Career Development Basics

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A STD’s Training Basics series recognizes and, in some ways, celebrates the fast-paced, ever-changing reality of organizations today. Jobs, roles, and expectations change quickly. One day you might be a network administrator or a line manager, and the next day you might be asked to train 50 employees in basic computer skills or to instruct line workers in quality processes. Or you may already be a trainer and be asked to take on new initiatives such as succession planning or implementing a knowledge management system that require a new set of skills and knowledge.

Where do you turn for help? The ASTD Training Basics series is designed as a one-stop, lifeline solution. The series takes a minimalist approach to your learning curve dilemma and presents only the information you need to be successful. Each book in the series guides you through a range of training and workplace learning challenges, including giving presentations, making the transition to the role of trainer, writing effective job aids, designing and delivering training, evaluating training, participating in change initiatives, honing your coaching skills, or getting up to speed on adult learning theory.

The ASTD Training Basics series is the perfect tool for training and workforce learning professionals looking for easy-to-understand materials that will prepare nontrainers to take on a training role and prepare trainers to take on new roles. In addition, this series is the perfect reference tool for any trainer’s bookshelf and a quick way to hone your existing skills.
The more we look at organizations, the more we see that career development often takes a back seat to the organization’s day-to-day demands. The need to promote a career development culture has never been stronger than it is today. The cost of not having a career development culture far outweighs the cost of supporting such an initiative.

When an employee’s career development goals are aligned with the needs of the organization, career development seems effortless and is a clear and affordable priority for management. The problem, however, is when the employee’s and the organization’s goals diverge.

Often, the fallacy is that the employee’s aspirations and the organization’s goals are divergent when they are really more similar than one might think. In our experience, an organization that is focused on career development often steers the individual aspirations of employees toward the needs of the company. The stronger the career development focus, the less divergent the interests of the employee and the company. That’s because the company is able to steer, develop, and influence the employee’s aspirations along the way.

Think about it: Most employees had a keen interest in the organization’s goals when they joined, but somewhere along the way, they lost their passion. For example, most employees don’t join an engineering company with career aspirations of becoming a professional lounge singer. But employees do feel less than satisfied in an engineering company when they feel pigeonholed into a routine with limited scope in relation to the broader elements of engineering work that first attracted them to the profession.
As organization leaders go about trying to get “the right people on the bus,” they often overlook the opportunity to grow the right people who are already on the bus (Collins 2001, 41). The focus on short-term demand and immediate contribution can derail the real opportunity to grow the right people who will make a lasting impact on the organization’s success. Can leaders implement a development focus, and will that focus increase the volume and quality of work, thereby helping training and development managers demonstrate a return on the investment in career development? The answer to this important question is certainly “Yes!” But training and development managers often don’t understand how to make the argument clearly so that organization leaders will not only buy into but also lead out from the process.

We see today’s workers placing a higher and higher priority on career development. Organizations that offer a broad practice of developing employees now uniquely and powerfully compete in the recruiting arena. They have more to offer than salary, benefits, and a certain number of vacation days. Human resources professionals need this competitive edge. Whether it’s the new college graduate looking for ways to develop a résumé without moving from company to company or a baby boomer in the middle of a midlife crisis looking for a new feel to the second half of his or her career, career development is attractive for a reason: It’s what employees need and want.

This book is intended to empower training and development leaders with the necessary tools and understanding to become catalysts for bringing a career development focus to their organization. It’s our experience that training and development managers have espoused the virtue of a development focus, yet in most organizations this focus has not been embraced by company leadership and, more important, by department management. Why? We see three key barriers to a career development focus:

- Training and development leaders don’t know how to bring a development focus to the forefront of managers’ strategic priorities or how to extend that focus across organizational boundaries in the face of department self-interest.
- Managers don’t know how to sustain a focus in the midst of budget cutbacks and short-term profit goals, and they often don’t place a high financial priority on development.
- Department managers and organization leaders aren’t encouraged or rewarded for a management mindset that focuses on helping others reach their goals.
We frequently see department managers protecting high-performing employees from being taken to another department, and objecting to their promotion to another department because their own department needs their expertise and high productivity. Often, this “standing in the way” of an employee’s career is done without the employee’s knowledge or buy-in. How do company leaders facilitate career development and practice healthy intervention between departments? How do organizations create an ongoing development focus for employees without moving them to different positions?

