

# Strengths-Discovery Conversation Guide

## Goal:



Begin the conversation by exploring the talent's goals and desired direction.  
Create a safe environment that supports forward-thinking, openness and trust.

- In what areas are you wanting to grow and develop?
- How would you like to grow in your current role?
- If you could pursue a different position within this organization, what would that be?
- If you could create a brand-new position within this organization, what would that look like?
- Is there a part of this organization's future (or your professional field's future) that particularly inspires you?
- Is there a part of this organization's legacy (or your professional field's legacy) that particularly inspires you?
- What contribution would you like to make to this organization (or your professional field)?

## Reality:



Discover the talent's current skills, experiences, attributes, and aspirations.

- In what subjects did you receive academic degrees or specific training?
- What professional experience contributes to your work?
- In what areas do you consider yourself a subject matter expert?
- What prior experiences have you had that have prepared you for the position or direction you are aspiring to?
- Think about the last 3-5 years of your work life. Which specific skills have you received recognition for and compliments on most frequently?
- In your current position, what do you feel you do exceptionally well?
- When people ask for your help, what do they ask you to help them with?
- Looking over your professional career, to what skill have you dedicated the most time with the best results?
- If you retired today, what could you continue to do on a consulting basis to generate income?
- Describe the last project you thoroughly enjoyed? What was it that engaged you?
- Outside of work, what do you get excited about? To what projects or organizations do you dedicate your time?
- Are there events inside or outside of work that you are always willing to help organize?

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## Options:



Collaboratively, explore possibilities for development and generate as many options as possible. Remember to identify development opportunities in formal learning, relationships and experiences.

Formal Training: *example: company-sponsored leadership courses*

Relationships: *example: work with mentor*

Experiences (internally and externally): *example: participate in quarterly meetings*

## Way Forward:



Clarify the goal, the development actions, milestones, support and resources needed, etc.

Goal	Development Actions	Timeline/Milestones	Support and Resources Needed
Prepare for a VP role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete leadership training</li><li>• Select a mentor</li><li>• Attend quarterly meetings</li></ul>	December 31st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nomination from leader to participate</li><li>• Leader will forward meeting invite</li></ul>

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## Best Practice Tips

### 1. Champion a culture of continuous learning.

To foster a culture of continuous learning, leaders must be dedicated to:

- building and maintaining trust,
- having constant conversations with talent about development,
- viewing mistakes as optimal moments for valuable learning,
- paying attention to each individual's strengths and aspirations, and
- seeking opportunities for talent to expand their network, their skills, and their experiences.

### 2. Become a student of your talent.

Pay close attention to where talent's strengths, skills, knowledge, experiences, personal attributes, and aspirations intersect.

### 3. Be S.M.A.R.T.

Help talent identify outcome, action-based goals by following the S.M.A.R.T criteria:

- I want to accomplish this outcome \_\_\_\_\_
- Measurable: With these milestones \_\_\_\_\_
- Attainable: I will achieve this by \_\_\_\_\_
- Relevant: This is important because \_\_\_\_\_
- Timebound: By this date \_\_\_\_\_ and this timeline \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Set Boundaries.

This is the talent's plan and responsibility. Don't over-own. You can't want your talent's success more than they do.

As a leader, your job is to:

- encourage ongoing development discussions,
- guide talent in setting S.M.A.R.T. goals,
- remove obstacles,
- connect talent with resources and opportunities,
- foster a culture of continuous learning, and
- act as a trustworthy, encouraging champion.

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*Talent goes where talent grows.*