

BRIDGE

The Definitive Guide to Employee Development

The How-To Resource for Getting the Best Out of Your Employees with Bridge

Visit our website at **instructure.com/bridge**

INSTRUCTURE

About This Guide

What?

Companies can no longer put off developing their people if they expect to stay in business. From the top to the bottom of the org chart, employees need ongoing, whole-person development. This guide was created to help organizations develop their people in ways that are personal and scalable—and reap the rewards of a more loyal, engaged and productive workforce.

Why?

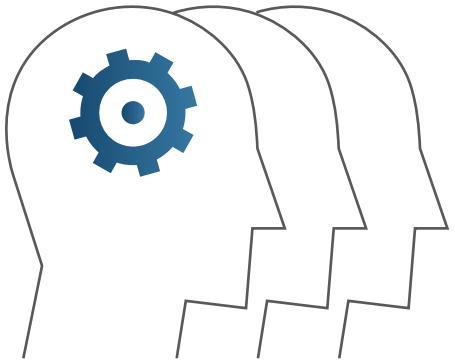
Employees have more power (and arguably, more needs) than ever before. To win the talent war, companies must provide more than fun perks and competitive pay. And to combat the skills shortage and turnover crisis, they must identify which skills are lacking and invest in reskilling those who they've already hired and retained (so far).

Who is it for?

HR managers, learning and development (L&D) professionals and leaders who want to provide the meaningful employee development required to thrive in today's environment. Particularly those interested in a single solution for developing and implementing an effective talent management strategy that creates a culture of learning and drives ROI.

Who is it from?

The makers of Bridge, the most comprehensive employee development platform for companies who want to deeply invest in their people.



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Houston, We Have a Problem (Actually, Quite a Few)

Whether they're just coming out of college and don't have the skills required to contribute, or worse yet, have advanced skills and are beyond disengaged, all employees need ongoing development.

Pop Quiz:

- How do you attract and retain talent?
- Are your managers adding to employee happiness?
- What critical skills are (or are not) in your organization now?

Stumped? Keep reading and we'll show you the way.

Consider the current state of the workplace:

- Half of all employees are looking for a new job
- Nearly 70 percent aren't engaged at work
- 25 percent of employees change jobs this year
- Only 10 percent of employees use development tools

With numbers like these, no one has to tell you how difficult it is to attract, engage and retain the employees within your organization...

There is a magic bullet that can turn it all around—employee development.
But implementing development software alone won't cut it. You need a platform that works hand-in-glove with the best practices required to:

- Hire (and keep) top talent
- Boost engagement for the long haul
- Create a culture of learning
- Develop employees in meaningful ways
- Tie behavior change to business results (like retention!)
- Prepare for ever-changing needs and skills
- Leverage actionable data to make the right decisions

This e-book is designed to help manage the challenges and benefits of employee development with a comprehensive solution.

Bridge is the all-in-one employee development platform that helps companies increase their impact by focusing on their most important asset: you guessed it, their people.

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Do you *really* need to develop your people?

Let's start with the WHY.

Developing employees requires a commitment to constant improvement. And many companies struggle with whether it's even worth developing job-hopping modern employees. How's this for motivation?

The Retention Paradox: Develop Employees and They'll Stick Around

At best, your employees will stay with you for two or three years, so why bother developing them? For starters, a lack of career development is a top reason people leave companies. Employees who receive ongoing development are more fulfilled, and fulfilled employees plan to stick around three years longer. In today's workplace, three years is an eternity in terms of the value an engaged employee could deliver. And development is your best employee retention strategy.

The Reskilling Paradox: The Workforce You Have is the Exact One You Need

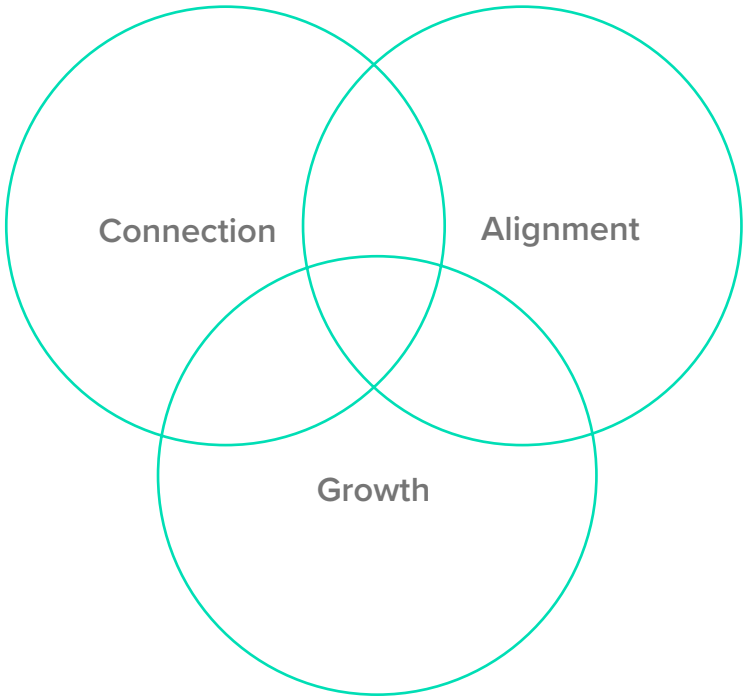
Companies spend countless hours and dollars trying to recruit hires with the most in-demand skills. Given the speed at which technology is moving, and how long and drawn out the process of hiring the right fit can be, most would be better off investing in their own talent pool. Plus, companies that nurture their employees' desire to learn are 30 percent more likely to be market leaders for an extended period.

The Productivity Paradox: People Push Themselves When They Feel Valued

We often think the fear of losing a job or a bad performance review will push people to be more productive. But when you focus on recognizing and developing them, they end up giving you more.

A Cautionary Tale

After reviewing its long-term strategy, a large financial services firm decided to reduce its workforce. The firm enlisted labor trend analytics software company, Burning Glass, to analyze the market and determine how to best fill the firm's talent needs. The conclusion? Taking domain knowledge, expertise and transferable skills into account, the best people for moving the strategy forward were the very people the firm had just fired. Ouch!



Great companies develop their people by providing connection, alignment and growth.

Connection - Building relationships with peers, managers, and mentors around skills, interests, and drivers is the (super) glue that drives fulfillment and retention.

Alignment - Making sure that everyone in the organization knows what they can do to contribute to the larger vision and mission of the company. This alignment is powerful for engagement and company growth.

Growth - Providing every employee with opportunities to grow—both personally and professionally. Growth comes from stretch assignments, mentorship, and formal learning.

OK, great. But what does it look like?

Read on for specifics on how to help your employees connect, align, and grow like you never thought possible.

Development How-Tos for All-Around Awesomeness

How to Develop Your Employee Development Plans

> **“No one summits solo.”**
>
> — Steve Arntz, Director of Product Marketing, Bridge

Development is the single biggest driver for engagement, retention and employee impact. And a one-size-fits-all approach just doesn’t work for modern employees.

That’s why Bridge goes beyond formal employee skills training to develop and grow the whole person.

Read on to discover how to make development relevant for every member of your team.

