

# HOW TO DEAL WITH A REQUEST FOR PROMOTION



**Promotion and pay reviews typically occur annually. Well-crafted development plans ensure your team's growth needs and aspirations are met.**

Career growth tends to happen in a broader way rather than the linear approach that we've traditionally been used to. You may be approached by someone who is keen to progress. It's important to understand and support their needs to keep them motivated but you will also need to be transparent and realistic about whether their goals can be achieved. In this scenario it's likely they've approached you.

**Say:** Hi [insert name], you mentioned you wanted to talk about promotion. Tell me, what does promotion mean to you?

**Listen:** *Start with compassion and curiosity - understanding what they are looking for and their drivers for this can help you to plan ahead and consider how you can support them. Encourage them to consider their own career goals and to take control of their aspirations:*

**Ask:** What are the key skills, capabilities or experiences that you'd like to have?

**Listen:** *Resist the urge we often have as leaders to tell them how to build these skills or get the experiences they're looking for. Instead ask them to articulate this. It gives you both a starting point for building out a plan that they will feel more accountable for.*

**Say:** How do you think you can start building out a plan to achieve this?

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**Listen:** Give them critical feedback on their plan so that they don't start to build something that doesn't go anywhere. This is where it starts to become more of a 2 way conversation where your inputs about opportunities might be matched with their goals in a realistic and transparent way.

**Say:** Whilst I can't guarantee that you will be promoted, I can help you to develop the skills that will make you more valuable for that role. I can support you with getting access to the opportunities to broaden your skills, experience and knowledge.

**How to respond to pushback:** Some people may have a distorted view of their own value, in which case this is the time to be honest with them that promotion is unlikely to be considered for them at this time. Instead focus the conversation on what they need to do to improve as well as the great things they're already doing.

*Others might be looking for a formula to achieve a promotion e.g. if I do X, I should get Y. Gently push back on this approach and use the opportunity to outline some of the things they may need to develop to help them achieve this e.g. what has helped others in the company be promoted, what's missing from their skillsets.*

**Say:** Whilst I don't see promotion as an immediate thing we can progress right now, I can help you to develop the skills that will make you more valuable for that role in the future. I can support you with getting access to the opportunities to broaden your skills, experience and knowledge.

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How to wrap up the convo: Summarise what you've discussed and agreed and invite your DR to build an action plan for their development that you can both work to. **Make the goals SMART (Specific, Measurable Achievable, Realistic, Timebound)** and meet again once they've done this to agree that you're both aligned on these.

## **Next steps to consider:**

Whilst their role is to create and follow their plan, your role is to help to facilitate the actions in it. Are there any other things you might need to do to help them e.g. having a conversation with your manager to make them aware of their ambitions, could you get them more involved in your work or could they shadow you or another leader for a period of time.

Is there additional training, development or support e.g. if they are interested in a role in another department maybe arrange for them to go and work there for a day to experience it for real. There might be external conferences or specialist events (many of these are free) in that field they could attend to learn more about the skill/work - it's good to have a combination of activities in the plan, both formal and informal experiential learning.

Regularly review their plan with them, either quarterly or 6 monthly.

**For extra information on promotions please contact your company HR or refer to government advice and legislation.**

