

How to lead a great development conversation

We want every colleague to be brilliant at delivering Unforgettable Holiday Happiness.

As a manager, **developing your people** and **watching them grow** is a rewarding part of your role.

You play a key role in empowering your people to **harness their strengths** and **build the skills** they need to succeed.

Development planning doesn't need to be complex. That's why we've created this guide – and there's also one for your people which'll take them through it too. They'll find this guide under My Best Me on [The Cove](#). If they're a manager between CUK 7-10 you should also consider the Leadership & Management Essentials programme, a practical and thought-provoking programme aimed at all managers and Line Managers that will help them become the best leader they can be. The programme will take them on a journey of self-discovery, through a mix of interactive workshops, supported by elearning. See our dedicated [insider page](#) for information on the content, who it's available to and how to sign up.

Development planning at a glance



How to lead a great development conversation

Getting yourself ready for the conversation

With some preparation, you'll set yourself up to support and empower your team member to take an active role in their development.

Here are three ways you can get the conversation flowing:



Reflect on your team member by thinking through these questions

- What development may they need in relation to their **job description** or their **goals for the year**?
- How well do they live our [CUK Culture Essentials](#)? Where are they less skilled? Remember, the culture essentials describe how we do things every day.
- What are this person's **strengths**? Don't just think about tasks they're good at, think behaviourally too
- What about their development areas? Again, think behaviourally too
- How could they use their strengths better in their role?
- If they are a manager, when are they scheduled to attend [Leadership & Management Essentials](#)?
- What **stretch opportunities** could you give them to help them do these things?



Speak Up



Improve



Respect & Protect



Communicate



Listen & Learn



Empower

Creating a supportive environment

During the conversation, your team member should be doing most of the talking. Your role is to guide, support and listen actively.

Not everyone will find it easy to open up, so here's how you can build trust and encourage an open dialogue.

Create a safe, positive space

- Show encouragement
- Focus on what can be done, rather than restrictions
- Focus equally on strengths **and** development areas

Use open, prompting questions to...

- Help your team member examine their ideas about themselves
- Let them come to their own conclusions about what development they need – **you don't need to have all the answers.**
- Use the open questions on the next page to help you.

Chip in with your observations but encourage your team member to take the lead.

Listen actively

- Reflect back what they are saying ('what I think I'm hearing is...' 'Sounds like you are saying...' 'Is this what you mean?')

And finally, don't forget that different people will have different support needs and aspirations.

Want more tips? You'll find more advice at the bottom of this guide.

How to lead a great development conversation

Getting your team member ready

For your team member, getting ready means exploring their strengths and development areas. By doing this, they'll come to the conversation armed with some ideas to talk through.

Here are three ways they can do this:



Use the development planning guide

In the development planning guide is a link to the **My Best Me quiz** as well as some **self-reflection questions**. Both of these things will help them explore their strengths and development areas. They'll find the planning guide on **The Cove > Library > My Best Me**

Top tip: Don't forget to look at this guide for your own development.

Get feedback from colleagues and stakeholders

Encourage your team member to get feedback from other people about their strengths and development areas

They could request this in a **STOP, START, CONTINUE** format.

Your team member doesn't need to do all of these things, but do encourage them to come prepared for the conversation.

During the conversation

Conversation starters

Here are some open questions you can use to get the conversation flowing.

By using open questions, you'll help your team member examine their thoughts and make their own conclusions about where they need to develop.

- From the preparation you've done, what would you say your development areas are?
- What about your strengths?
- What skills, knowledge or experience do you need to help you deliver your goals?
- If you develop in these areas, what does good look or feel like?
- What would you say you're the 'go to' person in our team for?
- Have you had any feedback from anyone to help you identify any areas of focus?
- Where would you like to be in a year?
- What new responsibilities or challenges would move you ahead?
- What types of activities and projects do you enjoy the most?
- What do you find most difficult or challenging? Why?
- What support do you need from me?

How to lead a great development conversation

Coming up with goals

What does a good development goal look like?

Development goals don't have to always be big, long term, or complex. The simpler they are, the easier they are to tackle!

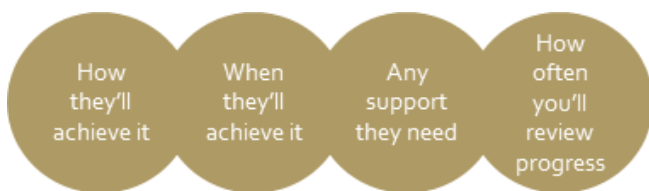
We recommend up to three achievable development goals

- One strength (because we should always build on our strengths)
- Two development areas

This development should help your team member do any of these things:



Then, for each goal, together agree...



What does good look like?

Goals don't have to just be about tasks.

There are always behaviours we can be developing that go hand in hand with **how** we 'do' our work; especially when it comes to the culture essentials.

Here are two different examples of a good goal.

A task focused goal

Learn how to create Widget reports using SmartWidget software

How I'll do it... Shadow Sarah when she creates the weekly Widget report. Start creating the weekly Widget report with Sarah's supervision. Do some elearning about the SmartWidget software.