Career Drivers: Get Personal with Every Employee

In order to provide development opportunities that resonate, people must first truly understand their own motivation and needs. Depending on the size of your org chart, this may seem impossible to scale. But we promise, it’s easier than you think.

By helping employees identify their career goals, then connect what they're doing today to that career vision, each player on your roster will be more fulfilled in their roles (and selfishly, more productive).

Here's how Bridge makes development meaningful for every human on your payroll:

Using the Career Drivers exercise, your employee prioritizes their top 5 motivators in a range of categories—everything from autonomy and recognition to work-life balance.

After employees uncover their unique motivators and vision for moving forward, all career development efforts should be centered around getting them closer to their Career Everest.

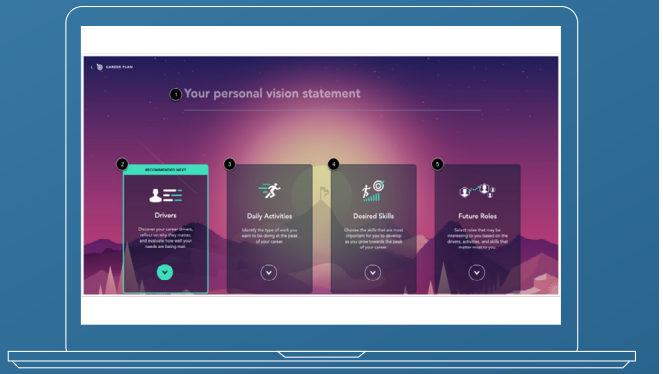
Discovering these intrinsic motivators is just the beginning.

Long-term Vision: Go Long with Company & Employee Goals

While employees will definitely come and go, your company as a whole should always be in forward motion. But without actionable to-dos that connect the dots between the big picture and individual performers, companies may find themselves stuck in neutral.

When managers align employee goals with corporate objectives, the results are easy to track and make necessary adjustments before things go completely off the rails.

Wouldn't it be better to have a constant pulse on what's happening instead of an annual checkup? By the time a year goes by, missing the mark could be too costly to recover from.

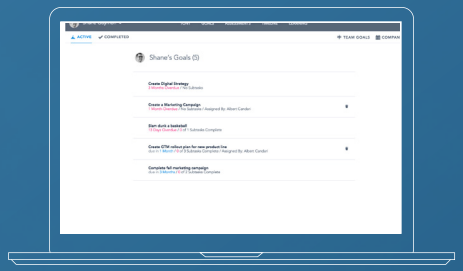


Career Everest

These drivers are added to an employee's Career Everest page where they can also enter in goals and answer: What is your "Career Everest," or the pinnacle of your career?

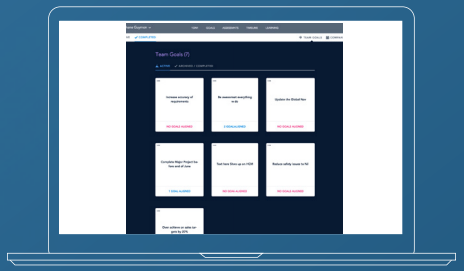
Development doesn't always equal formal learning.

Some of the best employee development ideas come in the form of stretch assignments. Whether it's overseeing an intern or taking the lead on a group project, every role has ample opportunities to grow employees outside of the (online) classroom.



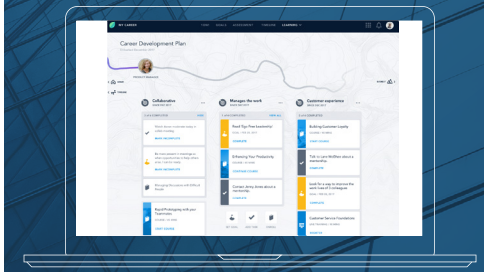
Connecting Employee and Company Goals

Employees can align personal and professional goals with team and company goals that have been set by a manager or admin to see where they stand and how their contributions add up.



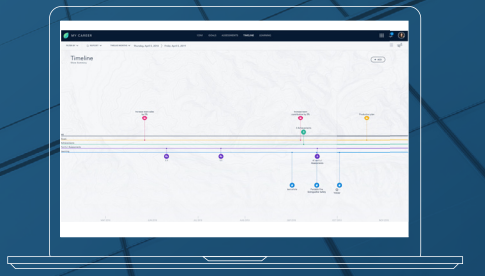
Goal Alignment

And a quick snapshot of team goal alignment can be accessed at any time.



Career Development Plan

Once potential roles are identified, the Career Development Plan helps managers and employees find pathways forward in plotting relevant skills, goals and training.



1:1 Agenda

Managers can use the 1:1 Agenda tool to keep tabs on whether employees are still moving along in line with their personal and career goals.

With Bridge, every check-in is an opportunity to think long-term.

Managers should use this intel to determine the best developmental courses of action for future alignment.

Career Development Plans: Even Lattices Need Some Direction

Our extensive research into career development (based on interviews with more than 600 employees) found that most people:

- Don't actually have a specific, concrete vision for their careers, especially when it comes to pursuing specific roles.
- Care significantly more about finding purpose and making an impact than about chasing roles, titles, and promotions.

While these findings could tempt some HR pros to wave the white flag, Bridge makes it easy to develop the skills that align with employees' Career Everest, even if they aren't 100 percent sure what that looks like.

With Bridge, developing relevant growth tracks is intuitive and collaborative:

Using the Career Drivers as a guide, managers and HR teams can identify skills and potential roles that keep employees evolving toward their ideal role.

By conducting (at least!) monthly or quarterly conversations that include long-term goals, teams should be able to stay on track and make adjustments every step of the way.

Development How-Tos for All-Around Awesomeness

How to Develop Your People

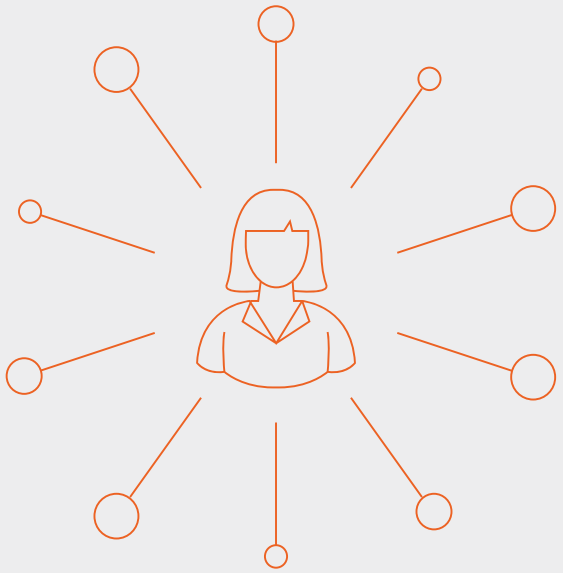
No matter how big your company is, your people should remain the primary focus (*and we don't mean shareholders!*). Why? Because your people:

- Have the ideas
- Turn your company mission into action
- Are your competitive edge (so much so that Josh Bersin Academy just launched a program called People As Competitive Advantage!)

But here's the thing … they're human. Which means cookie-cutter development or career paths won't cut it. Every member of your organization can—and should—be continuously developed.

On the flip side, no single employee can develop on their own. It takes many players to support a single development journey, even if the employee is the one seeking out villagers to guide their growth.

