

SAMPLE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Part of “How to hold a Development Discussion”

Examples of Employee Development Plans you may use for ideas.



Note to Managers:

The sample development plans presented in this document represent what is created after the manager-employee development discussions and after both the manager and employee completed their Career development worksheets. Phrases such as “our previous discussion” or “as we agreed,” refer to earlier manager-employee career development discussions that must take place before a development plan can be created. Holding a development discussion and other employee development tutorials may be found on Syniverse’s Geo learning site.

In the examples in this document, take note of how much of the development is pushed back onto the employee. Career Development is not meant to be burdensome to the manager. Much, if not most of the work resides with the employee. The examples in this document reflect that idea.

Operations

Title: Excel 2010 and how it applies to Dashboards and Executive perspective on dashboards

One of the things that you have been working on in 2011 are management dashboards that encompasses all of your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the applications in your area.

This dashboard will reflect the health of each of your applications in a central repository along with all the application within our group. This dashboards answers questions about volume, on-time completion of tasks, and other meaningful KPIs for management use. As we discussed, a better knowledge of Excel 2010 will help you in preparing these dashboards. A better understanding of executive expectations regarding these dashboards will also help you succeed in this area.

As we agreed, your key skills to develop are the following:

- A better understanding of Excel 2010
- A better understanding of what executives expect from these dashboards

Description:

You are to search out training opportunities in Excel 2010 which could include consulting with the training department, finding an online course or other. As your manager, I will set up a fifteen minute interview between you and my manager so that he/she may explain their requirements for a good dashboard and why they are so important to executive level employees.

Legal

Title: Develop effective working relationships with the Sales Teams and customers.

A cross-functional team helps communicate more broadly, gain alignment more easily, and ultimately supports the customer better. As we discussed, your development in this area will give you a deeper understanding of another group and a more holistic view of the organization. This understanding will

enhance your value to the organization and provide you with a deeper insight into a group outside of your normal interaction.

As we agreed, your key skills to develop are the following:

- A better understanding of the sales team and the forces under which they operate
- A better understanding of sales customers and their expectations

Description:

Please identify and set up a meeting with someone in the sales team that can help you with this development objective. Ideas might be for you to sit in on sales meetings, interview key sales stakeholders and of course any other ideas which you might have. What you experience could serve as a model for other people on our team. I'm asking you to make the first contact since you have already been working with this group and selected individuals from the sales team. In our quarterly discussions I will expect you to explain to me in what ways you have a better understanding of the sales team and a better understanding of their customers.

Sales

Title: Face to face visits and reviews with top accounts.

There is no better way to make a connection with someone than meeting them in person. There is a special camaraderie that most of us experience when sharing a coffee or meal, engaging in an activity together, or attending the same meeting or conference. It seems to be hard-wired into our human experience. As we agreed, since product sales is your long term goal at Syniverse it makes sense to involve you in several sales meeting this year so you can get a sense of what goes on in these meetings.

As we agreed, your key skills to develop are the following:

- Knowledge of how a customer sales meeting is conducted
- Knowledge of how to interact with a top account

Description:

I have already identified John Doe, a successful salesperson in the organization. John has agreed to take you on a few local sales calls and include you in a few sales conference calls with customers. Your role will be that of an observer with the intent to learn as much as you can. We will check in quarterly to discuss progress with this development objective.

IT

Title: Presentation skills and application knowledge.

As we reviewed some of the things that you accomplished last year, you indicated that you participated in several events involving presentations concerning equipment upgrades. As we agreed, it would be good for your career if you could prepare and present an information session like this yourself. This would involve enhancing your presentation skills and increasing your understanding of PowerPoint 2010.

As we agreed, your key skills to develop are the following:

- Presentation skills, specifically making presentations to small groups
- Greater knowledge of PowerPoint 2010

Description:

Carol Jones had been doing IT presentations for several years. I would like you to schedule some time with her in order to get her suggestions on what goes into a successful presentation. I would also like you to research avenues to improve your presentation skills. If it is classroom training that you come up with then I will need to know cost, timeframes, etc. As we agreed, you will want to contact internal training in order to see if they have any free training available in either of these areas. We will “check in” quarterly to discuss progress with this development objective.

