

Nurturing Growth: How Supervisors Can Use IDPs to Support Employee Development

Welcome to the world of supervisory responsibilities! As you settle into your role, one crucial aspect to champion within your team is the Individualized Development Plan (IDP). This tool is not just paperwork; it's the key to unlocking the full potential of your employees and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Let's dive into why conversations about IDPs are important, how to motivate employees to develop professionally, actions supervisors can take to support this development, and leveraging various resources to fuel their growth.

The Value of Using IDPs

Individualized development plans (IDPs) serve as invaluable tools in fostering personal and professional growth. Tailored to the unique needs and aspirations of individuals, these plans offer a strategic roadmap for honing skills, achieving career objectives, and overcoming challenges. By identifying specific goals and outlining actionable steps, an IDP empowers individuals to take ownership of their development, fostering a sense of purpose and motivation. This personalized approach not only enhances job satisfaction but also contributes to overall organizational success by cultivating a workforce that is adaptable, skilled, and continuously evolving.

In this article, we'll discuss how to use IDPs to address three key components to engage employees both with their team and their mission: Individualized Growth, Motivation and Engagement, and Alignment with Organizational Goals.



**Individualized
Growth**



Motivation & Engagement



**Alignment with
Organizational Goals**

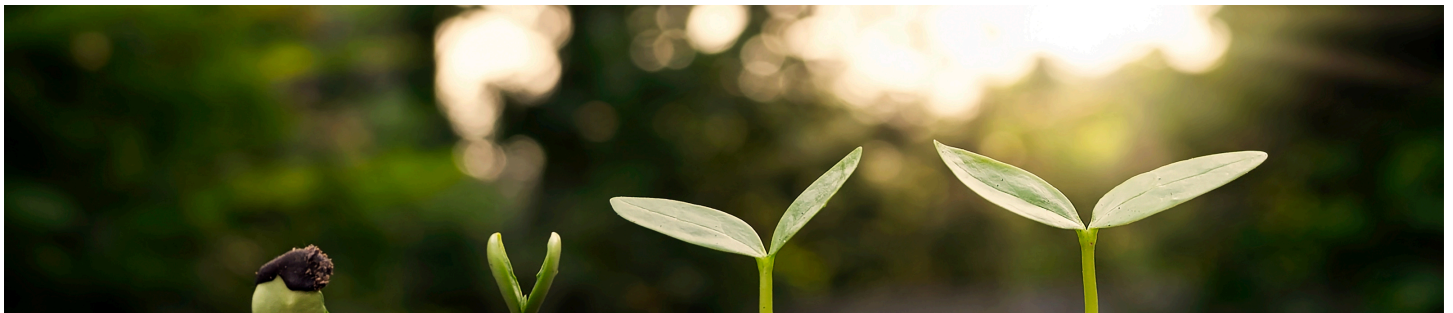
- **Individualized Growth:** An IDP is not a generic roadmap but a personalized guide to individual success. Discussing it with your team shows that you value each member's unique strengths, aspirations, and the journey they envision for themselves within the organization.

· **Motivation and Engagement:** When employees see that their supervisors are invested in their growth, it acts as a powerful motivator. A well-crafted IDP conversation can ignite a sense of purpose, fostering higher engagement and job satisfaction.

· **Alignment with Organizational Goals:** Through IDP discussions, you ensure that individual development aligns with the broader goals of the team and the organization. It's about channeling individual growth towards collective success.

Individualized Growth

In the dynamic landscape of employee development, individualized growth takes center stage as organizations recognize the paramount importance of understanding and nurturing each employee's unique aspirations. Tailoring development plans to align with individual goals fosters a sense of purpose and engagement. By showcasing clear career pathways within the organization, employees are not only empowered to envision their professional trajectory but also encouraged to actively pursue their ambitions. This personalized approach not only contributes to the fulfillment of individual aspirations but also serves as a catalyst for organizational success, creating a workforce that thrives on meaningful development within the broader context of the company's goals and vision.



1. Understand Individual Aspirations:

When engaging in conversations about IDPs, take the time to understand the unique aspirations and career goals of each team member. Ask questions that uncover what drives them professionally, where they see themselves in the future, and what skills they believe are essential for their success. This understanding forms the foundation for tailoring their IDP to align with their individual aspirations.

2. Showcase Career Pathways Within the Organization:

If applicable, discuss potential career pathways within the organization that align with the employee's aspirations. Knowing that their growth is not only beneficial for their current role but also opens doors to future opportunities within the company can be a powerful motivator. This discussion can include potential promotions, lateral moves, or specialized roles that the organization values.

For ease in discussing career development in the DAF, incorporate the roadmaps:

- DAF-level civilian career roadmap for “Enterprise Leaders”
https://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/2022SAF/Enterprise_Leaders_Roadmap.pdf

- DAF-level civilian career roadmap for “Functional Experts/Leaders”
https://www.af.mil/Portals/1/documents/2022SAF/Functional_Experts_Leaders_Roadmap.pdf
- In addition to the DAF-level career roadmaps, Career Field Managers (CFMs) have now developed career-field specific roadmaps within their civilian career field management chapters, which can be viewed/accessed by going to this link:
<https://myfss.us.af.mil/USAFCommunity/s/knowledge-detail?pid=kA0t00000004Y1cCAE>

Motivating Employees for Professional Development

Motivating employees for professional development is a cornerstone of fostering a thriving and dynamic workplace. By linking development opportunities directly to individual career goals, organizations inspire a sense of purpose and personal investment. Recognizing and celebrating progress along the developmental journey serves as a powerful motivator, reinforcing the value of continuous improvement. Open communication channels further enhance this process, enabling a constructive dialogue between employees and leadership to identify needs and aspirations. Creating a learning culture within the organization not only encourages skill enhancement but also cultivates an environment where curiosity and innovation flourish, contributing to both individual and collective success.

