

Tips to distinguish between a **business goal** and a **development goal**



Have you considered?

I'm going to start with a simple statement that seems obvious on the surface but requires thoughtful analysis as you write your development plan:

Business and development goals are not mutually exclusive; however, they are not the same.

Re-read that sentence please, because it's very important.



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Five-part series
THE IMPORTANCE OF A DEVELOPMENT PLAN
Part 2 of 5

Original post from: www.avantleadership.com/blog

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I'm not going to sugar coat it.

It is difficult to get out of your day-to-day business brain and into your long-term development brain, even when you think you are doing so. But if you are able to thoughtfully focus on your development, you will have a killer one-two punch that will catapult your ability to be successful in your business goals.

Let's look at Claire, the emerging leader who was recently promoted to her first VP role and is the focus of this series. Claire is thoughtful, highly motivated, committed to working on her development, and open to feedback. She is willing to put in the time and she knows she has areas that need improvement. Simply stated she "knows that she doesn't know" so to speak. All of these attributes are critical to learning and development.

Yet when we first started working together, the first draft of her development plan had "Transformational Decisions: Identifying the biggest business growth opportunities and identifying the right stakeholders" as her number one development goal. It took three full sessions for Claire to shift from her business-mindset to her development mindset.

In her words, "When I was first given this promotion and started working with you, I was thinking about all the things I needed to do – manage people who work in an area where I don't have specific experience, executive communication, more sophisticated decks, writing at the executive level, defining and being confident in developing a strategy – those were the things I automatically gravitated toward.

"It seems to me it might be common when you get a big promotion. Everyone is nervous. They know they have skills to build, but they aren't really sure what those skills are. We tend to think they're technical skills, which is where my brain went at first. But then after you asked clarifying questions and we peeled back the layers, it became clear that it was the interpersonal, leadership-type skills that I needed development work on."



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For more than 30 years, Avant has advanced leadership and organizational performance with Fortune 500 companies.

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That aha moment

For Claire, the penny dropped somewhere between round two and round three of writing her goals. She was willing to reflect and look for themes across the work we had done, and she had her “aha” moment. Her biggest area for growth is how she manages high stakes conversations.

This breakthrough made the work in the final round both easier and harder. It was easier because she was now in the learning and development space, but it was harder because it was so nebulous. That was the real indicator that she had hit on her number one development goal, because unlike her initial revenue growth goal, it was, well, squishy. It's more difficult to measure, yet it is connected to her business goals because but it can be applied across all of her business

objectives to help her be more successful in her new role.

This brings me back to my opening statement. Business and development goals are not mutually exclusive; however, they are not the same. When you can really break through that differentiator, you will have the right mindset to build a meaningful development plan.

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This is the second article in a five-part series on the importance of a development plan. Check out the introductory article that defined what a development plan is, and watch for future articles about how to build a transition plan that evolves into a development plan, how to overcome roadblocks to your development plan, and why meaningful feedback is critical to the success of your development.



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