

Triple Threat Leadership Series: Career *Forward* Worksheet

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What is the **best** career advice **you've** ever received?



Career Forward is part of the **Triple Threat Leadership series**.

Like premium ice cream, leadership never tasted so sweet once you master the **three most important skills of leadership**: training development, organizational development, and career development.

In this course, we'll focus on Career Development: how to navigate and lead the career development process with purpose and power to achieve goals.

Triple Threat leaders are skilled in training development, organizational development, and career development. With these three skills, they create individuals and teams that innovate, flex, and exceed.

Triple-threat leaders value Career Development as an essential aspect of **organizational performance**. They ensure diversity and transparency in all systems and processes designed to:

- **drive** enthusiastic career planning
- **confirm** unshakable succession planning

If you are a leader, or you plan to become a leader, then to **drive enthusiastic career planning**, you'll need to explain to your employees how they can get the most from career processes. If you are an individual contributor, you need to know how to get the most from career systems and processes. In this episode of the Triple Threat Leadership Series, we'll cover **three best practices for effective career development** and how you can achieve the greatest return on your efforts.

1

Know Your **Assets**

2

Take **Ownership**

3

Leverage **Opportunities**

The key best practices of **career forward leaders** are:

- **Know your assets:** Leverage skills, expertise, and results to open career opportunities.
- **Take ownership:** Define roles, build relationships, and take responsibility for your growth.
- **Leverage all opportunities:** Use lateral moves, networking, and performance management to expand potential, adapt, and align with organizational and environmental changes. Navigate the succession planning process, know the ins and outs, the ups and downs, go for it, stay grounded.

Your **superpowers** are:

- Build **relationships**
- Be focused but **flexible**
- Plan **measurable** actions



What level is your current career development planning skill:

- ☐ Beginner
- ☐ Intermediate
- ☐ Advanced

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Which path best represents your current end of career goal?

☐ **Individual Contributor**

- Deep technical expertise: **Focus** on honing your skills in a specific area and becoming an expert.
- Autonomy: Greater **control** over your daily tasks and project execution.
- Hands-on work: Direct **involvement** in the core activities of your field

☐ **Leader**

- Impact on others: Ability to mentor, inspire, and guide team members towards success
- Strategic thinking: Involvement in high-level decision making and vision development
- Career progression: Potential for greater responsibility and leadership opportunities

1. Know Your Assets: Your career development **plan** hinges on knowing and leveraging your **assets**:

- your **expertise**: knowledge, skills, experience
- your **brand**
- your **network**



What are specific examples of **your expertise**?



What skills earn credibility pretty much anywhere you are in the organization?

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How to articulate what you want to improve:

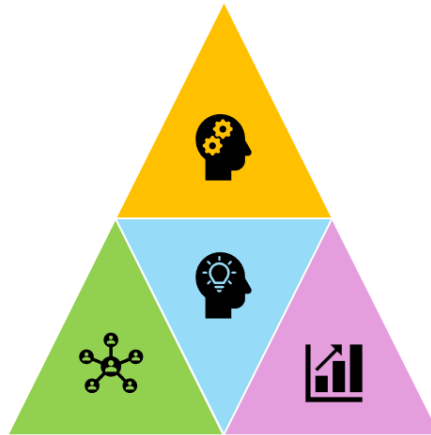
Always be specific.

- Communicate the skill(s) **you** want to improve, **why**, and how **you plan** to improve.
- Consider how you've already demonstrated competency and then **add on** how you will **increase** your competency even further.
- Communicate that **you know** what skills benefit your performance the most and **you know** how best to achieve your ideal competency and results.

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Your **Brand** is the basis and impetus for marketing yourself.



What is **your** central **philosophy** or **approach** when it comes to your work?



How do you track, promote, collaborate on, cooperate on, and communicate **ideas**?

Your **network** is a tremendous **personal** asset that should be nurtured, groomed, and shared.



How can **results** be used to grow a person's brand and increase their career opportunities?

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Your **network** is your ecosystem of connections, personal and work-related, including all levels, internal and external, current and past experiences.

Your **network** of relationships, from newly formed to long-term, can help you get work done, help others get their work done and build lifetime friendships.

