

HOW TO ASK FOR GROWTH

having a one-to-one with your boss about moving on

ZARIF FAIAZ

Careers rarely stall for lack of ambition; they falter because people never say out loud what they want next. A focused one-to-one with your manager is the right place to test ideas, map options and, if necessary, set a respectful course away from your current role. Handled well, it protects relationships, reveals opportunities you cannot see from your desk, and reduces the risk of impulsive exits. Handled badly, it can erode trust or trap you in the same job with a shinier title. The difference lies in preparation, tone, and the quality of how you ask.

Before you ask for time

Do your homework. Gather concise evidence of what you have delivered in the past six to twelve months and be ready to show how those outcomes supported the team's goals. Replace the vague desire for "more responsibility" with two or three thought-through directions, such as a transfer, a stretch project, a secondment, or an orderly exit if the fit is wrong. Each option should carry a business case: how it reduces risk, enables revenue, builds capability, or solves a succession problem. If you are exploring an internal move, learn the formal process and its timelines. If you are leaning towards leaving, read your contract carefully for notice periods, bonus or share-plan rules, and any restrictive covenants; HR can explain policy, but legal advice is the place for specific interpretations.

Setting up the meeting

Avoid ambushing your manager at the end of a status call. Book a dedicated half hour or, better, forty-five minutes, and choose a setting where neither of you is clock-watching. Set the tone in the invitation by framing it as a career conversation about how you can add value over the next year, and send a short agenda in advance so the discussion is purposeful rather than reactive.

Lead with impact, not frustration

Open the meeting with the work, not with what you dislike. The quickest way to trigger defensiveness is to start with a list of grievances. A calmer, more productive start sounds like: "Here's what I've delivered this year and where I think the impact has been strongest" or "Looking at the team's goals, I can see several areas where I could contribute more". Keeping the conversation future-focused invites your boss into problem-solving rather



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

than defence.

Make a clear, positive ask

Managers respond to specific, feasible proposals. If you want to grow in place, propose a defined shift of time or scope and explain how you will cover existing commitments. If you're seeking a secondment, sketch a trial period with success measures and a handover plan. If there is an internal vacancy that suits, show the fit and suggest a transition that avoids gaps for live projects. If you are ready to look externally, say so professionally and ask for support with an orderly plan, including references at the appropriate stage. Anchor each version of the ask in outcomes the organisation cares about: quality, speed, savings, risk reduction or customer value, so the conversation is about benefits, not indulgences.

Anticipating pushback

Expect legitimate concerns. Timing, headcount, policy, and readiness are the usual stumbling blocks. Treat these not as verdicts but as constraints to design around. If timing is the issue, offer a phased plan and show how early planning reduces risk. If headcount is frozen, suggest testing the change as a project or a time-split before revisiting the budget. If your manager doubts your readiness, ask which skills would tip the balance and propose milestones and a date to review progress. If policy appears to rule out an idea, explore what is possible within the rules - shadowing, short secondments,

or fixed-term assignments often sit comfortably inside policy.

Agreeing next steps

Good meetings die in the gap between principles and actions. Before you leave the room, summarise what you both think should happen first, what each of you will do, how success will be judged, and when you will meet again to check progress. Name the people you will involve: HR, project sponsors, partner teams, and agree who will speak to whom. Then send a same-day note capturing the decisions so momentum is not lost.

When the answer is "not now"

"Not now" can be productive if you convert it into a development plan with dates. Ask what would need to be true by a specific month to reopen the option, and record clear thresholds: the skills you must demonstrate, the exposure you will gain, and the work you will deliver. Ask for visibility: meetings to join, projects to co-lead, sponsors to meet, so you can build the evidence that will matter at the next review. If timescales keep slipping or the thresholds change with every conversation, treat that as data. It may be time to activate an external search with the same professionalism you brought to the internal route.

If you decide to leave

Leaving well is part of a long career. Tell your manager first and privately, give the notice the contract requires and offer

solutions rather than surprises. Draft a transition plan, propose a sensible scope for your backfill, and document your processes cleanly for whoever follows. Finish what you reasonably can and hand over the rest with clarity. Resist the temptation to vent in team channels; the way you exit will travel with you.

Remote and hybrid realities

Video compresses nuance. To de-risk the conversation, share a one-page brief beforehand, keep your camera on, leave longer pauses than feel natural, and summarise more often. Use a shared document during the call to capture decisions in real time so neither party leaves with a different memory of what was agreed.

Sensitive contexts

In small companies, options can be genuinely limited. Equity, cash flow, and key-person risk loom larger, so frame your proposals as risk management and continuity as much as personal growth. If you are on a visa, confirm potential immigration consequences of any change with HR or an adviser before you commit. If you are in probation, the wisest move is usually to focus on impact and feedback now and revisit mobility when the probation period ends.

