

Don't be discouraged if you need to reset and start over sometimes. Goals, people and needs change, and they change often. So don't write your plan in stone, be firm and hold yourself accountable, but understand when you need to be flexible and realistic.

Welcome to the Contributor Wednesday series on the Bridge The Gap network. This series is sponsored by Peak Senior Living by Functional Pathways each week. You'll hear from a thought leader discussing topics that are relevant and impactful to the senior living industry.

Welcome back to Bridge the Gap podcast for senior living for my second episode as part of the Contributor Wednesday series. I'm Anthony Ormsbee-Hale, Vice President of People Operations at Civitas Senior Living. And I'm thrilled to be with you today. As we follow up from my previous episode about the myths versus realities that many emerging leaders navigate through as they sharpen their own leadership skills. On today's episode, I'm going to share my thoughts on professional development plans. And while these plans are geared towards emerging leaders, I think that they're a valuable resource regardless of your tenure within the senior living industry. And I'll talk a lot about what individuals can do to take ownership of their own development and how they can leverage resources in and outside of their organization to identify needs, develop a plan and consistently execute that plan. It's important to note that organizations take a variety of approaches to development planning, but at the center of every approach is a person.

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And that person's mindset about self-development is critical to ensuring success. So who should create a professional development plan? In my opinion, it's everyone in the company, from the CEO down to the individual contributors. Some of those plans may look different. Some may be more formalized, and some may be more informal, but no matter who you are, you can always develop skills and knowledge. You can always become a better version of yourself. So before I explain how to create a personal development plan, I think it's only fair to share an example of my own personal real-life professional development plan goals. And here's why. I think that leaders should be transparent. As a manager, how can I expect my team members within my own organization to open up and be honest with me if I'm too afraid to open up and be honest with them? Personal growth should be celebrated.

We should remove the stigma attached to the term self-involvement. Whether you're trying to learn how to become more proficient in Microsoft Excel or even quit smoking cigarettes, setting goals and working to reach them is admirable. And writing a professional or personal development plan can be overwhelming. Maybe you go through five or six templates trying to find out which one better fits your needs. Or you go through a brainstorming exercise and come out with a mountain of goals. It can be hard to know which goals to prioritize, how to format the document, and where to even begin. And that's why I'm sharing a template for a professional development plan in the show notes, along with additional resources to help you get started on this journey today. I'd also like to encourage anyone to connect with me on LinkedIn and share their plan. If I can be of help, I'd love to add or share resources with you to help you crush your goals.

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So without further ado, here's my personal development plan divided into a few categories. For my own personal sake, I use the OKR objective and key result methodology. The first part of an OKR is the objective. This is what will be achieved. It's as simple as that. Some of them are two or three words. The second part of an OKR is the key results. This is where I get excited because this is how and when you'll accomplish your objective. Key results are measurable, and they're realistic. Accomplishing all key results should equate to accomplishing your objective. So for timing's sake, I'll just share one example of the objectives that I have. And I won't go into detail on the key results, but I'm happy to have those

conversations and share more information for anyone who's interested. So for professionalism, my objective here is to develop a better understanding of the real estate and investment management, part of the senior living business. For personal, it's to create special moments with friends by personalizing the celebration of those moments. For health, it's to increase my sleep quality. For finances, it's to solidify my long-term investments. And for education, it's to be accepted into a graduate-level program by 2024. By setting professional development goals using the OKR method, I'm able to establish what I want to do and when and how I'm going to achieve it.

There are no excuses when it comes to this process. I either meet the goal, or I do not. The brilliance of it is I can also learn from those mistakes, reset OKRs, celebrate achievements along the way, and start over again, as those goals need to change. So now we know who should set professional development goals, and just in case you've forgotten, it should be everyone. And one way out of many different ways that you can develop the goals. But let's talk about the person that comes up in the center of that professional development plan – the individual person. This is where I think self-awareness is a critical element. Although most people believe that they are self-aware true. Self-awareness is a pretty rare quality. One study puts it at about 10 to 15% of the population as truly self-aware. So without the ability to impartially evaluate our strengths and opportunities, how do we go about setting up a professional development plan that addresses all of our needs?