In this book, training and development professionals and company managers will find the tools they need to prevail against the natural tendency to resist spending time and resources on career development. This book intends to answer several important questions about career development:

- What are the clear, useful ways in which a focus on career development will benefit the company, managers, and employees—and increase the bottom line?
- How can managers complete an organizational assessment, implement career development in the organization’s staffing process, and integrate career development into succession planning?
- What simple actions can every company take to get managers to think like their employees and employees to think like the company when it comes to career development? What actions will foster career development while increasing buy-in to the needs of the company?
- Does research show that the unique combination of a mentor focused on helping others reach their potential will create better leaders, and what are the simple steps to find, train, and utilize mentors who are focused on helping others reach their potential?
- What tools will enable employees to manage their own career development and engage their supervisors in the process? What organization tools will allow employees to take charge of their own career development plan?
- How can older employees be enabled to discover how development can open up the second half of their career? And how can younger employees be assisted to develop the right types of expectations and a realistic career development plan?
- How can managers learn to avoid mistakes in career development discussions and to utilize the performance review process to facilitate career development? How can these development discussions help employees see the
alternatives in their development path—that it’s not just about promotion or advancement but also about the right kind of development?

How can employees, managers, and organizations learn to understand their own motivations so they can develop their own career development plans more effectively?

Last but not least, a career development focus can be the means for perpetuating a company’s goals, mission, and culture. When companies proactively help employees develop and influence the direction of this development, they mold and shape the prevailing culture. It’s our goal that through this book, training and development leaders will find the added help they need to create ongoing career development focus in their organization.

Look for These Icons

What’s Inside This Chapter
Each chapter opens with a summary of the topics addressed in the chapter. You can use this reference to find the areas that interest you most.

Think About This
These are helpful tips for how to use the tools and techniques presented in the chapter.

Basic Rules
These rules cut to the chase. They represent important concepts and assumptions that form the foundation of adult learning.

Noted
This icon calls out additional information.

Getting It Done
The final section of each chapter supports your ability to take the content of that chapter and apply it to your situation. Sometimes this section contains a list of questions for you to ponder. Sometimes it is a self-assessment tool. And sometimes it is a list of action steps you can take to enhance your facilitation.
Words of Acknowledgment
We would like to thank Mark Morrow at ASTD for his patience and encouragement as we both fought demanding schedules while trying to bring this project in on time. Also, we thank Michael Sackley for the hours he spent in thoughtful review and editing that have made our book so much better. Our ability to write a book such as this is really the culmination of years of experiences with inspiring and wise leaders and mentors.

From McKay Christensen
I would like to thank those who help me on a daily basis to remember the priority of developing others in my career, including Michael Kroth, Frank VanderSloot, Jann Nielsen, Erik Madsen, and my wife, Jennifer. To my first mentor, Dad, thanks for your patience and teaching.

From Michael Kroth
I would like to recognize, in particular, Leonard Gillingham, who, as my minister many years ago, opened my eyes to my potential for doing something meaningful in the world. He was and is, to me and many others, the kind of potentiating, servant leader McKay has studied and speaks so eloquently about. I think of him whenever I know I’m falling short of making the difference I know I could be making.

I want to thank the members of my Spring 2008 HRD and Organization Development classes, who helped me to think more broadly about my contributions to this book, and also Lorri Morgan, Marty Yopp, and Carissa Miller, who know far more about aging and career development than I do. Also, thanks to Lisa Haneberg and Elaine Biech for encouraging me to pursue writing a book for ASTD.

I also want to thank McKay for being a true professional to work with and also for the wisdom, from both “real-world” and scholarly experience, he brought to this project. He exemplifies the qualities of a true servant leader in a very successful company, and I am quite sure that all who work with him walk away as not only better employees but better people.
The Right Person for Every Job and the Right Job for Every Person

What’s Inside This Chapter

In this chapter, you’ll learn:

► How to redirect a portion of your hiring expense to developing the right people
► How to develop and use a career development plan to keep your organization’s jobs tailored to the needs of high-potential managers
► Three steps to designing your career development plan
► How to limit scope of your development efforts to ensure success.

In today’s employment world, hiring the right person is often a gamble at best. Despite the best recruiting and screening techniques, trained interviewers, and thorough background investigations, new hires sometimes just don’t work out. They fail to live up to expectations.

According to a recent Leadership IQ study, 312 companies reported on their hiring of 20,000 people. Of those hired, 46 percent failed in the first year and only
19 percent had unequivocal success (T+D 2005). What specifically interfered with the new employees’ success?

