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Development is all about growth. It shouldn't be something that feels remedial or negative in any way. A development plan is a concrete tool that outlines how you will work to build skills and expertise that will help you do your job, support the organization's goals, and advance toward your long-term career aspirations. Actively using a development plan, revisiting it, updating it, making progress on it, helps you grow in a deliberate way, and it helps your supervisor and other support you in those goals.

The first step in creating a development plan is to identify the places you want to focus for your development - your development priorities. These are typically two to three specific competencies from your organization's core and leadership competency list.

How should you go about selecting development priorities? In our experience, positioning individuals for growth and success requires considering both near-term needs and long-term aspirations. To keep this in mind, we encourage you to consider two questions: What are you trying to accomplish in your job in the coming year, given your department and organization's priorities? And what are your longer-term career aspirations? What do you want to be doing five years from now? Depending on your answers to these questions, select the two or three competencies from your organization's competency list that you believe are most important for your growth.

We recommend that you co-create your development plan with your supervisor and perhaps others who are deeply invested in your growth. By co-create, we mean your development plan should be informed by both your perspective and your supervisor's perspective. Ultimately, your development plan is about your growth and your best position to own the plan and progress. That said, your supervisor will have additional context or perspectives that they can offer, and they're often uniquely positioned to support you in finding opportunities or removing barriers to your growth. They have an important role to play.

Your supervisor has asked you to identify development priorities using a provided template, which includes the two prompts to help you consider both near-term needs and long-term career aspirations. Please complete the template before meeting with your supervisor. Your supervisor will also do some reflection. At your meeting you can share your thoughts and agree on your development priorities. And after this first meeting, you'll meet a few more times to build out those development priorities into what we call a 70/20/10 development plan. You'll hear more about that soon. For now, take the critical first step of reflecting on your development priorities.