

SAMPLE INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

To: Immediate supervisor, “New Boss” and Human Resources Manager

From: Pat Smith, Manager

Re: My Individual Development Plan

Having been coached by you (“new boss”), with supplemental information from the email 360 survey and what you could tell me about your anonymous and confidential interviews with my team and peers, I have a much better understanding of my strengths and weaker points. I recognize that I am not functioning as an A player, and I am determined to become one. The following Individual Development Plan will, I hope and expect, move me toward that goal.

1. Improve my public speaking skills from a 5 to a 7 (on a 10-point scale)

Why: I’ve done very little public speaking, and in my present and future positions it’s going to be a common occurrence. I know I struggled in a recent speech and I want to become very effective in this skill.

How/when: Meet with a tutor (ask HR for recommendations) quarterly for 2.5 hours, throughout the next year and join Toaster’s International. Read *The Articulate Executive*.

Measurement: Email 360° survey of 25 people observing a presentation of mine each quarter in the next year. The goal is at least a 7 rating, meaning people see me as “frequently” very effective in public speaking.

2. Improve as a team player

Why: I admit it; I get impatient and tend to run over people. I dominate meetings and people consider me a poor listener at times. I mean well, but get overly enthusiastic and act as though my way is the only way ... and it is not!

How/when:

- Read one book per month, such as *People Skills* (Bolton), *The Wisdom of Teams* (Katzenbach), *Leading Change* (Kotter), *Why Smart People Do Dumb Things* (Feinberg), *Zapp! The Lightening of Empowerment* (Byham).
- Ask one peer to give me regular (at least weekly) feedback on my team play and listening skills. Take that person to lunch once per month to really discuss it, in-depth.
- Attend Center for Creative Leadership within the next year, for a one-week program on the interpersonal aspects of leadership.

Measurement: Feedback from my peer at lunch, observations by you, communicated in quarterly meetings I'll initiate. Email 360° every six months. CCL has a 360° survey to measure me as well. The goal: 7+ on Team Player.

3. Clarify accountabilities with subordinates

Why: Although I occasionally am a bulldozer, some of my people have indicated that they aren't quite sure what I expect. I seem to change direction and not necessarily tell them, and it wastes a lot of their time.

How/when: Meet with each subordinate for one hour in the next two weeks to clarify job description, performance standards, and accountabilities for the year. Clarify accountabilities at my weekly staff meetings.

Measurement: Each subordinate must say he/she is totally satisfied with the clarity of accountabilities...in staff meetings and email surveys. I want 8.5+ rating.

4. Improve direction in my team

Why: This is related to #3. My people are going in different directions as new information convinces me we should. But I'll tell X to do something, forget, then tell Y, and not let X know. We need to flex and change directions, but I need to get a lot better at coordinating, at staying in touch with each person, so that we don't waste time, energy, and effectiveness. We get so busy I too often cancel staff meetings, and my people are screaming for me to hold them regularly.

How/when: Conduct a staff meeting every week, on Monday from 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. This means every week.

Measurement: I'll submit a report to you at the end of the year, and if I have cancelled more than 10% of the meetings, I will have failed. Furthermore, on a monthly basis I will be measuring the effectiveness of the meetings, asking everyone to say if the agenda is OK, if there is adequate participation, if the highest priority issues are being discussed, if we are achieving the necessary coordination, if my expectations for individuals are clear because of it, if people are being held accountable for follow through, if trust is high, if one hour is enough, and overall how they feel about the effectiveness of the staff meeting. Goal: 8.5+ rating.

5. **Hire three A players this year**

Why: Our company's future and my career success depend on Topgrading.

How/when: Install *Topgrading* blueprint for recruitment for all three open positions reporting to me. I will:

- Work with a search executive (pre-screened by HR), who will do the work and treat me as a client,
- Assure well-organized visits to the company. I'll see to it that interviewers know the job and competencies, are prepared, are on time, and write brief reports,
- Personally conduct a Tandem Topgrading Interview, and
- Personally conduct final reference calls.

Measurement: You (new boss) will have to give me high marks for Topgrading. Goal for survey: 8+ in hiring high performers.

6. **Develop or replace two marginal managers.**

Why: You (new boss), peers, and even members of my team say I give underperformers too many chances. The entire team's performance (and bonuses) can be sacrificed with my tolerance of mediocrity.

How/when: In the next month I will launch exactly the same coaching/IDP process this document represents.

Measurement: You (new boss) will have to give me high marks for how I handled the coaching process; clearly both the people in question will either have to rise to A player performance or be replaced. Goal: 8+ on Removing chronic low performers.

7. **Control my temper.**

Why: I lose my cool a couple of times per week. It looks unprofessional, undermines teamwork, causes people to cower rather than aggressively do the job, and it might even drive away some A players if I am not careful.

How/when: I'll take a deep breath and count to ten whenever I am about to blow up. Then I'll go get something to drink or take a short walk, to calm down. Every Friday afternoon I'll spend 10 minutes filling out a 3x5 card on how I did that week on temper control. On one side I'll record when I did a good job of controlling my temper, and the other side I'll record when I lost it.

Measurement: In my quarterly meetings with you I'll bring my card file, and both of us can give me a pat on my back if I'm progressing. Other measurements will be your observations as well as those of the peer I have recruited to give me feedback on my teamwork and listening skills. And a survey goal: 7+ on Emotional Control.