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Even though we are not born coaches, it is within our role as managers to have career and professional development discussions with our employees. Career ambitions are important to all-around well-being and a sense of satisfaction in our work, although many of us feel ill-equipped for such discussions with employees. Still, four trends that will continue for the next several years make it crucial for managers to learn now how to create a culture of development.

1. **Unemployment continues to decrease.** According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment reached a low of 5.3 percent as of July 2015. We are beyond the recession, resulting in more career opportunities for employees who are not hesitant about moving on. In particular, high-potential employees are most at risk for seeking (and being sought for) more promising options outside their companies. An added challenge to retention is the easy accessibility of job listings and online and mobile application processes.

2. **Workplace cultures are becoming more multigenerational.** Boomers and Gen Xers are still prevalent in the workplace; however, Millennials are moving up, and in many cases are assuming leadership roles. According to a 2014 *Forbes* article, at Ernst & Young, 59 percent of managers are Millennials and 18 percent are senior managers, even though many have not been trained to become managers. Additionally, Generation Z (born between 1994 and 2010) is emerging as the next generation preparing to enter the workforce.

3. **Technology continues to evolve and change at astonishing speed.** Implications for workplace changes include:
   - the need to learn new and changing business technologies
   - increased ability to work remotely
   - easier access to new job opportunities, both within and outside the company
   - managers keeping their teams’ abilities current, so their performance matches the pace of change.

Additionally, the prevalence of social media exponentially increases everyone’s networking capability regardless of cost, location, status, and culture. Likewise, recruiters are also able to network, making it easier to access and entice potential talent in an increasingly competitive market.

4. **Power has shifted from employers to employees.** More workers are saying no to full-time employment. Some workers have grown frustrated with repeated layoffs and the treatment they receive as job candidates. Technology enables more workers to become free agents, and more virtual opportunities are available that are unhindered by geographical boundaries. By managing several part-time contracts, freelancers can have a flexible schedule and work-life balance, giving them significantly more control over their earnings. Furthermore, the Affordable Care Act has reduced the dependence on health insurance from employers, removing one more reason to work full time for one company.

Keeping these trends in mind, managers need realistic approaches they can use immediately to manage their critical talent resources. Flexibility in worker abilities will help managers handle constantly shifting supply, demand, and demographic variables.

This TD at Work is a primer intended for managers, human resources professionals, and others. It is a practical, go-to guide that will explain:

- why career development is important to the organization, employee, and manager
- who is responsible for specific aspects of the employee development process
- how to facilitate the employee development process
- the characteristics of a strong individual development process
- how to lead successful development discussions.
WHY EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT?

In a competitive global business landscape, company leaders and employees are wise to adopt continuous, agile learning practices. While employees should manage their careers for ongoing employability, companies should focus on attracting and retaining high-potential, promotable people.

Employee development has an upwardly beneficial impact, from employee to manager to organization. The potential advantages are numerous and dramatic. Best-practice companies, such as Genentech, realize the importance of investing in their employees’ development. Genentech has received accolades from the training and development world for initiatives like its CareerLab. A blog post from career development firm Career Systems International further details the notable benefits achieved by the company's dedication to employee development:

- The employee turnover rate is at 6.2 percent, in contrast with the industry average of 11 percent.
- Almost half of the job openings are filled by internal candidates.
- Approximately $20 million in retention cost savings was realized in 2014, when the CareerLab helped find new roles for 76 high-potential employees whose positions were eliminated.

Employee development can be a proactive strategy. Business managers are smart to continually develop their employees even during times of stability, so that they don’t wish they had done so when faced with talent shortages.

It is critical to note that employees, not employers, will decide where they will work. Specifically, Millennials, a fast-growing employee

BENEFITS OF EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Employee development:

- Increases retention.
- Boosts morale.
- Improves person-job match.
- Maintains up-to-date skills for the workforce.
- Provides the resource depth and flexibility needed to swiftly respond to market demands and organizational changes.
- Keeps talent development aligned with organizational strategies.
- Supports and enhances organizational workforce-planning programs.
- Fosters future leaders within the company for business sustainability and stability.
- Increases employee commitment and productivity.
- Attracts high performers to your organization.
- Drives cultural change. For instance, Microsoft implemented a career development system as a strategy to remain competitive. Per a 2007 study, its career model, “platform of common standards,” was used to identify, assess, manage, and develop talent as the company shifted its culture.
population, look for employers that will support their development, not just a good salary. A 2015 EdAssist study of Millennials revealed that almost 60 percent “would pick the job with strong potential for professional development over one with regular pay raises.” This holds true even for Millennials with high student loan debt; 66 percent said they would trade regular pay increases for a job with strong employee development potential.

**EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT HAS AN UPWARDLY BENEFICIAL IMPACT, FROM EMPLOYEE TO MANAGER TO ORGANIZATION.**

Employee development encompasses three major considerations:

1. abilities and skills—the employee's current specific skills, knowledge, and competencies that are necessary for the ongoing success of the business
2. organizational needs—the needs and expectations of each role in the organizational structure
3. employee interests—career aspirations, the ability to fulfill current and future roles, identified gaps, personality type, and a plan for development.

Figure 1 displays the intersection of these three components. The ideal target for your employees’ development, as shown in Figure 2, is at the overlap of employee interests and organizational needs.

The objective is to maintain employee engagement and retention, and to develop individual and organizational capabilities, especially for promising employees with potential to make significant contributions to organizational imperatives. Otherwise employees are free to take their services to competitors. Your acquired and developed talent are a competitive advantage. An international study of organizational effectiveness by Right Management shows that companies providing career development opportunities are six times more likely to engage key talent and four times less likely to lose them. Findings also indicated that only one-third of employees are fully engaged. Of the top 15 engagement drivers, 10 can be tied to career discussions.
KEEPING YOUR CAREER ON TRACK

AUTHOR

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If you were asked, “Where do you see yourself five years from now?” would you be able to answer the question? In today's rapidly changing environment, it's difficult to imagine what the world of work will look like in two years, much less five years down the road. In light of this uncertainty, it's almost tempting to give up on career planning altogether.

But would you embark on an important journey without a destination? Or without any idea what you want to see or do when you arrive? Yet this is precisely how many of us approach our careers. We meander along the back roads without a plan and then wonder why we arrive at a destination that is not to our liking.

Don't wait until you're laid off, burned out, or unhappy in your current position before you consider where you want to go on your career journey. By conducting periodic inventories, both of yourself and of the job market, you can keep your career on course, despite any detours or road blocks that you may encounter along the way.

This TD at Work will help you to:
• Understand why you need a career road map.
• Identify what you have to offer employers.
• Clarify your preferred skills and work environment.
• Refine your career aspirations.
• Evaluate your strengths and identify any gaps.
• Develop an action plan.

WHY DO I NEED A CAREER ROAD MAP?

“If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll probably end up somewhere else.”
—Yogi Berra

In fact, according to recent Department of Labor figures from a longitudinal study, younger Baby Boomers—individuals born from 1957 to 1964—held an average of 11.7 jobs from ages 18 to 48. And the evidence points to greater job mobility for younger workers, with many studies predicting that today's workers will hold 14 or more jobs in their lifetimes and that more will rely on self-employment as a viable option.

During the past 10 years, many companies have eliminated employee career development programs in favor of a DIY model. While there is some evidence that this trend is reversing as the job market improves, it behooves you to take responsibility for your own career development. Using the tools in this TD at Work to map out a plan will help you stay abreast of changes in your field and identify any tune-ups or course corrections that might be necessary.

IDENTIFY WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER

“Take inventory of what you’re good at and extend out from your skills. Or determine what your customers need and work backward, even if it requires learning new skills.”
—Jeff Bezos, CEO, Amazon

Just as merchants need to take an inventory to know what wares they have to offer their customers, as an employee or a job seeker, you need to conduct a periodic inventory to identify what you have to offer employers. We're not talking about your resume or the jobs you've held before, but a complete list of the skills, knowledge, and personality traits that contribute to who you are as a person. Job satisfaction is highest when you utilize your best skills doing something that interests and motivates you in a work environment that suits your personality.

Skills

Skills are the basic building blocks of what you know how to do. Skills are generally learned by doing and will improve over time as you hone your craft. The items that fall under this category should include proficiencies that you have
developed through training and experience that can be transferred from one company or industry to another.

As you develop your skills list, include both work-related and nonwork-related items. At this stage, don’t concern yourself with how much you enjoy using these skills—identifying your preferences comes later in this process.

