

Career Management and Development: The Emerging Paradigm

Discerning the future of Career Management brings us more challenges than opportunities, more questions than answers.

Long ago, Peter Drucker (1997) was asked how he could predict the reunification of Germany when no one else did so. He replied 'I never predict. I just look out of the window and see what is visible but not yet seen'. In today's world, with the Career Management landscape changing faster than most of its architects can anticipate, it throws all of us back to Drucker's reply. So we look out making an attempt to see the challenges and imperatives of Career Management for the future.

The knowledge economy is changing the way people work. New entrants in to the job market can expect to experience a succession of jobs in a number of Industry sectors during their working lives. They may have concurrent part time jobs at one time and work periods will be interspersed with periods of learning, either full or part time perhaps while working at one or more jobs.

Consequently, the support needed for working individuals to continuously assess themselves and acquire skills that are required to effectively manage oneself throughout one's career span is becoming increasingly critical. The challenge is to help individuals learn how to choose wisely and commit to ongoing self improvement for the rewards of satisfaction and self fulfillment in the near- term and contingency planning in the longer- term.

Building a career is no longer about finding the right job and keeping it, but about making continual career choices in response to a rapidly changing job market Thus the knowledge economy demands a new approach to career management

Career Management would involve planning and navigating workforce progression and movement within the organization by aligning their preferences and expectations in-line with the resourcing needs of the organization. Career management needs to take into account the needs of both the organisation and the individuals within. The key challenge is in striking the right balance.

The results of several Research studies on the effectiveness of Career Development programs show that a higher level of satisfaction with such programs produces correspondingly higher levels of quality of working life, job satisfaction, professional development and productivity

According to industry estimates only a quarter of all graduates are employable and about 80% of job seekers in employment exchange are without any professional skills.

According to a 2005 McKinsey study, only 25 per cent of our engineering graduates, 15 per cent of our finance and accounting professionals and 10 per cent of professionals with any kind of degrees, in India, are suitable for working in multinational companies

A recent KPMG report titled 'Global Skills for Graduates in Financial Services' states that companies looking to expand their global operations in India are hamstrung by a 'talent gap' when hiring fresh graduates

The report also speaks of financial services organisations' growing concern about soft skills among young employees

Nasscom says the industry will be short of 82,000 workers by 2007. By 2009, the shortfall is expected to be around 206,000.

A closer look at some of the emerging trends in the workforce scenario in our country would justify the pressing need for a National framework for Career Management for the future as an imperative.

India is suffering from a massive shortage of skilled manpower. India has 4 million-plus unemployed graduates at a time when employers are desperate for talent. The problem lies in quality and not quantity of manpower. Almost every industry from IT, Retail, Finance, telecommunication, healthcare, manufacturing and biotechnology is struggling to find skilled manpower.

"There are signals of manpower shortages already in the horizon. Our estimates show that manufacturing sector will be hard hit." -PHDCCI statement.

Consequently the choices for individuals with appropriate skills are wider than that of the past. Employees have never had it so good ever before. In fact on most occasions it is the employee who is more likely to fire the employer! This has resulted in the war for the limited talent pool among organizations. The typical organizational response to such a phenomenon has resulted in higher wage costs, higher attrition levels, high employee poaching rates all of which have proved detrimental to the longer term growth and development of the industry.

The challenge for the organizations today is to balance the ever changing needs of individuals in order to meet their resource requirements it is in such a context that the need for a credible and comprehensive Career Development and Management system has emerged not merely as a necessity but more as a business imperative.

The new career management paradigm recognizes that career development is a life-long process of skill acquisition and building through a continuum of learning, development and mastery. This process enables people to be in charge of their own careers, having enough focus and direction for stability and enough flexibility and adaptability to allow for change along the way.

Career management does not seek to help people make the "right" choice the first time. It equips them to make good choices, time after time, year after year, for the rest of their lives.

Old Paradigm	New Paradigm
Office	Virtual space and remote working
Success = career ladder	Success = valued skills
Authority	Influence
Entitlement	Marketability
Loyalty to company	Loyalty to work and self
Salaries and benefits	Contracts and fees
Job security	Personal freedom and control
Identity = job, position, occupation	Identity = life circumstances and contribution to work, family, community
Attention to bosses and managers	Attention to clients and customers
Employees	Vendors, entrepreneurs, team members
Full time employment	Part time, Flexi Time and Contractual
Bureaucratic organization	Shared Vision and Mission

"In today's workplace, the need to for continuous assessment and analysis of the changing needs and expectations of the workforce at all levels of the organization needs to be the core objective of all career management initiatives. Unlike in the past, it is not only a few high performers who are susceptible to be weaned away by other organizations. Most employees are constantly being faced with the plethora of alternative career options to pursue on a continuing basis. If you're not talking with your people about their careers, you can bet somebody else probably is"

A generic framework for initiating a Career Management initiative in the organization would involve these process steps:

1. **Conduct a career development audit** to assess career development needs and organizational climate -- and identify any existing career development tools such as job posting, tuition reimbursement, work force assessment services such as competency profiles, training needs, employee engagement studies, attrition analysis studies, and other programs that may be currently available to employees, and examine their correlation with overall job satisfaction levels.

