

# How can I hold my direct reports accountable to manage their own professional and career development plans?

[Impactful conversations](#) and [written development plans](#).

Accountability works well when there is an understanding of the benefits for each party. By gaining an understanding of your employee's passions, skills, and abilities, you can align their interests and strengths with your department's direction. Not sure how to have this conversation? We've created some initial conversation starter [questions](#) you can use to initiate those conversations.

When employees understand "what's in it for them", they are more likely to be engaged, high-performing employees. So begin by having a conversation around what career and professional development success looks like in their eyes. Seek to understand what they need to be successful, and connect this with your department's direction.

After identifying areas of interest that align with your department's focus, ask your employee to research an area, and to identify three potential learning opportunities from [Organizational Learning's vast selection](#). Have them bring ideas to your next 1:1 and have a conversation that focuses on their ideas. Collectively pick one of the three ideas (it is ok to adjust) and ask them to begin to create a [Development Plan](#).

At your third 1:1, review the development plan together, make any necessary modifications, and ask your employee what they need to get started. Explain that you will carve out time in future 1:1s to discuss progress on development, and to allow for adjustments. Also, ask them to complete this sentence, "I will know I've developed in {Insert Area Here} when..." This will be your litmus test to determine when development has occurred. We've created [question sets](#) for checking in that you can use at your discretion.

Here are some more great questions to ask:

- At the end of the year when you have achieved career and/or professional success, what will it look like? (Note: Success could include staying in the same role, building knowledge, achieving performance levels, expanding responsibilities, etc.)
- What can I do to help you achieve your goal around development?
- Do you have any recent dates on your development plan? (One goal might have been to watch a specific LinkedIn Learning course in a 3 month period). You could ask, what did they learn? If they did not get the classes taken in that period you could ask, why? Help them find ways to meet those goals next time.

Continue these conversations throughout the year. Try to utilize the skills they have developed or the innovative approach they have taken.

Remember this should be a positive experience. Being held accountable does not need to be negative. Praising development and reaching goals is a form of accountability. Don't be afraid to share your own development plan with your team!