

**Stretch Assignment Ideas:** a quick reference guide to help select stretch assignments that develop targeted competencies

## Sample Stretch Assignments

**Strategic:** Develop competencies related to expanding one's awareness of organizational functions and strategy.

**Examples of Competencies:** Coping with ambiguous situations, gaining a strategic perspective, influencing others, working with customers, problem solving.

- Spend 3 days with clients and report back (presentation or written report)
- Conduct a customer-needs analysis
- Write a policy statement
- Interview external stakeholders about their opinions of the organization
- Analyze and compare a competitor's product or service
- Put together a presentation for a senior employee (i.e., supervisor or manager)
- Evaluate a training program
- Join a cross-functional team
- Join work on a project that has been unsuccessful
- Put together a task-force to solve a tough problem
- Monitor a new product or service through its entire life cycle

**Interpersonal:** Develop competencies that increase one's effectiveness to work with and manage others.

**Examples of Competencies:** Communication, listening, managing conflict, managing relationships, teamwork, negotiation, trust, approachability, delegation, leadership.

- Lead a team meeting
- Become a mentor to a new employee
- Train a new employee in a particular skill
- Represent team concerns to supervisor
- Join a team that's dealing with conflict
- Negotiate a new customer contract
- Take responsibility in resolving a team conflict
- Troubleshoot a performance issue
- Become a campus recruiter
- Interview customers and report back
- Work with a peer on a developmental opportunity
- Delegate 2 tasks to a peer and ask him/her to delegate 2 to you

**Personal:** Develop competencies related to expanding one's own set of abilities and improving personal skills.

**Examples of Competencies:** Organizing, planning, intellectual acumen, creativity, composure, time management, work/life balance, decision quality, customer service.

- Plan the next company picnic
- Help launch a new product or service
- Re-launch a product or service that previously failed
- Work with someone from another department on a tough issue
- Handle a difficult negotiation with an internal or external client
- Take on a project that others have failed in
- Write a press release
- Teach a seminar on an unfamiliar topic
- Create a customer satisfaction survey
- Take on a task that you do not like to do
- Take on an employee's tasks who is on vacation

Examples based on the following sources:

• McCauley (2006)  
• Lombardo, M. M., & Eichinger, R. W. (2003). *The career architect development planner* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Lominger Limited, Inc.  
• Lombardo, M. M., & Eichinger, R. W. (1989). *Eighty-eight assignments for development in place*. Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.  
• Vast & Plunkett (2009)