



The Growth Playbook

15 plays to help your people grow — without waiting for a promotion.

Not every employee needs a new title. Sometimes they need a new challenge. These plays are designed to build skills, confidence, and engagement while solving real business problems.

Play 1: Stretch Assignment

Play 2: Own the Whole Thing

Play 3: Become the Go-To Person

Play 4: Teach What You Know

Play 5: Build the Playbook

Play 6: Take a Tour

Play 7: Raise Your Hand

Play 8: Give Them the Messy Problem

Play 9: Step Into the Lead

Play 10: Successor Shadow

Play 11: Hand Over the Keys

Play 12: Get Them in the Room

Play 13: Send Them Out Front

Play 14: Pull Up a Chair

Play 15: Chase the Big Win



First, Pick the Right Kind of Growth

Every opportunity falls into one of three buckets.

1. GROW DEEPER

Build more expertise in the work they're already doing.

Best for employees who want:

- More challenge
- More autonomy
- Stronger technical skills
- Greater mastery

2. GROW BROADER

Give them exposure to new teams, business problems, or ways of thinking.

Best for employees who want:

- Something different
- Cross-functional experience
- Career exploration
- A wider business perspective

3. GROW BIGGER

Expand influence, ownership, visibility, and decision-making.

Best for employees who want:

- More responsibility
- More trust
- Greater influence
- Leadership experience (without necessarily managing people)



Grow Deeper

Play 1: Stretch Assignment

When to run this play

Someone has mastered today's job and needs a bigger challenge — not a new title.

What it looks like

- A temporary project that stretches skills while keeping one foot in their current role
- Usually lasts: 6-12 weeks
- Usually takes: 10-20% of their time

You'll know it worked when...

- The project is completed successfully
- Quality stays high
- You need to step in less often

Ideas to Steal

Administrative Assistant

- Plan the executive off-site
- Build SOPs for recurring processes

HR Coordinator

- Own Open Enrollment
- Redesign the new hire experience

Customer Success

- Handle escalated accounts
- Build a renewal playbook

Play 2: Own the Whole Thing

When to run this play

Someone is ready to own outcomes — not just complete tasks.

What it looks like

Instead of: "I schedule onboarding meetings," they own the entire onboarding experience.

Instead of: "I post on social media," they own the monthly engagement goals.

Instead of: "I process invoices," they own the billing workflow.

You'll know it worked when...

- They anticipate problems before they happen
- They make sound decisions independently
- Outcomes improve — not just activity



Grow Deeper

Play 3: Become the Go-To Person

When to run this play

Someone wants to grow without becoming a manager.

What it looks like

Help them become the person everyone turns to.

You'll know it worked when...

- Others seek their advice
- They set the standard
- They naturally mentor teammates

Ideas to Steal

- ERP expert
- Budgeting specialist
- SEO know-all
- Reporting go-to
- Process automation pro

Play 4: Teach What You Know

When to run this play

Someone is ready to turn expertise into influence.

You'll know it worked when...

- New resources exist
- Team capability improves
- Knowledge spreads beyond one person

Ideas to Steal

- Excel Lunch & Learn
- Writing workshops
- Customer communication coaching
- Project management sessions



Grow Deeper

Play 5: Build the Playbook

When to run this play

Your organization needs more consistency.

You'll know it worked when...

- New hires ramp faster
- Work becomes more consistent
- Fewer questions require manager intervention

Ideas to Steal

- Document SOPs
- Create templates
- Build quality standards
- Improve onboarding documentation



Grow Broader

Play 6: Take a Tour

When to run this play

Someone wants exposure to another part of the business.

You'll know it worked when...

- They better understand the business
- They bring back new ideas
- Collaboration improves

Ideas to Steal

- Marketing joins Customer Success calls
- Accounting shadows Operations
- Office Manager participates in recruiting
- Operations attends Sales meetings