- 26 percent couldn’t accept feedback
- 23 percent were unable to understand and manage emotions
- 17 percent lacked the motivation to excel
- 15 percent had the wrong temperament
- 11 percent lacked the technical skills.

Noted

Staffing.org reports the cost to hire employees is equal to 14 percent of total compensation for a typical company (Wolfe 2004). And the lower a company’s success rate in hiring, the higher these expenses can escalate—as high as 30 to 40 percent of total compensation for some professional firms.

It’s likely your company is already investing more than management wants in hiring and, if your company’s typical, often hiring the wrong person.

Develop an Effective Career Development Plan

Given the underlying obstacles—whether budget restraints or lack of management support—a clear plan with stated objectives is essential. And a clear plan begins with a thorough assessment of where your company and managers stand in terms of understanding, capability, and established practices.

Limit the Scope: Start with High-Potential Managers

Before beginning your assessment, the scope of your initiative needs to be addressed. As you begin your career development initiative, getting a win under your belt and

Basic Rule 2

Career development is simple—hire the right person, develop the right person for the job, and find the right job for the right person.
experiencing success are most important. Early success gives company leadership confidence in the initiative, creates positive word of mouth, and develops the organizational capability that can later be leveraged to a larger group of employees.

We recommend limiting your scope in the beginning to a select group of managers rather than extending these development efforts to all employees. Some companies have mistakenly attempted to limit the scope to a particular department or division. This may appease the budget concerns, but it rarely creates lasting buy-in from company leadership not in the department. The best way to reduce the scope is to make high-potential managers throughout your organization the initial focus of your career development efforts. These are the managers who have leaders’ attention and who clearly deserve the investment. There are several objections associated with this method of limiting scope:

- The investment in a select group of managers may seem unfair to those not chosen to participate.
- The process for selecting high-potential managers can be complicated and needs ongoing direction to sustain credibility.
- The list must be developed and the criteria agreed upon by the key leaders in the management team, not by human resources or a single leader within the company.

How do you select which high-potential employees to work with first? Choose those who have the capability to be the next leader or vice president in the organization, who demonstrate an abundance of the key qualities valued by the organization (these may include initiative, working effectively with others, a strong presence in communication, maturity, perspicuity, and an ability to think critically and act proactively), and who may possess unique skills that are critical to the organization’s success.

For some organizations, it’s helpful to limit the number of high-potential employees you initially allow in the career development program to force managers to rank and prioritize one manager over the other. This is similar, and related to, the way succession planning is implemented in many organizations. Different companies handle this in different ways, but each member of the management team can nominate high-potential managers from their departments. Thereafter, the collective team can finalize the selection of the high-potential list. The list should be regularly reviewed and updated.
Perform an Assessment

Once you understand the capabilities and values of the organization and the goals and capabilities of each high-potential manager, you can begin to fit the needs of everyone together. The assessment is critically important. In conducting this assessment, human resources and company leadership need to be open, nondefensive, confidential, willing to invite participation from diverse people, and capable of accessing clear and accurate data. An assessment, to be of lasting value to the organization, needs to be thorough, written, and shared. A career development assessment includes understanding of three important parts:

- *The organization’s needs and values, as shown in figure 2-1.*
- *The manager’s needs and values, as shown in figure 2-2.*
- *Aligning the needs of the organization and manager, as shown in figure 2-3.*

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**Figure 2-1. The Organization’s Needs and Values**

| Company hiring and turnover history | Leadership opinions and development orientation | Current and future needs of the company | Goals of organization or department | Understanding of organization needs and values |
An assessment of the company’s career development capabilities and manager orientations toward development includes an evaluation of:

- Leadership’s orientation toward career development
- Managers’ willingness to invest in development
- Company turnover and hiring history
- Existing managers’ opinions about the company and career development
- Current positions occupied by high-potential managers
- Profiles and job histories of all high-potential managers
- Key development positions available in which to place managers who need further development
- Key mentors available in the leadership ranks who have the personal capabilities to help others reach their potential
- Different skills, values, and experience company leadership values in its managers
- Succession plan for each key position within the company
- Deficiencies in skills and staffing in key positions and departments in the company.

The assessment can be completed using a number of tools:

- Written questionnaires designed to gather feedback from leaders in a uniform, confidential, and effective way
- Tailored interviews with individuals to gather more in-depth opinions
Data reports that list or give important information
Diagrams or analyses to organize information in a way that informs decision makers
Meetings to discuss, inform, and make decisions
Formal feedback such as performance reviews, employee opinion surveys, and staffing reports.

