

SAMPLE SHORT AND LONG TERM DEVELOPMENTAL EXPERIENCES FOR LEADING CHANGE

Critical Developmental Success Factors

To be effective, development activities **must meet** the following criteria:

1. Development is initially focused on relatively *short-term, sustainable actions* that are directly tied to an employee's *priority work responsibilities* – so that improvement in capability leads directly to improved results.
2. Short-term development activities are specifically designed to provide *more time* and *more resources* – so that successful development actually creates opportunities for further successful improvement.
3. Longer-term developmental experiences are specifically targeted at *improving core work processes* (such as ineffective, time-consuming meetings), *removing organizational barriers* to success (such as turf battles and miscommunication between units), or *creating breakthrough outcomes* that make work more efficient (such as building strong alliances with internal or external customers).

Developmental Criteria

To qualify as a genuinely developmental experience, *five or more* of the following criteria should be present in the experience:

1. Success and failure are both possible and will be obvious to others.
2. Success depends on assertive, "take charge" leadership, supportive, "empowering" leadership, or (even better) a balancing of both.
3. The experience involves working with new people, significantly more people than in the person's current position, or both.
4. Successful completion of the experience entails personal pressure such as tight deadlines, high stakes, or a highly charged, politically sensitive assignment.
5. The experience involves a high degree of uncertainty, ambiguity or change.
6. Success in the experience requires influencing people, activities or factors over which the person has little formal authority or control.
7. The experience involves a high degree of visibility with people who count (inside or outside the organization).
8. The experience requires building a team, or turning around a troubled team.
9. The experience involves starting something from scratch, turning around a situation, operation or project in trouble.
10. The experience involves a cross-functional, multi-functional (e.g. product development committee) or cross-cultural (outside of country) assignment.
11. The experience has a major strategic component and is intellectually challenging.
12. The experience requires learning a new skill or discipline critical to success as a CM, such as media training, political/ governmental lobbying, presentations to high-level audiences (senior officials, thought leader)
13. The experience involves working closely with a recognized knowledge or practice leader (inside or outside the organization).

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Overall Guidelines

Before the experience, the manager and direct report should agree on:

1. How the learning fits into the employee's changed role (for promotions/ new hires) developmental plan, career path and/or developmental needs (from 360° or other feedback).
2. Exactly what will be learned (knowledge, skill or ability) in what specific timeframe.
3. How the experience will build greater competence and mastery.
4. Why the learning matters and how it will be applied after the developmental experience.
5. How feedback and support will be provided during the developmental experience.
6. How the risks associated with learning will be jointly managed by the employee and manager.
7. How successful development will be measured in terms of observable results.

Immediate Developmental Actions

1. Publicly question a current process or procedure that you believe is no longer providing value.
2. In situations in which employees need to make decisions, challenge them to find and act on their own solutions instead of simply offering your own.
3. Publicly state your vision for a new initiative or course of action.
4. Make and sustain a positive change in your own personal routine that will produce meaningful improvement in your or others' effectiveness.
5. In meetings and conversations with your direct reports, listen for their unconscious assumptions about the status quo – "how things have to be" –and help them challenge their own assumptions and conclusions.
6. Volunteer for projects for which there is no historical perspective of precedent.
7. List the basic assumptions behind current policies and procedures that you believe are counterproductive. Ask yourself (even better, invite a discussion about) the following questions: "Under what circumstances are these assumptions NOT true? What are the exceptions?" "What kinds of results would we get if we assumed this assumption were NOT true?"
8. When people resist change, refocus them on positive actions they can take. If someone says, "We *can't* do that!" instead of arguing, simply ask him or her: "OK. What *can* you do?" If they say, "They'll *never* agree to that," ask: "Fair enough. What *will* they agree to?"

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Long-term Developmental Experiences

1. Work with other senior leaders to analyze problems caused by ineffective work processes (e.g., ineffective meetings, cycle time reduction). Generate innovative recommendations to meet those challenges, and play a leading role in implementing the change. Even better, delegate the desired change to others and support their success.
2. Lead or serve on a task force charged with implementing and gaining acceptance for significant, measurable redesign/improvement of a core business process.
3. Identify an aspect to the organization's business process that both no longer adds value and is defended by significant/powerful people internally or in a customer organization. Develop and implement a plan to discontinue or significantly improve this aspect of the business.
4. Lead a scenario planning exercise as part of the strategic planning process. Personally take on the role of generating "what if" scenarios. Leverage the knowledge and experience of another senior leader inside or outside of the organization to challenge your assumptions and "what ifs" and identify others you had not considered.
5. Lead or serve on a task force (or structured action learning project) that requires a high level of cross-functional or cross-country relationship management – projects with clear tasks that require networking and influencing in order to succeed.
6. Work with a personal coach or mentor to achieve significant, measurable improvement in innovative thinking, change leadership, systems thinking or process improvement skills.
7. Keep a journal of both the times when you have considered changes to existing plans but have not made changes as well as the times you have actually changed existing plans. Look for patterns that might indicate either too much willingness to change (creating unnecessary turbulence in the organization) or too little willingness to change (leading to insufficient responsiveness in the organization).