



Helping you develop the organization of your dreams.

Retain top talent: Career development pathway

Creating a developmental pathway program for your team

Danielle Lord, PhD ©
Archetype Learning Solutions

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INTRODUCTION

A career pathway, also known as a career pipeline, is a structured growth, development, and learning plan. It clearly defines your organization’s role expectations, necessary competencies, measurement tools, and learning events, ensuring a clear development path. A pathway development program is ideal for both novice employees as well as veteran employees seeking to transition into a new role.

Growth and development are key to sustaining a committed culture. Research has consistently shown that growth and development are not only key motivators, but highly correlated to long-term employee tenure. These are team members who share your long-term strategic goals and want to see your organization succeed!

Without a structured and well-managed approach however, it can become easy to over- or under-prepare team members for new roles. A pathway program is one of the best ways to ensure that all team members have and are aware of a clear path for growth and success.

If you’re looking for a career path solution for your team, our pathway program is the perfect solution!



PRODUCT/SERVICE/METHODOLOGY

Opportunities for on-going development, vertical and lateral, are highly correlated with long-term employee commitment. From a learning perspective, a well-structured program is equally appealing in that it provides all team members with the same information that is planned and methodical.

Any role within your organization that requires a ladder of knowledge, skills, abilities, responsibilities, and/or competencies, an in-house development pathway program is the ideal solution. It allows your organization to maintain control over the learning content and process, is a known, effective recruiting technique, and is an ideal commitment and retention strategy.

Working with your team, our development pathway plan provides a complete in-house solution:

- Learner tracking (i.e., records retention, advancement),
- Instructional design/curricula development,
- Learning evaluation to level 4 – we can implement an evaluation that measures behavior and organizational impact,
- Object assessment and measurement,
- Individual Development Plans,
- Stakeholder guide,
- Competency development,
- Mentor and Employee Development training to ensure your team members are getting the right information in a way that meets their learning and developmental needs.

KEY FINDINGS

Key Findings #1 – Attract great people



Employers that offer development programs are far more likely to attract great people show share their value for knowledge and growth.

A development pathway is one of the most powerful recruitment tools in your talent acquisition toolkit. Research has consistently shown that organization that provide on-going growth and development opportunities are far more likely to have higher engagement scores and lower turnover.

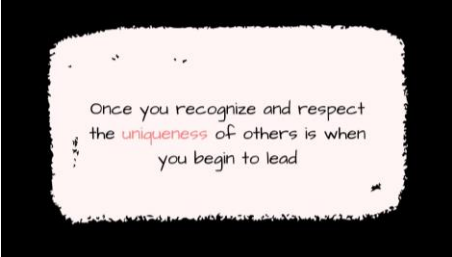
Key Findings #2 – Train and learn together



The best way to break-down operational and/or communication silo's is to learn together and ensure that information is freely shared across all lines.

Because the pathway program includes curricula for both the learners and mentors, the organization is growing and learning together. Organizational knowledge is shared and transferred equally. This also provides a consistent language taking the guess work out of learning and operations.

Key Findings #3 – Retain top talent.



A well-developed and committed workforce is an amazing asset, which can yield a tremendous competitive advantage when utilized properly

An opportunity to contribute, and work to the top of employment capacity, is one of the most effective ways to retain top talent. Organizations that demonstrate an interest in team members are far more likely to have higher levels of commitment and long-term team member tenure. Team members that are engaged in on-going learning and development also show a greater propensity to stay involved, working for you to advance your vision.



Visual Data

APM - PMI Development rubric

APM - PMI Competency Assessment Rubric

PMI Candidate Name: _____ Pre-assessment date: _____
 Post-assessment date: _____

Instructions for use:
 Use this document to objectively apply the requisite elements that meet the PMI criteria for the PMI project manager role. Begin with the highest level (PM level table) determine the degree the candidate was met and move to the right until you identify how completely the competency was met. It is acceptable and even expected that you will have identified competency development in each section. Tally to find the total score. For most effective results, each assessment should be completed by at least employee and supervisor, for better results consider other stakeholders.

