

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

HR's 4-Ingredient Recipe
for Healthy, Balanced
Employee Growth

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Want to Spice Up Your Bland Employee Development Program?

You've come to the right place. But we have news for you. Sprinkling in a few extra learning opportunities isn't going to get you the impact you're looking for. An effective employee development program depends on a handful of components, all essential for employee learning.

These four ingredients are must-have staples for meaningful and sustainable employee growth:

- 1. Learning and Development Opportunities**
- 2. Manager Training**
- 3. Continuous Feedback**
- 4. Authentic Recognition**

Although each element is powerful on its own, the recipe for success mixes all four factors together to drive employee performance, engagement, productivity, and fulfillment.

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

“The only thing worse than training your employees and having them leave is not training them and having them stay.”

Henry Ford, founder of Ford Motor Company

You want employees to continually grow and learn, but they're not always going to do it on their own. They might not be personally motivated, or they don't realize the development opportunities available to them. Engaged organizations provide avenues for employees to grow.

Access to Learning Opportunities Drives Engagement

79% of employees who had a formal development program were engaged, compared to 58% who said their organization doesn't have a formal program.

"I see professional growth and career development opportunities for myself in this organization" has been a **top 10 driver of employee engagement for the last seven years.**

Development Opportunities Can Improve Employee Performance

Of employees that took advantage of learning & development opportunities:

71%

felt motivated

55%

felt empowered

48%

felt ready to take on more responsibility

64%

felt more equipped to do their job

Development drives both engagement and high performance. That's a win-win for your people and your organization.

6 Best Practices for Implementing Learning and Development Opportunities

Implementing and maintaining learning and development opportunities can be complicated. Lessonly's Better Work Training Method features six steps that can make the process a bit easier.



ASSESS — Gather Needs and Inputs

Your company needs the right data and information to make educated decisions about learning and development. The goal of this phase is simple: collect data from team leaders and employees to identify areas of opportunity. Consider inputs like CRM data, surveys, company and departmental goals, and market data to assess employee wants and team needs.

PLAN — Prioritize for Impact

Adequate planning leads to successful training, so begin by mapping out what you'll need and how you plan to get there. Based on the inputs from the previous phase, make decisions about what types of opportunities should be top priority. Then, set milestones to create and deliver on those opportunities.

BUILD — Create Collaboratively

Now it's time to start building your learning program. Work with senior-level employees and subject-matter experts to develop and improve parts of the program. By integrating other knowledgeable and talented team members, employees will feel more engaged and inspired by their learning opportunities.

LEARN — Meet Learners Where They Are

The best learning and development opportunities are accessible to employees anywhere, anytime, and in any format that suites their needs. If you want employees to integrate learning into their routines, give them access to convenient, relevant and enjoyable opportunities.

PRACTICE — Rehearse, Refine, Repeat

Practice makes perfect. Empower employees to share and practice their knowledge and skills. This might mean conducting a Lunch'n'Learn after they attended a conference or role playing a sales demonstration as a part of cross-training.

PERFORM — Do Better Work

In the end, learning and development opportunities are about engaging employees and driving team results. Better performance and engagement begins by empowering your organization to continuously grow, improve, deliver, and quantify results. Measure the impact of your learning and development opportunities regularly and always look for new ways to improve.



Want to see how your team's learning and development program stacks up? Get your Better Work score.

“Meeting employees with development opportunities at the time of need is a really important part of the learning process. To do this, managers must leverage tools that facilitate learning at scale and meet the requirements of their employees to maximize engagement, satisfaction, and impact.”

Bryan Naas, Director of Enablement, Lessonly

Types of Learning and Development Employees Want

A [research study](#) conducted by Quantum Workplace uncovered the top five learning and development opportunities employees prefer.

1. Online Training Sessions or Webinars

Online training sessions or webinars are time-efficient ways to train your employees without breaking the bank. Online sessions allow managers to track employee progress so that they can reach out if assistance or support is needed.

2. Manager Coaching

Manager coaching is the simplest, yet most effective development opportunity for employees (we'll dive into this in the next section). Managers have direct visibility into employee performance, so they can assess and ensure the continuous employee development.