Table 2-1 may help as you organize your approach and use assessment tools to gather the necessary information.

Once you have gathered the assessment facts for your organization, you’ll need to organize it into useful information that can be used for making decisions. Such information includes the following:

- **Hiring and turnover history.** Organize this information along with clear cost analyses to demonstrate the need for and ongoing improvement resulting from a career development initiative.
- **Development positions map.** This is a map of the positions identified as key positions into which high-potential managers could be placed and rotated through on a regular basis to add to their understanding and skills. These positions are high-profile decision-making positions that will help these high-potential managers stretch and grow. A visual map helps executive management to easily see the overall plan.
- **High-potential manager profiles.** These profiles are your internal résumés for high-potential managers, including their specific experience, skills, and goals. You can assemble these profiles through performance reviews, mentoring discussion notes, and questionnaires. With a structured outline, mentors can fill in the needed information.
- **Key mentor list.** A mentor list identifies those key highly developed leaders in your organization who possess the maturity, perspicuity, and analysis skills that allow them to successfully mentor high-potential managers. It’s important that this list include the key skills and strengths of the mentors to enable decision makers to team up mentors with managers who will be the best fit.
- **Organization skills to be developed.** Do this assessment by determining the needs of the organization based on business strategy, goals, values, and key initiatives to be undertaken in future years. For example, if an organization were transitioning from retail to e-commerce, key skills would include web
development and marketing. If an organization were hoping to expand globally, then international awareness and understanding would be important. This list may also result from facing the brutal facts about what skills are missing in the organization in order to strengthen weaknesses in addition to seizing market opportunities.

- **Succession plan.** This plan is more than who replaces the CEO or executive team members. This comprehensive plan identifies the next two or three high-potential managers who could fill each key position and the two or three key positions each high-potential manager could fill next.

- **Manager and skills deficiency map.** This assessment summarizes the key staffing deficiencies that must be addressed to meet the future needs of the

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**Table 2-1. Necessary Information to be Gathered with Assessment Tools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Necessary Information</th>
<th>Questionnaire</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Data Reports</th>
<th>Diagram and Analyses</th>
<th>Meetings and Discussions</th>
<th>Formal Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership's Orientation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to Invest</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring and Turnover History</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager Opinions</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Positions Map</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager Profiles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Mentor List</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills to be Developed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manager and Skills Deficiency Map</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
company. The manager and skills deficiency map is critically important to begin growing the right managers in your organization. With it, you can begin to articulate to high-potential managers what skills and characteristics you want them to develop to meet the organization’s needs.

Once developed and assembled in one living document, the career development assessment is an amazing tool. You will find that it gives management clear direction in staffing decisions, broadens the organization strategic awareness, and serves as a tool to manage the career of each high-potential manager. This is not a document that merely sits on the shelf. It is a living document that requires continual updating and, if done well, will be an essential tool for executives throughout the company.

Conducting an assessment of each manager is essential for the overall development plan. This is done through a self-assessment by the manager, an interaction with a potentiating mentor, and an evaluation done by his or her supervisor. This assessment can be very specific to the individual and will vary depending on the development of the manager and mentor. The purpose is to get managers actively involved in honestly assessing themselves, taking the lead in their career design, helping to understand the organization’s values and goals, considering alternatives they may not have considered, and learning to better deal with personal and other challenges. In our experience, this assessment should be written. We gain great understanding when we think and write rather than simply participate in a discussion.

Before you begin the assessment, it is essential to introduce managers to career management and train them how to actively manage their careers. Give this training up front, so high-potential managers can use their career design framework as they begin their assessment. Simonsen (1997) suggests a three-part assessment process: (1) look inward with self-assessment; (2) look outward to your company, department, and the realities of the market; and (3) look forward to your goals, plans, and implementation.

**Step 1: Look Inward**

Understanding yourself is the foundation of any career design effort. This process begins at the manager level with a self-appraisal, which should answer these questions:

- How well do you know yourself? Have you gained good feedback with regard to your personality, interests, and skills? If not, ask others to give you honest, straightforward feedback.
Do you work effectively with others? What are your strengths and weaknesses in working with others? Do you show interest in others? Are you more comfortable working with people or with things?

Do you listen? Are you interested in people? Do you portray a positive and engaging sense about you? Are you comfortable in front of people?