This is a development document and to be used to assess developmental progress only and is not to be used in any part of performance conversations.

This document is confidential

Long Term (3 - 7 years) Career Aspirations (e.g., achieve PMI position in second program)

Short Term (1 - 3 years) Career Aspirations (e.g., achieve L2SD certification in support of second work)

PMI competency strengths (see list of competencies on back)	PMI competency opportunities (see list of opportunities on back)
•	•
•	•
•	•

PMI competencies - your strengths
 (Select up to three and record in the "Strengths" box on Page 1 of identified in your development table.)

- Masters PMI required job skills (technical competency)
- Demonstrates integrity and honors PMI values - PMI 21, 23 & 29
- Agile learner - PMI 32 & 46
- Business acumen - PMI 25
- Acts ethically and in the public interest - PMI 33 & 29
- International aware - PMI 23

PMI Competencies - your opportunities
 (Select your top three and record in the "Opportunities" box on Page 1 as identified from your development table.)

Competency matrix: developed to meet specific competencies, and skills and uses an objective measurement strategy.

Individual Development Plan: Lets your team members plot a career path that meets their needs and their timeline.

Key Initiative #1 Click on top links to enter text

My knowledge: Less knowledgeable 1 Some knowledge 2 3 Very knowledgeable 4 5

Basic Acumen (Key terms and acronyms)

What is it? External Resources

Organizational partner: Contact Information Who and Where

United States Test Predictions On Accessibility Statement

Program Outline

Topic	Year	Meets objectives
Complete PNDG (one term) as Department team introduction	3 - 4 terms	1
TDI		
The Post		1
• History of the Post		
• Post Strategy (community partners and impact)		
• Post Policies and Ethics		
CAR training (able to Cap course outline)	4 terms	
MS Project / course (2nd a term)	Office Set (one month) One hour	1, 2, A, 3
LEAD Leadership (able to ENK course outline)	32 terms	2
Four Kingdom III (able to ENK course outline)	2 - 12 months	
able to ENK course outline	4 terms	3
able to ENK course outline	2 - 12 months	1, 2, 3

Participate in a small capital project with a mentor or direct supervisor, development should focus on:

- Participate in various tasks related to APN role in completion of a Post project to demonstrate knowledge of APN responsibilities
- Assist in the preparation and development of a project notebook and all documents
- Be introduced to cost estimating guidelines
- Understand the difference between proper phase and specification
- Be able to contribute to completing work book items structure and calculation.

Stakeholder guide: an ideal tool to help introduce New team members to important internal Stakeholders, speeding knowledge transfer and relationships.

A customized course outline: provides all learners with a consistent learning opportunity.

CASE STUDY

A busy Port develops a Project Manager Pathway (PM) program to ensure long-term and sustainable development.

Large Ports are responsible for significantly large, expensive, and lengthy projects. Some of those projects can be:

- 20+ years in duration
- billions of dollars in cost
- a mix of dozens of different internal and external stakeholders,
- a dizzying array of local, state, and federal regulations, and
- extremely elevated in community visibility.

Effective and well-prepared PMs are essential for ensuring successful projects.

The Port was faced with several specific challenges:

1. Externally, they were unable to financially compete with large engineering firms, employing highly specialized project managers,
2. The current internal PM development efforts were unstructured and inconsistent based on who available mentors,
3. Recruiting junior PMs was easy enough, but there were no incentives to ensure their tenure. Significant amounts of knowledge were lost as they were recruited away to other external firms,
4. Without enough senior PMs to take on the work, the Port was required to contract with the same engineering firms at a very high compensation rate. In addition to budget impacts, out-sourced consulting PMs did not have the same degree of organizational commitment, and turnover among them remained a challenge in terms of knowledge and information transfer,
5. The Port had six levels of PMs, each with increasing responsibilities, with no way to measure outcomes, skill, or competencies and no way to demonstrate or qualify if current PMs were ready and qualified to move to the next level,
6. The range of non-employed PMs had no real commitment to the project outcome, Port, or community at large.