3. Classroom-Style Learning

Classroom-style learning isn't just for students. This style of learning is effective when training a group of employees on the same tasks. The group setting allows for and encourages communication and questions.

4. Peer coaching

Training can be intimidating, especially when it's facilitated by someone you don't know well. Peer coaching eliminates the intimidation factor and fosters a more relaxed learning experience. Employees may feel more comfortable asking questions in this setting, which leads to better understanding of the concept/development area at hand.

5. Cross-Training

Cross-training holistically develops employees to be their best selves in several areas of the business. This style of development helps curb position fatigue while expanding employees' horizons to build and grow different skills.

EFFECTIVE PEOPLE MANAGERS

“The conventional definition of management is getting work done through people, but real management is developing people through work.”

Agha Hasan Abedi,
founder of Bank of Commerce and Credit International

Managers: Essential But Unprepared

Managers are Essential to Employee Success...

52%

of employees believe managers are the **most critical component to their direct reports' success**

75%

of employees believe the primary job of managers is to **make other people successful**

It's clear that your people leaders' ability to engage, coach, and develop their direct reports is an essential skill of management. But, these skills don't come naturally.

... But Managers Don't Feel Prepared for the Job

84%

of employees have worked for a manager who was promoted for their skillset, yet lacked management skills

57%

of managers weren't prepared to be a people manager when they first become one

66%

of managers didn't receive any training when they first entered a management role

It's important that managers understand how to grow and develop their people. How can you improve their leadership skills and boost their confidence?

Training. Managers who received management training were 63% more likely to feel ready and prepared to lead a team than those who didn't receive any training.

Training Trumps Experience in Terms of Manager Success

Although experience is valuable, it's not synonymous with quality. You must ensure that adequate training fills the void. Training helps new managers learn how to effectively coach, lead, and engage employees before their first day on the job. Consider these three management training needs:

Employees are **2X MORE LIKELY** to rank adequate training as more important than years of experience when it comes to a manager's success.

1. Educate Them on the Big-Picture

Great managers understand company goals — and strategically align their team's and individuals' goals with key business objectives. Managers should receive in-depth training into the reasons behind company goals, the big-picture consequences of achieving them or falling short, and how their team is expected to make an impact.

This knowledge provides them with the insight needed to develop specific, measurable, attainable, and relevant goals for the entire team and each team member — and set realistic expectations for employee growth.

2. Teach Them How to Delegate, Strategically and Effectively

Once a manager understands what's expected of their team, they're able to delegate responsibilities accordingly. But effective delegation is much more difficult than we let on. It requires both strategic vision and effective communication to ensure the right people tackle the right projects and receive the right communication. Managers need to learn how to identify and maximize the strengths of each individual on their team, as well as communicate clear and direct expectations.

3. Prepare Them to Give Regular, and Sometimes Difficult, Feedback

Giving both positive and critical feedback is one of the most essential responsibilities of a manager; and unfortunately, it's often the most under-developed skill among team leaders. Managers need to make employees feel valued by giving authentic recognition when appreciation it's due and deliver constructive criticism in a way that motivates employees to improve.

4 Cultural Elements that Foster Good People Leaders

If managers were plants, initial training would be their soil, continuous coaching would be their water, and organizational culture would be their ecosystem. Without a supportive culture, many people leaders can wilt under the pressures of management. Here are four ways leadership and HR can create a supportive culture that fosters good people leaders.

1. Put People First

Your people are your most valuable resource. And if you want your managers to value, respect, and nurture each team member, your leadership needs as well. Listen to employee opinions, make positive change where it's needed, give credit where it's due, and pave paths of growth for high performers.

2. Encourage Individuality

We believe employees and managers are the best versions of their working selves when they're encouraged to bring their whole selves to work. At Quantum Workplace, we call this #BeYou. Foster a culture that accepts (and expects) employees who share their unique perspective and people leaders who take an individualistic approach to management.

