

Developing my Staff

Summary:

- Talk to your employees regularly about their development. An easy way to do this is to incorporate career development discussions in your performance management discussions.
- Encourage your employees to develop an [individual development plan](#), review the plan and assist them in implementing it.
- What are their strengths and weaknesses? How can you help them enhance their strengths and develop areas that need improvement?
- Here are some developmental ideas:
 - On-the-job training
 - Cross-training
 - Special projects
 - Formal training
 - Mentoring
 - Rotation Assignment
 - External Activities
 - DOC Leadership Development Programs
- Are your employees interested in attending training, here are a few training vendors that you should check out:
 - [Commerce Learning Center](#)
 - [USDA Graduate School](#)
 - [American Management Association](#)
 - [Management Concepts](#)

Information You Need to Know:

Why Develop Your Staff?

Research indicates that employees want to grow and develop. Career development and advancement are common reasons employees leave organizations. We want to retain our talent and developing them is an easy way to assist in your retention efforts.

How-to Develop?

Development and career advancement is a responsibility of an employee to determine how and what they want to do. However, supervisors play a critical role in supporting the development of their employees. Supervisors need to encourage their employees to fill out an [individual development plan](#) and establish a regular, on-going conversation on the employee's development. A great time to do this is during performance management discussions. The conversation should be an open dialogue on the employee's strengths and weaknesses. Recommend that your employees get involved in the [Department's Careers In Motion Program](#). This program offers employees career counseling, career assessments and workshops on a variety of topics.

Here are some specific developmental opportunities that you can provide as ideas for your employees:

- On-the-job training
- Cross-training
- Special projects
- Formal training, through the following training vendors:
 - [Commerce Learning Center](#)
 - [USDA Graduate School](#)
 - [American Management Association](#)
 - [Management Concepts](#)
- Mentoring through the [Department's Mentoring Program](#) or informal mentors.

Peer Insight:

We want to hear from you. Do you have any suggestions on how to reward and/or recognize employees? Do you have any tips or best practice ideas? Please share your ideas with ITA at ITABestPractices@trade.gov

At this time there are no best practices from ITA Leaders.

Books:

Now, Discover Your Strengths

By Marcus Buckingham and Donald O. Clifton

This book is the first sequel to *First, Break All the Rules*, and builds on the compelling case that the Gallup Organization's research makes for building on strengths instead of "fixing" relative weaknesses. Identifies 34 different talent "themes" and how to turn them into actual on-the-job strengths. Includes tips for managers on how to cultivate employees who have each kind of talent. The book also comes with an excellent online self-assessment that helps readers identify their talent themes.

All Learning is Self-Directed: How Organizations Can Support and Encourage Independent Learning

By Daniel R. Tobin

This book is an absolute gold mine of information for managers who want to develop the skills and knowledge of their people. It describes all the different kinds of self-directed learning and provides a comprehensive strategy for implementing them. One of the best sections includes a description of what managers can do to foster a positive learning environment for their employees.