Knowledge

The next category to include in your personal inventory is knowledge. You may have acquired this knowledge at school, in a workshop, or on your own—perhaps, for example, through volunteering or individual study.

The difference between skills and knowledge is that knowledge is a subject that can be learned. You either know it or you don’t know it. If you’re a history teacher, for example, the skill is teaching and the knowledge is history. Additionally, knowledge can become outdated and need to be refreshed, while skills, if you continue to use them, usually get better with age.

Your knowledge list should contain any specialized technical or industry expertise that you have acquired. If you’re a training and development professional, for instance, you might include specific e-learning tools or assessments that you have been trained to administer. Or if you’ve worked for many years in a specific industry and understand the terminology and issues facing companies in that space, make sure you incorporate that into this inventory. Add credentials under this heading as well, including any professional certifications or academic degrees that you hold, such as ATD’s Certified Professional in Learning and Performance.

Finally, if there is a subject that personally fascinates you or a hobby about which you have a wealth of knowledge, include it here. It may not go on your resume, but this inventory should be a compendium of everything you have to offer, no matter how irrelevant it might seem at the moment.

**SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND PERSONALITY TRAITS: WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?**

The ATD Competency Model defines competencies as higher-level clusters of what someone needs to know and do to be successful. They’re composed of measurable or observable skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviors critical to successful job performance.

For the purpose of the exercises in this TD at Work, we are using skills, knowledge, and personality traits as simple categories to describe yourself. Because these exercises are for your personal use, how you categorize items—as skills, knowledge, or traits—is less important than understanding what you bring to the table.

**Skills:** Proficiencies developed through training or experience. A skill is something you know how to do.

**Knowledge:** Practical or theoretical understanding of a subject.

**Personality Traits:** Abilities, a natural capacity to perform certain activities, and behaviors; the way in which you act or conduct yourself. These tend to be more innate and not easily learned.

**Personality Traits**

The final category in a personal inventory involves your personality traits, or the sum of the qualities that describe who you are. These attributes generally are not learned and don’t go away—you might find yourself prefacing them with “I am.” Items to include in this section might be characteristics such as “detail-oriented,” “creative,” or “calm under pressure.” To identify these traits, think about how your friends or colleagues describe you: “She’s incredibly empathetic and kind” or “He’s highly imaginative and thinks well on his feet.”
If you have taken the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), DiSC, or another personality profile test, you may already have a list of words that you can use to describe yourself.

Table 1 gives an example of a completed personal inventory for a fictitious training and development professional whom we will call Tina Trainor. It lists her skills, knowledge, and personality traits. We will use Tina as an example throughout this TD at Work to illustrate how to use the various tools.

As you can see in the table, Tina has six years of experience as a training specialist. She started her career as a nurse and, after a few years on the job, was asked to provide training for the graduate nurses. Tina learned that she loved the role and decided to pursue a position in the training and development department. Last year, she completed the ATD Master Trainer Program to strengthen her skills and training credentials.

### TABLE 1. PERSONAL INVENTORY: TINA TRAINOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills and Experience</th>
<th>Knowledge and Credentials</th>
<th>Personality Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examples: Teaching, Writing</td>
<td>Examples: History, Grants</td>
<td>Examples: Introverted, Detail-Oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching/Instructing</td>
<td>Adult Learning Principles</td>
<td>Extroverted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Facilitation</td>
<td>ADDIE and SAM Learning Models</td>
<td>Creative/Idea Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Speaking/Presentation</td>
<td>Learner-Centered Instructional Methods</td>
<td>Enthusiastic/Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Individual Learning Modalities</td>
<td>Organized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum Development</td>
<td>Group Dynamics</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing Instructional</td>
<td>Leadership Development</td>
<td>Empathetic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>Healthcare Industry</td>
<td>Good Sense of Humor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needs and Audience Assessment</td>
<td>Clinical Knowledge</td>
<td>Enjoy Variety and New Challenges</td>
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<td>Establishing Rapport and a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Classroom Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Personality Profiles:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Storytelling</td>
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<td>MBTI (ENFJ)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role Playing</td>
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<td>DiSC (High IS, Fairly High D)</td>
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<td>Program Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Experience:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Six Years—Training Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four Years—Nurse</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Technical:</strong></td>
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<td>WebEx/GoToMeeting</td>
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<td>PowerPoint</td>
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<td>Blackboard LMS</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Social Networks (LinkedIn, Facebook)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree:</strong></td>
<td>BS in Nursing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credential:</strong></td>
<td>ATD Master Trainer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![FIGURE 1: IDEAL CAREER](image)
BASICS OF E-LEARNING REVISITED

