



EMPLOYEE EDUCATION AND ADVANCEMENT

STANFORD SOM HRG
STAFF JEDI COLLECTIVE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1

How to Normalize and Facilitate
Conversations about Career Advancement _____ **03**

SECTION 2

Expanding Professional Networks
with Informational Interviews _____ **13**

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SECTION 01



HOW TO NORMALIZE & FACILITATE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CAREER ADVANCEMENT

PAGE 3

HOW TO NORMALIZE AND FACILITATE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CAREER ADVANCEMENT



INTRODUCTION

Professional development and career advancement opportunities are vital to the growth and sustainability of an organization's people because they improve an organization's ability to find, recruit, and place talented people in jobs. In turn, this investment in professional development can lead to providing a stronger foundation for a more diversified leadership team. This resource guide provides guidance on facilitating and normalizing conversations on professional development and career advancement with managers and direct reports.

IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS

LEFT: A person sitting at their desk with their laptop out taking a phone call.

RIGHT: Two people sitting at a table having a discussion.

WHY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT MATTER

Professional development offerings enhance both the value of the organization and employees' experiences by providing tools and opportunities for employees to successfully navigate their career paths. Career advancement has two traditional methods by which employees can develop and progress within an organization.

- **Career Path.** The first is by an employee's career path, which encompasses various forms of career progression, including the traditional vertical career ladders, dual career ladders, horizontal career lattices, career progression outside the organization, and transitioning careers.
- **Career Ladder.** The second is by an employer's career ladder, which is the progression of jobs in an organization's specific field(s) ranked from highest to lowest based on level of responsibility and pay.

Professional development and career advancement start with conversations between the direct report, their manager, and/or their mentor, sponsor, or coach. These conversations allow for dialogue and sharing of ideas about how the employee will meet their career development goals and advancements.



WHY JEDI MATTERS IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CAREER ADVANCEMENT

When considering professionalization, it is important to acknowledge and understand the history of exclusion from institutions, professional networks, and career development opportunities that may affect an individual's ability to navigate these discussions. For example, first generation professionals (formerly first generation college students) tend to come from lower-income households. This disparity persists after graduation. Moreover, due to systemic inequities, lower socioeconomic status correlates with racial minorities in the United States.

Given these challenges, it is important for managers to disrupt these inequities — a first step is to provide spaces where direct reports can share their experiences about their personal and professional backgrounds. This sets the stage for greater mutual understanding and respect. As managers, it is important to actively listen and seek out resources to have an open and supportive conversation.

These conversations can contribute to building equity into decision making when distributing resources for professional development and reflecting on advancement opportunities for minoritized employees.



IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS

TOP: A person smiling/ laughing while working on their laptop.

RIGHT: A group of people sharing a laugh while looking at a laptop.

GENERAL GUIDANCE



PREPARATION FOR INITIAL DISCUSSIONS

FOR DIRECT REPORTS:

Reflect and research on possible opportunities.

Reflect on your career goals and interests. There are many ways to reflect—see resources below in ideating and identifying career goals and pathways. Talk to mentors or colleagues on how to guide discussion. Also, consider conducting information interviews to collect more information about possible career paths and identify professional development opportunities.

Make the connection between professional development and career goals.

Make note of the broader implications for professional development opportunities. Consider making connections to the current or emerging strategic initiatives and needs of your organization and the ways in which this development opportunity can benefit the broader community.

FOR MANAGERS:

Prepare. Understand that this discussion is centered on your direct report. It is important to actively listen and seek understanding through questions. Consider using an [active listening model](#) and a [coaching conversation model](#) like the ones from the Center for Creative Leadership. These models demonstrate that you are there to support your direct report's growth and respect and acknowledge their stated needs. As these conversations are iterative, do your homework between meetings and seek out resources and opportunities that might fit what your direct report is seeking.

Review budget. Before the discussion, look at your budget to see if there are opportunities/space to invest in a direct report's professional development. Make sure to track how funds are allocated across the team and ensure equity is being considered during the distribution.

