

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to have a career conversation



The importance of career conversations

Only 16% of people have ongoing conversations about their careers.

But research shows that 8/10 of us would be more engaged in our work if we were having regular career conversations and that 75% of people would be more likely to stay in their organisation if they received ongoing professional development.



Career conversation outcomes

Tick the outcomes which apply most to you.

Sponsorship

Having someone (usually more senior) who advocates for you and your career development.

Opportunities

Having people (e.g. manager and peers) proactively spotting internal/external opportunities that you can't see yourself.

Impact

Getting feedback on your strengths to assess whether you're having the impact that you intended.

Career conversations are future-facing

vs.

Performance reviews are backward-looking

- where am I going?
- what might I need to learn?
- what can I explore?

- how have I done?
- what progress have I made?
- have I reached objectives?

Creating a distinction between the two gives more space to have an effective career conversation without the pressure of a performance review often linked to promotions / salary.




Top tips to have effective career conversations

- 1 Have career conversations regularly**
You won't solve everything in one chat, think of these as a series of conversations instead.
- 2 Talk about possibilities rather than plans**
Plans limit us to today's reality whereas possibilities encourage us to explore.
- 3 Help your manager to help you**
Scheduling conversations in advance and sharing an agenda can make them more meaningful.
- 4 Make sure you ask for feedback**
Asking for 'even better if' feedback helps make the most of your career conversations.
- 5 Career conversations can be with anyone**
Think about having career conversations with a broad network of people to get different insights.
- 6 Be clear about the what, the why, and the how**
Be intentional about what you want to learn, why, and how the person you are talking to can help.

Coach Yourself Questions

- ?** What are the current career possibilities within your organisation that you'd like to explore?
- ?** Who could you have your next career conversation with?
(other than your manager)

Recommended resources

-  [How to reimagine retention](#)
Our article for Harvard Business Review
-  [The best career path isn't always a straight line](#)
Our Tedx talk which has had over 1.5 million views shows how squiggly careers can be dynamic
-  [How to create your career criteria](#)
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