

## How to have a career conversation

### The importance of career conversations

Only 16% of people have ongoing conversations about their careers.

But research shows that 8/10 of us would be more engaged in our work if we were having regular career conversations and that 75% of people would be more likely to stay in their organisation if they received ongoing professional development.

### Career conversations vs Performance reviews are future-facing vs backward-facing

- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 🔗 where am I going?           | 🔗 how have I done?           |
| 🔗 what might I need to learn? | 🔗 what progress have I made? |
| 🔗 what can I explore?         | 🔗 have I reached objectives? |

Creating a distinction between the two gives more space to have an effective career conversation without the pressure of a performance review often linked to promotions / salary.

### Career conversation outcomes

Tick the outcomes which apply most to you

**Sponsorship**  
Having someone (usually more senior) who advocates for you and your career development.

**Opportunities**  
Having people (e.g. manager and peers) proactively spotting internal/external opportunities that you can't see yourself.

**Impact**  
Getting feedback on your strengths to assess whether you're having the impact that you intended.

### Top tips to have effective career conversations

- 💡 **Have career conversations regularly**  
You won't solve everything in one chat, think of these as a series of conversations instead.
- 💡 **Make sure you ask for feedback**  
Asking for 'even better if' feedback helps make the most of your career conversations.
- 💡 **Talk about possibilities rather than plans**  
Plans limit us to today's reality whereas possibilities encourage us to explore.
- 💡 **Career conversations can be with anyone**  
Think about having career conversations with a broad network of people to get different insights.
- 💡 **Help your manager to help you**  
Scheduling conversations in advance and sharing an agenda can make them more meaningful.
- 💡 **Be clear about the what, the why, and the how**  
Be intentional about what you want to learn, why, and how the person you are talking to can help.

### Coach yourself questions

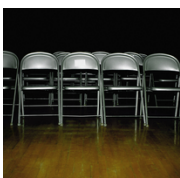
What are the current career possibilities within your organisation that you'd like to explore?



Who could you have your next career conversation with? (other than your manager)



### Recommended resources



**How to reimagine retention**  
HBR article by Helen & Sarah



**The best career path isn't always a straight line**  
TEDx talk by Sarah & Helen



**Squiggly Careers Podcast**  
How to create your career criteria #274