I'll know I'm successful when... I can create Widget reports without any help

I'll achieve it... Within 3 months

I'll review my progress... Every 1:1 with my manager

A behaviour focused goal

Develop in the Improve culture essential by being more mindful of others in meetings

How I'll do it... In meetings, be more mindful of impact on others particularly when they express an opinion. Avoid negative language and use build statements or questions to understand more. Be open to ideas, discuss and influence to reach mutual understanding or a way forward. I'll ask for regular feedback and use Good Practice for tips to help with my techniques.

I'll know I'm successful when... Better engagement and discussion in meetings, stronger relationships, a more supportive team and positive feedback

I'll achieve it... By the end of the year – I'll collect feedback for my end of year conversation to support this

I'll review my progress... Every 1:1 we will review what has and hasn't gone well with my manager.

How to lead a great development conversation

What activities will help them develop?

When it comes to thinking of **how** your team member could develop, it can be challenging to know where to start.

You might be thinking about a course or a workshop but the best development activities are usually much simpler.

Try it, Discuss it, Learn it

Research shows that we usually learn best 'on the job', but we often need a mix of different methods:

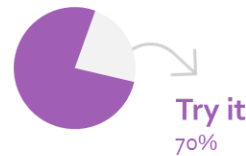
Trying it through day-to-day tasks, challenges and practice.

Discussing it through collaboration and sharing, in person or online.

Learning it through more formal learning such as downloading recommended content from My Best Me, completing a course or qualification, or attending Leadership & Management Essentials workshops.

Research says that we learn mostly through **Try it** tasks (about 70%), followed by **Discuss it** (about 20%) and then **Learn it** (10%).

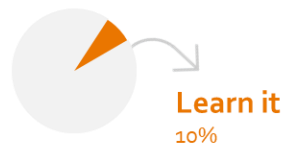
Want some inspiration? Here are some ideas to get you started.



- Get involved in a new project
- Take on a new and challenging responsibilities
- Offer to help others just for experience
- Apply new techniques to real situations
- Facilitate and chair meetings
- Introduce new ways of working
- Use feedback to try a new approach
- Practice and reflect on how it went
- Find opportunities to network and interact with senior leaders
- Ask your manager to delegate new work to you
- Represent your line manager in a meeting
- Take an opportunity to experience a new role
- Spend some time with a colleague learning about their job and ways of working
- Speak at internal or external events
- Become a team member in a project where you have no knowledge
- Cover for other peoples work while they are on holiday



- Discuss your development with your manager
- Ask for feedback and be open to receiving it
- Ask questions
- Actively seek out advice, opinions and ideas
- Talk to someone who will support and challenge you
- Ask a team member to coach you
- Talk to an expert in the subject
- Discuss what you've learned in your 1:1s
- Share your own knowledge with your colleagues
- Participate in group discussions
- Build your network, internal and external, and learn from it
- Buddy up with a colleague to share experiences and knowledge



- Access videos, articles and tools that can support you
- Research topics and techniques
- Read books
- Listen to podcasts and webinars
- Attend a course or workshop
- Read internal communications updates
- Think about a professional qualification
- Take an elearning course

How to lead a great development conversation

What happens after the conversation?

Straight after

- Ask your team member to log their development goals on the myHR portal. If they're not sure how to do this then you can find guidance on Ask HR which you'll find on the Bridge.
- As well as this, they might want to make their own record so they can revisit their goals and keep track.

On going

While your team member should sit firmly in the driving seat of their own development, you play an important part in providing direction and championing them. After the conversation, continue to support them by:

- Making dedicated time to regularly discuss their progress
- Giving them feedback to steer them in the right direction
- Spotting relevant opportunities, tasks and projects that stretch them
- Helping them broaden their network

Supporting you

After some more tips and tricks on having a great conversation? Here's what we recommend.

These links will take you to Good Practice (<https://app.goodpractice.net/#/carnival/login>).

If you haven't already, simply sign up with your CUK email address.

Development, your role

Take an in depth look at your role in helping your people reach their potential. You'll also understand more about managing expectations and handling team members who don't want to be developed.

Leadership & Management Essentials

A practical and thought-provoking programme that will help you become the best leader you can be. The programme will take you on a journey of self-discovery, through a mix of interactive workshops, supported by elearning.

Shore Learning Guide

Our shore learning guide summarises our current learning offer including details on Power Hours and Leaders exchange sessions available to book via the cove.

Holding a development discussion

A development conversation is more than a quick discussion. Here's why.

How to have a great 1:1

Here's how you can make the most of 1:1s with your team.

Giving feedback

Giving feedback is a critical skill for any manager. These articles will give you the confidence to deliver great feedback.

My Best Me

An online toolkit, My Best Me makes planning and developing yourself easier than ever. Signpost your people to it and don't forget to look at it for your own development too. You'll find My Best Me on [The Cove](#).

For further support, talk to your local HR Business Partner or get in touch with the [Learning and Development team](#).