Two paths *after senior.*

Use a career conversation to agree what a senior designer can own next. Make expert and management tracks concrete with a trial assignment and a review date.

How I used it at Medius.

Rotation needed a way to talk about progression. At Medius I helped define expectations for an expert track and a management track, so career conversations and job descriptions could spell out what growth might look like.

The Medius framework showed Lead UX Designer and UX Architect on the expert path after Senior UX Designer. The management path showed UX Team Lead, UX Manager and VP of User Experience. UX writing and research had their own paths. These were examples of progression in that organisation.

When to use it.

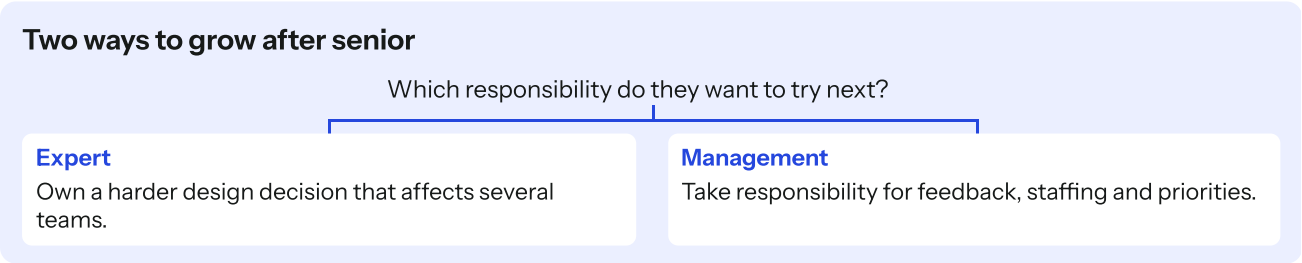
Good fit

People are growing past senior and the only visible next step is managing others. You write job descriptions or run career conversations and have no shared language for growth.

Start elsewhere

The team is too small for more than one level above senior. Write the expectations first and add titles when the team needs them.

The steps.



1. Write what a senior designer does today, in plain terms.
2. Describe the next step on each path: the problems taken on, the decisions owned and who relies on them.
3. Put both paths in job descriptions, so candidates see where growth leads.
4. Use them in career conversations. Ask what the person wants more of before you suggest a title.
5. Review the paths when a role changes, and keep both reachable from senior.

Making the decision.

What to check.

Check that neither path is the consolation prize.

Ask whether the expert track carries real decisions and visible influence, and whether the management track names the work of leading people: hiring, feedback and priorities. If one reads as the default or the lesser option, rewrite its expectations.

When someone wants both

Offer a bounded assignment on one path for the next quarter. Agree who gives feedback and what evidence would make the person want to keep going or try the other path.

Worked example.

Practice scenario

A senior designer has run the team's research for a year and asks about the next step. They like the work and don't want to manage people.

The decision

Describe the expert path in concrete terms: the problems they would take on and the decisions they would own. Agree one such problem for the next quarter and review it together.

If they later want to lead people, show them the management path and what changes in the daily work.

When it gets complicated.

The company has no titles for the expert track.

Write the expectations first. Titles can follow once the expectations hold up in review.

Everyone asks to become a manager.

Ask what they want more of. Check whether the expert track actually gives people wider decisions, visibility and access to the same progression review. Give one example of each.

A manager wants to go back to the craft.

Treat it as a change of path, not a demotion. Agree what they take on and how the team knows who owns what.

See how the tracks took shape at Medius →

Worksheet.

Describe the next step.

Bring one person and the path you are discussing. Write what changes, so the conversation is about work and not about a title.

Filled-in example

Current role	Senior UX Designer.
Path being discussed	Expert.
Problems to take on	One problem that spans several modules.
Decisions owned	How the team handles that problem across modules.
Who relies on them	Designers in two or more modules.
Review date	End of next quarter.

Use it on your project

At the next career conversation, record the path, the problem and the review date.

Responsibility to try

Who will give feedback

Review date and what you will look for