

What do you need to know about career guidance

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Organisations need to align their employees' career goals with the strategic goals of the organisations. Employees usually feel more engaged when they believe that their employer is concerned about their growth and provides avenues to reach individual career goals while fulfilling the company's mission. In a study by global staffing firm Randstad, 73 per cent of employers said fostering employee development is important, but only 49 per cent of employees said leadership is adhering to this practice. A 2011 report, *The Bottom Line*, by Catalyst has identified four career advancement strategy profiles based on the methods that individuals use to get ahead. These profiles include:

- **Climbers.** Individuals who seek advancement in their organizations by asking for varied assignments, working long hours, networking and seeking greater visibility.
- **Hedgers.** Individuals who use all career tactics available to advance in and outside their current organizations.
- **Scanners.** Individuals who monitor the job market closely and are poised to change jobs, if not organizations, as opportunities arise.
- **Coasters.** Individuals who do little to seek career advancement

Results from the 2008 Encore Career Survey by MetLife Foundation and Civic Ventures found that unexpectedly large numbers of Baby Boomers are looking for jobs that can provide them with "means and meaning. According to Arthur & Rousseau, the progress of individuals in an orderly employment arrangement within organisations is known as the 'Bureaucratic career'.

Super depicts a vocational career model, where he argues that individual career development is implemented through the following five life stages:

- Growth stage (Birth – 14 years)
- Exploratory stage (15-25 years)
- Establishment stage (25-45 years)
- Maintenance stage (45-65 years)
- Decline stage (65 years – death)¹⁷

What is a Career Development Plan?

A career development plan is a personalized action plan used by individuals to map their careers. It is a roadmap of one's career. Despite the clarion call to create career paths and ladders to retain and develop

talent many organisations do not have well-crafted career development plans for their employees

Why is the career development plan important?

According to a Research done by WorldatWork organizations that do not invest in training and development of their human capital lose valuable employees to their competition and organisations that have employee development plans differentiate themselves from labour market competitors. A 2012 Deloitte survey, Talent 2020, found that when employees were asked to indicate the top factors that would cause them to look for new employment over the next 12 months, lack of career progress topped the list, whereas lack of challenge in the job came in at No. 5, suggesting the need for career development plans

- It provides employees with an ongoing mechanism to enhance their skills and knowledge that can lead to mastery of their current jobs, promotions and transfers to new or different positions.
- Providing identifiable career paths is used as a strategy for retention of critical staff
- Implementing career paths may also have a direct impact on the entire organization by improving morale, career satisfaction, motivation, productivity, and responsiveness in meeting departmental and organizational objectives
- It assists employees in achieving their goals
- It helps employees set realistic expectations of career growth by suggesting time frames for certain milestones to happen and identifying areas that employees need to develop before becoming eligible for their next career milestone.
- If used appropriately, it can help the manager focus on supporting employees in gaining new skills, while adding value to their organizations.
- It also helps employees stay on track and move forward in their careers

What do you need to do when developing your career plan?

Step 1. Where Am I Now

As a point of departure for your career navigation, you need to have an appreciation of yourself, what is important to you, your dreams and hopes for the years ahead. When developing a personal development plan is imperative to have a snapshot of where you are by exploring some of the questions below:

Where am I now with regards to my career?

What do I think are my strengths/weaknesses?

What have been my successes/failures?

What are my values?

What skills do I possess naturally?

What has prompted my job moves in the past?

STEP 2. Where Do I want to go?

Knowing where you want to go makes the navigation of your career path much easier. Before concluding your intended destination in terms of your career, you may need to explore some of these questions:

What are my short/long term goals?

Where will I see myself in the next year or five years from now?

What challenges should I want to face?

What is my preferred balance between work and my personal life?

What roadblocks am I likely going to face in my career progression?

Do I have a calling for my desired career?

Step 3. What Steps Should I take to reach my career?

You need to know the steps you are supposed to follow to reach your career and these help you to set clear goals and you should set your goals by applying the smart principle. Here are some of the questions to explore:

What steps do I need to take to get from where I am now to where I want to be?

What new skills /knowledge do I need to possess?

What existing skills do I need to develop?

What obstacles do I need to overcome to make sure this happens

What do I need to do to prepare me to achieve my goals?

What resources do I need?

What are my measures of success?

Step 4. What Resources Do I Need?

If you are to achieve your career goals there are some resources you should mobilise. You may need to examine some of the questions below:

Who can support me to achieve my goals?

What role can my colleagues play in helping me to stay focused?

What role can my manager play in supporting my career aspirations?

Who else can support me to realise my career goals?

Step 5. How do I Monitor Progress Against My Plan?

You need to set a timeline and define when and how progress on all activities and goals will be evaluated. You should indicate when each activity and goal will be accomplished.

Career development needs to be prioritised if any organisation needs to retain its competent staff and increase organisational performance.

Source:

DeFillippi, R.J., Arthur, M.B. (1994), 'The boundaryless career: a competency-based perspective', Journal of Organizational Behaviour,

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