



CAREER OWNERSHIP WORKBOOK FOR EMPLOYEES

Stop waiting to be noticed. Make four moves.

Get clear on what you want, have the conversation that moves you forward, turn feedback into growth, and build a development plan you run yourself.

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HOW TO USE THIS PDF

Type straight into the boxes on screen and save your copy, or print it and write by hand. Rating scales add up on their own in most PDF readers, including Adobe Acrobat and Chrome. Every heading above is a link.



START HERE

Your career is not a waiting game

Career momentum is rarely accidental. The people who move up usually do four things on purpose, in order. This workbook walks you through each one.

01 Define what you want

Name your strengths, what energizes you, and the role you are aiming for.

02 Have the courageous conversation

Tell your manager what you want, and turn vague praise into a specific commitment.

03 Ask for real feedback

Invite candor, take the tough parts in stride, and act on one blind spot.

04 Build a plan you run

A development plan built on real experience, reviewed every quarter.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

Do one move a week. Each one takes 30 to 45 minutes and ends with something you do, not just something you think about. Save your filled-in copy and bring it to your next 1:1.

A development plan is not a promise of promotion. It is your plan for building the capability and evidence that make the next step possible, with your manager's support.



CLARITY

Move 1: Define what you want

You cannot ask for what you have not named. Start with evidence from your own work, not with job titles.

Your proud moments

Set a 20-minute timer. Write down three moments from the past year when you felt proud or lost track of time. Note what you were doing and who it helped.

	What I was doing	Who it helped, and how
1		
2		
3		

The pattern I see across all three

Strengths and energy audit

What I am known for doing well

Work that gives me energy

Work that drains me

Skills I want to use more



What matters most to you at work?

Tick your top three.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ☐ Growth and learning | ☐ Impact I can see | ☐ Autonomy |
| ☐ Stability | ☐ Recognition | ☐ Leading people |
| ☐ Deep expertise | ☐ Flexibility | ☐ Purpose and mission |
| ☐ Collaboration | ☐ Income growth | ☐ Variety |

Your direction

What do you want more of, what do you want less of, and what would you like to test before making a major move?

More of

Less of

Something to test first

Time horizon: next year, and three years out

Target role or next step

Capabilities that role needs that I am still building

Openness to moving team, role or location

Practical constraints to consider



ALIGNMENT

Move 2: Have the courageous conversation

Performance reviews look backward. This conversation looks forward, and you lead it. Use the scripts as written the first time, then make them your own.

OPEN THE CONVERSATION

"I'd like to use part of our 1:1 today to talk about my career direction and the next level of impact I want to grow into."

STATE YOUR AMBITION

"I want to grow into a role where I'm **[the scope or work you want]**. I'm ready for more, and I'd like us to align on what that path could look like."

ASK WHERE YOU STAND

"Based on the outcomes I've delivered, I believe I'm operating close to the next level. Where do you see me today, and what gaps should we focus on?"

ASK FOR A STRETCH ASSIGNMENT

"I'm ready for a stretch assignment that builds my capability in **[skill or area]**. If something comes up, I'd appreciate being considered. What evidence would help you feel confident recommending me?"

CLOSE WITH A NEXT STEP

"This was helpful. I'll summarize what we aligned on and draft a development plan. Can we revisit my progress in 30 days?"



When the answer is vague

If you hear	Try saying
"You're doing great. Just keep it up."	"Thank you. To make this actionable, could we name two or three specific capabilities or experiences that would show readiness for the next level?"
"You need more leadership presence."	"Could you share an example of what that looks like on our team? It will help me turn it into concrete actions."
"Great job on that project."	"Thank you, I'm proud of it. Are there upcoming initiatives where I could contribute at a higher level?"
"You've got real potential."	"I appreciate that. What is one capability or experience that would speed up my growth?"
"Let's just wing today's 1:1."	"No problem, I can guide us. Let's start with priorities, then save the last ten minutes for development."