Steps to Consider:

Link Development to Career Goals

Help employees connect the dots between their professional development and their long-term career goals. When they see how these plans contribute to their overall success, they're more likely to be motivated.

Regularly acknowledge and celebrate achievements, no matter how small. Positive reinforcement reinforces the idea that growth is valued and recognized.

Recognize and Celebrate Progress

Create Open Communication

Maintain open lines of communication. Regularly check in with employees about their IDPs, providing feedback and addressing any challenges they may be facing.

Foster an environment where learning is not a one-time event but a continuous process. Encourage a culture of curiosity, where employees are inspired to seek out learning opportunities.

Create a Learning Culture

Alignment with Organizational Goals

Aligning individualized growth with organizational goals is the cornerstone of effective IDP discussions. By connecting personal aspirations to team and organizational objectives, you create a symbiotic relationship where individual success contributes to collective achievement. This alignment not only motivates employees but also strengthens their commitment to the organization, fostering a culture of collaboration and shared success.

Per DAFMAN 36-142, para. 4.2.1., IDPs should be used for the following:

- Record employee short-term and long-term professional goals.
- Record employee annual training and development plan to assist in meeting the employee's professional goals.
- Align employee training and development efforts with organizational core values, mission, and vision.
- Acquire an understanding of employee strengths and developmental needs.

As a supervisor, you play a pivotal role in guiding your team members towards a future where their growth is not only beneficial for them but also integral to the continued success of the entire organization.

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2. Highlight Contribution to Organizational Mission:

Move beyond team goals and illustrate how individual growth aligns with the overall mission and vision of the organization. Help employees recognize the impact of their development on the company's success. This step is crucial for fostering a sense of purpose, as employees understand that their professional evolution plays a part in achieving the organization's long-term objectives.

3. Map Development to Organizational Competencies:

Many organizations have identified core competencies or skills deemed crucial for success within the company. Work with employees to map their development goals to these organizational competencies. This ensures that their growth is in line with what the organization values and expects from its workforce.

4. Establish Milestones Tied to Organizational Timelines:

To further align individualized growth with organizational goals, establish milestones and timelines that coincide with key organizational events or projects. This ensures that the team's development aligns with the company's strategic initiatives and that employees are prepared to contribute effectively when needed.

Crafting the Development Plan

Crafting an individual development plan (IDP) is a strategic endeavor that places a spotlight on personal and professional excellence. The process begins with a meticulous identification of skills crucial for individual growth and success. Leveraging relevant courses and learning opportunities becomes the backbone of the plan, providing a structured pathway for acquiring and honing these essential skills. A key element in the effectiveness of an IDP lies in its adaptability; regular review and adjustments ensure alignment with evolving goals and challenges. This cyclical approach to development not only emphasizes continuous learning but also underscores the dynamic nature of personal and professional growth.

1. Identifying Skills for Excellence:

Work collaboratively with employees to identify the skills that will make them excel in their current roles. This might involve looking at current job requirements and future expectations.

2. Utilize DAF resources:

Leverage available DAF resources to develop your people:

- Civilian Leadership Development School (CLDS) courses <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Eaker-Center/CLDS/>
- Civilian Development Education (CDE) call <https://myfss.us.af.mil/USAFCommunity/s/knowledge-detail?xid=13085>
- Percipio <https://usaf.percipio.com/>
- Digital University <https://digitalu.af.mil/>
- Civilian Associate Degree Program (CADP) <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/CLDS/CADP/>

3. Regular Review and Adjustments, in accordance with policy:

The IDP is not a static document. Encourage employees to regularly review and adjust their plans based on changing job requirements, personal aspirations, and feedback received. Employee IDPs should be developed concurrently with the individual's annual performance plan and should be reviewed during each feedback session, per DAFMAN 36-142, para. 4.2.3.2.

Completion of a civilian Individual Development Plan (IDP) is **mandatory**, as discussed in DoDI 1400.25, Volume 410, DoD Civilian Personnel Management System: Training, Education, and Professional Development and [DAFMAN 36-142](#), Civilian Career Field Management and Centrally-Managed Programs. Additionally, IDP guidance for DCIPS and CES employees should follow DAFI

36-1101, Defense Civilian Intelligence Personnel System (DCIPS) and DAFI 36-141, Cyber Excepted Service (CES).

It is highly encouraged that employees and supervisors use the automated MyVector IDP tool located within MyVector (DAFMAN 36-142, para. 4.2.3.1.). Use this system to easily document your plan and then share it with your supervisor. You can find the IDP on MyVector at:

<https://myvector.us.af.mil/DevelopmentPlan/Home>

Conclusion

In conclusion, discussions about IDPs are not just a formality; they are a gateway to unlocking the full potential of your team. By understanding the individualized nature of professional development, motivating employees, and actively supporting their growth through available resources, you contribute not only to their success but to the overall success of your team and organization. Embrace the role of a guide and mentor in your employees' professional journeys, and watch as your team flourishes and excels.