GENERAL GUIDANCE



DURING THE DISCUSSION

FOR DIRECT REPORTS:

Be prepared. This conversation is about you and your needs. Be prepared to share and answer questions to allow your manager to understand what you are seeking. This does not mean you have to have all the answers. Rather, it might require some vulnerability about what you do know about your future goals and what you are still determining. Bringing an agenda and talking points is helpful to ensure that you cover all areas and keep a focused conversation.

Take notes for follow-up. Throughout the conversation, take notes on what your manager shares. This could include guidance, budgetary constraints, and questions to reflect on later. These notes can also be useful as this will be an ongoing and iterative conversation.

FOR MANAGERS:

Center the direct report's needs and interests. This is a discussion that is led by the direct report — consider taking a coaching approach, where you encourage discussion and help your team members reach conclusions. Moreover, do not judge the individual's aspirations. Listen to what your direct report is seeking, rather than lead as though you know what is best for them.

Manage expectations. At the beginning of the conversation, set expectations on possibilities and limitations for individuals. From there, focus the discussion on what can be done rather than on restrictions.

GENERAL GUIDANCE



FOLLOWING UP

Ensure that conversations about professional development and career advancement continue throughout the year. These conversations can be weekly (especially if there is a specific short-term goal associated with it), monthly, or quarterly. **Schedule consistent check-ins.** Keeping your direct report's professional development check-ins consistent and frequent will increase their motivation and help them stay on top of their goals.

Consider a team approach. Teams can take professional development courses together. Teams can also share ideas for and experiences in various professional development offerings and identify available learning opportunities.

Whether it is before, during, or after — it is important to find a shared system/ template that works best for managers and direct reports.

Find a template that facilitates and tracks these conversations.

Recommendation: Here is the [Individual Development Plan document](#) from the Stanford School of Medicine Human Resources Group — it provides a template for quarterly conversations on development. It also provides the 3E model (Experience, Exposure, Education) to leverage how one can focus their development. (See [702010 Forum](#) for activities tied to this model.) This approach asserts that a mix of learning experiences that include education, exposure, and experience yield the best new capabilities. Schedule career conversations throughout the year and use this planning document to facilitate the meeting between managers and direct reports.

Examples

https://info.advantageperformance.com/hubfs/docs/15minCareerConv_APG_03-2019.pdf

<https://www.skillpacks.com/career-conversations-guide/>

<https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/shupdreviewtoolkit/files/2018/07/Career-and-development-conversation-guide-Final-Aug-2018.pdf>

RESOURCES

Professional development/career advancement opportunities at Stanford

Below is a table of professional development opportunities and resources at Stanford that may lead to career advancement:



PROGRAM/RESOURCE	HOST OFFICE	WEBSITE	NOTES
LEAP	SoM Human Resources Group (Learning & Organizational Development team)	https://med.stanford.edu/hrg/Talent-Development/LEAP.html	Build all-around leadership skills
Staff Mentorship Program	SoM Human Resources Group (Learning & Organizational Development team)	https://med.stanford.edu/mentorship.html	One-on-one mentoring model
RING	SoM Human Resources Group (Learning & Organizational Development team)	https://med.stanford.edu/hrg/Talent-Development/RING.html	One-on-one mentoring model
Supervisory Academy	SoM Human Resources Group (Learning & Organizational Development team)	https://med.stanford.edu/hrg/Talent-Development/SA.html	Build supervisory skills
Career Conversations	SoM Human Resources Group (Learning & Organizational Development team)	https://med.stanford.edu/hrg/Talent-Development.html	Guidance on ongoing career conversations
BetterUp	SoM Human Resources Group (JEDI team)	https://med.stanford.edu/hrg/jedi/programs/betterup-coaching.html	Development through coaching
Praxis Program	SoM Human Resources Group (JEDI team)	https://med.stanford.edu/hrg/jedi/programs/transforming-self-and-systems-through-praxis-program.html	In-depth justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion

PROGRAM/RESOURCE	HOST OFFICE	WEBSITE	NOTES
LinkedIn Learning	University Human Resources	https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/learning-stanford/professional-development/linkedin-learning	Broad range of skill building
Communities of Practice	University Human Resources	https://cop.stanford.edu/	Specific work topic area groups with common interests
Career Counseling Network	University Human Resources	https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/learning-stanford/career-guidance/career-counseling-network	Individual career conversations
Apprenticeship Program	University Human Resources	https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/learning-stanford/professional-development/apprenticeship-program	Build supervisory skills
IDEAL Learning Journey	University Human Resources	https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/engage/ideal-staff/ideal-learning-journey	Foundational diversity, equity, and inclusion
Manager Academy	University Human Resources	https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/manager-toolkit/develop/self-development/stanford-manager-academy	Foundational manager skills
Leadership Academy	University Human Resources	https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/manager-toolkit/develop/self-development/stanford-leadership-academy	Executive leadership skills
Stanford Fellows	University Human Resources	https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/manager-toolkit/develop/self-development/stanford-fellows	University executive leadership skills
STAP	University Human Resources	https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/learning-stanford/tuition-training-assistance/stap	Annual funds for professional development
STRP	University Human Resources	https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/learning-stanford/tuition-training-assistance/strp	Annual funds for continuing education
Staff Affinity Group Offerings	Diversity and Access Office	https://diversityandaccess.stanford.edu/diversity/staff-groups	Staff Affinity Groups provide staff members with opportunities for professional, educational and social support, especially for staff from minoritized identity-based groups. Some groups regularly share open roles at Stanford through their Slack or list serves.

SOURCES

01

Society of Human Resource Management (2022). Surviving the Great Resignation - Resignation Recovery Playbook report. Retrieved by:
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SECTION 02

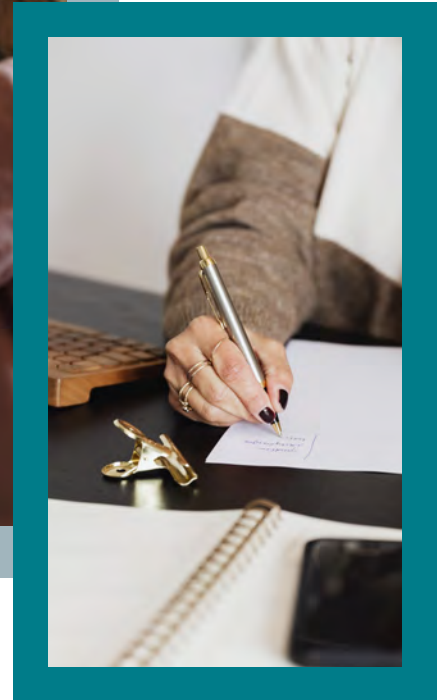


EXPANDING PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS WITH INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

EXPANDING PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS WITH INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS



STAFF JEDI COLLECTIVE



INTRODUCTION

Informational interviews are a method to hold informal conversations with a professional that works in a field or area of interest. It is not a job interview, and the objective is not necessarily linked to finding new job opportunities. Rather, informational interviews are a form of networking—they offer a space for individuals to build meaningful relationships and learn more about their field from potential future colleagues, mentors, and/or employers.

Informational interviews are important for many reasons especially for individuals with minoritized identities who may not have access to specific networks due to a lack of diverse representation and additional barriers from historical and current systems of oppression. Informational interviews help individuals build confidence for real interviews, learn about different fields and careers and how to enter those fields, and introduce an individual to people inside and outside of the field of interest or organization - ultimately allowing one to develop and broaden their network.

Below is guidance on informational interviewing for employees seeking to build their professional networks.

IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS

LEFT: Two people sitting across from each other at a table while having coffee.

RIGHT: A view of a persons hands writing.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- **Reflect on individual needs and research possible connections**
 - Review your [Individual Development Plan](#) or other professional development tools to reflect on your personal career goals. Afterwards, identify and research possible individuals for an informational interview. Beyond their current roles, consider their career trajectories, current portfolios, and shared experiences you may hold when trying to find prospective connections.
- **Be thoughtful about how to make initial contact with the individual**
 - Have someone you both know introduce you
 - If you do not have any contacts, construct a thoughtful message via cold call, email, or LinkedIn message (see [example templates from iHire](#))
- **Be prepared with questions and be timely (both in communications and for the conversation)**
- **Have your “elevator pitch” ready**
 - An elevator pitch is a 1-2 minute summary of your professional background and what potential paths you are exploring. Introduce yourself, identify your goal / purpose, describe your relevant experience, pull everything together into a concluding sentence.
- **Take notes and create a plan for how to follow up accordingly**

IMPORTANT REMINDER:

- Be respectful of their time. Keep track of time throughout the discussion.
- Avoid and/or limit transactional requests (i.e. asking for a job, asking for feedback on your resume). The objective of these conversations is to build relationships and connections. While individuals may be happy to help support and follow-up, be thoughtful about the nature and level of the request.