3. Coach Don't Evaluate

The most effective coaches are bred within a coaching culture. Unfortunately, most workplace cultures have a bias towards measurement and evaluation instead of continuous coaching and development. Adopt organizational performance management methods that focus on employee growth, such as ongoing performance conversations, monthly GOOD meetings, and quarterly career conversations.

4. Ask for Feedback Continuously

Effective people leaders need to receive regular feedback from the people they lead. Receiving feedback is difficult, so set a good example. Collect regular high-level feedback from your entire workforce through an annual engagement survey or pulse surveys.

CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK

"True intuitive expertise is learned from prolonged experience with good feedback on mistakes."

Daniel Kahneman,
Professor of Psychology and Public Affairs at Princeton University

Employees Want Feedback from Managers and Peers

People leaders often think employees dread receiving feedback, especially if it's critical. But [employee development research](#) proves the most engaged employees prefer coaching and feedback to other traditional learning opportunities.

Coaching from **manager** ranked as the **#2**

preferred form of learning and development by employees.

Employees who said they preferred coaching from a manager were

5.6 percentage points more engaged.

Coaching from **peers** ranked as the **#4**

preferred form of learning and development by employees.

Employees who said they preferred coaching from peers were

8.0 percentage points more engaged.

"Being able to hear where I need to improve and where I'm doing well has effectively driven me to achieve better results."

Anonymous Employee | Mid-Sized Tech Company

When organizations implement initiatives and support practices that allow employees to receive feedback from managers and peers, they're more likely to be engaged.

Manager-Employee 1-on-1s is the **#1 ranked**

communication tool used by highly engaged companies

88% of peer-reviewed employees

are happier with their jobs

Employees Want Continuous Feedback

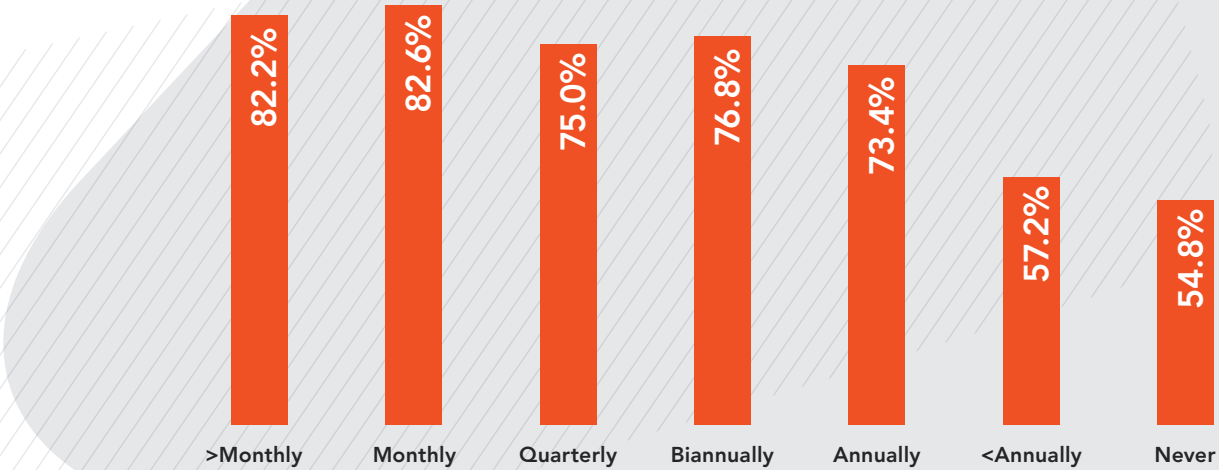
Infrequency is one of the main reasons the archaic annual performance review is on its last leg. Employees who crave growth want regular feedback in real-time.

71% of employees prefer immediate feedback, even if it's negative.

What is the Ideal Cadence for Recurring Manager Coaching and Feedback?

Although immediate feedback is often preferred, not all feedback can or should be delivered right away. Research shows having performance conversations monthly is the ideal cadence for engaged and productive employees.