But there are three roles that need the most attention because they have the power to impact your company in big ways—managers, mentors and coaches.



Managers: Invest in Your Leaders, ASAP

Like it or not, managers have some serious clout. They can make or break your employee development programs, whether it's intentional or by accident. According to Gallup, 75 percent of voluntary turnover can be linked back to manager behaviors.

Since productivity is cut in half for employees who are poorly managed, investing in proper training for your leaders can't wait until next quarter or even next week!

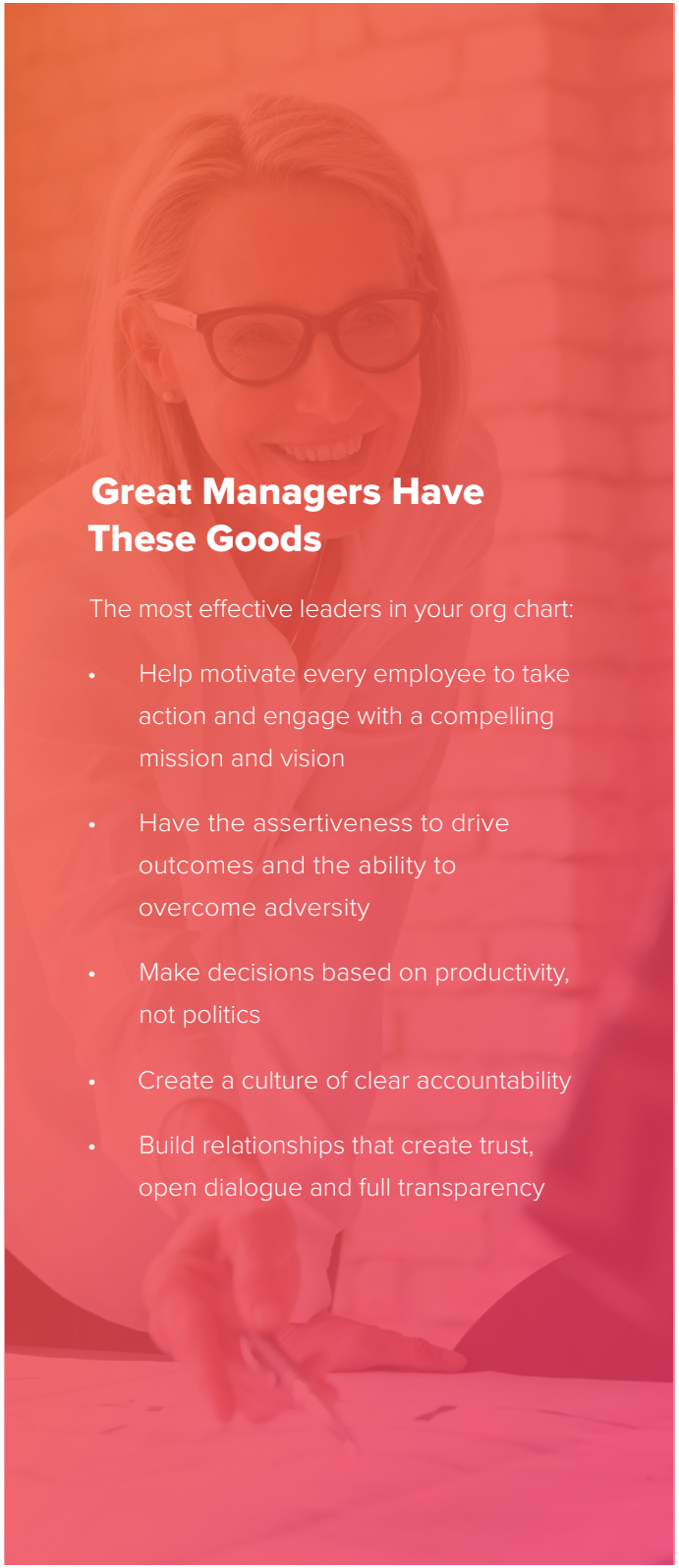
Even companies without a formal employee management structure can apply the following approach because hey, someone has to be held accountable, right?

The most effective development programs are employee-led and manager-driven.

The employee will always be in the driver's seat. Make sure a solid manager is riding shotgun give guidance on development that's aligned with individual and organizational needs.

"The hallmark of great managers: they tune in to each individual employee and adjust to meet that person where they are. They also see what you're capable of, even when you can't see it yourself, and nudge you (sometimes a shove is necessary) in the right direction."

— Dr. Britt Andreatta, Thought Leader, Speaker and CEO of 7th Mind Inc.

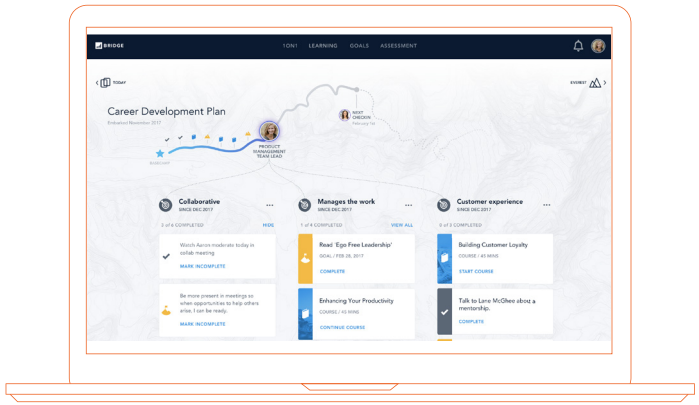


Great Managers Have These Goods

The most effective leaders in your org chart:

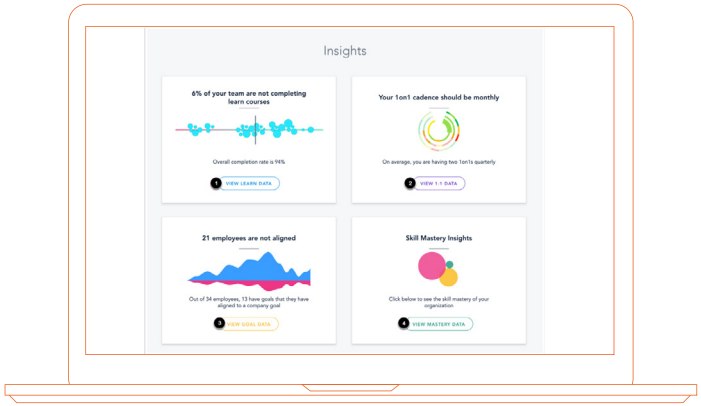
- Help motivate every employee to take action and engage with a compelling mission and vision
- Have the assertiveness to drive outcomes and the ability to overcome adversity
- Make decisions based on productivity, not politics
- Create a culture of clear accountability
- Build relationships that create trust, open dialogue and full transparency

From promotion day to day-to-day, Bridge is a manager's best friend thanks to:



