



Navigating Career Conversations: Help Your Direct Reports Gain Career Clarity

Pathstream Webinar Series



**In the chat, add your name
and where you're dialing in from!**

Today's Goals

01 Share strategies for
navigating career conversations

02 Review resources in the
People Leader Toolkit



Please add any questions you have in the Q&A feature.
You can even add questions anonymously.



Introductions



Lauren Pizer

User Experience



Liz Fernandes

Career Coaching



Pathstream is here to help you grow and develop your career through 1:1 career coaching, resources and certificate programs.

Why is it important to have career conversations?



Increased Engagement & Motivation

When employees feel their managers are invested in their growth and career development, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated. They understand how their role contributes to personal career goals and organizational success.

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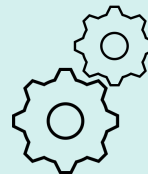
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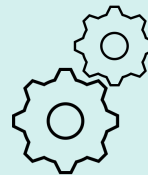
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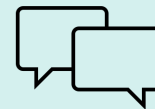
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Performance Improvement

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Building Trust & Communication

Career conversations foster open communication and trust between managers and employees, which is crucial for a healthy work environment where employees feel valued and heard.



Real stories we've heard through coaching

*Anonymized to protect confidentiality

“

I have a newfound hope, I guess you could say, since I've started talking about growing my career, I really have. My husband told me, he said, 'You seem so excited.' I said, '**It seems like something's been lit in me that maybe was burning low. I feel a passion coming back to want do better, to want to help and to want to make a difference.**' I had gotten where, you know, it was eight hours in eight hours out.

But now I take the extra step and I look for ways to try to better this and better that. **I've been communicating a lot more with my supervisor.** I would like to be one of those people that you hear about succeeding, so that others think, 'hey, if they can do it, I can do it,' you know?

”

POLL Question:

What is the biggest benefit you've seen your team members experience as a result of career conversations?

1. **Increased Engagement & Motivation**
2. **Increased Retention**
3. **Enhanced Skill Development**
4. **Performance Improvement**
5. **Building Trust & Communication**
6. **Other** (write in the chat)

Steps for structuring effective career conversations



01

Establish psychological safety

02

Gather information to prepare for a conversation

03

Facilitate & lead the conversation with your employee

04

Determine next steps and set a career goal



Steps for structuring effective career conversations



01 Establish psychological safety



What

Team members feel safe to take risks and be vulnerable with one another/you

How

- Show that you're **engaged** through body language, active listening, and proactively sharing ideas
- Make others feel **included** by asking for feedback or opinions, not interrupting, expressing gratitude for contributions, step in when talk turns negative
- Build **relationships** between people by modeling vulnerability about your own growth opportunities and creating space for team building

Steps for structuring effective career conversations



02 Gather information to prepare for a conversation



Checklist: Preparing for a Career Conversation With Your Direct Report

As you get ready to facilitate a career conversation with your employees, gather the following information to help you prepare.

- ☐ List out the strengths, skills and interests of your direct report.
 - ☐ **Strengths:**
 - ☐ As their manager, jot down three strengths your employee brings to the table that other employees you manage do not.
 - ☐ **Skills:** What kinds of skills does your direct report have? Jot down:
 - ☐ 2-3 technical skills they excel in
 - ☐ 2-3 soft skills they excel in
 - ☐ Any other skills they excel in. For example, skills in operations, project management, or team management etc.
 - ☐ **Interests:** If possible, identify a few of your employee's career interests. For example, have they voiced an interest in customer service, learning Excel, or facilitating team meetings?
- ☐ Encourage your employee to complete the assessment on the Pathstream platform so that they take time to reflect on their work preferences and transferable skills. They should get a report that recommends career paths that could be a good fit for them and have the opportunity to discuss their results with a coach. Encourage them to bring this report with them to your meeting so that you can discuss the results they received and compare it with your own reflections on their strengths, skills, and interests.
- ☐ Schedule time (at least 45 minutes) to meet with your direct report to discuss career opportunities. Let them know this conversation will be about their career interests and how they can grow within the company.
- ☐ Read the conversation guide to navigate the live conversation with your direct report.

Brainstorm strengths, skills, and interests of your employee

- **Strengths:** innate traits that an individual naturally excels at and finds energizing
- **Skills:** abilities or expertise that has been acquired through learning, practice, and experience
- **Interests:** activities or subjects that individuals are curious to learn more about or engage with during their free time

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Encourage your employee to engage with the Pathstream platform

- Review **assessment results**
- Review **career path recommendations**

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- Review **assessment results**
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Schedule dedicated time for career conversations

- Ideally **twice per year**

Steps for structuring effective career conversations



03 Facilitate & lead the conversation with your employee

**Conversation Guide: Career Growth & Development Conversations with Direct Reports**

Use this step by step guide to navigate live career conversations with your direct reports. Remember to first complete the [preparation checklist](#) before leading any career development conversation.

Step 1 Set the Stage

- **Manager goal:** At the start of this conversation, introduce the meeting, what you hope to accomplish, and why you're having it.
- **Why this matters:** When your direct report has a clear understanding of what will be discussed and what's expected of them in the conversation, they can approach it with intention and focus. Note that some employees may come into this conversation having already investigated the Pathstream platform and reviewed their personalized pathway recommendations. Other employees may just be beginning this process and have not yet accessed Pathstream.
- **Sample manager language:**
 - ☞ "I'm excited to chat with you today about some of the internal pathways and opportunities at Centene. This might be a different kind of conversation than we've had in the past, but my goal is really to understand some of your career interests and also share what I know about internal pathways here."
 - ☞ "I don't expect you to have all the answers about your career, but I'll be spending a lot of time listening and asking questions. I'll also share my own thoughts based on my role as your manager. Do you have any questions before we dive in?"

