

Personal Development Plan

Guide

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What is a Personal Development Plan?

The aim of creating a Personal Development Plan (PDP) is to document a process of self-analysis, personal reflection and honest appraisal of your strengths and weaknesses. We make plans every day, but do not always write them down; a PDP allows you to set your own personal targets and find the best way to achieve them. It becomes a very powerful tool when combined with work and career-development targets.



We cannot overemphasize the following enough:

The PDP is yours and yours alone.

Final accountability lies with you.

Only you can make a success out of it.

What do I need to do?

Creating your PDP has three stages as follows:

- Stage 1 – Personal Analysis.

The first stage is designed to analyse your strengths and developmental areas (weaknesses). You will be able to draw heavily upon your career and the outcomes of training workshops that you may have attended. These should be supplemented by the perceived opportunities that will have been derived from your experience and any threats to your continued success.

- Stage 2 – Setting Objectives.

This involves setting new and clearly definable Objectives for yourself which are measurable. These Objectives will help you to work on any developmental areas which you may have identified during stage 1. For further insight and assistance, your line manager can be approached. The example PDP provides clear guidance on identifying these.

- Stage 3 – Goals.

This stage involves setting out your personal and career goals.

Example PDP

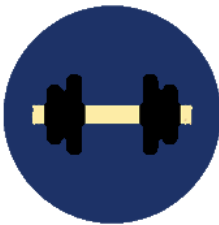
Stage 1 – Personal Analysis



Before setting your short-, medium- and long-term personal development plans, you should conduct a personal analysis: E.g. - What are my strengths and developmental areas? What external opportunities or threats might affect any plans I might make? This is commonly also known as a SWOT (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats*) Analysis.

Taken together, your strengths and opportunities help you identify potential long-term career goals. Your weaknesses, and the threats you face, are the things that need to be managed, mitigated, or planned for, to ensure that your goals remain achievable.

Strengths



Here, your goal is to uncover what sets you apart from other people. What qualities do you have that make you stand out?

When thinking about your strengths, do not limit yourself to your professional skills. Explore all of your experiences, and the opportunities that you have had to grow and develop. This includes your education, aptitudes, personality factors, and interests.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- *What am I really good at?*
- *What skills do others recognise in me, and what do I get rewarded for?*
- *What do I do better than most people I work with?*
- *What am I most proud of?*
- *What experiences, resources or connections do I have access to that others do not?*

Remember to ask your friends and colleagues to list your strengths as well. We can tend to be modest, and we often downplay our own abilities, so this is a great way to get more ideas. When you learn where others think you excel, it can be a real boost to your self-esteem.

Developmental Areas (Weaknesses)



Here, you think about the things that you are not so good at, or the areas where you can improve your performance. When you list your weaknesses, you can reduce or manage them, so that they do not stop you achieving your goals.

Do not “beat yourself up” about your weaknesses: we all have them. The trick is to recognize them and manage them appropriately. Also, do not be too self-critical. If you are fair and forgiving about other people’s weaknesses, make sure you forgive your own, too.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- *What skills do I struggle to master?*
- *What do I only do because I have to, in order to satisfy job requirements?*
- *Are there one or two aspects of my personality that holds me back?*
- *What do other people most often identify as my weakness?*
- *Where am I vulnerable?*
- *Where do I lack experience, resources, or connections, where others have them?*

Unlike the Strengths section, do not feel compelled to list every weakness you can think of. Limit yourself to the ones that can have an impact on your career.

Opportunities



Now that you have reflected on your strengths and weaknesses, you need to focus on understanding the opportunities that are open to you.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- *In what ways can I take advantage of my strengths?*
- *What opportunities are open to people who do these things well?*
- *What would I love to do that I am good at?*
- *How can I minimize my weaknesses? If these no longer hold me back, what could I do?*
- *Where do I see the most potential growth for myself: within my current role, in a different department, in another store, or in a separate career entirely?*
- *What trends are having an impact on my current career, or on the one that I am thinking about pursuing?*

Threats



Finally, reflect on the things that could derail your success. Although threats often cannot be directly controlled, they can be planned for. That is why it is so important to identify as many of them as possible. The more you know about them, the less likely you are to be “blindsided” by something unexpected.

You might feel that thinking about threats will cause you undue worry and stress. However, you will likely experience more anxiety if you do not consider them, especially when they start becoming more significant.