2. **Develop a preliminary career development statement** for the organization which addresses the needs, priorities and rationale for committing to a career development initiative.

A majority of organisations appear to follow a 'partnership' model when managing employees' careers. Organisations generally advocate individual ownership for career management, but also agree that individuals need advice, support and training in how to manage their careers.

3. **Convene a career development project team;** comprising a cross section of representatives through all levels of the organization, to fine-tune the career development statement, generate ideas and approaches for services, and assess organizational goals, timelines and budgets.

The barriers to effective career management appear to be practical ones: lack of time and resources; career management being seen as optional or peripheral; and lack of senior management commitment - all to do with 'getting it done' rather than problems with its strategic intent.

For effective career management, activities need to be formalized into a strategy that is linked both to business and HR strategy. Line managers and HR staff also need to be trained to deliver career support to employees.

Gaining the buy-in and commitment of senior management is vital to ensuring that career management is given the due attention, resources and importance it needs in order to be delivered effectively to employees.

4. **Select components for the career development program,** looking at such possibilities as career management workshops, private professional consultation for employees, career coaching workshops for managers, career informational interviews, success teams for peer coaching and support, mentoring, job shadowing, skills databases and on-line career coaching.

The 2003 Managing Employee Careers survey reviews current practice in UK Organisations and provides useful information about HR practitioners' views on what makes for effective career management.

The link between career management, HR and business strategies

- *Under half of the organisations surveyed have a formal written strategy for the career management of their employees (48%).*
- *HR is considered to be the most involved in determining this strategy, although board members and line managers were both involved 'a great deal' in over a third of cases.*
- *The main strategic aims of career management are to grow future senior management/leaders, retain key staff and support changes in the organisational structure/business environment.*
- *56% of respondents felt that their activities had been 'effective' or 'very effective' in meeting strategic objectives.*

Career management practices rated as most effective % of respondents seeing the practices as 'effective' or 'very effective'

Career Management Practices	% of respondents seeing the practices as 'effective' or 'very effective'
Open internal job market	85
Development or assessment centres	84
Online vacancy board	83
Development programmes which include work/career experience	83
Graduate entry schemes	82
Career moves managed by the organisation	80
Career counseling by trained individuals	78
Career coaching	76
Formal appraisal or development review including a career review	75
High-potential development schemes	73
Internal secondments/project assignments/work shadowing	77
Informal career support from HR or training function	72
Formal mentoring	72

(Source: The 2003 Managing Employee Careers survey-CIPD)

- Conduct career development discussion sessions** to provide an overview, answer questions and communicate goals and objectives to all levels of the organization. Emphasize anticipated benefits, including improved person-job match, communication about career opportunities, larger talent inventory for special projects, and clarification of career options and resources.

The traditional annual appraisal session to discuss achievements against goals and development expectations of the employee will surely become a thing of the past. The workforce of today takes a more active role in managing their careers and their future. Being confronted with choice points and career dilemmas of staying on or switching jobs or switching industries have become almost an every day phenomenon. The answers to these are not easy to come by. Organisations will need an ongoing forum of free exchange of information and resources on career development and management initiatives across all levels. Such discussions would focus more on the careers of employees than their performance in the organization.

A career development discussion differs from a performance review in that it is not tied to compensation but focuses on the skills and abilities needed to achieve personal career goals in the future. A broad-ranging discussion has an unlimited timeframe and ideally should occur several times through the year.

That's why a focus on career development is so important today. To help protect human assets, organizations today must provide the tools and resources employees need to manage their careers, to align individual visions of career success with strategic business goals and objectives.

As we scan the environment for those straws in the wind that may portend major shifts or change, in the backdrop of our introspection are some messages from our career management practices of the past with powerful implications for the future. Almost all thought leaders on this subject remind us to be people focused-to keep a human face on human resources.

References:

- *Leading Change: An Imperative on Leadership- Frances Hesselbein*
- *The New Career Management Paradigm 2003-Jarvis Philip*
- *Taking Charge of your career-R.Kannan*
- *The Business Case for Career Development-Dan King*
- *'India is suffering from a real shortage of manpower' – Sanjeev Duggal*

Future Changes in Career Management practices.

- *Over 95% of respondents agree that individuals will be expected to take responsibility for looking after their own careers in the future.*
- *However, over 90% of respondents also believe that individuals must be offered support in terms of advice, guidance and information by organisations for this to work effectively.*
- *In the future, career management is considered to play an important role in organisational change or restructuring*

(Source: The 2003 Managing Employee Careers survey-CIPD)