Development

Title: Obtain TOGAF certification

As we discussed, many organizations like ours are fully indebted to the developments within TOGAF and it is being selected by many of our competitors. Togaf Certification is now being sought as the ‘must have’ qualification amongst ambitious, forward-thinking management professionals. We agreed that it would be beneficial to you personally and Syniverse if you were to pursue your TOGAF certification in 2012.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective would be:

- Obtain TOGAF Certification

Description:

Please investigate what resources and time are necessary to obtain this certification. The certification that you are seeking will help the department therefore I will seek to expense it through the company although that particular expense was not part of our current budget.

Customer Support

Title: Improved skills as a trainer

During 2012 you conducted backup training for the staff and you indicated that you enjoyed this type of work. You also indicated on your career development worksheets that this is something that you enjoy. Therefore we agreed that improving your skills as a standup trainer is something that you would like to try and it would certainly benefit the organization and our group in particular.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective would be:

- Improving your skills as a stand-up trainer

Description:

Please investigate what resources and time are necessary to improve in this skill. One suggestion that we agreed to would be to meet with several Syniverse internal trainers and “pick their brain” about the training function. From the small amount of research that I have done it also appears that there are many well-written books on the subject. This could be another avenue for learning. Of course you should get this expense approved by me before moving forward with it. I would also be willing to help you with the development of some questions to ask current trainers. Be prepared to discuss your ‘resources findings’ with me at our next quarterly meeting.

Operations

Title: Improved writing skills

One of the things that you mentioned in our earlier meeting is your desire to improve your writing capabilities and you related to me that writing is something you sometimes avoid since your own perception is that you are lacking in that area. Another area of agreement is that comfort in writing is a necessary skill for future advancement within the company. The good news is that writing well is very much a ‘learned’ skill.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective would be:

- Improved writing skills

Description:

I know that I have seen writing courses on the company’s Learning Management System. Please assign yourself one of those courses and complete it by June 15, 2012. After that I will involve you in more tasks that involve writing and I will review many of the documents or descriptions that you create. I might ask you to compose emails or correspondence for me with me acting as a reviewer. I am definitely open to suggestions on how to improve this skill in you.

Implementation

Title: Project Management experience

You indicated in several of our earlier career development meetings that you would like more project management experience. I certainly want to accommodate your desire however you must do some preliminary work first. I would like you to take at least one course on project management and I would like you to talk to a current project manager about what their life entails in that field.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective would be:

- More project management experience

Description:

Even though you have done some informal project management work in the past it is important at this stage of the game that you put some science and discipline to your learning in that area. For that reason I am asking you to interview someone that has been doing it for a while and then discuss your findings with me. If you would like to discuss possible questions to ask please put time on my calendar for this. I'm also asking you to take at least one course in the area of project management. After all that I will involve you in at least one project where you take a lead role and exhibit the duties and requirements of a project manager. Another area in which you expressed interest was learning the Visio application. I recommend that we postpone that training until we see real progress in the project management area. We will discuss your progress each quarter during our normal performance objective discussion.

New Skill

Title: Learning AJAX

As our group is now responsible for more and more asynchronous web applications your learning AJAX would be hugely beneficial to the department and the organization. Fortunately this is an area in which you have interest and the desire to learn and become proficient. Great.

Therefore, as we agreed, your 2012 development objective will be:

- Learn to program in AJAX

Description:

Research any online or instructor led classes available in this subject area. Include costs in whatever you come up with. Please schedule a meeting with our internal IT group in order to determine whether we can obtain a sandbox to help you learn this group of technologies. Speak with Brooke Brown who has been using AJAX for a while about getting the right desktop tools to program in this area. As you get better with AJAX be prepared to speak with me about potential projects in which we can get you involved. Since you are already proficient with JavaScript you will have a "leg up" in this development objective. We will meet quarterly to discuss your progress in this area.