QUESTIONS TO ASK:

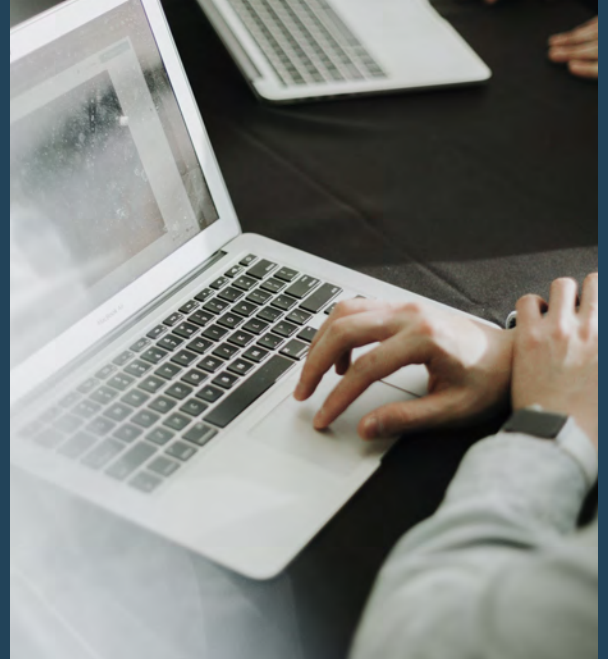
In preparation for the informational interview, individuals should prepare a list of questions to help guide and frame the discussion. Select questions that are aligned with what you are interested in understanding. Moreover, here are some potential questions to review when creating:

- Why did you get into this field? Tell me about your career journey.
- Were you ever at a crossroads during your career journey, and why did you decide to go one way?
If you went the other way, where might you have ended up?
- What makes you excited about coming into work everyday?
- What are some challenges and opportunities in your field?
- Can you tell me about a significant professional accomplishment that stands out for you?
- Who are some of your mentors and why?
- What skills and / or background help you succeed in your role?
- Are there any education, classes, professional development training that would best prepare anyone in this field?
- What is the career path moving forward for your particular job?
- What do you wish you had known about this role/field when you were starting out?
- How advanced is justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) in your field and at your workplace?
- What barriers did you encounter when navigating your position and how did you overcome them?

Note: Be prepared to share about yourself beyond your “elevator pitch”— reflect on your career goals and how this individual (or the work this individual does) fits into your overall plan.

FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

TIPS/ETIQUETTE:



Finally, it is important to follow up after the informational interview. Consider developing an overall engagement strategy for the individual. The strategy should be based on your initial discussion and your interest in maintaining, sustaining, or even evolving the relationship. Moreover, it is also okay if you are not interested in maintaining a relationship with the person from the informational interview—merely send a thank you message for sharing their time and expertise. If you are interested in sustaining conversations, consider building out a follow-up plan. Here is a possible framework for engagement—

- **Within 48 hours:** Immediately after the informational interview, send a thank you email. In the message, highlight something you appreciated in the conversation.
- **One week to one month:** Follow-up on any discussion items from the conversation. Perhaps, they told you to send them your resume or connect on LinkedIn. Moreover, communicate your plan for future communications and check-ins.
- **Three to six months:** Consider maintaining initial discussions. Some ideas include: send update emails on career milestones/new projects, share an interesting resource (article/video/podcast) that connects to their work or to previous conversations, or check in about professional conferences or key current issues within their field.

Finally, if you build a strong connection, you may consider seeking to develop a mentor and/or sponsor relationship. However, this takes time. Focus on collecting more information and developing relationships that can expand your perspective and network.



IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS

TOP: A view of a persons hands writing.

RIGHT: A person wearing a purple dress taking a phone call while holding a notebook.

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