



Personal Career Development Planner

Make sure your career is going where you want it to. Define what success means to you and identify ways to achieve it with this job aid. First, complete the “Career and Organizational Success Skills Inventory” on the next two pages. Use this to rate the strengths and weaknesses of your career skills. Next, move on to the “Career Success Development Planner.” Get out an extra sheet of paper and answer the questions for each of the planner’s three steps. First, define what success looks like to you; then identify the skills you need for success. Finally, create a plan to get you there; your answers from the initial skills inventory will help you during this final step

Career and Organizational Success Skills Inventory

Using the following statements, rate your career and organizational success skills based on the scale: Needs work = 1, OK = 2, Strength = 3. Based on the key at the end of the self-assessment, total your scores for the five success skills.

Evaluation Statements	Needs Work (1)	OK (2)	Strength (3)
1. I understand the hierarchy and formal structure of my organization.			
2. I know what my boss’s top work priorities are and why.			
3. I have built good relationships with key individuals in the organization who can help me in my career success.			
4. I know the top items on management’s radar screen.			
5. I have the specialized knowledge I need to do my job efficiently and well.			
6. I understand how internal communication takes place in my organization.			
7. I understand my boss’s working preference in terms of tasks versus people.			
8. I have identified organizational projects beyond my regular scope of work to which my expertise can bring value.			

9. I know how top management perceives my group.
10. I have broad business knowledge.
11. I know which major projects get supported.
12. I understand how my boss balances the need for data and action.
13. I have the support of an internal coach or champion.
14. I understand the business numbers that are critical to my group.
15. I know how to interpret organizational politics.
16. I understand how to balance the tradeoffs between internal competition and collaboration between departments.
17. I know the career goals of my boss.
18. I know the expectations of my boss's manager.
19. I know what key value my group delivers internally.
20. I have the necessary influence skills for building relationships.

Write your scores from the self-assessment at left in the spaces provided below to get your scores in each skill category.

Building competencies and expertise

Question No. 5: 10: 15: 20: Total:

Working with your boss

Question No. 2: 7: 12: 17: Total:

Building relationships and visibility

Question No. 3: 8: 13: 18: Total:

Understanding and fitting into the culture

Question No. 1: 6: 11: 16: Total:

Increasing business savvy

Question No. 4: 9: 14: 19: Total:

If you scored 10-12, you are doing great in that skill and can use it as a strength. If you scored 6-9, you are doing OK, but might eventually want to work on that skill some more. If you scored 4-6, you should focus on this area immediately if it aligns with your goals. Use your development planner in the job aid to plan next steps for development in these areas. One option is to find a coach in your

organization who can assist you with guidance and development of some of the particular knowledge and skills. Another option may include formal training from inside or outside the organization.

Career Success Development Planner

Use the following development planner to define what success means to you and identify ways to achieve it. You will need separate pieces of paper to complete your planning activities.

Step 1: Defining Success

On a separate sheet of paper, write down your career success goal(s) in a one-sentence statement. What would success look like to you?

Step 2: Identifying Skills Needed

Based on your results from your career success skills self assessment and your success goals, list the success skills you need to develop. Do not start with the skills that you scored lowest on, but focus on those that are most critical to success in your particular position. Also note your strengths.

Step 3: Planning for Development

Create development plans for each career success skill as follows. Identify development activities, support needed, due dates, and tracking methods for each skill. Prioritize your development activities based on the order of development needs you established in Step 2 above.

1. Building Competencies

Identify any gaps or deficiencies in job-specific skills and knowledge for your current position or for a position you want. Use the process in the “Building Competencies” section to help you identify critical skills.

List the skills or knowledge that would have the greatest beneficial effect on your career success if you were proficient in them today (limit to three to start). Then, on a fresh sheet of paper, write the following headings along the top of the page:

- skill or knowledge gap
- learning activities
- support needed
- due dates or deadlines
- tracking methods

For each skill or knowledge gap you listed, create a set of learning activities to fill the gap, identify the support you may need (for example, time from your manager to attend training), set due dates, and identify tracking methods.

2. Working With Your Boss

To work with your boss effectively, think about his or her:

- Working Style

What are his or her preferences for reporting? Does he or she want a formal or an informal relationship? Does he or she want a lot of data before making decisions, or not?

- Management Style

Does your boss tell, participate, or delegate?

- Work Goals

What does your boss's boss want from him or her? What targets or numbers is he or she expected to hit? What pressures or deadlines arise on a regular or periodic basis?

- Work Needs

What does your boss want from his or her career?

- Personal Wants

What drives your boss personally?

- Organizational Capabilities

Who does your boss have influence with? Who competes with your boss for resources? What kind of access to information and resources does he or she have? After you have developed a picture of your boss based on these elements, identify a set of specific strategies to work with these characteristics. For example, if your boss is highly data driven, establish a habit of providing a weekly report of your activities and progress. Or if he or she strives for power, identify and suggest high-profile projects that can have a major effect on the organization. How can you support your boss?

3. Building Relationships and Visibility

To build relationships and visibility, ask yourself the following questions:

- Other than your boss or manager, who should you try to build a relationship with?
- In the operating culture of your unit or organization, what skills or talents of yours can be leveraged with other people or projects to enhance your visibility?
- How can you read other people's work goals (priorities, targets, deadlines, and pressures)?
- How can you determine other people's work needs (career goals, rewards, new skills, and advancement)?
- Who can assist you in the role of coach or champion?
- Can you acquire a mentor in the organization?
- Are there opportunities for you to be a coach or champion to another junior colleague?

Based on your answers to these questions, identify the steps you will take to build relationships and visibility. Make sure your plan of action is specific and includes due dates or deadlines. Also, avoid the perception that you are playing politics by ensuring that you bring value to relationships and projects.

4. Understanding the Culture

Based on your analysis of your organization's operating culture, answer the following questions to help you strategize behaviors that are likely to lead to success:

- Who are the people that are important for you to learn from?
- What rules should you follow strictly?
- What rules can you bend a little?
- What values are of key importance in the organization?
- How do decisions get made (differentiate between major and minor)?
- What are the key business priorities of the organization?
- What are the key priorities of your boss or unit?
- What are the most effective methods of communication with others in the organization?
- What are the best ways to contribute in meetings?
- How can you influence others in the organization?
- When should you speak up about something, and when is it best to be silent?

5. Increasing Your Business Savvy

General business knowledge is important for most employees to succeed. To gain a different perspective on how your work matters, go through the following checklist:

- Describe your organization's industry or sector.
- List your organization's top three competitors.
- Describe any other environmental pressures (for example, heavy government regulation, environmental rules, rapid technological innovation).
- Identify ways you can keep up with what's going on in your industry (reading trade magazines, and so forth).
- Describe how your organization differentiates itself from its competitors.

- Identify three ways that the way you work could support the organization's strategic positioning.
- List the top numbers on the radar of your organization's executive team.
- Identify how your work affects those numbers.
- List the major concerns of your boss.
- Identify how your work supports the goals of your boss for his or her group.