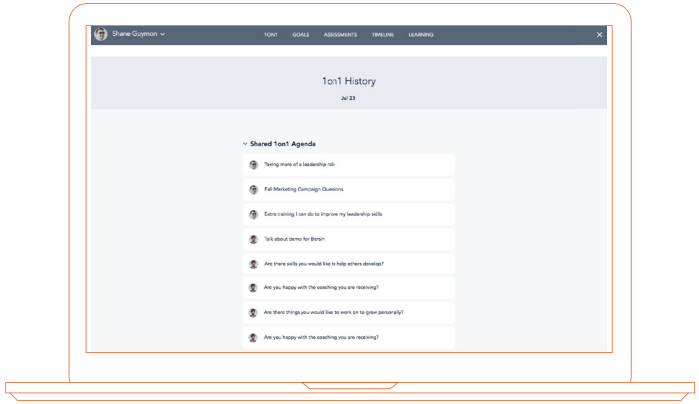
Career Everest & Paths

*Guiding meaningful employee development for teams large and small is simplified with **Career Everest** and **Career Development Path** tools.*



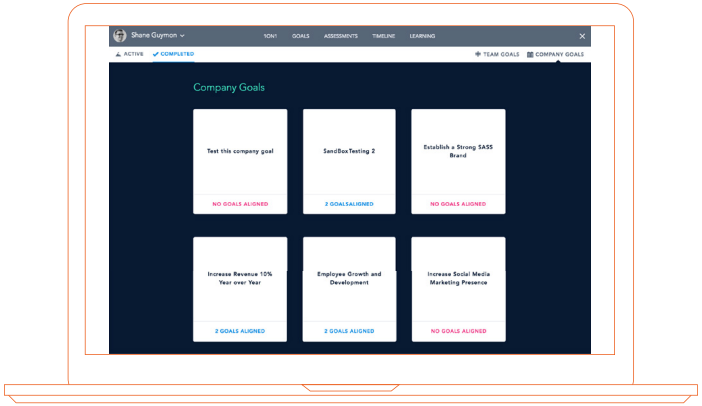
Manager Insights

*Bridge delivers **Manager Insights** into everything they need to know about team sentiment, goals and learning activities so they can guide overall team and productivity.*



1:1 Tools

*From team **1:1 frequency to agendas** and holding feedback conversations, effective check-ins can become second nature with a little help from Bridge.*



Goal Alignment

*Managers can quickly get a temp-check on organizational and team **goal alignment**—then proactively do something about it.*

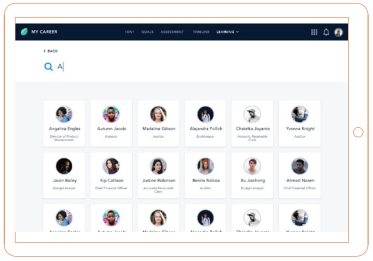
Mentors: Identify & Empower Your Untapped MVPs

Employees want mentors more than you may think. According to one Deloitte survey, over 79 percent of millennials want their managers to be mentors or coaches.

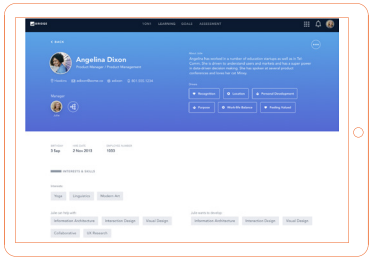
While the seemingly most logical mentor would be the manager, that doesn't always have to be the case. Whether it's the manager or someone else in the organization, retention rates soar to 72 percent for mentees.

Enable opportunities for employees to seek out their own workplace heroes for mentoring and support, even on a micro level. When managers know who's great at what and which direct reports are seeking development of a certain skill or role, they can help connect the two for all types of mentoring.

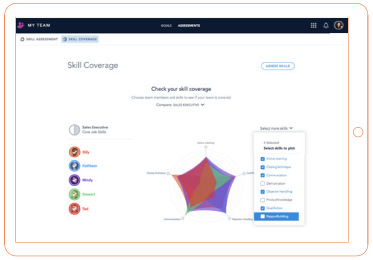
How Bridge facilitates employee mentoring (and mentee-ing):



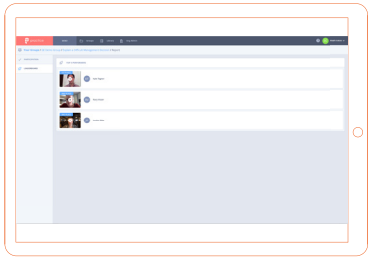
*The **Employee Directory** enables all employees to see how each person is connected and fits into the company. They can see peer profiles and help identify potential mentors or mentees.*



*An **Employee Profile** is a cheat sheet of the goals, skills, drivers, and strengths unique to each member of your team (and a great place to find what they want to be mentored on).*



*Managers can quickly see who's mastered which skill, as well as which employees need development and could benefit from a mentor with **Skills Coverage**.*



***Leaderboards** in Bridge's video role-playing tool enable visibility into which teammates could provide invaluable peer-to-peer mentorship.*

Mentors Drive Meaningful Development

Whether a manager, peer or someone in a completely different department, the best mentors:

- Value the relationship over the mentorship
- Focus on the mentee's needs—even over the company's
- Put a lid on pessimistic feedback
- Aim to develop more than job skills

Coaches: It Takes a Village to Create a Learning Culture

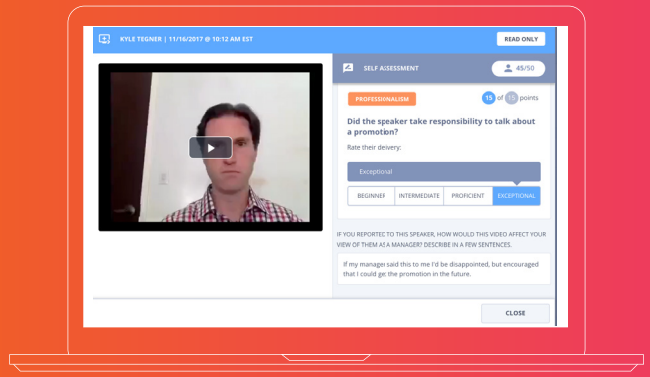
While some companies are outsourcing coaching to third parties and even using virtual chatbots, there's a lot you can do with the brain trust you already have.

Hint: start with your managers.

Yes, managers should be trained in how to be effective coaches—especially when only 15 percent of employees believe their supervisors are winning in this area. Factor in that managers with effective coaching skills can boost team performance by 130 percent, and you may want to stop reading this and immediately start creating coaches out of your managers.

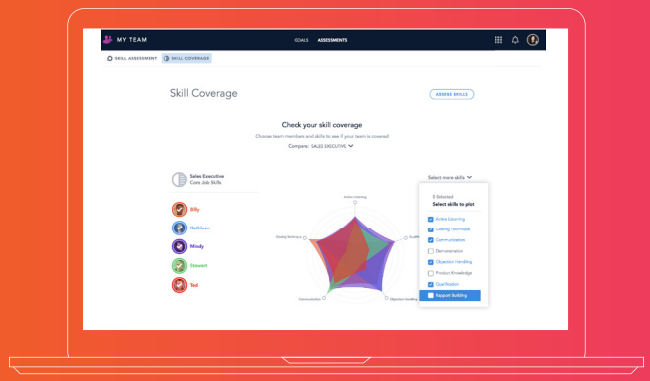
But managers shouldn't bear all the burden of coaching employees. With a little training, other members of your organization could gladly step in and motivate employees to do their best work (even if it's just for one particular skill or competency).

