



Preparing for Career Conversations

Personal Reflection

To set the stage for an effective career conversation, **you should invest time in personal reflection and preparation.** This will help you effectively communicate how you can contribute to the priorities of your organization while growing the skills that will advance your career. To help you prepare for the meeting, here are some questions for you to consider as you reflect on your career history:

1) What are you naturally good at?

- What can't you keep yourself from doing?
- What are you known for?

2) What do you enjoy learning about?

- What do you wish you had more time for?
- What topics or tasks do you naturally gravitate to?
- How would you spend your time if you didn't have to work?

3) What aspects of your work have you enjoyed the most?

- Which activities or projects energized you?
- Who have you worked well with? Why?
- What kinds of work settings have helped you do your best work?

4) What kind of work do you resist doing?

- Which tasks get consistently pushed to the bottom of your to-do list?
- What parts of your job do you routinely procrastinate on?

5) What lessons do you find yourself learning over and over again?

- Which choices continue to result in less than satisfactory outcomes?
- Which attitudes have hindered your growth?

6) Which skills have contributed to your successes or satisfaction?

- What knowledge would you need to develop further to strengthen those skills?
- What additional skills would complement your current skills and provide new opportunities for growth?

7) How have your contributions supported the goals of the organizations that you've worked with?

- What impact(s) have you made?
- What impact(s) would you like to make?
- What feedback have you received from others?



Preparing for Career Conversations Employer Research

The next step in preparing for a career conversation is to research, to understand the needs of your employer. When you are able to find opportunities for alignment - how your skills, experiences, talents and interests meet up with your employers wants and needs - you are on-track to developing a mutually beneficial partnership with your employer.

What's current/known?

- Type of industry
- Size of company/organization
- Current location(s)
- What they do/make/provide/sell
- Who they help/serve/sell to
- What they are known for

What's new?

- Industry changes
- Recent news (internal/external)
- New location(s)
- New products or services
- New clients or customers
- What they want to be known for

What challenges do they need to solve?

- Current and/or future roles to be filled
- Ways to develop skills/knowledge to address current and future staffing needs
- Messaging to reach clients/customers
- Change of work structure/environment
- Change of image or reputation

What growth opportunities are available?

- Job shadowing
- Mentorship
- Cross-training
- Secondments (temp. assign to new role)
- In-house professional development
- Funding/support for education and training from outside the organization



Preparing for Career Conversations Thinking Ahead

You have completed a personal reflection and looked into the needs of your employer and where opportunities might exist. An important next step is to visualize where you want to be in both the short and long term. Consider what you would like to be doing and what problems or challenges you want to tackle. What skills and knowledge will you need? Your answers to these questions will help clarify your growth areas and allow you to develop an actionable plan.

1) Where do you want to grow next?

- What would you like to be doing?
- What skills do you want to use or develop?

2) Where are you now in relation to your goal?

- What knowledge and skills do you need to develop?
- What knowledge and skills do you already have?

3) What training or experiences might you need to achieve this goal?

- What growth opportunities are available in your workplace?
- What growth opportunities are available outside of your workplace?

4) Who could help you gain the experience or develop the skills you desire?

- Is there someone who could mentor you?
- Can coworkers support your learning on the job?

5) What is your current goal, or most important to you right now, in terms of your career growth?

- Why is this goal important to you?
- Where are you now in relation to your goal?
- Who could help you with this goal? How can they help?
- What training or resources can you access to move closer towards your goal?

Adapted from: United Nations.(n.d.). *Taking Control of Your Career: Knowing Yourself and What You want.*

6) What challenges could prevent you from achieving your goal?

- What strategies or tools could you use to overcome these challenges?
- Where could you access support to assist you when challenges arise?
- Who can you lean on for support during challenging times?

7) How will you know when you have succeeded?

- Do you have a **SMART Goal**?
- How will you celebrate your success?

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