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For help or inquiries about your subscription, please contact Customer Care at 1.800.628.2783/1.703.683.8100 (international).
E-learning has come a long way from its origins in the 1980s and 1990s as computer-based, stand-alone disc-driven courses. In the late 1990s, courses started being hosted on intranets and later on learning management systems (LMSs). It was at this time that we started seeing the true benefit of e-learning in terms of economies of scale in reaching more learners in less time.

E-learning now refers to anything delivered, enabled, or mediated by electronic technology for the explicit purpose of learning. With the advent of smartphones and tablets, the term now includes:

- stand-alone computer-based training
- online or web-based learning
- mobile learning on phones and tablets.

E-learning also includes learner-to-learner interactions, such as those that might occur in an online learning community. The promise of e-learning was that it would provide that constant access and connectedness in the learning context, and now, with the advent of social networking, we can see that promise being fulfilled. However, e-learning excludes instruction that might fit under "distance learning," but is not delivered in an electronic format, such as books or e-books.

In this Infoline, you will learn:

- how e-learning has evolved in the past 10 to 12 years
- common e-learning traps
- considerations when designing e-learning for continuing professional education certification
- tips for deciding whether to buy from vendors or develop your own e-learning solution
- e-learning competencies.

AN OVERVIEW OF E-LEARNING

Once companies caught on to the fact that e-learning can be cheaper than instructor-led training (ILT), every company with a limited training budget started pinning their hopes on the promise of e-learning. After all, it was the modality of choice when it came to rolling out learning to large and widely distributed audiences in a cost-effective and time-efficient manner. In a November 1999 study, U.S. Bancorp Piper Jaffray Equity Research estimated that the e-learning market would reach $46 billion by 2005. While we didn’t quite hit that number then, in 2013, the market did reach $56.2 billion, as reported by eLearningindustry.com.

Today e-learning courses can be deployed on many devices. Making learning available on smartphones and tablets, in addition to traditional delivery on PCs, enables training to become intricately linked to the essential fabric of the organization—to illustrate the true integration of work and learning.

When it first came on the horizon, it was thought that e-learning would replace instructor-led courses whenever large audiences needed to be reached in short timeframes. The dynamic between learning modalities is no longer that simple. In addition to e-learning, organizations now have another alternative to classroom learning—virtual classrooms, which provide a way for organizations to leverage the presence of instructors and still reach more learners than they could in a traditional classroom.

Now, e-learning is in the process of being replaced to some extent by mobile learning. UNESCO’s policy guidelines for mobile learning (2013) shed light on the contrasting trends of mobile learning usage in developed versus developing countries. In developed countries four out of five people own a mobile device, in developing countries, the ratio of access to phones is only about two to five. Still, learners in these countries have better access to their own phone than a computer on which they can spend discretionary time learning at their own pace. Learning providers in these countries are bypassing the traditional definition of e-learning altogether and are directly creating learning for mobile delivery.

With the advent of YouTube “how to” videos and Wikipedia, we have to differentiate between actual e-learning and online reference behavior. While learners today get much of their just-in-time information from the web—in the form of Wikipedia articles, search engine results, YouTube videos, and blogs—and subsequently share these resources with
each other on social media, these should be treated more as a way to facilitate research and networking, rather than as learning modalities in their own right.

Twenty years ago, most of us probably didn’t have email accounts, or regular access to computers for that matter. Ten years ago, with a PC on every desk, we were frustrated if we lost email for an hour. Today, if Netflix or YouTube goes down for a few minutes, Twitter explodes with tweets about how we can’t cope until they come back online. We have come to rely on having constant access to information and social networks to share it on. We live in a high-tech, networked world and it is a natural evolution for learning to become more integrated and technical.

From an individual’s point of view, if he gets an answer online, it suffices to help him solve an immediate problem and he learns something new in the process; that definitely counts as learning. From an organization’s point of view, that kind of self-directed behavior is the mark of the naturally curious learner. It is a good attitude to leverage and support by openly providing access to these resources. However, providing access does not absolve the organization from providing learning content that maps to performance measures and learning objectives to help employees succeed on the job. And of course, from the certification perspective, if it is not trackable, it is not evidence of completion of learning objectives.