Play 7: Raise Your Hand

When to run this play

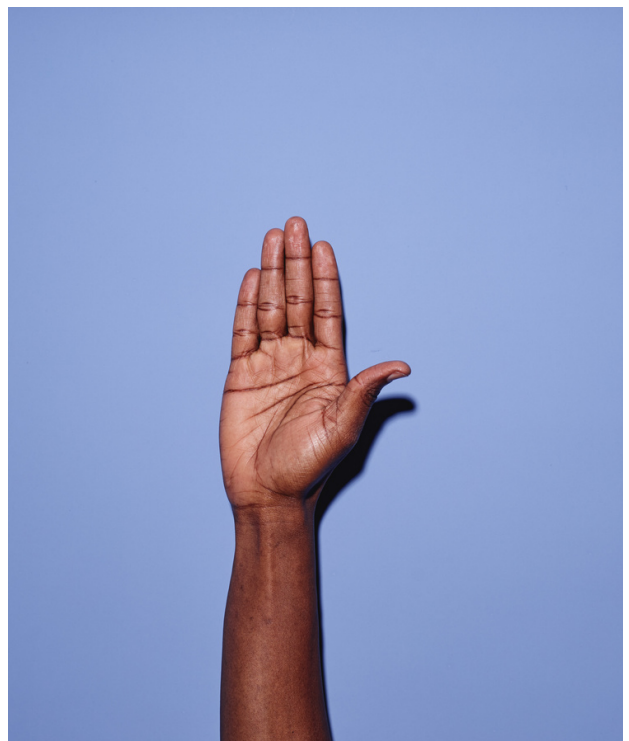
You have important projects that don't belong to any one department.

You'll know it worked when...

- The deliverable gets finished
- The business problem gets solved

Ideas to Steal

- Select new software
- Plan the company retreat
- Improve meeting culture
- Build an employee handbook



Grow Broader

Play 8: Give Them the Messy Problem

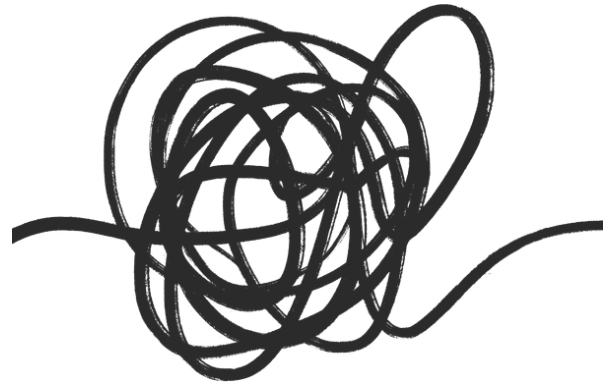
When to run this play

Someone is ready for ambiguity.

What it looks like

Give them ownership of problems like:

- Reduce turnover
- Improve hiring speed
- Increase retention
- Simplify internal communication
- Reduce billing errors



You'll know it worked when...

- Recommendations are implemented
 - Business metrics improve
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Play 9: Step Into the Lead

When to run this play

Someone wants leadership experience before becoming a manager.

You'll know it worked when...

- Stakeholders stay aligned
- Decisions move forward
- The team succeeds

Ideas to Steal

- Cover parental leave
- Lead a product launch
- Coordinate seasonal hiring
- Run a client implementation

Grow Broader

Play 10: Successor Shadow

When to run this play

You know someone may eventually step into a bigger role.

What it looks like

- Have them attend planning meetings, observe decision-making, lead smaller portions of strategic work, and gradually build readiness.

You'll know it worked when...

- They're prepared before the opportunity arrives — not after



Play 11: Hand Over the Keys

When to run this play

Someone has earned greater autonomy.

What it looks like

- “I recommend vendors” vs. “I choose vendors within a budget.”
- “I escalate customer exceptions” vs. “I approve exceptions within the policy.”

You'll know it worked when...

- Fewer decisions come back to you
- Good judgment increases



Grow Bigger

Play 12: Get Them in the Room

When to run this play

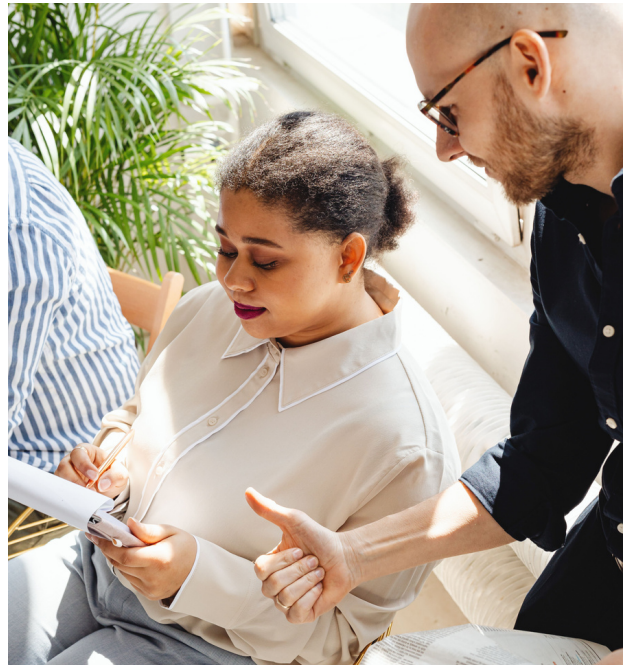
Someone needs more visibility.

