



5 Tips to Build Leadership Skills in STEM Professionals

You invest a lot of resources to attract and hire professionals with highly specialized and technical skills. Without additional investment in developing these individuals they likely won't stay. STEM professionals are a precious resource - they need special care. You want them to develop into effective managers and leaders. Here are 5 tips to help you.

- 1 START EARLY.** Onboarding is a good way to reinforce your mission and core values. It's also the time to set clear expectations for dress code, flexibility in work schedule and provide insight into your organizational culture.
- 2 SOFT SKILLS DRIVE HARD RESULTS.** Your STEM hires get little, if any, soft skills development in their classes. You need to fill in the gaps with competencies that will help them succeed such as how to build effective relationships, how to resolve conflict and how to manage up.
- 3 EXPAND HORIZONS.** Connecting STEM professionals to mentors and sponsors gives them insight into the skills and perspective that comes from years of experience in your organization. Spending time with leaders several levels above them helps them better understand how to manage their careers.
- 4 EARLY LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.** Put your STEM professionals in a different environment and give them an opportunity to hone leadership skills fast. Cross-functional teams and special projects expose them to different ways of thinking and a broader understanding of what makes your organization a success.
- 5 BUILD NETWORKS.** Effective managers and leaders know how to build and leverage networks. Encourage your STEM professionals to build both internal and external networks through participation in professional organizations and internal affinity groups such as minority leadership groups and women leadership forums.

Founded in 2000, PorterBay Insight is a leadership development consulting firm serving a broad range of organizations including Fortune 500 and science-, engineering- and technology-based companies. They understand the unique needs of STEM professionals and are experts in personal effectiveness, leadership development, succession planning and linking people processes to business strategy.