How Bridge can transform all employees into coaching employees:



Peer-to-Peer Micro-Coaching

*Managers can enlist top performers in specific skills and competencies to provide informal **micro-coaching** to other team members through feedback on role-playing exercises.*

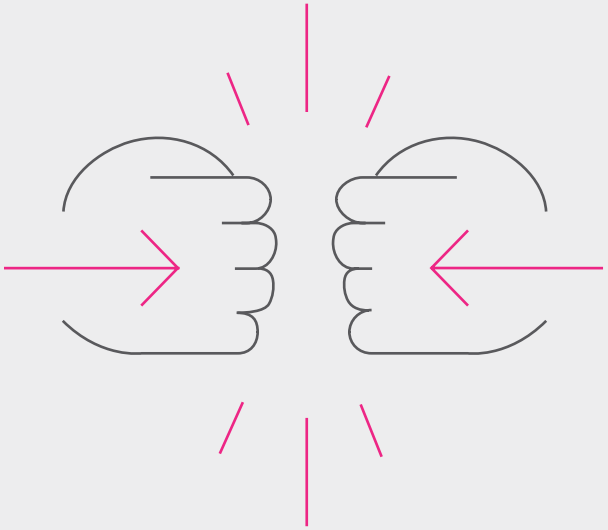


Skills Coverage

*By understanding who's mastered which what (as well as who's lagging) using the **Skills Coverage** tool, managers can foster appropriate coaching relationships.*

Development How-Tos for All-Around Awesomeness

How to Develop Your Programs



From the moment employees arrive until the day they leave, companies should provide ongoing development.

In addition to manager-directed training, give employees access to self-directed learning paths so they can take the lead in their growth and development.

Onboarding: First Impressions with Impact

Your onboarding program can lay the foundation for not only what your employee needs to learn right off the bat, but also instill some good development habits early on. Most onboarding efforts fall flat, and only 12 percent of employees think their company does a good job at it. So, ensure your onboarding program helps employees feel connected and empowered from Day 1.

Of course, "this is how we do things" content and compliance-mandated courses should be part of your onboarding program, but the developmental focus should go beyond job-related skills.

Many new hires (no matter their seniority level) can benefit from development opportunities for transferable skills like empathy, collaboration and communication.

In addition to upskilling your new hire, you'll demonstrate a commitment to developing them in ways that are personal and special to their specific career journey. Showing a little value goes a long-term way!

Set newbies up for success from the get-go with Bridge features such as:

- A **Personal Dashboard** with context into their current role and development opps
- An **Employee Profile** that helps them see how they fit into the company from the get-go
- **Specific courses or certifications**, whether they are created internally or by a third party
- **A learning library for self-directed development** of the skills they want to learn for current roles
- **Just-in-time (JIT) training** that can be accessed during the time of need—on any device
- **Role-playing exercises** that flatten the learning curve—especially for sales and customer service roles

Early Careers: Plant the Seed for Ongoing Success (And Loyalty)

Once managers meet with employees and uncover their career drivers, those motivators should drive (no pun intended) all future development activity.

For starters, development should contain a mix of job-related skills and transferable skills—those "soft" skills that are pretty durable from job to job.

Stretch assignments make it easy for employees to try on different responsibilities and dip their toes in a few different roles. Consider allowing your team to dedicate 10 percent of their time to expanding their workplace horizons (hey, Google engineers get 20).



“The best managers at Instructure lead with strategy and vision and allow people to figure out the tactics and way forward on their own.”

— Troy Anderson, Director of Talent Management, Instructure

Keep the development going strong long after onboarding with Bridge:

- Provide access to **self-directed learning pathways**, whether they are created by L&D teams or third parties like LinkedIn Learning and Open Sesame.
- Help employees **find mentors and grow their skills** through stretch assignments and short-term projects that let them develop in less-formal ways.
- **Focus on transferable skills** like empathy, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving, as they will be useful in any future role.
- **Assign role-playing exercises** to help employees master certain competencies while benefiting from social learning and peer feedback.

Manager Training: Invest in Those Who Can Make or Break Your Teams

We’ve already covered how managers have all the power over your organization. Why not empower them with the development required to make their impacts as effective as possible?

While most managers are promoted to the role after demonstrating high performance as an individual contributor, any job-related skills probably won’t translate to leading and inspiring others. The initial culture shock can have lasting impacts (and not in a good way).

Because *overseeing the work* and *doing the work* require completely different skills, focus your manager development program on the transferable skills and behaviors that will be completely foreign.

Use Bridge to create development programs that teach managers how to:

- **Uncover employees' strengths** and career drivers
- **Evaluate employees' personalities** and how they fit into the team dynamic
- Help **manage workloads and set expectations** without micromanaging
- Build connections with employees that go beyond status updates
- **Tailor feedback and communication** to each employee's style and preferences
- **Balance strategic and employee goals**
- **Be an awesome coach** and call in reinforcements as needed
- **Conduct effective 1:1s** with employees

With Bridge, managers can complete manager training and development, but also have the tools at their fingertips to immediately start making an impact on their direct reports.



Conversations are King

Special focus should be given to training managers on how to have effective career development discussions with employees (and preparing them for the inevitable awkwardness from time to time). There are four types of conversations every manager will have with employees:

- **Foundation conversations** - centered around the unique attributes that make each employee tick—drivers, personality, strengths and interest.
- **Connection conversations** - Best suited for coffee or lunch breaks away from the office, these convos go beyond work topics to show how managers care about the employee as a person.
- **Progress conversations** - status updates on hot projects and tasks are vital for any employee check-in. But they shouldn't dominate the entire 1:1 agenda.
- **Development conversations** - Our research shows that 79 percent of employees want to discuss career growth monthly or quarterly, yet progress conversations dominate check-in chats. Managers should always touch base on how employees are tracking in their desired career path.



A word(ing) to the wise...

According to research by Harvard Business Review, how you position your leadership development training can make a huge difference in its appeal and effectiveness. HBR concluded that training programs positioned as *how to become a leader* were less popular than those focused on *how to develop leadership skills.* Plus, participants of the program focused on leadership skills had 29 percent better recall than those who attended the leadership-focused course. The takeaway? For best results, mindful of how you position your employee development programs.

Leadership Development Training: Groom the Next Generation Now

A little training can help just about anyone prepare to become a manager. Which is a good thing, since millennials and younger workers are long on ambition and getting promoted faster than ever.

Yes, individual drivers and goals should help shape leadership development. But any formal program should focus on developing these core behaviors: *(Don't take our word for it, Google prioritizes these, too!)*

- Coaching
- Empowerment
- Concern for employee
- Productivity and results
- Communication (aka, holding effective performance conversations)
- Career development
- Clear vision and strategy
- Key technical skills

How Bridge makes it easy to groom and grow future leaders with relevant development opps:

- If leadership is part of an employee's career plan, use the **Career Development Plan** to help provide ample opportunities—informal and formal—to help them get there.
- **Create and curate formal learning pathways** for aspiring managers. At Bridge, our formal leadership development training program is called LeadStrong (and that's exactly what it helps our learners do).
- **Offer optional employee-driven learning** through self-directed content that will help aspiring managers grow those transferable skills on their terms.

