

# Guide to Identifying Quality Development Connections for Employees

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# BRAINSTORMING DEVELOPMENT CONNECTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

**Instructions:** Consider recent interactions with individuals who could be development connections for your employees. Then use the template below to keep track of these development connections.

## Possible Contacts for Development Connections

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| Colleagues from company-wide meetings  | Onboarding colleagues  |
| LinkedIn connections   | Manager training colleagues and instructors  |
| Colleagues from employee resource groups   | Former teammates   |
| College alumni   | Colleagues from a pro bono project   |
| Colleagues from social events<br>(e.g., holiday parties or networking happy hours) | Previous mentors   |
|  | Colleagues with an area of expertise<br>(e.g., a colleague who is an SME in contracts, entry-level training, etc.) |

Direct Report	Development Area	Possible Development Connection

# CATEGORIZING IDENTIFIED CONNECTIONS

**Instructions:** As you brainstorm potential development connections, use this illustrative list of roles, effective behaviors, and detracting behaviors to figure out which individual would be the best fit for your employee.

Key Roles	Effective Behaviors	Ineffective Behaviors
<b>Advisor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Acts as a sounding board and facilitator</li> <li>✓ Maintains privacy and confidentiality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Fixes problems</li> <li>✗ Assumes responsibility for employee</li> </ul>
<b>Protector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Supports, is a safety net</li> <li>✓ Ensures a safe environment to take risks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Fights employee's battles</li> <li>✗ Overprotects</li> </ul>
<b>Developer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Gives structure and direction</li> <li>✓ Provides guidance based on observations during interactions with employee</li> <li>✓ Empowers employee to handle his or her problems independently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Dictates, controls learning</li> <li>✗ Looks for quick-fixes</li> <li>✗ Provides general criticism or judgment</li> <li>✗ Tells employee what to do</li> </ul>
<b>Broker</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identifies skill or competency gaps through a "third party" lens</li> <li>✓ Identifies and facilitates development opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Allows for personal biases</li> <li>✗ Abdicates, does not follow up</li> </ul>
<b>Challenger</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Positively provokes, pushes toward highest standards</li> <li>✓ Helps employee explore potential career opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Pushes too far too soon</li> <li>✗ Discounts employee's thoughts and opinions</li> </ul>
<b>Clarifier</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Teaches organizational values and politics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Removes obstacles so employee does not have to deal with organizational politics</li> </ul>
<b>Affirmer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Gives needed support, enhances self-esteem</li> <li>✓ Exhibits empathy and understanding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Gives too much feedback</li> <li>✗ Discounts employee's feelings or concerns</li> </ul>
<b>Sponsor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provides visibility and recognition of employee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Promotes employee at the expense of others</li> </ul>

# CONTACTING IDENTIFIED CONNECTIONS

**Instructions:** Use the email template to obtain details about the experiences and capabilities of the potential development connections you have identified.

## Sample e-mail template

Hello [Name],

I hope this message finds you well. I'm looking to facilitate a connection for one of my direct reports to help [him/her] close a few skill gaps, and I thought you might be a good person to help with that. We're open to some flexibility in how/when you share your skills and knowledge with [him/her]. If you are interested, would you mind answering a couple of questions below so we can see if it would be a good fit?

Please let me know if you have any questions, and thanks in advance for your time.

## Questions to ask potential development connections

1. Which of the following skills would you be willing to help develop?

Business acumen

Persuasion

Collaboration

Problem solving

Conflict resolution

Project management

Customer service

Public speaking

Defending ideas

Sales

Delegation

Time management

2. What time commitment would you be interested in? (e.g., a one-time session, weekly, monthly)

3. When would you be able to start?

4. Is there anything else that would be helpful for us to know?