New Manager

Title: Thinking as a manager

One of the things that you mentioned in our earlier meetings is your need to now “live as a manager.” I agree with your assessment that as a newly promoted manager it is important for you to understand the difference in living as a manager versus that of an individual contributor. The main difference of course is that you are now evaluated on the results that you obtain through others. Another big difference for you, in particular, will be the need for increased communication.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective would be:

- Think, act and work like a manager

Description:

I will give you the names of several successful managers and as we agreed, interviewing them would be a good first place to start. I will help you prepare some questions to ask them. Please schedule some time on my calendar to work on these questions. I would appreciate it if you attempted to come up with your own questions prior to our meeting. Attending the leadership classes is also a necessity in completing this development objective.

New Manager, Manager, Team Lead or anyone who conducts meetings

Title: Business meeting skills

One of the things that will help you as a Syniverse manager is the ability to hold succinct, productive meetings. As we discussed in our meetings there are a lot of examples of poor, unorganized meetings that we have both experienced.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective would be:

- Learn components of a professional meeting
- Conduct professional meetings

Description:

I will give you the names of several people that I think hold very polished and professional meetings. Please contact these people and ask them to invite you to several of their meetings as an observer. See if you can get invited to both phone and in-person meetings. I would like you to compose a list of things that they do as meeting holders that lend to the professional nature of their meetings. Internal training also told me that there are several “facilitating a meeting” type courses on the company learning management system. I would like you to take at least one of those courses. We will discuss your findings in upcoming meetings. Another thing that you will do as a result of this is create a performance objective for holding meetings that I can then cascade to other members of our group.

Team Member

Title: Building relationships

We were not able to reach an solid agreement on a 2012 development objective and rather than risk settling on one of dubious benefit I took the initiative to prescribe one for you. I did not arrive at this development objective lightly. One of the things that you mentioned to me in several past conversations is your strong preference to work on projects alone. Although I understand your reasoning, there are many instances in our work life where we must operate successfully with a team and it is important that you understand the dynamics that go with that. Let me be clear, I'm not saying that you will be changing all your projects over to team projects; I'm saying that I want you to increase your understanding of the importance of relationships in the workplace.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective would be:

- Learn the importance of building relationships in the workplace

Description:

This development objective is a bit of a tough one in that there is no magic light switch that either one of us can flip that will all of a sudden make you conversant in establishing meaningful relationships. For starters, see if the Internal training group has anything on "Building Relationships." Think about the way that you've come up to speed on the technical applications that you use. If you bought books or watched videos then apply that same effort at this. The only difference here is that it is a non-technical subject. I will need you to demonstrate that increased understanding of building relationships in our quarterly objective meetings.

Team Member

Title: Running an important meeting

As we discussed in our prior career development discussions, you're running the Production Change control meeting would be a growth area for you. There are several actions that go into preparing for the meeting and it will help you think of larger issues that affect the organization.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective would be:

- Running the Production Change Control meeting

Description:

Since this is a function that I have been performing over the last several years I will act as your primary coach with this endeavor. Let's meet each Tuesday to discuss aspects of the weekly meeting. As we agreed, it makes more sense to work you slowly into being the owner of the meeting. The first step is to

observe not as a participant but as the soon-to-be-owner of this event. From there we will progress with you eventually assuming the entire conduct of the meeting. Since we will be meeting each week on the day before the objective it should be pretty easy to build on the previous week's progress. Eventually you will participate in running one of the meetings working up to a point where you will conduct an entire meeting yourself.