Step 2 Ask Questions


- **Manager goal:** Ask thoughtful, pointed questions that encourage reflection and prompt your employee to share their career interests and goals.
- **Why this matters:** The manager's role in this conversation is to facilitate and guide the employee towards a deeper understanding of available, internal career paths aligned with their interests. Asking questions and deeply listening are two skills that will facilitate this process.

- Set the stage
- Ask questions
- Share your knowledge of possible pathways
- Determine goals & next steps

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a. Set the stage

Be explicit about what you hope to accomplish and why you're having the conversation

“I’m excited to chat with you today about some internal pathways and opportunities.. This might be a different kind of conversation than we’ve had in the past, but my goal is really to understand some of your career interests and also share what I know about internal pathways here.

”

“I don’t expect you to have all the answers about your career, but I’ll be spending a lot of time listening and asking questions. I’ll also share my own thoughts based on my role as your manager. Do you have any questions before we dive in?”

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b. Ask Questions

Ask thoughtful, pointed questions that encourage reflection and prompt sharing of career interests and goals

“To start, I'd love to know if you have any immediate interests come to mind when you think about the next steps in your career.”


“What do you enjoy most about your current role? Have you held any positions in the past that you've really enjoyed? Are there any roles that friends, family or colleagues hold that you're interested in learning more about?”

“What do you already know about [career interest]? It's OK it's not much yet, I'm just curious about what you may have ready or anyone you may have met that does this kind of work?”

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c. Share Your Knowledge of possible pathways

Share knowledge of transitional roles and internal pathways you know are available, both in your department and in other departments.

“It sounds like you might be interested in exploring [career path]. From my experience at this company, I know that [career path] requires skills in [...]. You already have some of transferable skills such as [...] that will help prepare you for this role.”

“Let's set a specific career goal together right now. It doesn't have to be big, but it can help you start the process of taking your next step in your career.”

“We have a shadowing program that often matches people to [career area]. Do you think you'd be interested in that?”

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d. Determine goals & next steps

Summarize the conversation, identify a single goal an employee can work toward, and wrap up with clear, actionable next steps.

“What I heard you say in this conversation is that you love numbers and are interested in exploring the field of [career area(s)]. I think that aligns with your current skills in [...].”

“Let's set a specific career goal together right now. It doesn't have to be big, but it can help you start the process of taking your next step in your career.”

“I will schedule time for us to reconnect on career growth on _____ date. I'd love to continue the conversation and hear more about what you've learned since we last spoke.”

Steps for structuring effective career conversations



04 Determine next steps and set a career goal

Career goals **do not** have to be related to promotion to be meaningful. Use the 8 C's in Pathstream's Goal Setting for Growth Worksheet:

Contribution: Making a difference and aligning with my purpose

- Understand how my work impacts my team and our business goals
- Improve my performance so that I am competitive for a promotion

PATHSTREAM

GOAL SETTING

Goal Setting for Growth

! See your work! This worksheet does not automatically save. Save this PDF to your computer.

Name: _____

Step 1 Define Your Goal.

✓ What is the category of outcome or goal that you want to accomplish? [\[Check the box\]](#)

<input type="checkbox"/> Contribution Making a difference and aligning with my purpose	<input type="checkbox"/> Choice Enhancing the control and autonomy you can exercise
<input type="checkbox"/> Competence Building critical capabilities, skills, and expertise	<input type="checkbox"/> Connection Cultivating relationships and deepening your network
<input type="checkbox"/> Confidence Trusting and appreciating your talents and abilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Challenge Stretching beyond what's known and comfortable
<input type="checkbox"/> Commitment Experiencing satisfaction in your work	<input type="checkbox"/> Climb Advancing through promotions or new positions

Unsure which category you're interested in? [Explore goals for each category using this tool.](#)

✓ What is the specific goal that you want to accomplish within this category?

✓ How will you know when you have achieved your goal?
(Describe, in detail, what your ideal endpoint looks like)

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Challenge: Stretching beyond what's known and comfortable

- Complete a stretch project to hone new skills aligned with a role I'm interested

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Challenge: Stretching beyond what's known and comfortable

- Complete a stretch project to hone new skills aligned with a role I'm interested in

Climb: Advancing through promotions or new positions

- Evaluate career paths that are a good fit for me through informational interviews
- Learn new skills to qualify for a new role

POLL Question:

Which step for structuring effective career conversations do you find most challenging?

1. **Establish psychological safety**
2. **Gather information to prepare for a conversation**
3. **Facilitate & lead the conversation with your employee**
4. **Determine next steps and set a career goal**

How to learn about opportunities in different departments



It's ok if you don't know all of the opportunities that exist in different departments.

There are lots of ways to learn about opportunities, such as:

- Utilizing Pathstream
- Participating in shadowing programs
- Informational interviews



How to learn about opportunities in different departments



Support employees with shadowing opportunities

- Create a culture of learning
- Beneficial for cross-training
- Enhanced problem-solving