Engagement by Manager Coaching Frequency



6 Tips for Creating a Culture of Feedback

Acknowledging that employees want to receive feedback doesn't guarantee that people leaders will suddenly feel comfortable giving it. Here's how your organization can combat common fears and foster a culture of feedback:

1. Nurture a Growth Mindset

A feedback culture is one where employee voices are valued. Organizations with feedback cultures are investors in talent. If you want to create and maintain a culture of candid feedback, start by changing your mindset.

2. Provide Feedback Training

Every member of your workplace — senior leaders, management, and employees — should be trained in how to both give and receive feedback. Consistent training will help reinforce expectations.

3. Set the Tone from the Top

Employees are more likely to adopt a culture of feedback if they see leadership doing the same. Leaders set an example by consistently asking for feedback, showing they receive feedback well, and using it to improve.

4. Create a Feedback-Safe Environment

For a feedback culture to work, managers and employees must be willing to give honest feedback. Employees need to feel safe and know that their feedback won't lead to negative repercussions. This starts with building trusting relationships and is reinforced by how feedback is received.

5. Set Clear Expectations Around Feedback

Create organizational standards for what feedback looks like and consistently convey that message to managers and employees. Set organizational expectations around your feedback structure, including who gives feedback, who receives it, how often it should occur, and how it's delivered.

6. Power Your Team with Feedback Tools

Leverage software that facilitates feedback by giving employees an easy way to record notes from feedback sessions, participate in two-way feedback conversations, request feedback, give feedback, and more. Choose a system that supports your feedback culture.

AUTHENTIC RECOGNITION

“When you ‘get’ that employees are human beings first and worker bees second, you say something about their worth.”

Shelley Prevost
Lamp Post Group

Employees Want to Be Recognized

Employee recognition has consistently been a top driver of employee engagement in the workplace.

And, data shows that employees want to more of it.

53% of employees

want to receive more recognition from their immediate manager

41% of employees

want to receive more recognition from immediate coworkers

The most engaged companies are placing a higher emphasis on developing real-time, authentic recognition programs.

Top 5 Driver of Employee Engagement:

"If I contribute to the organization's success, I know I will be recognized."

Recognition Providers Employees Find Most Meaningful:

1. My immediate manager or supervisor
2. Customers/clients
3. Directors/executive leadership
4. My immediate coworkers within my own team/department
5. Coworkers in other teams/departments

Tips on how managers can give authentic recognition on the next page!

4 Manager Tips to Authentic Recognition

Recognition is most meaningful when it comes from a direct leader. Share these tips with your managers to ensure they're giving authentic and engaging recognition to their team.

1. Know Thyself

Reflect on the recognition you've received, and think about which examples were meaningful to you and which weren't. What was it about the meaningful recognition that made it so important to you? Apply those principles when you give recognition.

