

NAVIGATING YOUR CAREER

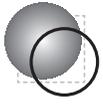
*Your Career Journey*

*Produced by:*



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## INTRODUCTION

Mentoring is an important element of a sound career development plan for all employees.

- If you are early in your career, a mentor can help focus your vision for future opportunities while providing sound advice and guidance for maximizing your impact in your current role.
- At midcareer, a mentor can help in assessing your skills acquired through varied experiences and create a meaningful plan for your next steps in the organization.
- Late in your career, a mentor can help you review your accomplishments and assess and plan the legacy you wish to leave behind.

Although “formal” mentoring programs are common in many organizations, most employees find that their opportunities for mentoring occur through a more “informal” process of selecting and engaging in a mentoring relationship outside of a formal organizational program.

This series has been designed to provide all employees, regardless of their participation in a formal program, with a framework for establishing and getting the most out of their mentoring relationships. Each module provides you with suggestions for organizing your plan for mentoring and suggestions for conversations to have with your mentor, as well as practical steps to take to develop your skill set.

Other modules in this series include:

- **Building Working Relationships**
- **Increasing Visibility**
- **Influencing Others Through Leadership**
- **Learning Partner Toolkit**
- **Sharing Organizational Knowledge**

Each module provides a framework for self-paced reflection with prompts and suggestions of areas you may wish to talk over with your mentor. The prompts are designated by this symbol: 



## YOUR CAREER JOURNEY

*When I look to the future, it is so bright it burns my eyes.*

– Oprah Winfrey

Only you can manage your career journey. That means you must determine what things you are passionate about, what your goals are, both professionally and personally, and how much energy you are willing to invest along the way.

- **What is it that you really want from your career?**
- **What do you want to be doing next year?**
- **In five years? In ten years?**
- **How do you define success?**

With the help of your mentor, this module guides you through a process that will assist you in learning more about yourself and your career. You will think about your personal work history, your unique talents and passions, and consider a path that corresponds with your opportunities for growth and advancement.

As you work with your mentor to consider the opportunities that await you, think about your whole self. Consider your real needs and wants and determine the things that give you a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Don't forget to find fun along the way.

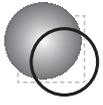
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### GOALS OF THIS MODULE

Through your dialogues with your mentor, you will explore:

- Your career needs and wants.
- Your strengths and talents.
- Your career challenges.
- Opportunities for career growth.
- Support for your career goals.





## EXPLORING YOUR CAREER OPTIONS

Throughout your career journey, you are responsible for reflecting on your current situation while considering your goals and ambitions for the future. As you assess your present path in relation to your future aspirations, you will need to conduct an honest appraisal of:

- Your professional needs or wants
- Areas you consider to be strengths and challenges
- Your ability to recognize your talents and passions
- Your experiences of roadblocks or dead ends

In addition, you will need to reflect on the organizational culture, your career map, and short-term tactics that will lead to long-term gain.

Once you have thoroughly examined your current state, you will be prepared to anticipate your leadership “sweet spot”: the convergence of your unique passions, competencies, and opportunities.



# CAREER DIALOGUE

## 1. Your Professional Needs and Wants

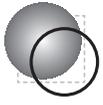
What is really important to you as you consider your career goals? Are you in a unique situation now that has created needs you don't foresee in the future? What elements of a career really matter to you?

As you think about your career, on a scale of 1 to 5, **1** being **not important** and **5** being **very important**, how important is:

	Today?	The Future?
Salary		
Benefits		
Status or Title		
Recognition and Rewards		
Job Security		
Coaching and Feedback		
Independence		
Promotional Opportunities		
Peer Relationships		
Professional Development		
Personal Growth		
Work/Life Balance		
Making a Difference		
Company Values		
Respectful Workplace		



*Ask your mentor to comment on your responses. What is your hierarchy of needs/wants today? In the future?*



### **2. Your Strengths and Challenges**

Talk about your present job, or one you had in the past, and a time when you felt you were doing your best work, meeting the highest expectations of those around you, fulfilling your own expectations, delivering superior service, or making a difference in some way.

- What were you doing?
- Who worked with you? Describe these relationships.
- What level of responsibility did you have?
- How much responsibility did you assume?
- How would you describe your feelings related to that experience?
- What other factors contributed to your success?

Talk about a time in your career when you met the greatest challenge. It may be a challenge that lasted just five minutes, yet had great impact, or it may be a challenge that you have experienced over a lifetime.

- Describe the feelings associated with this challenge.
- Who was present in these circumstances? What were their roles?
- What was the result of this challenge in your job?
- What was the result of this challenge in your life outside of work?

### **3. Your Talents and Passions**

Discuss an event in your life that may have happened on one or numerous occasions when you recognized your special talents and passions and pursued an opportunity you may have previously overlooked.

- When did this happen in your life?
- Describe the talent.
- Describe the passion.
- Why might you have overlooked the opportunity?
- Why didn't you?



## CAREER DIALOGUE *(continued)*

### **4. Your Support for Career Goals**

Describe a time in your work career when you experienced support, sponsorship, and encouragement.

- From whom did you experience this support?
- How did this relationship begin?
- What was your role? What was the other's role?
- What happened?
- What stands out most about that experience?
- Why did this make a difference for you?

### **5. Your Organization's Culture**

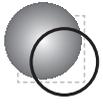
Interview your mentor to learn about the culture of your organization. Ask any questions that you feel are relevant to your career journey. Probe to gain an understanding of the unwritten rules for success. Be sure to ask for clarification and examples.

- Describe the organization's culture and work environment.
- What does it take to succeed in the organization?
- What are some of the political and social rules of etiquette that may not be widely known?
- What does your mentor wish someone had told him or her about the organization?
- Who are the organization's star performers? Why?

### **6. Your Career Map in This Organization**

Together with your mentor, develop a map of the organization. This should not look like an organizational chart since you, as a mentee, should be at the **center** of the map. Draw lines to areas of opportunity within the organization.

- Draw lines to areas of special interest to you within the organization.
- Identify key people along these lines.
- Identify key tools for communication along these lines.
- Identify any opportunities for "quick hits" in terms of visible assignments.
- Identify skills needed to travel along these lines.



## PERSONAL REFLECTION: YOUR CAREER JOURNEY

Think about this career inventory and the examples you just talked about.

1. What are some insights that you need to consider as you reflect on your career goals?
2. What are the opportunities, limits, or constraints you anticipate as you seek to achieve your career mission?
3. What do you see as trade-offs that you will need to make to achieve these goals? Are you willing to make them?
4. How much energy are you willing to put into achieving these goals?



## HOW YOUR MENTOR CAN ASSIST YOU

As you move through this process, you and your mentor will develop a relationship that will be important to your career journey. There will be opportunities to add to this inventory in conversations about other topics or in additional encounters with each other.



*Talk to your mentor about ways he or she can assist you by:*

- Sharing organizational knowledge.
- Helping you build professional networks.
- Acting as a sounding board for your ideas and concerns.
- Other ways: