

Q06. There is someone at work who encourages my development.

Help Me Grow

Human beings cannot be successful alone. We learn more, apply what we learn faster, and grow and develop all in response to others. Given this, we know that employees need a manager who encourages their development.

Each employee needs help navigating the course of their career. At times, employees need sponsorship, coaching, protection, exposure and visibility, and challenging work assignments. At other times, employees look for counseling, friendship, and acceptance and confirmation that they are doing well.

Less than 1% of employees who report having someone at work who encourages their development are actively disengaged.

Less than 1% of those who have no mentor are able to achieve real engagement with their employer through the other 11 elements of engagement.



The manager-employee relationship is one of the most important in a workplace. Your employees' relationships with you should help them define who they are and what they can become professionally. They should be able to trace their successes to the relationship they have with you.

In the typical workgroup Gallup has studied, about **four in 10** employees worldwide strongly agree that there is someone at work who encourages their development.

While all 12 elements of engagement require manager-to-employee and/or peer-to-peer interactions, managers must put in extra effort to personally invest in their employees to have success with the sixth element of engagement.

Personal and professional development does not occur in a vacuum. It takes intentional effort and attention. Gallup's research suggests that the most effective managers are intentional in their effort, individualize their approach and provide ongoing developmental support.

As a manager, you should routinely ask yourself:

- ✓ Do I understand which development opportunities are most important to each team member?
- ✓ Do I understand which opportunities are most relevant to each team member's career growth?
- ✓ Have I created shared goals and established expectations with my team?
- ✓ Do I regularly celebrate my employees' successes and achievements?

Three Ways to Encourage Development

- 1 **Individualized:** Customized for each team member and consistent with their current role
- 2 **Intentional:** Directed and purposeful for each person
- 3 **Ongoing:** Continuous process throughout each person's work life cycle (from onboarding to promotion)

Investing in Your Team's Growth and Development

One common misunderstanding that many people have about this element of engagement is that "development" means "promotion." Development is a process for understanding each person's unique talents or strengths and finding roles, positions and projects that meet them.

Engaging Conversations

Employees want to learn, grow and maximize their contributions to their personal mission, their organization and the people they provide services to. To do this, you need to discuss your employees' professional growth and development more than once a year. Asking your employees these questions can help ensure that you learn more about their growth and development needs:

- What do you enjoy most about your work?
- Are you being challenged at work? What challenging experiences are you facing? What challenges would you like to take on?
- What is the best way for me to encourage your growth and development?
- What are some ways we develop as a team? What are ways you would like to see our team develop?
- What do you want to accomplish in the next six months?
- If you could learn anything that would have an effect on your current role, what would that be?
- When you are "in the trenches" getting the job done, what are some ways we as a team can help you?
- What can I do to help you achieve your goals?
- When you achieve your goals, how would you like to receive recognition?
- Where do you see opportunities for growth within yourself? Are there opportunities I can help you with?

Best Practices

The most effective managers create opportunities for employees to learn, grow, acquire new skills, try new ways of doing things and take on new challenges. These managers try to build a culture of encouraged development by incorporating the following behaviors into their management style and approach:

- Teach employees the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in their roles.
- Help each employee identify, document and track performance goals.
- Don't look at development as a finished product. Keep moving the goal posts to encourage next steps. Meet regularly with team members to talk about their development. Learn about employees' development goals, help them set reasonable expectations, and revisit their goals often.
- Look for coaching opportunities to provide greater clarity and improved understanding of a role.
- Help employees track and celebrate personal bests.
- Meet with each employee regularly to review progress on their development plans.
- Identify your role in the development process so that you can support and provide any information necessary for employees to achieve their development goals.
- Consider what development opportunities you can offer your team. These opportunities could mean job shadowing or additional responsibilities for a specific employee.
- Pay special attention to your long-serving employees. They need development opportunities too.