Many companies and organizations today are using various types and combinations of e-learning. Some organizations are using Internet-based training with various e-learning providers, while others offer similar training through their internal intranets. Despite the simple and concise definition for e-learning, it is accompanied by a plethora of indigenous terms such as synchronous, asynchronous, and MOOC. (See the Glossary of Terms sidebar for examples and definitions.)

**EVOLUTION OF E-LEARNING**

E-learning has come a long way from stand-alone disc-driven courses. Once it became apparent that to truly replace classroom training—at least from the learning administration point of view—e-learning content libraries or hosting systems would also need to start recording and capturing learner completion data. Thus, the era of the LMS began.

**Growth of the Learning Management System**

With the advent of the Shareable Content Object Reference Model, or SCORM, in the early 2000s, a standard and uniform way to track learner completion was born. The hosting platform could now maintain completion reports. At this point, enterprise-level LMSs came into being, using SCORM standards to provide the type of learner activity data based on the certifications that could be awarded. LMSs, such as Blackboard and Moodle, are most commonly used in academia, while Saba and Sum Total are examples of LMSs used in the corporate environment.

**From Packaged Courses to Microcontent**

Organizational learning has always had the aura of “serious business.” Learners were expected to fully focus on learning activities in the classroom while taking a complete break from work. This showed the commitment of both learners and the organization to learning by treating hours spent away from work and in the classroom as an “investment in employee development.” Obviously, when you expect your learners to travel to a classroom, you want to maximize the value for the amount of time they are there. If they will spend a day traveling to and from the venue, you don’t want them to spend only an hour in the classroom! This thought process led to learning departments investing in day-long (or longer) classroom programs that tried to cram as much learning into one journey as possible. If individual topics took an hour or less, they were bundled together, sometimes without any good reason.

E-learning broke this cycle. Training departments found that they could minimize their training budget and maximize available training programs by providing asynchronous and synchronous learning. Companies could develop short e-learning programs on different topics that could be accessed at any
The following list of terms provides a useful introduction to the vernacular of e-learning. However, along with the rapid growth of e-learning, its associated vocabulary is growing exponentially, so this does not claim to be an exhaustive list.

**Alpha version:** a version of a program, also known as a pilot version, which can be tested for overall usability and training effectiveness.

**Asynchronous:** training that is self-paced. A learning program that does not require the student and instructor to participate simultaneously. Email is a type of asynchronous communication.

**Authoring software:** a program designed for use by a non-computer expert to create training products. It does not require programming language or specialized skills to operate. Examples of authoring software are the Articulate Suite and Lectora.

**Beta test:** an important function of quality control and one of the last steps before a software product is released. Beta testing helps uncover content errors, software bugs, usability, and level of user involvement.

**Gamification:** inclusion of game-like elements within the learning context. Courses (e-learning or instructor-led) contain short contests where learners compete with each other or against themselves. There are rules regarding gaining points as the learner progresses through the game, which could be associated with badges that can be earned and displayed on leader boards.

**MOOCs:** massive open online courses. Online blended courses that include synchronous and asynchronous aspects in a time-bound, cohort-based curriculum.

**Multi-modal:** a curriculum that delivers training through multiple learning modalities such as audio (podcasts), verbal (text based), visual (videos), and the like.

**Prototype:** representative course content populated in a sample of the final course, which is created early in the design process to get sign-off on the look and feel, and to test functionality.

**Simulation:** immersive case or scenario-based learning, with branched decision points that allow learners to apply real-world judgments and experience the consequences of their actions in a safe environment. Simulations can be created for instructor-led, as well as for e-learning courses.

**Social learning:** learning that leverages social media to enhance learner-to-learner interaction by sharing experiences and collaborating on assignments.

Companies could also move some of the content from the classroom—especially at the knowledge and comprehension level—into e-learning, which is a good medium for individual “pre-work.” Learners then went to a classroom for a short and focused application, or higher level, interactive session. By leveraging virtual classroom technologies, shorter instructor-led sessions became possible without the need for travel. In-person classroom training, therefore, was reserved for those topics that truly needed that level of in-person interaction between learners and facilitators. Thus the blended and “flip” class approach to learning was created.