Development How-Tos for All-Around Awesomeness

How to Develop Your Performance Management

Give and Take: Feedback Best Practices

Giving Feedback	Receiving Feedback
Focus on factors the recipient can control, such as behaviors, results or outcomes	Don't take anything personally
Tailor delivery to the individual's personality and feedback preferences	Ask open-ended and clarifying questions as needed
Deliver with empathy and authenticity	Self-reflect after the fact
Provide actionable insight	Try to maintain objectivity and be open if feedback is critical

Just like employee development, performance management should be ongoing and transparent.

There are many practices at your disposal when it comes to giving and receiving the feedback that can strengthen those all-important workplace relationships while building on team skills in the process.

Feedback: It Doesn't Have to Feel Like an F Word

For modern employees, feedback is as essential as keeping their smartphones within reach. They crave it daily, which can be tricky for time-crunched managers. While emojis and Slack messages can be used to give feedback daily, managers should also commit to a regular cadence of face-to-face feedback sessions.

Whenever Possible, Keep it Positive

When it comes to giving feedback, focusing more on the pros than the cons is the way to go. Organizations that use this approach can see increased profits, customer engagement, and employee engagement. Strengths-based feedback makes every employee feel seen and understood and drives fulfillment by helping employees do what they do best.

But, not all feedback sessions will be full of sunshine and rainbows. Ensure your managers are equipped with the skills and best practices to handle awkward feedback chats when necessary (more on that later in this e-book).

Giving and receiving feedback is easy peasy (and effective) with Bridge:

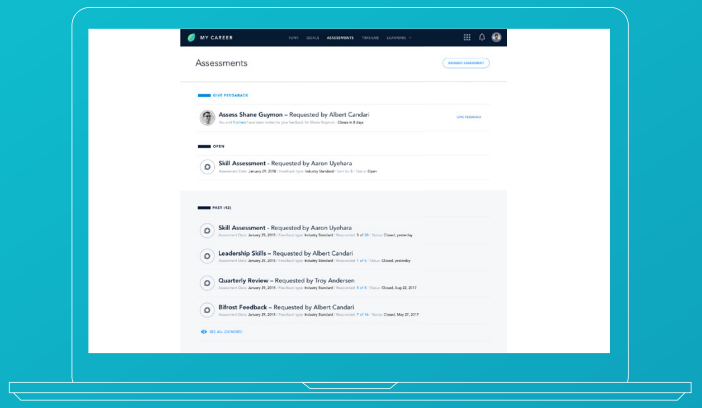
- Managers can see an employee's goals, personality type, and strengths in the **Employee Profile**, then tailor feedback to complement all of the above.
- **Peer Assessments** can be leveraged to effortlessly collect feedback on specific skills and competencies, then use that input to guide an employee's development and recognize skill mastery.
- **Engagement surveys** are a quick way to get holistic feedback on how your employees feel about their roles and the company as a whole.

Behaviors, Skills, Competencies—The Trifecta for High-Performing Development

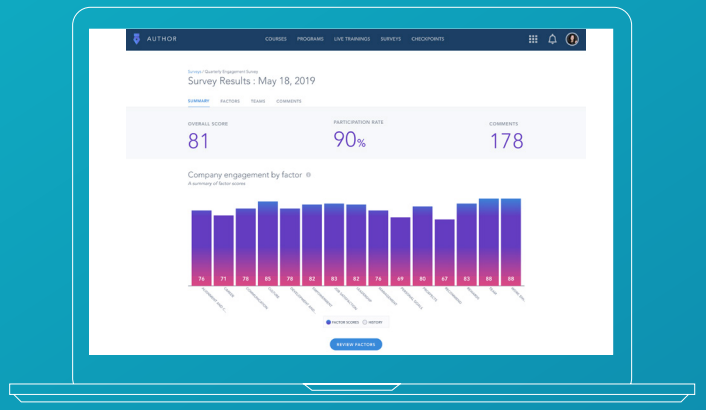
Behaviors Begin At the Company Level

Whether they're in writing or not, a company's own values can dictate the workplace behaviors—acceptable or otherwise.

Companies have the power to set the stage for positive behaviors by clearly communicating desired behaviors and expectations with the entire organization.



Peer Assessments



Engagement Surveys

How can Bridge help facilitate desired behaviors?

- **Managers can gather feedback from peers, mentors, and surveys** to help identify employee behaviors that need to be addressed, good and bad.
- Using **positive reinforcement and incentivization during performance conversations**, managers can encourage individual behaviors that demonstrate excellence, drive results and mirror corporate values.
- On the other hand, managers should swiftly identify and correct behaviors that have a negative impact on the company and its employees. Nipping them in the bud may entail **additional training, coaching, or those fun alignment conversations**.

Employee Skills Training: Sweet Spot or Moving Target?

Hint: it's both.

Because leaders have the ability to identify the goods your employees want to develop as they get closer to their Career Everest, skills are the sweet spot when it comes to meaningful development. Once they have uncovered the drivers and motivations for each employee in your organization, Bridge empowers managers to foster, grow, develop, and reskill the hell out of them.

But what is a skill, exactly? A learned activity that can be honed through training and experience. A skill can be technical, such as operating a computer program or piece of machinery. It can also be transferable, or one that employees can use throughout their careers, like empathy or collaboration.

A proper balance of technical and transferable skills should be maintained to grow your people in ways that align with their long-term goals and your organization's objectives.

With Bridge, managers can identify the skills employees want and organizational skill gaps to help develop employees through:

- Online learning
- Role-playing
- Peer feedback and social learning
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Stretch assignments

Thanks to the breakneck pace of technology, being able to develop and train your current workforce, the need for ongoing skill development is more crucial than ever before. Fortunately, modern employees want—and expect—to be developed on the job. And Bridge makes it easier than ever to assess where they are and help mold where they need to be (aka, keep your sights on those moving skill targets).

Competencies Put Skills (and Then Some) Into Action

A competency is defined as **skills + knowledge + abilities**. The combination of all three can describe how well an employee could perform a job-specific activity.

Many organizations create a ***competency model*** for various roles that help describe job responsibilities and requirements for success. These models apply a complex structure using tiers based on experience and expertise, then rank each employee accordingly. Then, the scores are used to provide grounds for upward mobility and compensation.

