

HRDIGITALPLAYGROUND • JOB ARCHITECTURE 101

Career Tracks

The different ways to grow, including paths that never require managing people.

IN THIS DECK

A common set of tracks

Other models

Growing without managing

Picking the track

Manager titles

Switching tracks



September 2026
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Before You Start

What you will be able to do, the example we use, and the words you will meet.

YOU WILL BE ABLE TO

- ✓ Name a common set of career tracks, and why others exist
- ✓ Explain how experts grow without managing people
- ✓ Pick the right track for a job
- ✓ Tell a real management job from a title
- ✓ Handle moves between tracks fairly

MEET THE EXAMPLE



Brightside Bakery

About 350 people making fresh bread and cakes. It grew fast without a plan for its jobs.



Bakery plant



20 shops



Delivery team



Head office

Made-up example

WORDS YOU WILL MEET

Career track

The kind of contribution and accountability a job has

Dual career ladder

Expert and manager paths side by side

Direct report

Someone who reports to a job

Level

The size and scope of a job

The colored tag on each page tells you what it is: an idea, an example, a practice, a warning, or a check.

A Common Set of Tracks

A track says what kind of contribution a job makes. A common architecture might include these four.



Support

Does defined work by following set processes, often learned on the job.

EXAMPLES

Shop Associate

Delivery Driver

Accounting Clerk



Professional

Applies specialized knowledge, usually from a degree or deep experience.

EXAMPLES

Accountant

Marketing Specialist

Food Scientist



Management

Formally accountable for a team's performance, direction, and development.

EXAMPLES

Shop Manager

Accounting Manager



Executive

Sets direction for a large part of the company, or all of it.

EXAMPLES

VP of Operations

Chief Financial Officer

The track says what kind of contribution a job makes. The level says how big it is.

A common model, not the only one

Other Tracks and Models

Organizations add or change tracks to fit their workforce. One principle decides when.

OTHER TRACKS YOU MAY SEE

Technical

Scientific

Clinical

Sales

Production

Operations

Skilled Trades

Academic

Customer-facing

Project and Program

Specialist

COMMON VARIATIONS



Executive as the top of Management

Not a separate track



One contributor track

Instead of Support and Professional



A separate technical track

For deep technical or scientific experts



A framework for one workforce

Such as a clinical ladder for nurses



THE PRINCIPLE Tracks exist when the nature of career progression or accountability is materially different.

Add a track only when the way people progress, or what they are accountable for, is truly different.

You Can Grow Without Managing

A dual career ladder gives experts their own way up, side by side with managers.



Same row, comparable size

WHY IT MATTERS



Experts keep growing

They can reach senior levels without a team



Management becomes a choice

People lead teams because they want to



Teams get better managers

Fewer reluctant managers, fewer lost experts



Career talks get easier

Two clear ways up, both respected

Experts can grow as experts. Management is a different job, not the only way up.

Which Track Is It?

In a four-track model like Brightside's, ask three questions in order.



Ask about the job, not the person in it.

Ask the questions in order. The first yes gives the track. No to all three means Support.

A Manager Title Doesn't Make a Manager

Plenty of jobs have Manager in the title and manage no one. Check what the job really does.

Social Media Manager

Manages accounts and campaigns. No one reports to the job.

P Professional

Project Manager

Leads projects. The team reports to other managers.

P Professional

Account Manager

Manages customer relationships and sales.

P Professional

Shop Manager

Leads a team of 8: assigns work, owns results, develops people.

M Management

WHAT MAKES A MANAGEMENT JOB

Formally accountable for the sustained performance, direction, development, and organization of a team.