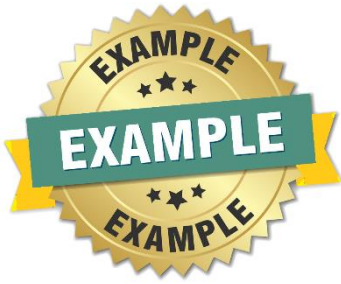
Remember, a threat loses much of its impact when it is managed and prepared for.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- *Are there any general threats that I need to think about?*
- *If I do not address my weaknesses, what problems could they cause?*
- *What setbacks might I face?*
- *What obstacles have other people overcome when they are trying to get to where I want to go?*

Background to Example Individual

Abongile is a 25-year-old graduate that works at ABC Coffee Company. He is 2 years into our graduate recruitment programme. He joined ABC Coffee Company while at university and transferred to his current department following graduation. After a year he was encouraged to participate in the inhouse leadership and management development programme. He re-joined his department as a junior manager. His line manager is supportive and has been reasonably flexible and supportive in making allowances for the additional time off work to attend all the learning modules. Once properly qualified and with more experience, he is keen to take on more responsibility and be seconded to another part of the business.



Personal Development Plan

Name: Abongile Mabece

Department: Information Technology

Line Manager: Bronwyn Gabriels

PDP Start Date: 13 March 20##

PDP End Date: 28 February 20##

Personal Analysis

Strengths <i>What am I good at?</i>	Developmental Areas (Weaknesses) <i>What do I need to work on?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My personal administration in the business and basic skills are good and my detailed knowledge is generally sound for my level of training. • I gained confidence from proving that I could cope with the pressures of the Leadership and Management course, even with sleep deprivation. I was assessed to be composed during practical work and provided clear direction. • Having the opportunity to lead a team over an extended period of time, I demonstrated that I have the ability to provide clear direction and manage people to achieve specific tasks whilst under pressure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was difficult to maintain the work/life balance and maintain my physical fitness standards during academic studies. As a result, I have lost some physical fitness. • I need to take more time in planning a task thoroughly before briefing my subordinates. I.e. provide the solution not present the problem. My understanding of the estimate planning process is still superficial in places and requires more detail. • In order to build my confidence in command I need more experience of team management in different scenarios.
Opportunities <i>What could help me along?</i>	Threats <i>What might stop me?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate to my line manager that I have had both structured management and leadership training and experience of leading teams to achieve specific tasks. Also, to highlight that I have been exposed to a more structured approach to analysing problems which will assist me in providing clear solutions will be of value to the quality of my work. • This activity provides a space for renewal in a hectic business environment to achieve a better work life balance allowing me to be refreshed and more focused at work. • I can call on the support of my line manager to give me guidance on personal development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance work and personal commitments.

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Stage 2 – Setting Objectives

This stage is also known as the **ACTION PLAN**. Developmental Areas and Opportunities uncovered during stage 1 now help you determine what your Objectives on your PDP should be. Each one of us have our own Performance Management Goals for our roles and areas which we struggle with. These now in addition to your Development Areas and Opportunities, become Objectives which can be worked on. The time period for your PDP should cover the next 12 months (*short-term*). Objectives can be personal, or career focused as the two are interrelated.

Use the **SMART** mnemonic to set precise, motivating Objectives:

- **Specific** – Make sure that your Objective focuses on one particular outcome.
- **Measurable** – There must be a definable end point, so you know exactly when the Objective has been accomplished.
- **Achievable** – You must be reasonably able to accomplish your Objective, otherwise it will frustrate you and undermine your self-confidence.
- **Relevant** – Objectives must relate to what you are ultimately trying to achieve.
- **Time bound** – There has to be a time requirement, otherwise you may never push yourself to accomplish your Objectives.

Objectives

Objectives	Activities	Coaches/ Resources	Measures of Success	Target Date
Greater depth of knowledge of leading in the business external activities	Read up on additional resources provided during the Leadership and Management Programme.	The Learning Team.	Course Assessment. L & M Programme Assessment report. Line managers Appraisal Report (LMAP) including mid-year appraisal will assess performance and potential.	31 March 20##
	Get to know my team better and build their confidence and trust in me.	Advice from my Line Manager and team feedback. Arrange a teambuilding session.	Formal and informal appraisal. Self-appraisal.	30 April 20##
	Identify key training opportunities in the Business. Forecast of Events and de-conflict with work and social life.	I will need to discuss and agree my priorities with my Line Manager.	Prioritisation of goals forms part of my appraisal process. Ensure that I have attended all the agreed high priority training.	30 April 20##
Widen my understanding of leadership.	Learn from the more by observing experienced managers. Gain their friendship and trust.	Senior colleagues.	Mentoring and performance appraisal. During development programmes.	31 October 20##
Achieve core business skills.	Complete mandatory business update training i.e. Continuous Professional Development (CPD).	External Training Providers and Accreditation Bodies.	Course Assessment. CPD Point target reached.	30 November 20##

Objectives (Continued)

