoother job succession- Larger talent bank for special tasks- More innovative environment- Improved communication- Attract good people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Better company image and reputation- Better customer relationship and experience- Greater potential to adapt, change, and develop

Intersectionality Avatars

Dante: Soon after I was hired out of university, I helped the company train employees on how the internet on their new computers. Things have changed a lot since my onboarding. We have new information and logistics coming in every single day.

In fact, a new way my company went was to offer training online so that employees would be able to learn at their own pace and according to their schedules. I appreciated it very much when my superior announced that there was a new training program for managers like me. He asked me if I was comfortable with using computers. He doesn't know that I was hired for my computer expertise, and I've kept up with the changes in technology by participating in workshops to expand my expertise during my personal time.

References

- ¹Performance Management Line Manager Guide (2014). Business Disability Forum. https://rct.learningpool.com/pluginfile.php/711/mod_folder/content/0/Saesneg%20-%20English/BDF%20Performance%20Managment%20Line%20Managers%20Guide.pdf?forcedownload=1
- ²MaRS Startup Toolkit (n.d.). MaRS. <https://learn.marsdd.com/article/career-development/>
- ³Employers' Toolkit: Making Ontario Workplaces Accessible to People with Disabilities, 2nd Edition (2015). The Conference Board of Canada. https://www.conferenceboard.ca/docs/default-source/pdf_downloads/7159_accessibilitytoolkit-2015_rpt.pdf?sfvrsn=a98e7013_2&pdf=toolkit
- ⁴Hire (And Keep) the Best Training Course (n.d.). Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion. <https://askearn.org/page/hire-and-keep-the-best-talent-acquisition-and-retention-processes>
- ⁵Career Development: Improving Options and Opportunities for Women With Disabilities (2012). Impact Feature Issue on Employment and Women With Disabilities. *ICI WebPub System*. <https://publications.ici.umn.edu/impact/21-1/career-development-improving-options-and-opportunities-for-women-with-disabilities>
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- ⁸Introducing Career Development: Toolkit (2012). Careers New Zealand. *The Government of New Zealand*. <https://www.careers.govt.nz/assets/pages/docs/introducing-career-development-toolkit.pdf>