

Choosing Developmental Assignments

| Type of Challenge | Ideas for Assignment |
|---|--|
| <p>Unfamiliar responsibilities: Handling responsibilities that are new or very different from previous ones you've handled</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask your boss to delegate one of his/her job responsibilities to you • Volunteer for a task that would normally go to a more experienced person • Take up a new hobby • Work with colleagues to redesign a work process |
| <p>New directions: Starting something new or making strategic changes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the start-up of a new team • Work on a strategic plan for a community or professional organization |
| <p>Inherited problems: Fixing problems created by someone else or existing before you took the assignment</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take over a troubled project • Serve on a task force to solve a major organizational problem • Join the board of a struggling nonprofit organization |
| <p>Problems with employees: Dealing with employees who lack adequate experience, are incompetent or are resistant to change</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach an employee with performance problems • Resolve a conflict with a subordinate • Coach a sports team |
| <p>High stakes: Managing work with tight deadlines, pressure from above, high visibility and responsibility for critical decisions</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage high-profile customers or business partners • Do a tight-deadline assignment for your boss's boss • Manage a community event with high visibility |
| <p>Scope and scale: Managing work that is broad in scope or large in size</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broaden the services or products offered by your unit • Serve on a team managing a large-scale project • Serve as an officer in a regional or national professional association |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>External pressure: Managing the interface with important groups outside the organization, such as customers, vendors, partners, unions and regulatory agencies</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train customers how to use a new product • Take calls on a customer hotline • Take on public relations or other boundary-spanning role for a community organization |
| <p>Influence without authority: Influencing peers, higher management or other key people over whom you have no authority</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage projects that require coordination across organizations • Represent concerns of employees to higher management • Teach a course |
| <p>Work across cultures: Working with people from different cultures or with institutions in other countries</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage a multi-country project • Host visitors from other countries • Travel abroad |
| <p>Work group diversity: Being responsible for the work of people of both genders and different racial and ethnic backgrounds</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire and develop people of different genders, ethnic groups, and races • Lead a project team or task force with a diverse group of members • Join a community group that attracts a diverse group of people |

Based on the work of the [Center for Creative Leadership](#)

For more, see McCauley, Cynthia D.: *Developmental Assignments: Creating Learning Experiences without Changing Jobs*, CCL Press, 2006.