# Career Development Mapping

Mapping career paths clarifies opportunities and boosts retention. Many leave roles due to unclear growth, not just compensation. This exercise helps individuals and teams visualize career trajectories, required skills, and actionable steps.

2 hours
Collaboration
Beginner

## H HOW TO RUN

### 1 Map Current Role — 20 min

(20 minutes)

Participants individually document current responsibilities, daily skills, projects, and impact. Specificity provides a baseline for future planning.

### 2 Identify Target Roles — 30 min

(30 minutes)

Participants identify desired roles for the next 2-3 years (e.g., "Senior Designer," "Product Lead," "Design Manager"). Research role requirements. Consider lateral or specialty moves, not just promotions. Select 2-3 target roles.

### 3 Gap Analysis — 40 min

(40 minutes)

For each target role, participants identify missing skills, experiences, knowledge, and relationships. Honesty is key; gaps are development opportunities, often addressable with effort.

### 4 Create Development Plan — 30 min

(30 minutes)

For prioritized gaps, participants define concrete actions and timeframes to develop skills. "Learn system design" is vague; "Lead architecture discussion for Q2 project" is actionable.

**KEY TIP**

Organizational paths may not always align with aspirations. Acknowledge when the best path involves leaving; transparency is crucial.

## O OBJECTIVES

- Visualize clear career progression options
- Identify skills and experiences for advancement
- Explicitly define implicit growth paths
- Integrate individual career planning with organizational context

## M MATERIALS

- ☐ Career path frameworks (if available).
- ☐ Role descriptions for target positions.
- ☐ Skills assessment templates.
- ☐ Development resources catalog.
- ☐ Individual reflection materials.

## P PARTICIPANTS

2 to 3 people

## F FACILITATOR NOTES

**REMEMBER**

- Differentiate between skill gaps (lacking ability) and exposure gaps (lacking opportunity).
- Skills gaps require training; exposure gaps need project assignments.
- Managers provide context, opportunities, assessments, and mentorship, but career development remains the individual's responsibility.