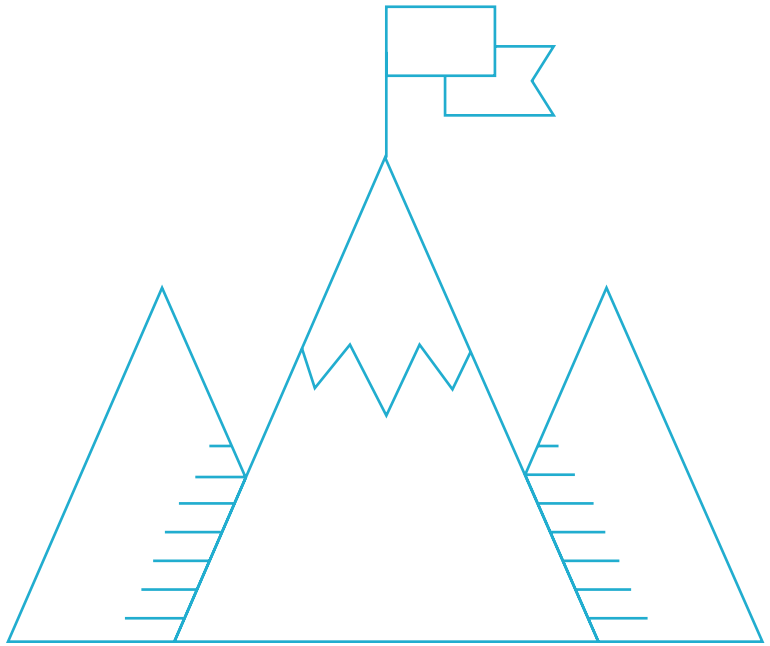
However, the competency model seems to be more trouble than it's worth for many organizations. Here's why:

- Competency models are laborious to develop and maintain
- Only unicorns will have all of the competencies desired for a specific role
- It's practically impossible to accurately measure how someone stacks up in a given competency

For all the reasons above, we recommend filing the competency model in the same circular bin where the annual performance review now resides.

Instead, managers and HR leaders can use Bridge to focus on helping employees attain desired competencies by:

- Identifying wish-list competencies using the **Career Drivers** exercise and **Career Everest tool.**
- Maintaining constant progression toward said competencies through **ongoing learning and performance conversations.**
- **Giving employees ample opportunities to flex those skills** in stretch assignments and short-term projects.



Conversations: Keep the Dialogue Going Strong

Workplace conversations are more than a recap of last week's *Game of Thrones* episode (Did you *see* that coffee cup???), although those types of convos are great for building connection, too.

Done right, manager-employee dialogue can inspire, retain, and ramp up productivity. When these conversations take place regularly, their effect is compounded. As a general rule, employee check-ins should take place monthly, with more performance/growth-based conversations happening quarterly.

"The flow of work is through the conversation between the manager and employee. This system is one of the few out there that's actually doing that."

— VP, Learning and Talent Development

Effective 1:1s, 101:

When conducting employee check-ins, managers should:

- Open things up with "*What do you feel proud of recently?*"
- Prioritize the employee's shared agenda items
- Use open-ended questions
- Spend more time praising positive behaviors than pointing out areas for improvement
- Focus on outcomes, not the path taken to get there
- Ask for feedback on their own performance
- Cover career development as well as the status of projects at hand

Add effectiveness to performance convos—every time—with Bridge:

- Bridge makes it effortless for managers to conduct regular 1:1s by guiding the convos with a simple **Performance Conversations Template.**
- The **1:1 overview** allows managers to easily schedule meetings and quickly identify lapses in cadence that could turn into issues if left unchecked.

- Using the **shared 1:1 agenda**, both the manager and the employee can document talking points ahead of time so important issues aren't forgotten or overlooked during the actual conversation.
- The **Employee Profile** provides a quick snapshot of an employee's strengths, personality and goals to help in giving substantive feedback and determining meeting takeaways and next steps.
- Shared documents are great, but there is still a need for **Private Notes**. Bridge houses both collaborative and private content so managers and employees don't have to manage two documents for the same conversation.
- Managers can **assign learning courses** based on 1:1 agenda, tasks, and goals without ever leaving the 1:1 template.

Goal Setting: Ready, Set, Kick-@ss!

Goal setting needs to happen on multiple levels—company, team and individual. Not just for something to talk about during 1:1s, either. In order to attain any objective, it must be established, tracked, and followed up on with consistency.

Since modern employees already want to know how they're contributing, why not enlist them in the process from the beginning? Research has shown that employees are 3.6 times more likely to be engaged if they help create their own workplace goals.

And by having frequent conversations, all parties involved can see results, make adjustments, and keep everyone moving forward.

The To-dos that Align

There will be instances where an employee's desired skills don't perfectly align with your organizational needs. Encourage managers to:

- Keep the lines of communication open with **frequent check-ins**
- Look for common developmental ground using the **Career Everest** page
- Find stretch assignments and creative opportunities that interest the employee while tracking toward company goals

Solo or with a Crowd, Reflection Works Wonders

Individuals can ask themselves:

- What worked?
- What didn't work?
- What should I do more of?
- What should I start doing?
- How does this fit into my overall goals?

Groups can conduct post-mortems with fast feedback loops by asking:

- What worked better than expected?
- What didn't go as planned?
- What strengths can we build on to do better next time?
- Are there assumptions that need to be changed?

Set and Crush Goals with Bridge:

- Each employee's Career Everest and drivers should be the guiding force for all development and growth opportunities going forward. Noticing a theme here?
- **Individual and team goals can be tied to overall corporate objectives** so all tracking and striving for excellence can sync up.
- Both managers and employees can quickly see a snapshot of learning and work goals and when they are completed using the **Employee Timeline.**

Reflection: Meditation Optional. Growth, Not So Much

Self-reflection is a crucial aspect of self-awareness—something all managers, leaders and individual contributors should strive for. Boosting an employee's EQ helps members of your team better understand themselves and those they interact with.

Simply taking the time to stop and reflect can help managers, teams and employees:

- See how far they've come toward attaining their goals
- Recognize and appreciate their impact on the team and organization (which drives fulfillment)
- Be mindful of their strengths, drivers, and growth opportunities
- Sharpen job-critical skills and competencies
- Apply learnings to future events

And in group settings, research has shown that reflection is vital in accelerating learning and progress.

Enable Reflection From Every Angle with Bridge:

- During 1:1s, both the manager and employee can ponder what worked and didn't together, then note the insights of their reflection in the **shared 1:1 agenda** or even assign tasks.
- After a 1:1, managers can reflect on how the chat went, then add **private notes to the shared agenda** to help improve future conversations.
- Employees can use **video role play to self-reflect** on their performance of a job-related skill compared to the model response or those of teammates.

Effective People Development Must-Haves

To tap into the secret sauce of companies whose employees have a cult following (or pretty darn close), we interviewed some of the companies ranked as 2019's top places to work.

We asked them three questions:

- How do you develop employees at your company?
- Who feels responsible for employee development?
- How do you retain top talent?

Here's what they told us:

- Only 10 percent of employees have formal plans for development
- Development is employee-driven and manager-led
- Money, career growth and alignment to the company mission drive retention of top talent

The good news is that you can do all of the above with a single platform. Here are the key ingredients for developing more engaged and productive employees with Bridge:



PEOPLE



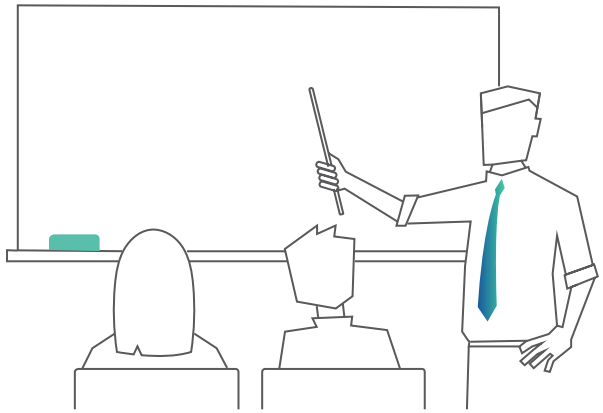
BEST PRACTICES



CONTENT



TOOLS



People: Snowflakes, Unite!

