

THE DEVELOPMENT CULTURE:

Build Yours to Maximize Performance,
Retention, and Profits

Organizations that have strategically invested in employee development report 11% greater profitability and are twice as likely to retain their employees.

In this guide, you'll learn:

- Why building a strong development culture is so important for your bottom line.
- How leaders can build a development culture that makes a difference.
- How to make your development program sustainable for the long term.



Development Culture: More Than a Fad

You've probably heard buzzwords like "high-performance workplace" before. But what exactly is a high-performance workplace, and how does it get that way?

When it comes down to it, all organizations are made up of people. And it's those people that are the foundation of your company's culture and growth. When employees who want to achieve success have the pathways to do it, it makes your organization better.

This applies across the board – development initiatives need to address EVERYONE's learning and training needs at every level and in every department. Otherwise, growth and development will be uneven and inequitable.

It's not a fad or a trend. It's a development culture.

The question is, how do *you* build yours?



The Numbers Don't Lie

Developing your employees to help them achieve success is a great idea – but how does it benefit your business?

Let's take a look at the numbers.



11%

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2x's

Organizations that have invested in employee development are twice as likely to retain their employees.



2 of 5

Development at work satisfies two of the five essential elements of well-being – fulfilling a person's career drive and satisfying social well-being.



9 in 10

Almost nine in 10 millennials say professional development opportunities are very important to them.



#1

Career growth is the number-one reason employees give for changing jobs.

What Development Culture **ISN'T**

Let's get one thing straight about development culture. Traditionally, companies have defined growth and development with one word: **promotion**. And while development and growth can certainly result in a promotion, **that's not what development culture is all about.**

Development means understanding an employee's talents and skill set and finding roles, positions, and projects that allow them to continue building on their strengths.

In many cases, that's more valuable than a title to your employees.

Sometimes, an employee who feels they're very good at what they're currently doing doesn't want a promotion because they may not want additional responsibilities or pressure. But they still want to grow.

That means you can promote employees if and when their desire and development warrant it. But development culture doesn't mean handing out promotions like candy.

So, how can you build a development culture that works?





How Leaders Can Build a Development Culture

Development culture starts from the top down. Actually, your company's entire culture starts from the top down. So, it's up to an organization's top leaders to build – and maintain – a development culture.

Here's how to do it:

- **Develop “learn-it-all” leaders.** Your organization doesn't need know-it-alls. Leaders need to be focused on learning and growing right alongside their employees.
- **Allocate time at every organizational level.** Time must be set aside for development and learning if growth is expected to occur.
- **Teach managers to be coaches, not bosses.** Rather than having managers who tell employees to “do this, do that,” your organization needs leaders who act as coaches to facilitate learning and action.
- **Provide the right resources.** Employees and leaders alike need the right resources at their disposal to make development happen.

What Development Culture ISN'T

Remember: Part of development culture is that **everyone learns and grows**. It's not limited to entry-level roles. The truth is that leaders are also growing in a culture that fosters development.

Leaders do have a proportionally larger influence on the team at your organization. That's why **their development is just as important as everyone else's**.

Here's the thing: Your organization doesn't need a leadership team full of know-it-alls. People whose job is to tell their underlings what to do or how to do it. That **doesn't** foster growth and innovation.

Your organization **needs** leaders who are learn-it-alls.

Learn-it-all leaders:

- Grant permission to themselves and others to admit fallibility.
- Have a constant desire to grow.
- Have intellectual humility – they're open to improving and never use their intellect to discourage others.
- Are compassionate teachers.



Allocate Time at Every Organizational Level

Too often, an organization's leadership says there will be time for learning and development without ever putting an action plan into place to make it happen or setting aside time specifically for this purpose.

Or, even worse, **learning and development are prioritized at certain levels and not at others.**

Another problem is that leaders often schedule time to give employees feedback but don't allocate time for those employees to work on their improvement areas.

So, what is your organization to do?

Some companies (Google, for instance) **use the 80/20 rule**. This means that while 80% of employees' time is devoted to their normal work routine, the remaining 20% is dedicated to learning, developing, and experimenting with new ideas. At your company, you can adjust this ratio as necessary. It's having the guideline in place – and sticking to it – that matters.

Microlearning is another option. This involves sprinkling small doses of learning and development throughout your employees' normal work schedule. Perhaps you share daily insights through your company's internal communications platform or set up a weekly company-wide email series featuring new learning content.