The solution:

The development of an “apprenticeship” style program that encompassed:

- *A deep understanding of roles:* Identification of specific KSAs and competencies by role,
- *Individual Development Plans:* every member had a specific Individual Development Plan ensuring they could map their own growth plan and timeframe,
- *Structured curricula by level:* this ensured that any new PM, either internal or external, was receiving the same learning opportunities. New hires, regardless of what level they hired into, were required to complete internal curricula offerings within one year. they partnered with an external partner to provide specific PM certification.
- *Objective measurement:* a series of matrices and rubrics were developed to objectively assess required leadership competencies by level as well as specific PM knowledge, skills, and abilities,

- *Navigation tools:* junior level PMs received a stakeholder introduction document that allowed them to meet all of the internal stakeholders to better understand the complex Port structure,
- *Mentor and learner support:* mentors received training in a variety of areas to support the long-term learning of PMs regardless of role and tenure.
- *Employee development training:* A specialized training that ensured anyone touching the development of another PM understood the unique learning needs of adult learners,
- *Outlined competencies by role:* A realization that more advanced PMs required developed specific to leadership competencies, such as demonstrating integrity, interpersonal savvy, and cultivating relationships.
- *Junior or Assistant PM cohorts:* each year, the Port recruits a cohort of college students interested in a PM or engineering career. These cohorts begins their journey together.
- *Team project:* the cohort participates in a team project which exposes them to stakeholders, business acumen, and competency development from day one.

The results:

While the program has only been in place for a short amount of time, HR has reported that the overall program has made external candidate acquisition much more attractive to junior recruits. This allows talent acquisition to hire local candidates who are interested in staying close to home, while working a good-paying job through the duration of their education. This enhances the likelihood of long-term employment, increased knowledge of complex operations, and values alignment. In addition, local individuals have a long-term commitment to the organization and community at large and are less likely to leave.

Additionally, HR developed more supportive tools and incentives that supported more long-term commitment, such as electronic badges so internal stakeholders recognized specific accomplishments and introducing enticing benefits much earlier in the socialization process.

Individual development plans are structured per PM learner need. Coupled with a tuition reimbursement program, the pathway program ensures that every PM team member can develop a career path that supports their unique needs, on their own specific timeframe.

For the more senior members of the PM program mentoring and PM development is a significant and important part of their role. Traditionally, the nature of engineering and/or PM work is very linear and data driven. Many in these roles are unfamiliar with the adult learning theory and methodologies, mentoring best-practices, and learning trauma that can often inhibit effective learning. The Port’s program included mentoring training as well as instruction on best-practices around employee development. Finally, the learning measurement tools provided consistent and objective measurement. This ensured that all applicants were assessed fairly and equitably.

“Danielle has taken a very complex process and created a development program that is elegant in its simplicity”

Wayne G. Director (retired) Director, Project Management,
Port of Seattle



CONCLUSION

Establishing a development pathway or pipeline program ensures that your organization has a greater ability to attract great people, who are learning together in support of ensuring the long-term success of the organization. Beyond that, team members are looking for organizations who support their long-term growth and development. Developing a career pathway program ensures that as an organization you have complete control over the content, its delivery, and ensures an objective measurement and promotion strategy, which can also aid in being more legally defensible, if needed.

Key Takeaways

An organizational development program or pathway is the ideal way to

- *attract* great people who have a greater likelihood of long-term employment tenure,
- *train* your organizational team members so they are learning together, increasing the likelihood that they will share their knowledge with others,
- *retain* top talent who are equally committed to the success of your organization,
- sustain a culture of commitment where everyone will thrive!

A consistent experience ensures a common language that promotes mutual understanding across a team and organization. This reduces conflict and ensures that your team members are receiving equal developmental opportunities that are free from personal preference or bias’.

Who is the guardian of your culture? If its not you, who is, and what are they guarding?