A simple way to structure the conversation

Think of the meeting in five acts. Set the tone by explaining that the purpose is to maximise your value over the next year. Recount two or three pieces of work where the impact is clear. Shift to the future by describing what energises you and how that overlaps with the team's direction. Present a small set of options, explain the business case for your preferred path, and show that you have thought about coverage and risk. Close by confirming actions, owners, measures, and a review date. It is not theatre, but the shape helps you keep control of time and intent.

Measure success by outcomes, not titles

Titles lag reality. The best indicator that the conversation worked is not the wording on your email signature but a change in what you spend time on, the quality of opportunities that reach you, and the sponsorship you receive from people whose advocacy opens doors. If, after two good-faith cycles of this process, nothing meaningful has shifted, you have your answer, and your cue to act elsewhere.



ChatGPT Enterprise adds new 'company knowledge' feature

NEXT STEP DESK

OpenAI has introduced a new 'Company Knowledge' feature for its ChatGPT Business, Enterprise, and Education subscription plans. The function allows the AI system to search through an organisation's connected applications to provide answers using internal company information.

The new feature works with various business tools, including Slack, Google Drive, SharePoint, GitHub, and Asana. According to OpenAI, the system respects existing user permissions, meaning employees can only access information they're already authorised to view within their organisation. Responses include citations linking back to original sources for verification.

To use the feature, employees must select 'Company Knowledge' before asking questions in a chat. The system will then search across connected



PHOTO: UNSPLASH

applications that have been enabled by company administrators. OpenAI states that data protection measures include

industry-standard encryption and that the company does not train its models on customer data by default.

WhatsApp plans to ban ChatGPT-like AI chatbots in 2026

NEXT STEP DESK

WhatsApp will no longer permit general-purpose AI chatbots, such as ChatGPT, to operate on its platform under a new policy that takes effect on January 15, 2026. The Meta-owned messaging service has updated its Business API terms to prohibit third-party AI model providers from distributing their assistants through WhatsApp, effectively shutting out a growing number of AI-powered bots that have recently emerged on the platform.

In the revised policy, WhatsApp stated that "providers and developers



PHOTO: UNSPLASH

of artificial intelligence or machine learning technologies", including large language models and generative

AI assistants, are "strictly prohibited" from using the WhatsApp Business Solution if their technology functions as a standalone chatbot rather than an incidental feature.

The rule change is expected to affect a range of startups and AI companies that have integrated their conversational models into WhatsApp, including OpenAI, Perplexity, Lulzia, and Poke. The move effectively reserves WhatsApp's AI integration for Meta's own assistant, MetaAI, while preventing independent AI developers from using the platform to reach WhatsApp's user base of more than 3 billion people.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

Save the Children



Senior Python Developer

Deadline: November 1

Eligibility:

• Bachelor's degree in Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) or equivalent with professional experience in Python software development.

Minimum experience: 5 years

UCEP Bangladesh

Senior Officer, Resource Mobilisation

Deadline: November 1

Eligibility:

• Master's degree in International Development Studies, Social Sciences, Business Administration, Public Administration, or a related field.

Minimum experience: 5 years



Beacon Pharmaceuticals PLC

Coordinator, Oncology/ Biotech/ Palliative Care

Deadline: November 4

Eligibility:

• M.Pharm/B.Pharm from a reputed university.

Minimum experience: N/A

Water and Sanitation for Urban Populations (WSUP)



Senior Officer, WASH Technical & Municipal Coordination

Deadline: November 8

Eligibility:

• Bachelor's degree in civil engineering, urban and regional planning, environmental engineering, or related discipline. Master's degree preferred.

Minimum experience: 3-5 years

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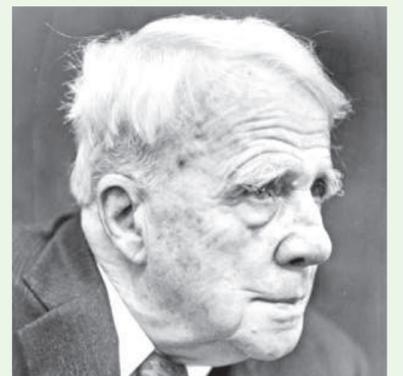


X's ad chief out after 10 months: report

NEXT STEP DESK

John Nitti has left his position as X's Global Head of Revenue Operations and Advertising Innovation after ten months with the company, according to a recent report by The Financial Times. Before joining X, Nitti held senior roles at Verizon and American Express.

According to the report, Nitti's exit comes amid broader leadership changes at X, as the company continues to face internal and strategic challenges under Musk's management. The advertising department has also experienced difficulties, with several major brands pulling back from the platform and Musk redirecting resources toward artificial intelligence development.



"The brain is a wonderful organ; it starts working the moment you get up in the morning and does not stop until you get into the office."

ROBERT FROST