Team Member

Title: Research an important area and present back to the group

One area that could potentially affect are department and the entire organization is the adoption of ITIL. We discussed this in our career development discussions and as we said in that meeting, I would like you to thoroughly investigate this area and present your findings back to the group. As we said before, this would be developmental for you because:

- It is the first time you have had an assignment like this (at least while you've been at Syniverse
- Because it is new, it forces you out of your comfort zone
- It will require presentation skills when you report back to the group

ITIL is new for you and me and the entire group so you are learning something new even if we do not immediately adopt the practice. As we agreed in our meeting, you have to understand something before you can make an informed judgment about it.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective will be:

- Research the ITIL methodology and present back to the group

Description:

As you are researching ITIL, at a minimum, you should seek to answer the following questions:

- ✓ What is ITIL?
- ✓ Why would an organization be interested in ITIL?
- ✓ Who uses ITIL?
- ✓ What are the benefits of ITIL?
- ✓ What is the latest version?
- ✓ What, if any, certifications are available?

Challenging assignment

Title: Lead a small Storage Virtualization team.

As we discussed in our earlier development discussions, accepting a challenging assignment that can positively impact our department is one excellent way to develop you in an area that is new to you. As such I would like you to be the team lead on Storage Virtualization.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective will be:

- Lead a small Storage Virtualization team summarizing your findings at the end

Description:

As more and more conversation heats up on the subject of storage virtualization it will be hugely beneficial to determine once-and-for-all whether this is something Syniverse adopts or ignores. As we discussed in our earlier meetings, I would like you to assemble a small team. I will help you bend peoples arms in order to get them to participate then investigate Storage Virtualization for our group and potentially other groups in Syniverse. The developmental aspects of this objective are the following:

- You will be leading a small team and that is new for you.
- You will be presenting your findings and that is new for you.
- You will be impacting at least our group and potentially a much larger group within the company.

Remember, in your investigation to include the following:

- Benefits
- Cost
- Security
- Capacity
- Performance
- Disaster Recovery
- Backups

I'm really looking forward to your participation in this development objective. I believe that your success in this area will really benefit you in several ways that can only help your career with the organization.

Preparation for New Assignment

Title: Demonstrate your understanding of the process our group follows for the year-end audit.

As you know from part of our earlier discussion and what you observed at the end of last year, there are many things our department must do in order to participate in the year-end audit. There is planning, a to-do list to follow, closing requirements, considerations about fund balances and financial statement preparation. Since I will be involving you in the year-end audit this year I would like you to familiarize yourself with the process now.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective will be:

- Learn then demonstrate your understanding of our group's year-end audit process

Description:

Although not easy, participating in the year-end audit process is good experience for you and a valuable skill transferable across other industries. The primary way that you can come up to speed on what goes into the year-end audit process is to interview people that have been through it. As we stated earlier, I will give you a list of people that are knowledgeable in this and I would like you to schedule time with them and "pick their brains" so that you have a good idea of what the process entails. I would like you to create a list of questions to ask and review that list with me before you meet with the people that I have in mind. I will ask you targeted questions throughout our meetings that will allow me to see if you are making progress in this area.

Learning about the year-end-audit process is something that will benefit you professionally at Syniverse and for that reason we agreed that it is a beneficial development objective.

Enhancing a Skill: Interactions with Customers

Title: Develop and execute smooth kickoff meetings

One of your performance objectives is to **Initiate project kickoff within 2 days of PON assignment** and this is done with a "kickoff" call with the customer. One of the goals of this kickoff meeting is for you to build a shared consensus that will help guide the project; in other words, to make sure everyone is on the same page. Some of the other things you will be responsible for are:

- Identify all people on the call
- Confirm the availability of all participants
- Review key parameters in the project
- Quickly gather the best thinking from the whole team
- Identify the best sources for further information
- Uncover any differences early, when these are easier to deal with.

And there is actually much more.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective will be:

- Learn then demonstrate how to conduct a kickoff call

Description:

Because there is so much that is necessary in conducting a successful kickoff call as we agreed, it makes sense for you to interview people that are doing it well right now, practice in a safe environment, then demonstrate your skills in this area. Please start work identifying who you think is an exemplary performer in this area (I have my own ideas) and that will be the subject of our first review meeting. From there we will plot a strategy for the rest of this development objective. We will meet each quarter in order to judge progress.