There are four types of **connections** that are particularly helpful for career development:

- Sponsor
- Mentor
- Advocate
- Advisor



In your experience, what is the difference between an **advocate** and an **advisor**?

Pop Quiz: Which of these is **NOT** considered a career development **asset**?

- A. **Expertise**
- B. **Brand**
- C. **Hobbies**
- D. **Network**

- Please list **your strongest** skill that is **most valued** by your organization:
- Please list one **idea you've got** that could **help** your department or organization achieve more:
- Please list one **action you plan** to take to **expand** or **share** your network:

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2. **Take Ownership:**

- Stakeholders
- Organizational Assets

Nobody cares about your career **more than you** do.

You have the **biggest role** and the **most responsibilities** in managing your career.

- Who are the **most influential** stakeholders in results you achieve? Why?
- What role do your most influential stakeholders have in deciding **your performance** evaluation rating?
- What role do your stakeholders have in your career **opportunities**?
- Which of **your results** are **easiest to quantify** and **most valuable** to your most influential stakeholders? Why?
- What opportunities do you have to **recruit** influential stakeholders?



What are **your best practices** for giving your stakeholders (and others) **recognition**?

What **recognition** have **you received** from stakeholders and advocates about your:

- contributions and results?
- KPI accomplishments?

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Your **organizational assets** include the:

- Career Development process
- Succession Planning process
- Performance Management process
- Purpose/Mission/Vision
- Culture/values
- Organization's current results vs ideal results

How do the processes work?

What happens to information entered into each process?

How is that information used? **Who** uses it?

How are career **decisions made** using that information?

How is the information used to **decide** what **opportunities** will be offered to you?

How does the organization's purpose/mission/vision/culture/values **align** with your own?

Who knows about your **strengths** and how well they **align** with the organization? How will you **ensure** key decision-makers **know**?

Poll Question: Which aspect(s) are included in your organization's career development process?

- A. **mentoring** programs
- B. **leadership** training
- C. **skills** development courses
- D. job **shadowing**
- E. career **pathing**
- F. performance reviews with **development plans**
- G. internal mobility **platforms**
- H. employee **self-assessment** tools
- I. cross-functional project **assignments**
- J. **rotational** programs
- K. regular **feedback** sessions
- L. **networking** opportunities
- M. other

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Whatever systems your organization has, **make the fields work for you**.

You may know the system is set up with specific goals in mind for certain fields, but **you should hack it** to work most in **your favor**, pushing the limits of the system as needed to **further your career goals**.

Customize and Manage Your Plan:

To achieve your career goals, you need a SMART plan.

- **Decide** on your end of career goal
- **Set** your 1-2 year goal and your 3-5 year goal to align with your end of career goal
- **Document** your SMART action steps to get you to each milestone

Review your career plan with your advocates, trusted advisors, and mentors:

- How well does your plan **align** with your org's values, mission, purpose, vision, current and future goals and results?
- How **flexible** is your plan?
- How **agile** are you?
- What is your plan if an **opportunity** opens that is adjacent to your goal?
- Are you ready to **adapt** to change? What **blind** spots might you have?
- **What is your plan if** your ideal role disappears or changes so much that it no longer appeals to you?
- **What is your plan if** your organization disappears or changes so much it no longer appeals to you?
- **How do you feel about** transferring to another geo or travel?
- **What impact** would transferring or travel have on your family and friends?

Poll Question: How **well** does your career plan **align** with your organization's values, mission, purpose, vision, current and future goals and results?

- A. **Fully** aligned – My career goals strongly support the organization's direction.
- B. **Mostly** aligned – There is some overlap, but areas of divergence exist.
- C. **Somewhat** aligned – I see potential alignment but need more clarity.
- D. **Not** aligned – My career goals differ from the organization's direction.
- E. **Uncertain** – I have not fully assessed the alignment yet.

Please list what action do you plan to take to increase your **relationship** with any of your **stakeholders**?

Please list what aspect of career development do you plan to **learn more** about? Or what ways do you plan to **better leverage** the career development system or process?

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3. **Leverage Opportunities:**

- Change
- Performance Management
- Experiences and Succession Planning

Keep your plan updated, **and** update your boss, mentors, and other advocates, as your personal assets evolve.

Consider **organizational** and **environmental** changes as you update your 1-2, 3-5, and end of career goals and plan.

