

IDENTIFY THE RIGHT TYPE OF GROWTH GOAL FOR YOU

Four out of five people don't set goals for themselves, even though goal setting has been linked to higher performance, self-esteem, levels of autonomy, and motivation. But for some reason most people don't take the time to think about and write down high quality goals.

Nowhere is this more profound than when it comes to a person's growth, development, and future. Sure, a lot of people dream about the future, and think about what they want to achieve. But very few people actually take the time to set high quality growth goals or create concrete action plans to achieve those goals. In the end their dreams just end up being dreams... nothing more.

What everyone needs to realize is that growth is not something that we can do every now and then. I would argue that growth is a requirement of your job just to keep pace with how the world is evolving. If you aren't growing your skills, then you are already falling behind.

What Type of Growth is Right for You?

Everyone needs to grow, but that doesn't mean that everyone needs to grow in the same way. The truth is, there are many types of growth that you will experience throughout your career. To make things simple, all you have to do is answer two questions, and you will be able to identify which type of growth is a priority for you at this moment.

- **Question 1** - Is it more beneficial for you to focus your growth on how you can improve in your current role, or is it better to focus on preparing for the future?
- **Question 2** - Is there some immediate need that requires your attention (you got feedback on something or your company needs you to build a new strategic capability), or are you free to pursue some long-term passions or ambitions?

Answering these two questions should put you somewhere on the following 2x2 matrix. Each quadrant represents one type of growth that you could choose. Each type of growth is different and requires a different approach to creating your growth plan.



1) **Strengthening Expertise** - Some people want to improve on an existing strength or further their expertise. For me, this is the default type of growth. If you can't figure out what to improve, then you should focus on strengthening an expertise.

2) **Qualifying for a New Role** - Some people already have a new role they are aiming for. Maybe this is some sort of promotion, or maybe it is moving into a completely new type of role.

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3) **Addressing a Gap or Weakness** - Many people don't always associate improving weaknesses as growing, but this is a critical type of growth. Everyone has aspects of themselves that they can improve. It doesn't mean you have to fix all your flaws. Instead, I suggest trying to become 10% better in your role.

4) **Building New Strategic Capabilities** - As companies and industries evolve, what is required of your role will also evolve. This type of growth is about preparing for that future. These skills might not be critical today, but by tomorrow you are going to wish you had them.

Setting Your Growth Goal

Once you know what type of growth you need, you can begin the process of creating a growth goal. The first step is to reflect on your growth type and start to narrow down what you want to grow. Below are reflective questions that will help you in identifying your growth goal. Don't race through the questions, but instead take the time to truly reflect on your situation. We also recommend that you discuss your answers with a trusted person. Gathering different perspectives adds significant value to creating your growth goals.

Strengthening Expertise

- What are your strongest skills / competencies, and are you using these in your current role?
- What do you want to achieve with your expertise?
- Is there someone you can point to as a role model for that type of expertise?
- How will you know when you've hit the desired level of "expertise"?
- What type of growth goals would build your desired type of expertise?

Qualifying for a New Role

- What new role are you interested in acquiring, and why?
- Is the next role the final destination, or a stepping-stone for an even larger role?
- What are your current strengths that are aligned with this desired role?
- What are you missing in order to be considered for this desired role?
- If you could improve one thing needed for this role overnight, what would it be?

Addressing a Gap or Weakness

- What parts of your work role are difficult or frustrating?
- Have you gotten any feedback that you feel is important to improve on?
- Are you struggling due to a lack of skills or more due to a lack of motivation?
- If you could improve one skill between this meeting and the next, which would you choose?
- How would improving the skill have a positive impact on you, your colleagues, or your business?

Building a New Strategic Capability

- How can you contribute to fulfilling the strategy in your business unit?
- How do you see your skills and competencies come into play in your company?
- What trends do you see on how your current role will evolve over time, and what can you do to embrace these trends?
- What are your current strengths that are aligned with how your role is evolving?
- What are you missing in order for you to keep pace with how your role is evolving?

There is No Wrong Way to Grow

Over my 20 years of experience working with talent and learning, one thing always annoyed me ... people assuming they don't need to grow. "I love my current job, and I don't want to be a manager, so I don't need to grow." That is incredibly frustrating to me because those people just assume that the only way to grow in your career is by taking new jobs or promotions.



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As you now understand, there are many types of growth, and you will experience them all. You may start by addressing some feedback, and then transition to building a strategic capability. Or you may focus on building up your expertise, only to realize you want a new role you hadn't previously imagined. The simple truth is that there is no wrong way to grow. The only thing you can't do is stand still.

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