Objectives	Activities	Coaches/ Resources	Measures of Success	Target Date
Build confidence in as a leader/ management.	Volunteer to lead ad-hoc cross functional projects to build credibility and experience as a leader.	Line Manager.	Feedback from the team and the project sponsor.	30 June 20## and 30 November 20## (bi-annual)
Improve planning/ decision-making skills.	Gain further experience of business analysis processes. Use this in a working environment to speed up and improve complex decision making	Use training opportunities and revision.	Attendance of inhouse training programmes.	28 February 20##
Improve my personal fitness.	Allocate specific evenings during the week for fitness training and allocate time over weekends. Develop personal fitness programme to improve fitness and stamina.	Advice from Gym Fitness Instructor.	Improved fitness levels and drop in pant's size (aiming for a drop in 2 pant's sizes).	30 June 20## and 30 November 20## (bi-annual)



- Activities make Objectives practical and easier to track. An Objective can have more than one activity linked to it this is all dependent on the level of complexity.
 - Examples of Activities:
 - Job-Shadowing (*following and observing a person closely*).
 - Reading relevant content and research.
 - Reviewing and analyzing examples.
 - Internship, Apprenticeship and Correspondence courses.
 - On-the-job training.
 - Online learning or attendance of workshops.
 - Mentoring.
 - Special projects/assignments.
 - Structured interviews with subject matter experts.
- Coaches or Subject Matter Experts can be found either in your department, in other departments or even outside the business. Resources could be training that you can attend, books you can read, etc.
- Measures of Success are either quantitative (e.g. *90% pass mark*) or qualitative (*improved communication levels amongst colleagues*) in nature, depending on the activity being either technical or behavioural, respectively.
- Target Dates should not all be the same, as this could lead to a feeling of being overwhelmed and create unnecessary stress. As the PDP is planned for a 12-month period, these dates should not fall outside this.



Stage 3 – Goals

Goals

Short-Term Goals (next 12 months)

Complete the Leadership and Management Programme in order to become eligible for engagement in complex business project activities.

(I accept that some of these goals may slip into year 2 but no further).

Have accountability for a significant cross-functional project at work.

Medium-Term Goals (next 2 – 3 years)

Be given responsibility for leading and managing a small team, in support of a challenging business project.

Engage in supporting some functions of a cross-functional project team which gives me significant business exposure.

Long-Term Goals (beyond 3 years)

Gain promotion to middle management and gain support of work colleagues and senior managers.

Be given responsibility for managing a large team of direct reports/ a number of teams (Work towards becoming a Head of Department).

Even though the PDP looks at the short-term, it is also important to look at the medium- and long-term, so that you keep your eye on where you are going. Your short-term goals should support your medium-term goals and these need to then support your long-term goals.

Benefits for Colleagues and Line Managers

A PDP provides meaningful action plans that will help:



You to:

- Perform duties according to established job standards,
- Improve job performance,
- Assess particular strengths and weaknesses and,
- Schedule and plan own individual development each year.

To benefit from a PDP you must be involved and make a serious commitment to your future. It may take several hours of your time, but it is an effort that should later prove to be well worth the investment.

Your Line Manager to:

- Aid in the development of their colleagues to achieve the knowledge, skills, and competencies according to their performance standards,
- Accurately document the current developmental needs of their colleagues and consider the department's and/or business' needs, mission changes, changes in technology, expected turnover, staffing needs, program plans and future needs for particular skills.

Commitment of Colleagues and Line Managers



Your Commitments:

- You commit to working closely with your Line Manager to develop and monitor your PDP.
- Identifying short- and long-range goals, Objectives, and activities to achieve these.
- Identifying additional knowledge, skills and abilities required to achieve the stated Objectives.
- Discussing and obtaining concurrence of goals, Objectives, and developmental activities with your Line Manager.
- Satisfactorily completing all assigned reading, education, and developmental activities.
- Keeping your PDP up-to-date and sharing evidence and accomplishments with your Line Manager.

Your Line Manager's Commitment:

- Line Managers commit to assisting you in the development of your PDP and supporting development activities outlined in the PDP.
- Performing a developmental needs assessment, in cooperation with you, to assist you in planning and formulating actions to successfully accomplish identified Objectives.
- Counseling you concerning career development and encouraging you to set goals to improve your performance through systematic and continuous self-development.
- Assuring that developmental activities support the Objectives of the PDP and are evaluated regularly.

What your Line Manager will review when looking at your PDP:



- Are your goals realistically based on their assessment of your capabilities and past performance?
- Are your goals consistent with the team/department needs, core competencies, and business goals?
- Do the proposed development activities support your goals?
- Have you considered a full range of potential developmental activities, including self-study, on-the-job training, seminars, workshops, professional society meetings and conferences, and special assignments?
- Are any additional developmental activities needed to address upcoming changes in responsibilities and planned assignments or to maximise cross training?
- Is the level of proposed developmental activities reasonable given the anticipated workload?