Do you take the initiative? Are you a risk taker? When do you avoid risk?

Can you communicate effectively in writing and verbally? Are you concise, clear, and convincing in your communications?

Are you self-aware? Can you step away from your own feelings, thoughts, and point of view to consider alternative ways of action and decision?

Are your professional skills such that the organization would value your expertise, work ethic, and contribution? Can you deliver results?

What gives you satisfaction—such as accomplishment, helping others, service?

What career experiences have led you to choose your job opportunities thus far? What have you learned from them?

How long do you want to work? What is your financial situation? Have you prepared for retirement?

What do you have passion about? What motivates you?

Step 2: Look Outward
This step in a manager’s assessment involves thoroughly understanding the landscape, the organization’s goals and needs, and all the external factors that have an impact on the manager’s career and opportunities. Questions to answer in this step include the following:

What are the organization’s goals, strategies, and mission?

What have been the positions and career paths of key executives who have gone before you?

How does the formal human resources management process work? How does the informal process work? How are decisions made in your organization?

What are the needs of the organization? What competencies are valued?

What is the method for feedback within the organization?

What is the landscape of the industry? What external influences could affect your own job performance? What are the trends in the marketplace?

What opportunities are available to you? Who can help you identify them? Have you made key alliances and networked with key personnel?
Step 3: Look Forward

A high-potential manager is now ready to look forward and develop his or her career development plan and goals. This is where the goals of the organization and the manager begin to come together. The manager uses the information gathered by looking inward and outward and works to see how they fit together. The mentor plays a particularly important role during this looking-forward assessment.

Often, the immediate reaction of most managers is to focus on their next promotion. They feel they have finally gotten the ear of the company, and it’s time to move ahead. A good mentor can guide the process to help managers see this as a long-term, ongoing part of their careers. Help them become well rounded and more skilled, find fulfillment in their work, and turn their focus from self to service. This often involves a special role, lateral move, added responsibilities, training, new opportunities, ability to reduce broad responsibilities and focus on a particular strategy or initiative, or other types of development.

A good mentor will also skillfully help the manager see that as the organization begins to focus more on the manager’s career development, the manager must take the primary responsibility and see things with maturity and broad perspective. In the looking-forward discussions with the mentor, the following types of questions should be discussed and their answers written down:

- Where are the goals of the organization and the manager aligned? This is not a simple discussion. The answer requires exploration and some discovery. For example, are the goals of the manager aligned with his or her potential?
- Are the goals of the organization and the manager realistic?
- Does the manager need to consider his or her own talents and skills more carefully?
- Does the manager accurately understand the organization’s goals?
- Does the manager's perception of the organization reflect reality?

Through this process of finding alignment, the manager will have to look inward and forward several times to refine his or her assumptions and answer questions. A potentiating mentor will ask more than answer questions.

The very interesting and unexpected result of these types of discussions is the discovery and learning on the part of the mentor. Often, great ideas for the company, for leadership, and for improving results emerge in these mentor–manager discussions. Mentors learn more about themselves, people, leadership, and relationships. It is a mutual actualization process, looking at these types of questions:
What are the development options available?
How can those development options fit into the manager’s career plan?
What options are the most important? The options are best prioritized after understanding what the manager needs to improve the most.
Does the manager need to overcome personal weaknesses, build on strengths, broaden skills, experience something uniquely different, manage people, improve analytic skills, create proven results, work more with customers or vendors, or address a number of other key needs?

Once identified, the development options can be seen more clearly.
In addition to training, promotion, or moving on to a new position, there is a range of various development options. Here are just a few:

- **Task force team assignments.** Often, the company has specific short-term needs that can fit the needs of the manager without the manager taking a new position. These temporary assignments give managers the chance to lead, get exposure to executives in other departments, and provide the chance to work with other managers throughout the company.
- **Specific assignment to resolve a problem or carry out an initiative needed by the organization.** These assignments provide an opportunity to expand skills not used in everyday responsibilities.
- **Assignment on an acquisition team or new startup.** Organizations should remember that the value of creating these teams extends beyond the execution of the initiative. The managers assigned to the startup learn and develop as well.
- **International assignment under the same job scope.** Often, managers can carry out their same responsibilities but do so in multiple countries. This offers the chance to grow and develop without leaving the core area of expertise.
Assignment to focus on an element of their current job. Rather than expanding responsibilities, managers focus on an area of development need. For example, a purchasing manager may need to focus on training and developing other purchasing agents rather than expanding his or her scope in terms of vendors or responsibilities. This focus allows the purchasing manager to improve organization, training, and communication skills without leaving the purchasing department.