Poll Question: What impact can **performance management** have on your opportunities?

- A. **Significant** positive impact – Clear goals and feedback enhance career progression.
- B. **Moderate** impact – Helps in some areas, but other factors influence growth.
- C. **Minimal** impact – Performance management has little effect on career trajectory.
- D. **Negative** impact – Poorly executed reviews limit opportunities.
- E. **Depends** on the organization – The effectiveness varies based on leadership and policies.

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Leveraging Performance Management for Career Growth

- **Performance management** is a top opportunity for building your **personal brand marketing plan**.
- Your **brand message** should:
 - Clearly state your **career goal**, milestones, and action steps.
 - Drive others to **consider you for growth opportunities**.
 - Show **demonstrated progress** toward your aspirations.

Linking Performance to Strategy

- **KPIs/OKRs** align across the organization:
 - Organization → Department → Individual.
- Focus your **efforts and dispatch** on achieving your KPIs/OKRs.
- **Track progress** and adjust actions to stay on target.
- Regularly **evaluate your own performance** and discuss with your boss:
 - No surprises—maintain **regular communication and status updates**.

Using Performance Reviews Strategically

- Share your **strategic ideas** during performance conversations—to showcase innovation and value.
- Understand how your **performance data is used**:
 - In **career development** and **succession planning**.
- Leverage your data to:
 - Gain visibility and access to **new opportunities**.
 - **Participate in succession planning**, if desired.

Boost Your Brand Using Performance Inputs

- Align personal KPIs with departmental/organizational ones.
- Highlight:
 - Quantitative KPI results.
 - Qualitative achievements.
 - Contributions to **cross-functional KPIs**.

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- Use **positive performance feedback** to:
 - Enrich your **Career Development Plan**.
 - Share internally/externally (e.g., **LinkedIn**, intranet—if allowed).

Positioning Yourself for Promotion

- Regularly update your personal **Brand Marketing Plan** with:
 - Results, improvements, and new capabilities.
- Best predictor of your opportunity: **exceed expectations in your current role**.
- Improvements can include:
 - Efficiency, quality, and mentoring others.
 - **Helping your boss “sell” your potential**.

Set Your Successor Up for Success

- Document your:
 - Processes.
 - Networks.
 - Improvement results.
- Make onboarding easy for your replacement—**don’t make them reinvent the wheel**.

Think Like a Leader

- Ask: **If I were in charge, what would I change, and why?**
- Record and develop **strategic ideas** over time.
- Your ideas are **valuable career assets**—be ready to present and evolve them.

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Pop Quiz: Which of the following is the **best** way to leverage **performance management** for career opportunities?

- A. **Keep** your achievements to yourself to **avoid** competition.
- B. **Align** your key performance indicators (KPIs) with company goals and **highlight** your results.
- C. **Ignore** feedback and focus **only** on individual accomplishments.
- D. **Avoid** discussing your contributions to cross-functional teams.

The **best** way to gain **experience** that will **propel your career** is to choose **rotations** that **complement** your career goals.

- Consider **rotations** that will provide you skills and experiences that will **serve you well** in your goal position.
- These **rotations** may **not** be part of the **traditional** or **direct** path to your goal position, but maybe they **should** be.
- Consider what skills and experiences make the **best** performers in your goal position, and think about pursuing **rotations** that will get you those skills and experiences.

Poll Question: How can **lateral** rotations impact your opportunities?

- A. **Enhances** performance – Provides broader experience and new skills that improve efficiency.
- B. **Neutral** impact – Skills transfer, but results depend on individual adaptability.
- C. **Hinders** performance – Requires adjustment time, which may slow progress.
- D. **Depends** on the role – Some roles benefit more from lateral experience than others.

Consider the **political** position of your desired area of expertise (what is the **credibility** of that function in your organization) and consider what skills would most **benefit** you and your function, and what skills are most often **missing** from most practitioners in your desired area expertise or function, and at the same time what skills are **vital** to achieving the goals of your function.

Pursue **development** opportunities, ideally rotations, to build the greatest level of **competency** and **credibility**, to master those skills to the level needed to achieve your goals in your function or area of expertise.

Be **open-minded** to the opportunities that come to you, **leverage** your network, and be creative as you consider your career path.

