

9 CREATIVE WAYS TO DEVELOP YOUR MANAGERS

You've done your [talent assessment work](#), completed the nine-box grid, and now it's time to create specific plans to develop your managers. You'll want to ensure everyone has a solid foundation of leadership training, and consider cross-functional moves, but what other developmental activities can you include?

ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE SELF-AWARENESS

1. DIY (Do It Yourself) 360 (feedback, peer relationships)

Formal 360 feedback assessments are a GREAT way to get structured, anonymous feedback. We're big fans. But the truth is, what makes these tools valuable is always the conversation that follows. If a formal 360 feedback tool is not available or practical, you can achieve similar results by helping them conduct a DIY 360 (for step by step instructions [click here](#)).



2. Field Trips (teamwork and collaboration)



There's a reason every elementary school takes a trip to the zoo. You can read about giraffes all you want, but until you have one bend down and lick your face, it's hard to understand just how hard it is to go through life with a neck like that. Help them arrange a visit to meet with their peers in another department or shadow them to learn more about their roles. It's always amazing to see how quickly such visits increase understanding and trust.

TEAM-BASED DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Some of the best development activities are done as a team, where everyone is learning from and with each other while working on real work.

3. "Shark Tank" Type Competitions (fostering innovation and problem solving)

If your employees struggle with innovation and problem solving, you can use our [I.D.E.A.S. framework](#) to help them vet their ideas and bring you one that is Interesting (solving a relevant strategic problem), Doable (something they could actually pull off), Engaging (an idea others would find worthwhile) as well as defining the key Actions required to make it happen. This exercise can be done with an individual, but it's even more fun and impactful to do as a team where everyone brings their best idea to pitch, and you facilitate a [Shark Tank](#) type competition as the team hears, discusses and votes on one another's ideas.



4. Action Learning Projects (strategic thinking, planning, communication, executive presence)



When done well, action learning projects are an incredible way to learn while working on improving the business, as well as give your managers exposure to the executive team. You provide a small group of managers with a business challenge, success criteria, and a sponsor. They work together to complete the project and then present their outcomes to members of your executive team. Just be sure to [avoid these common mistakes](#).

Contact us at info@LetsGrowLeaders.com for more information.

DEVELOPMENT YOU CAN DO AS PART OF A TEAM MEETING

5. "Bring a Friend" staff meetings (strategic thinking, executive presence)

Pick a staff meeting each quarter where your direct reports can bring one of their high-potential employees. Run the meeting as you normally would so they can see behind the curtain and learn what your team talks about and [how you make decisions](#). It's a great way to help employees see how the work they're doing fits into the bigger picture.



6. Mini-Mastermind (problem-solving, communication)

Have every team member bring a strategic business challenge they're wrestling with and pitch it to the group for ideas. Everyone shares their challenge and explain why it's hard, what they've tried, and where they need some ideas. Once they've explained the challenge, other members of the team ask additional probing questions and share their best ideas. Besides the business improvement ideas, it also helps to break down the problem-solving process by helping the team consider success criteria and looking for innovative approaches to persistent problems. You learn more about how to conduct a [team mastermind here](#).

7. Book Groups

Read a leadership book as a team. Many teams have been doing that with [Winning Well](#), so we built this [book group facilitator's guide to help](#).



ACTIVITIES TO GROW PROFESSIONALLY



8. Authoring a LinkedIn Article (critical thinking, influence)

Encourage your employee to come up with a teachable point of view on [LinkedIn](#) and write an article. This is a great way to help your employee think critically and to work on building their professional brand. Note: Some companies have PR guidelines around this, but most companies are fine with employees posting their thoughts about leadership or industry expertise if they stay away from using the company name or proprietary information.

9. Speaking at an Industry Conference (critical thinking, communication, building a network)

There are so many benefits to preparing for and delivering a breakout session at an industry conference— the research, the delivery prep, the presentation, feedback, and of course the benchmarking and other benefits of attending the conference itself.