You'll know it worked when...

- Confidence grows
- Leadership knows who they are

Ideas to Steal

- Present project updates
- Lead leadership meetings
- Represent the team
- Share results with executives



Play 13: Send Them Out Front

When to run this play

Someone is ready to represent the company.

You'll know it worked when...

- Relationships expand
- Credibility grows

Ideas to Steal

- Speak at webinars
- Attend conferences
- Volunteer with industry associations
- Represent the company at recruiting events



Grow Bigger

Play 14: Pull Up a Chair

When to run this play

Someone has valuable judgment — not just technical skills.

What it looks like

Invite them to:

- Annual planning
- Software evaluations
- Customer strategy conversations
- Budget discussions

You'll know it worked when...

- Their recommendations influence decisions



Play 15: Chase the Big Win

When to run this play

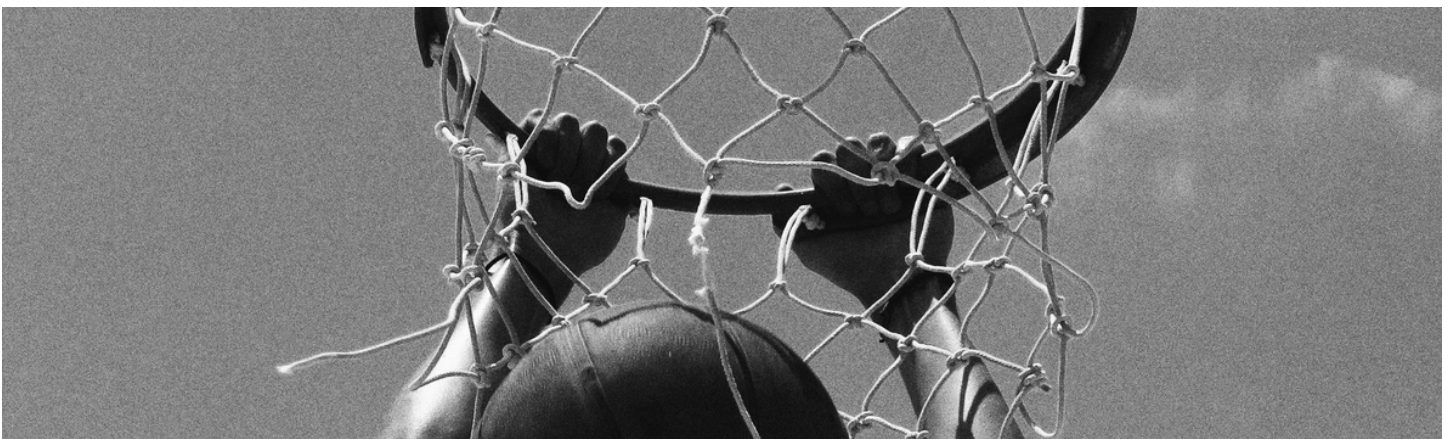
Reward initiative by giving someone an opportunity with visible business impact.

You'll know it worked when...

- The impact is measurable
- The results are documented

Ideas to Steal

- Save 10 hours every week
- Eliminate a recurring error
- Improve retention
- Reduce costs
- Improve customer experience



Which Play Should You Run?

If your employee says...

Try these plays

"I'm bored" _____	1, 2, 8
"I want to get really good at this" _____	3, 4, 5
"I'd like to try something different" _____	6, 7, 10
"I think I'm ready for more responsibility" _____	9, 11, 12
"I'd like more influence" _____	12, 13, 14

Before You Run The Play

A good growth opportunity helps the employee and the business.

Before you kick things off, ask yourself:

- ☐ Does this solve a real business problem?
- ☐ Have we clearly defined what they'll own?
- ☐ Is success measurable?
- ☐ Is there a realistic end point or review date?
- ☐ Will they have enough time to do this well?
- ☐ Am I developing this employee – or just giving them extra work?
- ☐ If this becomes a permanent part of their role, am I prepared to revisit role scope and pay?