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Here are a few suggestions. One has a conversation with your manager or a trusted leader within your organization that's familiar with your work. Ask them for feedback on skills, attitudes, and abilities. Not just for your current performance, but what would it take for you to move into that next role, whatever that may look like for you. And it's important for you to be open to that feedback, to hear about the positive opportunities available to you, to ask questions, to seek, to understand the perspective of the person giving that feedback to you. Secondly, I think it's important to take into account what friends and family have to say about you. So you can learn more about leveraging your personal relationships. There's an interesting relationship between who we are at work and who we are at home. For example, someone may be incredibly empathetic at home but choose not to use that skill in the workplace, as it may come across as a sign of weakness.

Understanding and adapting ourselves to the situation is a sign of an emotionally mature leader, but what's even more powerful is when we are aware of what gifts we have and how we can leverage those in and outside of the workplace. And one of the ways that you become aware of those gifts that you have is by utilizing self-assessment tools, such as Gallup, DiSC, or the Predictive Index, along with the many other tools that are available to you. These tools measure behaviors, and they measure behaviors within certain settings, such as the workplace or within relationships with other individuals. At Civitas, we have utilized the Predictive Index for several years to provide behavioral assessments for our employees and leverage those tools to bolster relationships and power development and overcome conflict. In the show notes, you'll be able to access a link to complete a free Predictive Index assessment.

And you'll receive an email after you complete the assessment that contains your full report along with other resources that will aid in your professional development. I promise I won't add you to a junk email list but consider it my gift for you having to listen through this podcast.

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One of the reasons that I am a particular fan of the Predictive Index is because of my own personal experience with it. For example, my predictive index profile shows that I naturally tend to avoid work that is too detail oriented because I thrive in big-picture scenarios that don't rely on minute details. However, in my work, I often need to dive into those deeper details to better understand and solve a problem or a process. And if you think back to my development plan, if I wanna learn more about

finance and investment, I'm going to need to find a way to make looking at details much more enjoyable. For now, the best way that I've learned how to do this is to put those detailed-oriented tasks at the top of my to-do list and get them over with as soon as I can in the day. That doesn't necessarily increase the amount of pleasure or joy that I get from doing the task, but at least I know that I've got it done. Otherwise, I'll procrastinate, and that's not good for anyone.

So you, too, can leverage these resources to get a better understanding of your strengths and areas of opportunity. Much like a physical fitness improvement plan, this requires a degree of honesty and accountability to be effective. So as we come to the end of our discussion today, I wanna share my final bits of advice on how to manage a successful development plan. It's important that you have honest conversations with your manager or trusted leaders within the organization to let them know about your goals and how these goals align with the needs of the company currently or in the future. And during this conversation, it's important that you ask for commitment and help you to meet some or all of your goals. This could be including dedicated time with a mentor, special assignments, learning opportunities, or more.

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This will look differently depending on your role within the organization, but volunteer for additional tasks to increase your relationship with those around you to get a better understanding of how business works outside of your primary role. All of these are great ways for you to continue to leverage your own growth and development within an organization. Secondly, share your goals with friends, families, and coworkers. The more people that know about what your goals are and what you're working on, the better resources you have available to you. If you'd like to share your goals with me, I'd love to hear them. You can share my LinkedIn and tag me, or email me at aoh@csrliving.com. And I'd love to hear what your personal goals are and how I can help support you as you're working towards those goals. And last, don't be discouraged if you need to reset and start over sometime. Goals, people, and needs change, and they change often.

So don't write your plan in stone, be firm and hold yourself accountable, but understand that we need to be flexible and realistic. As a reminder, there's a template that you can download and start using today to build out your own development plan. And you can also utilize the free Predictive Index assessment link. That's in the show notes. In our next episode, we'll talk more about how senior leaders within the industry can mentor emerging talent through personal or formal mentorship programs. I think mentorship is a critical part of personal and professional development. So I'm really excited to share more about what organizations can do to develop mentorship programs. Or what leaders can do to do this through an informal approach. I hope that you'll consider joining me next month. And in the meantime that you'll begin to evaluate and work on professional development plans for yourself or for individuals within your organization. Thanks so much for your time today. Feel free to connect with me online. Send me an email to continue the discussion stay well.

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