Close the loop in writing

Send a short note the same day so you both remember the same conversation.

FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

"Thanks for the conversation. Here's what I captured: I'll [action] by [date]. You'll [support or action] by [date]. We'll revisit [topic] on [date]. Please let me know if I missed anything."



WORKSHEET

Your conversation prep sheet

Fill in the left column before the conversation and the right column right after it.

What I want from this conversation

What we agreed

The evidence I will bring (results, examples)

Who owns each next step

My clear ask

Follow-up date

Suggested 1:1 agenda you can send ahead

- Quick wins and progress since last time
- Blockers or decisions I need help with
- Development and capability building
- Priorities for next week



BLIND SPOTS

Move 3: Ask for real feedback

"Any feedback for me?" gets you "No, you're doing fine." Specific questions get specific, useful answers.

Questions that invite candor

- ☐ "What is one thing I could do differently that would make the biggest difference to you?"
- ☐ "Where did my work fall short of what you needed in the last month?"
- ☐ "What do people above us notice about my work that I might not?"
- ☐ "If I were already in the next role, what would I be doing differently today?"
- ☐ "What should I stop doing?"

Tick the ones you will ask this month. Ask two or three people, not just your manager.

How to take it in without getting defensive

1 Listen

Let them finish. Write it down.
Do not explain yet.

2 Thank

"Thank you, that is useful." Even
when it stings.

3 Ask for an example

"Can you tell me about a time
you saw that?"

4 Sort

Later, ask: is this a pattern I have
heard before, or a one-off?

5 Act and show it

Pick one change, try it, and tell
them what you did.

Blind spot log

Feedback I heard	Who said it	Pattern or one-off?	My one change	Check back by



DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Move 4: Build a plan you run

A good development plan is built mostly on real work, not courses. Use the 70-20-10 mix as a guide, not a quota.

70% On the job

Stretch assignments, project ownership, new scope, cross-functional work.

20% From others

Coaching, mentoring, feedback, shadowing someone a level up.

10% Formal learning

Courses, reading, certifications that support the real work.

Your capability map

Pick the two or three capabilities that matter most for your target role. For each, name the action and the evidence that will show progress.

Capability to build	Where I am now	Development action (70, 20 or 10)	By when	How I will know

Your stretch experience

A real stretch assignment comes with the authority to make decisions and someone who gives you feedback. Without those, it is just more work.

Experience I need (project, rotation, new scope)

Why I need it: the capability it builds

How I will get it, and who can help

Support, authority and feedback I will need



MAKE IT REAL

Check and review your plan

Is your plan strong enough?

Rate each quality from 1 to 5. Anything below 4 is a prompt to revise before you share the plan with your manager.

	RATING
Specific Could someone else tell exactly what I will do?	1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐
Actionable Is the first step something I can start this week?	1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐
Measurable Is the evidence of progress observable?	1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐
Time-bound Does every action have a date?	1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐
Aligned Does it connect to something my team or business needs?	1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Plan quality (out of 25)

Quarterly review

Every three months, block 30 minutes, answer these, and share the highlights with your manager.

What did I try?

What did I learn?

What evidence changed?

What barrier needs support?

What will I continue?

What will I change or stop?

Next review date

Agreed with my manager on



NEXT STEPS

Keep going

Pick the next step that fits where you are.

Go deeper on your own: the Employee Workbook

Strengths, goals, conversation scripts and a development plan you run on your own, in one self-guided workbook.

Get a thinking partner: 1:1 career coaching

Set one clear goal, then take one action before every session. Accountability included.

[Ask about the workbook](#)[Book a conversation](#)

Thinking about a bigger move?

If you are wondering whether to grow where you are or move on, take the free five-minute [Career Moves diagnostic](#). It gives you one path and one first step.

[Take the 5-minute diagnostic](#)

Follow [@nextlvluptalent](#) on Instagram for more tools you can put to work this week. Questions? info@nextleveluptalent.com