2. Ask!

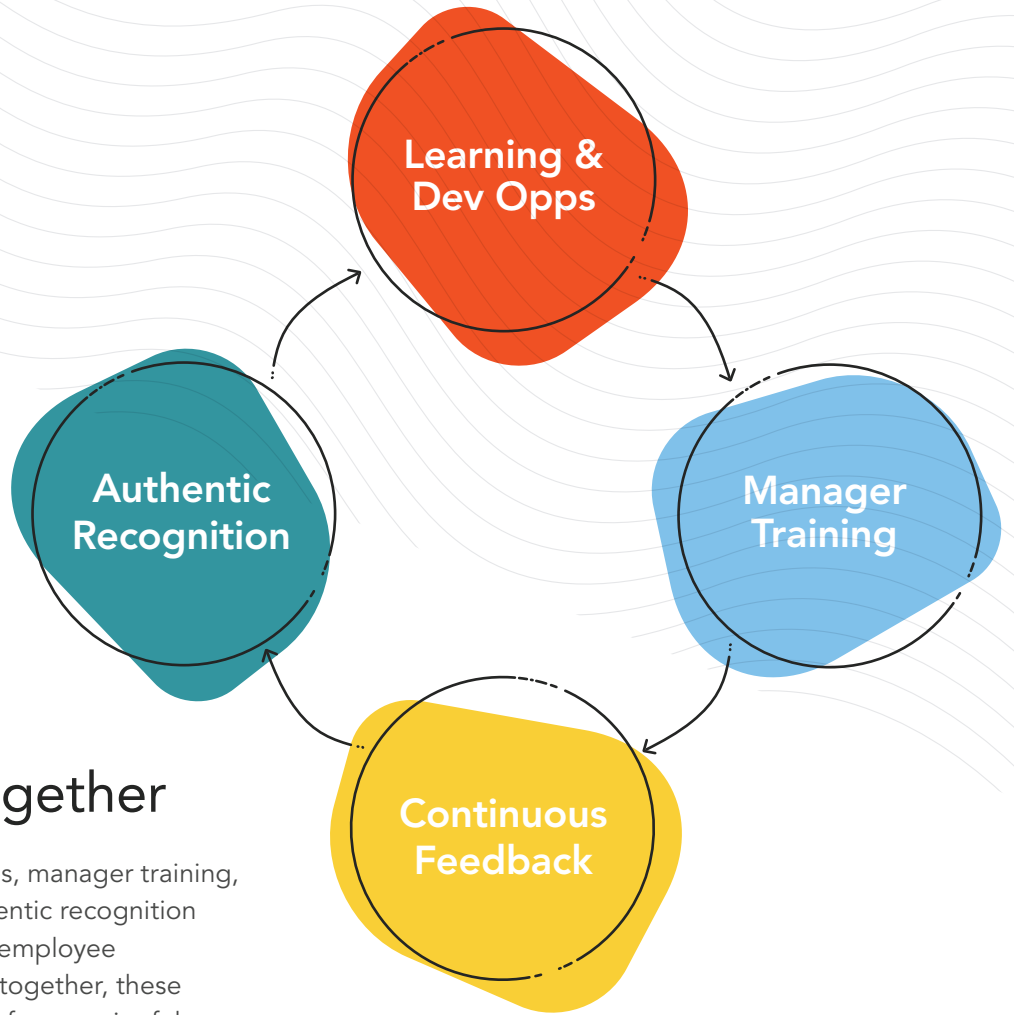
Have a conversation with your employees to figure out what kinds of recognition are most meaningful to them. The more closely your recognition aligns with their preferences, the greater the impact it will have.

3. Be Spontaneous

Ditch the quotas — recognition should be given naturally when employees deserve it. Random or cyclical recognitions will give off the impression that you aren't truly assessing their work, which may promote slacking in the future.

4. Match Rewards to Your Employees

When giving individual recognition, find rewards that are personal. Consider a gift card to an employee's favorite restaurant, tickets to a game for their favorite team, or a shoutout in the next team meeting.



Mixing it All Together

Access to learning opportunities, manager training, continuous feedback, and authentic recognition all have a positive influence on employee development. But when mixed together, these four ingredients create a recipe for meaningful, impactful, and sustainable employee growth.

Software That Can Help

Quantum Workplace

Support better people leaders with surveys, -1s, performance tracking, 360 feedback, real-time recognition, and actionable analytics.

[**Request a Demo**](#)

Lessonly

Help teams learn, practice, and do better work with a powerfully simple training software.

[**Request a Demo**](#)

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Quantum Workplace provides an all-in-one employee engagement and performance software that makes managers the central drivers of workplace culture. Serving more than 8,700 organizations, Quantum Workplace's technology gives team leaders direct access to employee feedback and personalized real-time insights, so they can make work better every day. The software includes surveys, goals, recognition, feedback, one-on-ones, and alert features — providing a powerful solution for team engagement and continuous improvement.

[Learn More](#)



Lessonly is powerfully simple training software that helps teams learn, practice, and Do Better Work. We are used by more than 2 million learners at more than 650 leading companies including Cisco, Trunk Club, Zendesk, and U.S. Cellular to share knowledge, develop skills, and reinforce best practices. The result is faster onboarding, higher NPS scores, more closed deals, and a superior customer experience.

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About the Research

This report is based on data that were collected from an online survey created and hosted by Quantum Workplace. Over 1,300 employees from Quantum Workplace's research panel responded to the survey. For more information on other Quantum Workplace research referenced throughout the Ebook, click through to the hyperlinked sources.