USEFUL EVIDENCE

Direct reports

Assigns work

Owens team results

Staffing decisions

Develops people

Allocates resources

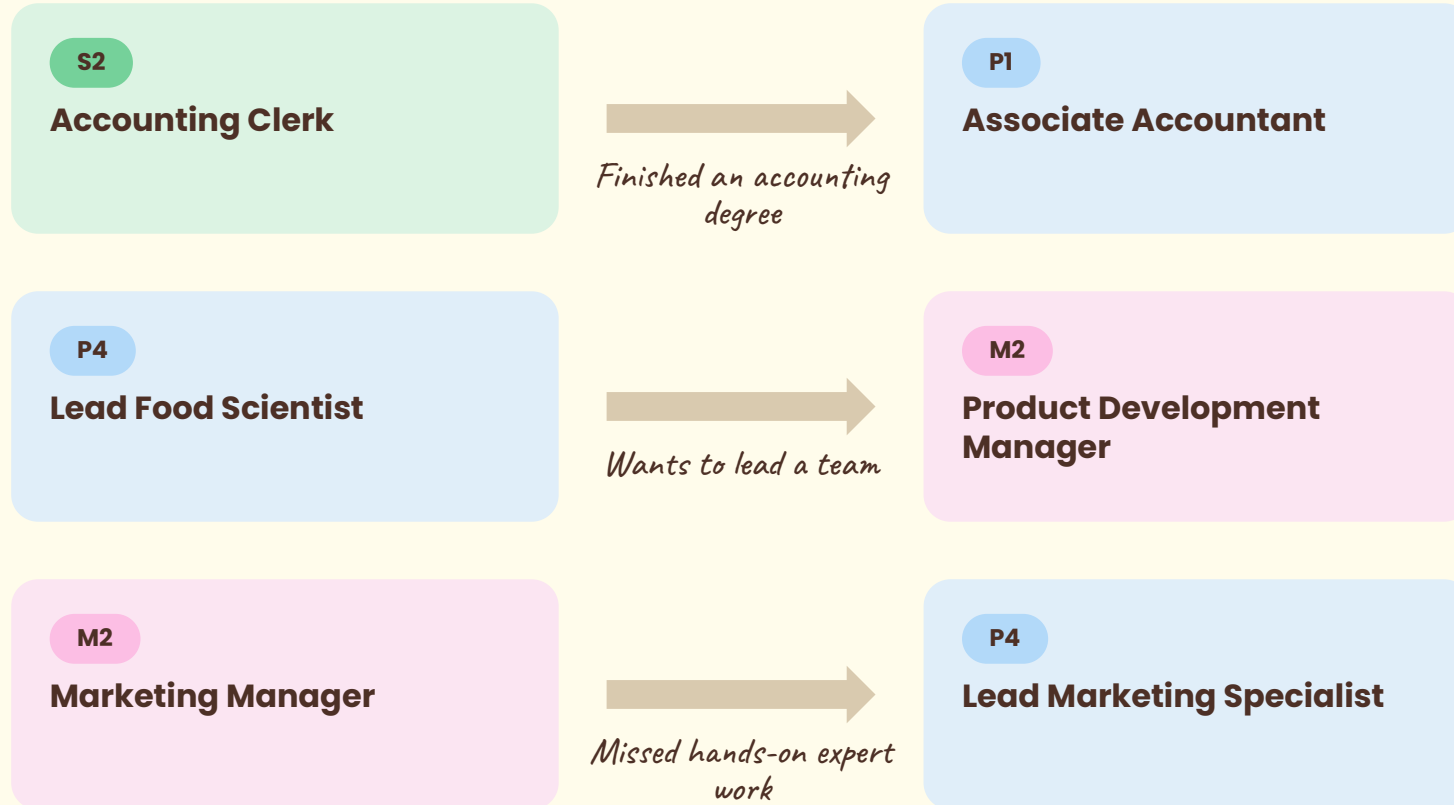
Delivery accountability

HR processes vary. A central pay or hiring team does not stop a job being a manager.

Look for formal accountability for a team, not the word Manager.

Switching Tracks

People move between tracks all the time. Each move is a move to a new job.



THREE RULES

- 1** Each switch is a move to a new job, placed on its own level.
- 2** Moving into management is not automatically a promotion.
- 3** Moving back to expert work is normal, not a step down.

A track switch is a move to a new job with its own level. Moving back is normal, not a step down.



Pick the Track

Six Brightside jobs. Use the three questions to choose S, P, M, or E, then turn the page.

1

Shop Associate

Serves customers, following shop routines

S

P

M

E

2

Shop Manager

Leads a team of 8 and owns its results

S

P

M

E

3

Food Scientist

Needs a food science degree to develop products

S

P

M

E

4

Delivery Driver

Drives set routes, following safety procedures

S

P

M

E

5

Head of Operations

Sets direction for all plant, delivery, and shops

S

P

M

E

6

Brand Manager

Runs the brand. No one reports to the job

S

P

M

E



Decide on your answers before you turn the page. The model answers and the reasons are on the next page.

Use the three questions in order. The job's work decides the track, not its title.

Pick the Track: Model Answers

Compare with what you decided. The reason matters more than the label.

1 Shop Associate

S, Support

Follows set shop processes learned on the job.

2 Shop Manager

M, Management

Formally accountable for a team and its results.

3 Food Scientist

P, Professional

Needs specialized scientific knowledge.

4 Delivery Driver

S, Support

A license is a requirement, not professional knowledge.

5 Head of Operations

E, Executive

Sets direction for all plant, delivery, and shops.

6 Brand Manager

P, Professional

No team to lead. The title does not decide the track.



The order Sets direction for a whole function? E. Formally accountable for a team? M. Needs specialized knowledge? P. Otherwise S.

The job's work and accountability decide the track, not its title.

Quick Check

Three questions. Answer from memory first, then look back if you need to.

1 QUESTION 1

Which job belongs on the Management track?

- A** A Project Manager with no team of their own
- B** A Shop Manager accountable for a team of eight
- C** A Lead Food Scientist

2 QUESTION 2

What does a dual career ladder allow?

- A** Two people to share one job
- B** Experts to grow without managing people
- C** Managers to skip levels

3 QUESTION 3

What is the first question when picking a track?

- A** Does it set direction for a whole function or business?
- B** What does the title say?
- C** How long has the person been here?

Answers, with the reason behind each one, are on the next page.

Remember

The whole deck in three lines, plus the quiz answers.



THREE THINGS TO KEEP

- 1** A common set is S, P, M, and E. Add others only when progression truly differs.
- 2** A dual ladder lets experts grow without managing people.
- 3** The work decides the track. A title with Manager in it does not.

Two ways up the stairs. Both count.



CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

1B

It is formally accountable for a team's performance, direction, and development.

2B

Experts and managers get parallel ways up, lined up by size.

3A

Executive first, then Management, then Professional, else Support.

Tracks give every job a clear way to grow, and experts and managers can both reach the top.





Job Architecture 101: Career Tracks

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Published September 2026 · hrdigitalplayground.com



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