

Employee Guide: Preparing for a Career Aspiration Conversation



CEB Corporate Leadership Council™

Instructions: Use this guide to prepare for a career conversation with your manager if you want to develop a stronger idea of your career aspirations and want your manager's advice.

Consider Your Career Aspirations

- How long have I been in my current position? How interested am I in changing my responsibilities, and when will I be ready to do so?
- What tasks or types of project would I like to do more frequently? Less frequently?
- What do I value most in terms of my career (e.g., autonomy, management, prestige, compensation)?
- What non-work goals and priorities may influence my career decisions? Have I considered how my mobility might make achieving certain career aspirations difficult?

Identify Strengths and Development Areas

- What do I do really well? For what do people come to me for help? How could these skills and capabilities relate to potential career aspirations?
- Thinking about potential career aspirations, which experiences or capabilities do I lack that people in the positions I aspire to have?
- How am I performing against expectations and performance goals for my current position? How does this influence the achievement of different career aspirations?
- Which of my accomplishments am I proudest of? How would I articulate those to other managers in the organization?



Conversation Preparation Tips

- You own your career conversations. Proactively schedule conversations with your manager and follow-up on development activities you discussed.
- Prepare in advance of the meeting to get the most out of it. Your manager should support you, so think about what you want to ask of them.
- Use your organization's or externally available tools to research different careers or industries to get a better idea of your interests.
- Take an online personality test to learn about your strengths.

Consider Future Business Needs and Internal or External Opportunities

- What is the state of our business (e.g., are we growing or at a maturing stage?), and how does that affect the achievability of different career aspirations?
- What about the industry at large? Are other organizations that do things I am interested in performing well?
- What skills and capabilities will the organization need in the future, and am I interested in developing these skills?
- How would I articulate my skills to make them relevant to roles in other parts of the organization or outside of it?
- How competitive are the different fields I am interested in?

Prepare an Action Plan

- What support do I want from my manager or from other leaders in my function or throughout the organization to help me with achieving my career aspirations?
- How can I demonstrate that I am ready for the next step in my career? What challenges do I need to address?
- Which development opportunities do I want to pursue to work toward achieving my career aspiration?



Use the guide for Managing a Career Aspiration Conversation to structure the conversation with your manager.