Whatever strategy you choose, the important thing is **allocating the necessary time for learning and development** – at every organizational level. Otherwise, how can you hope to instill a culture of development that works?



Teach Managers To Be **Coaches**, Not Bosses

A development culture starts from the top down, and that includes managers. In fact, **managers are a key part of making development culture a reality.**

Managers are closer to an employee's daily routine and work than top-level leadership or HR. But they're still in a leadership role. That makes them the perfect vessels to engage and develop employees.

But managers who simply boss employees around – telling people what to do and how to do it – aren't developing those individuals. **Your managers need to be coaches, not bosses.**

People are more likely to learn and grow when they receive immediate, specific, and targeted feedback. And this feedback needs to be directly tied to the employee's personal development. **Coaching the employee individually on a path of growth and learning is the way to truly develop them within the organization.**



Less than one in four employees strongly agree their performance is managed in a way that motivates them to do outstanding work.

Provide the Right Resources

Developing leadership and making sure they're acting as coaches, not bosses. Allocating the proper time for development to happen. These are essential foundational steps, but they're not effective if you don't provide the right resources to your team to facilitate learning and development.

The right resource for your company might look quite different than another company. It all depends on your needs. And most companies use a mix of resources to accomplish their development goals. The important thing is that you provide resources that work for everyone – from the assembler on the factory floor to the office manager and everyone in between.



Formal Training

Formal training in workshops or in-person courses conducted by leadership or outside experts is impactful and effective.



Online Learning

Online courses and webinars allow employees to tackle learning and development initiatives as it fits into their schedule. This is a good choice for on-site and remote employees alike.



Peer-to-Peer Knowledge Flow

Each one of your employees brings unique and valuable experience and perspectives to the table. Provide opportunities for employees to share their knowledge and skills with their peers.



One-on-One Mentorships

Having veteran employees mentor less-experienced employees on the job is a great way to develop niche skill sets and nurture future leaders.

Next Step: Establish an Internal Learning Platform

Internal learning platforms serve as a central hub for engaging employees in learning, professional development, and knowledge sharing. You can build your own bespoke platform if you have the time and resources or invest in a Learning Management System (LMS) from a third party.

If you don't have the budget to purchase an LMS or aren't interested in building your own online platform, consider taking it offline. Even simply having workbooks printed and establishing a schedule for employees to work through them in small groups is better than no development at all.

Regardless of the format, internal learning platforms should:

- Present the content in a user-friendly way. There needs to be a balance between education and entertainment. Training and development need to be appealing, not something employees dread.
- Cover employees' initial knowledge gaps and push employees toward researching or discovering further. This results in deeper practical knowledge and overall understanding.
- Be updated regularly with the latest topics. Ideally, the platform should allow employees to add their own content, expanding the ability of your team to learn from each other.

Online Learning Platforms for Organizations

 LinkedIn Learning

 coursera

 Howspace

 skillsoft®

 ispring

 OpenSesame®

 PLURALSIGHT

 talent lms

How to Make Your Development Program Sustainable

An [IBM survey](#) showed that 84% of employees in high-performing organizations say they are getting regular training.

The key word here is *regular*.

It's not enough to simply have an internal learning platform that helps bolster your development culture. You need to make that development sustainable.

Here's how to do it:

- **Make learning a priority from the start.** Learning should start during onboarding and continue throughout an employee's tenure through structured learning and on-the-spot coaching.
- **Align learning with the big picture.** Link all training initiatives to the organization's overall goals and strategic objectives.
- **Set training goals.** Behavior is reinforced through goal setting. Set concrete goals so that employees have something to reach for – and so you can measure the program's success.
- **Reward your learners.** Celebrate employees' development by recognizing milestones and giving shout-outs when lessons are applied in the workplace.



Ready To Start Building **Your Development Culture?**

Organizations that invest in employee development are **more profitable and successful**. It's as simple as that. And developing employees is easier when you have motivated, and engaged individuals working for you.

If you're ready to start building your organization's development culture with the right people, partner with a staffing and recruiting expert.

A staffing partner doesn't just find warm bodies to fill open roles. Professional recruiters can refer candidates who are the right technical and cultural fit for your organization, helping you get started on the right foot when it comes to learning and development.

Get in touch today to get started.



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