Added skill

Title: Processing Tap and Rap files

One thing that we agreed will increase your value to the company considerably will be learning how to process Tap and Rap files based on GSM standards. This is an area slightly out of your domain right now but as we discussed, it will benefit you greatly to know how this process is performed. It will give you a better understanding of why this process is so critical to Syniverse's success.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective will be:

- Learn how Tap and Rap files are processed and what considerations are involved with their processing

Description:

Because it is essential that you get as much as possible from this developmental objective, I need you at a minimum, to understand the following areas.

- Why the processing of Tap files has a short timeframe
- How the action on Stopped tap file affects Rap generation
- Actions taken in a Rap dispute
- Recycle of Rap files.
- Client follow up

As you start to learn this process, we can discuss why it is essential to be knowledgeable in this area. Let's review each quarter during our objective discussions.

Competency Improvement

Title: Enhancing your customer focus.

As you know, part of your normal performance objectives are to respond to client emails within 24 hours and to keep a close monitor our critical clients. In the past, you have performed these objectives quite well but as we discussed earlier, a fuller understanding of the customer and what it takes to have the customer mindset is something that will really benefit you in your career at Syniverse. Having a complete, undeniable zest for delighting the customer is something that will stay with you for the rest of your life and give you a fuller understanding and appreciation of what is necessary in today's company-customer relationships.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective will be:

- Taking your customer focus skills to a whole new level

Description:

I would like you to do some research on your own to determine what free and not free resources are out there. Start with the internal training group and then we can talk about other people who might be able to help. Remember, this is not in any way suggesting that I am dissatisfied with your current level of customer focus. As we agreed earlier, there is always room for improvement in anything and I want you to see what the next level in customer service looks and feels like. We will talk quarterly about your progress in this area but don't hesitate to come and see me when you have additional news to relate and including when you identify some available resources.

Additional Skill

Title: Creating a business analysis.

One of the things that our department needs to do right now is evaluate new technology which offers increased stability and/or availability of production systems. I would like you to do a business analysis that details technology options for this increased stability with your recommendations at the end. As we learned in our career development discussion, writing reports is not something that you have done in the past but is a necessary skill in our business. Knowing how to do this well will help you with future projects and probably career progression. Not knowing how to provide the "written word" can be a limiter in any profession.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective will be:

- Evaluate new technology which offers increased stability and/or availability of production systems and write a business analysis from that.

Description:

In a sense you are working as a business analyst in this developmental objective and I would like to connect you with someone who is very skilled in that area. They will be able to provide you with some hints on ways to proceed. I am very glad to help you with the written portion of your business analysis as I have done this many times myself. Schedule some once-every-two-week-meetings with me to insure this gets going. After that we'll discuss your progress during our quarterly objective meetings.

Additional Skill

Title: Learning more about LTE

Since Syniverse is investing much of our success in LTE it makes sense with our departmental mission for you to become conversant with that technology.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective will be:

- Learn everything that you can about the LTE technology

Description:

As we discussed in our Career Development meeting, learning LTE will be good for you personally and it will also benefit the department. Please find out who hosted last year's LTE training and ask that person whether any other LTE training is scheduled for 2012. Also, check to see if there are any LTE topics on the Syniverse Learning Management System. If there are other classes scheduled for 2012, please obtain the cost so I can secure approval for your taking the course. One course will not make you an expert so please look for other options in bringing you up-to-speed in this area.

Prepare for future tasks

Title: Describe steps necessary for Android app development

Syniverse is looking at developing on the android device and you can be helpful with that effort.

As we agreed, your 2012 development objective will be:

- Obtain Android Market license for research and development and brief team on all that is required for android development including the SDK, IDE, platforms and anything else

Description:

As we discussed in our Career Development meeting, this will be helpful to you because you are researching the tools and environment necessary for a specific type of development. In the future when we do this again for a different type of device you will be able to do it faster and more efficiently and understand all that is involved in scoping this out for a particular device.