

# Take Ownership of Your Growth:

## A Guide to Performance Management and Career Conversations

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When you're just starting out, whether in your career or in the security industry—it's easy to assume that someone else will steer your growth. Maybe you think your manager will recognize your potential, or that HR has a plan mapped out for you. While good leadership and support are important, no one is more responsible for your career than you.

In fact, one of the most important lessons I've learned, and one I always share with people early in their careers, is this: you have to own your development. If you wait for someone else to initiate performance conversations, define your goals, or advocate for your next step, you may be waiting a long time.

The security industry, like many others, doesn't always move quickly. Many companies are small, evolving, or still building formal talent development systems. That makes it even more important for you to be proactive, intentional, and vocal about your growth.

This doesn't mean you need to have it all figured out. It means taking small, consistent actions—like tracking your accomplishments, having regular check-ins with your manager, asking for feedback, and making your interests known. Those steps compound over time and can make a major difference in how your career unfolds. Here are some of the most influential tips I have when it comes to performance management and growing in your career:

### Know Your Role in the Process



A good manager should be guiding your development, providing feedback, and helping you understand expectations. But here's the truth: you are the driver of your own career. Your manager may help steer—but you need to press the gas.

Don't wait for someone else to check in on your progress. If your manager doesn't schedule regular 1-on-1s, you should. These meetings should be purposeful—use them to:

1. Briefly highlight what you've accomplished since the last check-in
2. Share any roadblocks or challenges you're facing

3. Confirm priorities. What you think is most urgent may not align with your manager's view, and these conversations help realign when needed.

These conversations make formal reviews (like annual or mid-year evaluations) much smoother and less stressful because there's already a shared understanding of your contributions and goals.

### **Document As You Go**

Don't make the mistake of trying to recall a year's worth of work right before a performance review. You'll forget important milestones, especially the smaller things that may have had a big impact.



Keep a simple, ongoing log of accomplishments. It doesn't need to be fancy - a running document, notes app, or email folder will do. What matters is consistency. This also helps you make the case for promotions, role changes, or new projects with confidence.

### **Promotions Take Time—and Intention**

Promotions typically take time; 2-5 years depending on the organization and level. While timelines vary, what's common across most companies is that promotions are based not just on tenure, or even high performance, but on readiness to take on broader or more complex responsibilities.

Best practices for positioning yourself:

- Consistently exceed expectations, not just meet them
- Take initiative—volunteer for cross-functional work or stretch assignments
- Seek and apply feedback
- Make your goals known to your manager or HR
- Ask what it takes to get to the next level and start closing that gap

And remember; growth doesn't always mean going up the ladder. Zig-Zag Growth is still growth.



We often think of career advancement as a straight vertical line (or up in the ladder)—but more often, it looks like a zigzag. Lateral moves into different departments, projects, or roles help you build a more well-rounded skill set and broader business understanding. These experiences make you more valuable in the long run.

If you're interested in exploring other areas, let your manager or HR know. Expressing interest doesn't mean you're leaving your current role tomorrow - it just shows you're thinking about long-term development.

### **Don't Make Yourself Irreplaceable**

This may sound counterintuitive, but it's something I've learned firsthand: if you become the only person who can do your job, it becomes much harder to move on. Being irreplaceable may feel like job security, but it can also turn into career stagnation.

Here's the better strategy: build systems, not dependencies.

Create a simple SOP (Standard Operating Procedure). This could be a checklist, document, or even a screen-recorded video. The point is to make your knowledge transferable. Then, train someone else to handle those tasks.

When others can step in, you create the space to step up.

### **What If Your Manager Isn't Great?**

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, your manager may not be actively engaged in your development. If that's the case, find someone else in the organization you admire and ask for mentorship. A good mentor can be a sounding board, a source of feedback, and someone who helps make your work visible across the organization.

In Summary:

- Be proactive—own your development
- Schedule consistent 1-on-1s with your manager
- Document accomplishments regularly
- Align your work with team and company goals
- Ask what's needed for your next step and work toward it
- Build capacity so you're not the only one that can do something in your department
- Recognize that growth can come from zigzag moves - not just promotions



The best thing you can do for your career is take control of the narrative. Don't wait for a promotion to validate your progress, build your story, tell it often, and make your goals known. That's how growth happens.