Up is not the only direction to get you where you will work hard, achieve much, and be happy.

Promotion is not the only way to gain experience.

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There are many ways to gain experience.

Constantly scan for opportunities to build your portfolio of **perspective** and **capability**.

Any opportunities you have to **collaborate** and achieve with others, or any opportunities you have to **broaden** your perspective, should be accepted and the **results** should be folded into your personal assets in terms of updating your **resume**, your career **plan**, your performance **appraisal**, social media **profiles**, etc.

WARNING: Make sure anything you post in social media is **approved** or within the **guidelines** of your organization.

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Navigate Succession Planning Opportunities

This article gives a good overview of an effective succession planning process:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-assess-leadership-potential-comprehensive-guide-leaders-jim-panos-vmxje/>

Indicators of high potential may **vary** from individual perspective and organizational perspective.

There may be **issues** with the credibility and accuracy of the high potential identification process.

Businesses sometimes **suffer** from a kind of A.D.D. based on internal and external factors, constant change, and limited resources all of which impacts priorities.

Indicators of high potential can include:

- strong **leadership** qualities
- high **emotional** intelligence
- adaptability

Your dispatch will probably change as the organization's priorities change.

You may be given opportunities to master skills and processes and then given completely new opportunities to build new capabilities and levels of competence.

As your dispatch changes, you'll cycle through varying stages of the learning curve, which will impact your performance, your evaluations, and your career opportunities.

However, **indicators of high potential** can include some of the characteristics and abilities that are **demonstrated as you cycle through a learning curve**.

For example, high potential can be indicated by:

- a strong desire to **learn**
- excellent **communication** skills
- **initiative** to take on new challenges

Build strong relationships and have open, clear communication and understanding of the **specific** qualities your organization and leadership consider **indicators** of high potential.

For example, indicators of high potential can also include:

- ability to **collaborate** effectively
- **receptiveness** to feedback
- a consistent **drive** to improve
- performance **beyond expectations**

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Consider how the learning curve may impact your **performance** rating and your “**high potential**” rating.

Consider how a change in bosses may **impact** your performance rating and your “high potential” rating.

Consider that the impact may be **short-term**, and decide how you’re going to **navigate** any impact.

Keep in mind:

- Be grateful and humble when you get feedback of any kind because you can **learn from it all** and you can use it all, but you can also choose to only use part of it or none of it.
- Consider how any feedback you get can be **used to further your career goals**; it may drive you to update your career goals, add actions to your plan, or put it aside to be considered later.
- Keep the feedback in **perspective**; don’t let it become bigger or smaller than it is, because the feedback isn’t your value, the feedback is just a data point you can use (or not).

Best Practices for Navigating Succession Planning:

- **actively** discuss your career goals
- demonstrate a **willingness**
- take on **challenges**
- seek out **mentorship**
- showcase your **performance** and potential
- **align** your plan with the company's needs

Excellent article about assessing your strategic thinking ability:

<https://www.linkedin.com/advice/0/how-can-you-measure-effectiveness-your-4e?ut>

Enjoy the Ride:

- Taking **ownership** of your career development is a way you can **protect** yourself if the succession planning ride gets bumpy.
- Once you are **clear** on your personal assets and how you can **leverage** all of the organizational assets, then you are in the driver seat **deciding what to do, when to do it, how much effort** to invest, **who to collaborate** with, who to seek as a **mentor**, who to mentor, which **opportunities** to pursue inside the organization, which **opportunities** to pursue outside the organization, etc.
- You’ll encounter pros and cons in the short, mid, and long term.
- But **you own** your career development, so **you decide** what action to take along the way.

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Pop Quiz: Which of the following is the **best** way to position yourself for **inclusion** in your organization's succession planning?

- A. Focus **exclusively** on achieving performance **metrics**.
- B. Actively discuss your career **goals** and seek **mentorship**.
- C. **Avoid** feedback to maintain your independence.
- D. Take on **only** tasks that are part of your job description.

Please list what changes are you observing that may impact your career plan?

Please list what actions will you take to better leverage your performance management system to achieve your career goals?

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Please list: what experiences do you plan to pursue to increase your career opportunities?

What is **the most important** thing you learned in this course that you plan to apply **right away**?