The secret to winning development is to allow employees to take charge of their own development journeys. Then use the powerful influence of managers, mentors and coaches to multiply the effectiveness of your programs tenfold.

By focusing on their individual drivers, strengths, needs, and ambitions, you have the power to develop every member of your team in meaningful ways. Chances are, the people you already have are the ones who will obtain your organizational goals. They just need a little guidance.

Content: It Takes All Kinds for Winning Employee and Organizational Development

Bridge gives every member of your team the power to try on the role of instructor, student, and even coach. It's up to your leaders to determine the right content mix to develop, stretch, and support your employees.

Your development content can—and should—come from many sources and be available in multiple formats. Create a diverse mix of resources that can be accessed on employees' own time as well as the time of need.

Content Types

- L&D created content
- Third parties such as LinkedIn Learning and Open Sesame
- Compliance and regulatory content
- Subject-matter expert authored content
- Transferable skills development
- Job-related skills development
- Certification programs

Content Formats

- Role-playing exercises
- Videos
- Quizzes and retention tools
- Learning library
- Group discussions
- Peer-to-peer feedback
- Just-in-time learning

Best Practices: More Than Tips & Tricks

We won't rehash all of the insights and best practices outlined in this e-book. But here's a quick recap of the many ways Bridge can help your leaders and their direct reports develop and grow in ways that really matter:

Career Drivers and Planning

Managers can find out what drives employees and where they want to go long-term—then co-author a course of action.

Conversations and Feedback

Use what drives employees to improve the quality of manager-employee 1:1s and feedback conversations.

Ongoing Development Opportunities

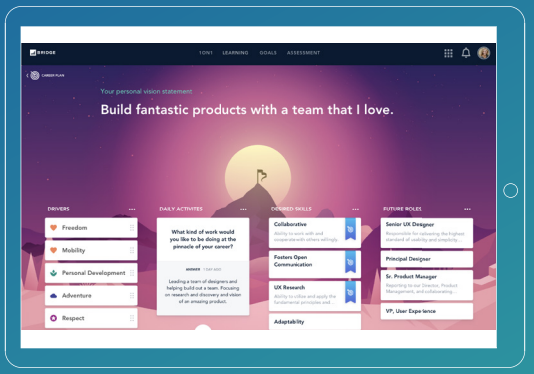
Combine manager-assigned training with self-directed learning for development that meets personal and strategic goals.

Engagement Metrics

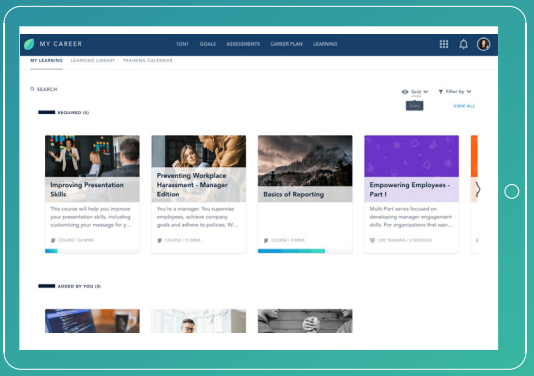
Boost engagement through relevant conversations and track how it impacts your business.

Tools: You're Going to Need Bigger Goals

Tools don't solve problems. People do. And good tools can amplify those people like never before (without making things all complicated).



Career Drivers and Planning



Learning Library

Additional Resources for Exceptional Development

- Career Drivers - managers can use the online or card version to uncover what motivates each employee, then center all development conversations around those insights.
- **Predictive Index** - we use Predictive Index to help managers tap into their team's unique dynamics and players. But your company can use any personality tests to dig into what makes each of your employees special.
- CliftonStrengths - Use CliftonStrengths or other strength assessment tools to identify who's great at what within your organization and where you may need some reskilling or additional hires.

Bridge isn't the only development tool out there. But it's the most comprehensive employee development platform. And it's built exclusively for companies committed to providing every individual contributor, manager and leader with connection, alignment and growth.

All-in-one, not one-size-fits-all employee and organizational development:

Connection: Empower employees to find and connect with mentors and peers

Directory

Profiles

Org Chart

Alignment: Link your people to your mission

Strategic Goals

Engagement Surveys

1:1 Agendas

Growth: Enable ongoing skill and career growth

Career Vision Planning

Career Development Plan

Growth Conversations

Learning Library

Organizational Alignment: Be Unstoppable With the Same Song Sheet

Alignment is crucial for company growth, as well as employee engagement. And without strategic goals in place that are SMART, most companies won't reach their objectives, or even be able to track them at all.

Fortunately, there are steps managers can take now to get everyone's ducks in a row (or at least the same pond) with Bridge:

- **Goal setting and tracking** - establishing company goals and team goals within Bridge can help all players keep their eyes on the ball. At the individual level, employees and their managers can tie personal or professional goals to team or company goals for real-time status and accountability.
- **Ongoing 1:1s** - frequent check-ins and feedback sessions are essential for helping managers understand how the day-to-day work is going, as well as serve as a platform for big picture and long-term employee development goals.

- **Skill assessments and coverage maps** - knowing exactly how deep your bench is for each skill or competency ensures managers can always be developing to fill in any gaps with reskilling.
- **Engagement surveys** - help managers get a temp-check on how employees are feeling about the company and where it's headed, then make necessary adjustments to development efforts.

Once managers and HR teams know where things don't line up, they can work on closing them by reskilling employees.

Upgrade Your Employee Experience: But First, Understand Where You Stand

When it comes to figuring out the development needs and challenges of your people, don't boil the ocean (aka fall into the trap of trying to solve for everyone all at once). Start with one person—just pick someone—then ask yourself:

- What challenges do they face?
- How do they think about work?
- What do they need for their development?
- If I could give individual attention to their needs, what would that look like?

Once you have a good understanding of how meaningful development could work on the individual level, it's time to let those insights and best practices ripple org-wide.

If only there were an all-in-one employee development platform that allowed managers and employees to have conversations about such things, then act on them through relevant growth opportunities ...

"The more you're able to align people in the company the better. This platform is a place where people can say, This is for me and this is where the company is going."

Director, Talent Development



Conclusion:

Employee Development is the Most Important Factor

BRIDGE

Employee development is the most important factor in determining whether your organization succeeds. But unless you keep the focus on your people, your efforts will fall flat.

Bridge was designed to enable the conversations, plans, and programs to help employees achieve long- and short-term growth while keeping your people in the dead center of it all.

With Bridge, the platform doesn't get in the way—it leads the way to amazing employee development.

More to love about the most comprehensive employee development program on the block:

- Centered around people
- Tools for every aspect of people development
- Learning solutions
- Performance management
- Video role-play for skill mastery
- Rooted in best practices
- Made for how people actually work
- Easy, intuitive interface
- Robust, real-time reporting
- Mobile friendly
- Cloud-based
- Secure, scalable platform
- 24/7/365 support
- Dedicated customer success team
- 99.98% uptime

Take Bridge for a test-drive.

Visit our website at **instructure.com/bridge**



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