Added responsibilities in the same department. For example, a marketing manager could assume responsibility for web design for the division and its brands. This expansion of scope allows the manager to gain technical understanding and skills while maintaining brand management responsibilities.

Added assignments, such as training, communication, or executive support. Managers could be assigned to work in another area or in the development of others for one day each week. For example, a sales manager could be on the road one day each week training and developing newly hired employees in addition to ongoing sales responsibilities.

Provide opportunities to give presentations to executive management. High-potential managers develop and grow when given the opportunity to present to and interact with executive management.

Lead company events and community volunteer opportunities. Managers can direct volunteer and community efforts sponsored by the organization and develop and grow in ways not usually provided by the company.

Personal development goals. Mentors and managers may discuss development objectives not related to the manager’s current assignment. These goals might include education, training, and other personal growth efforts.

What is the development plan? What needs to change? What recommendations can be made to executive management and the human resources department to enhance the career development strategy? What specific goals does the manager have? How can the mentor help? These goals might include improvement in areas such as interpersonal skills, communication style, technical skills, leadership, company knowledge, initiative, and writing.

How will you implement the development plan? Once the manager, mentor, and company agree to the plan, everyone needs to act with the purpose and commitment needed to create and sustain a development culture. Nothing
can be more frustrating to a high-potential manager than to develop a clear
development plan and then have the organization’s urgent needs get in its
way. This happens frequently in all organizations. However, when an organi-
zation sticks to the plans developed, it sends a clear signal to all involved that
development is a priority. When an organization makes and keeps promises
to its key employees, it creates loyalty and nurtures a culture that attracts
loyal employees.

Development plans need to be revisited, reviewed, and revised. Mentors need to
have regular sessions with managers (once a month) to help them progress in their
development. This is also a good opportunity for mentors to evaluate the manager’s
commitment to development. The manager’s ability to make and keep goals is also
a good indication of his or her performance as a high-potential employee.

**Look Inward, Outward, and Forward as an Organization**

Like managers, organizations also need to look inward, outward, and forward. This
ongoing assessment, combined with feedback from mentors, informs and enhances
the seven critical activities set forth in chapter 1. Here’s a quick review of these seven
critical activities:

1. Articulate the vision and shared values that establish a basis for career
development in your organization.
2. Identify and continually assess a list of high-potential managers.
3. Identify your most skilled and talented mentors.
4. Identify and set aside critical positions throughout the organization into
   which you can place those who need career development.
5. Implement an ongoing training and development program.
6. Continually review, recognize, and reward.
7. Use performance evaluations, informal discussions, and other tools to link
   managers to senior management, and continuously let managers know
   where they stand.

The three-step assessment provides the information necessary for the organiza-
tion to begin to engage in the seven critical activities of a career development sys-
tem that will eventually be applied in differing degrees throughout the organization
(figure 2-4).
The information gathered from mentors and managers as they look inward, outward, and forward can help the organization understand the prevailing culture and identify what needs to change. Then the organization can use this information to better execute the seven critical activities of creating a career development system.

**Figure 2-4. How the Three-Step Assessment Provides the Information Needed to Engage in the Seven Critical Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seven Critical Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Articulate vision and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Create a high-potential manager list</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Identify and train mentors</td>
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<td>4. Identify development positions</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Implement development program</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Evaluate and recognize</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Give feedback, evaluate, and redirect</td>
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Getting It Done

Assessing how your organization currently manages and deploys its career development programs and processes is the first step to making positive changes. This chapter outlined important steps to take in designing your own career development plans. Here are some key questions to consider as you begin building a program that works for your organization:

- What obstacles to implementation do you see? How might you overcome objections and resistance to change?
- How might you assess the current situation? Do you have in mind a plan to select high-potential employees who might help you seed your future success?
- How might you deploy assessment and share the results once complete?
- How will you get managers actively involved in the assessment process?

The chapter offered a three-pronged approach to career development assessments: look inward (self-assessment), outward (your department, company, market, environment), and forward (your goals, plans, and how to implement). Jot down a few notes below for the following question: How do you regularly contribute to your own career development plan?

There are more activities every company can do to create greater buy-in to the career development process. Chapter 3 sets forth some of these key activities.