

# Q12 This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

## CHALLENGE ME

The desire to learn and grow is a basic human need. One way employees can learn and grow is to find more efficient ways to do their jobs. The best teams are never quite satisfied with their work. They always strive to find better, more productive ways to work. And where there is growth, there is innovation.

Employees who have an opportunity to learn and grow at work are twice as likely as those on the other end of the scale to say they will spend their career with their company.

On average, business units in the top quartile of this element score 9% higher on customer engagement and loyalty measures and 10% higher on profitability metrics than business units in the bottom quartile.



Challenging employees to meet goals motivates higher performance. Teams that score high on this element of engagement produce more innovative ideas, build and maintain better customer relationships and have higher financial metrics.



Only about 50% of Americans agree that they have had opportunities to learn and grow at work in the past year.

When employees feel they are learning and growing, they work harder and more efficiently.

*The most effective managers continuously discuss progress and opportunities for growth and development for employees.*

For many people, progress in a role distinguishes a career from employment that is “just a job.” To improve and progress, employees need to feel someone or something is challenging them. As a manager, you should routinely ask yourself:

- ✓ How am I creating an environment in which my employees can grow and develop?
- ✓ What have I done in the last six months to help my team learn and grow?
- ✓ What are my employees’ goals? Do I know them, and am I helping them actively achieve those goals?

## Three Ways to Challenge Employees to Learn and Grow



### CONTINUOUS

An environment that encourages continuous learning



### EXPANDING

Short-term “stretch” goals that motivate employees to expand their current knowledge or skill set



### ASPIRATIONAL

Career-oriented development plans that align with each person’s strengths and aspirations

## LEARNING, DEVELOPING AND GROWING

The best managers know that an organization's growth depends on employees' capacity to learn, develop and grow. These managers create a structure for learning and opportunities to align and challenge employees with new tasks. These opportunities encourage and motivate employees to develop and grow — sparking innovation and positive business results.

### ENGAGING CONVERSATIONS

People want to know that they are developing and progressing in life. Managers can empower employees to feel that they have had a chance to grow at work by helping them identify learning opportunities and encouraging them to develop. The most effective managers make time to discuss growth with employees by asking some of the following questions:

- Are there things you need to learn to do your job better?
- How can we build a team environment that emphasizes acquiring new knowledge?
- In what situations in the past six months have you felt that you were learning new things?
- What are you looking forward to in your job this year?
- What experiences are you challenging yourself with this year?
- What types of learning opportunities are you interested in?
- What goals do you have right now? How can I help you accomplish these goals?
- What was your most significant accomplishment in the past year? What was your most significant accomplishment since you have been here?

## BEST PRACTICES

The best managers create learning opportunities at the individual level. These managers understand that learning and growing is a never-ending process and look for ways to align individuals' current capabilities with their long-term goals and aspirations. Managers do this by incorporating the following behaviors into their management style and approach:

- Invest time in getting to know your employees' career goals and strengths to help match each one with the right opportunities to grow and develop.
- Involve the entire team in charting the team's completed learning outcomes. Identify individuals who are subject-matter experts whom others can call on to help answer questions.
- Consider partnering employees with complementary strengths to work on a task together. These partners might learn something new that they did not know before.
- Match a new employee with a veteran employee to help the new employee learn about the job more quickly and provide an opportunity for the veteran to take on a new role.
- Create personalized development paths with your employees. Check in on their progress often and ask them what they are learning and how they are applying it to their roles.
- Help employees find opportunities to use their strengths and talents to meet the needs of their jobs and move forward in their careers.
- Create stretch goals for your employees. These goals should involve acquiring new knowledge and skills that already align with team members' goals.