# Career Development: An Overview

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**Career Development:**

**An Overview**

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research is to give a brief overview about career development because many organizations and employees find it challenging to develop an effective career development strategy. This research addresses career and career development definitions, career development components, process and strategies. It also addresses the career management model, finalizing with recommendations for organizations and employees and a conclusion.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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## 1. Definitions

Sullivan and Baruch defined "career" as "an individual's work-related and other relevant experiences, both inside and outside of organizations that form a unique pattern over the individual's life span" (2009), this definition distinguishes both physical movement as well as the interpretation of individual's perceptions of the career.

One definition of career management is that it is the planning of one's activities and engagements in the job one assumes in the path of his life for better completion, growth and financial stability (Juneja, n.d.). Moreover, Career Development Association of Alberta defined career development as "the lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future" (2012).

Workers want the chance to progress in their careers, "opportunity is the top reason why 39 percent of employees are engaged." (Dixon, 2017). Along with that increased engagement, career development programs lead to holding more people who are productive and grow their skills, thus advancing the organization.

## 2. Career Management Components

If an organization lacks career development programs, it may lose talented employees. By implementing a career development program you will not retain all your valuable talented employees, but you will decrease the risk of losing them, so this program is essential for all organizations, and the components of career development are:

1. Education
2. Capability
3. Network
4. Experience

### 2.1 Education

The first component/element of career development is education. This includes both training (degree, certificates and classes) as well as self-training like reading, ongoing classes, books and reading blogs and being always up-to-date for new

researches in the relevant field. Successful careers starts with education, getting education to understand the broad concepts and overview of the relative industry is crucial. However, you should not over invest in education without having experience. While education is crucial, it's a form of power, and how you invest this education is more important than the paper itself. A bachelor degree is the most essential need in any business now a days, however, in resumes education part is usually listed in the bottom (Owyang, 2012).

## 2.2 Capability

The next component of career development, is the capability. Capabilities are the raw skills needed to complete your jobs. These can include data, developing strategies, project management, software management, programming, or a wide range of knowledge working. Most employers agree that having both strategic and tactical skills are needed (Owyang, 2012).

### 2.2.1 Strategic Skills

6 key strategic skills are: (Brearley, n.d.)

- **Knowing how to prioritize:** Arranging your workload is a key strategic skill. Don't use a complicated process, start with "Must Do" tasks and "Won't Do" tasks. That's it. No more classifications.

- **Knowing when you need to be involved:** Another vital strategic skill is understanding where you add the most value. Leaders don't need to engross themselves in everything their team does. You need to know when to get out of the detail and let your team run things.

- **Knowing how to manage up:** One of the most important strategic skills is know how to manage up. Strategic leaders don't say "Yes" all the time. They push back on people when they need to and say "No". If you say "Yes" all the time, you're going to be overwhelmed in the long run.

- **Knowing when to delegate responsibility, not just tasks:** Handing over isn't just about tasks. Sometimes, you can delegate responsibility in your team to others. Not only does this provide growth chances for your team, it frees up some of your time.

- **Knowing how to resource your team properly:** Having the right people in your team is a strategic skill in itself. If you don't have the right skills in your team, you'll never be able to take advantage of opportunities. You'll be playing catch-up, because you don't have the right skills, or enough people.

- **Being aware of the outside world:** Leaders with good strategic skills understand what's going on around them. Keep an eye out for industry trends or technologies that may help you and your team perform better. The world outside is changing and if you don't keep an eye on it, it might leave you behind.

### 2.2.2  *Tactical Skills*
5 key tactical skills: (Berkus, 2014)

- **Delegate:** Nothing is more of a turn off to a minion than having the boss do the work for that person. Worse yet, breakdown to delegate make the leader the key blockage in the flow of work through an organization.  A great leader learns to delegate, first.

- **Measure the results of delegation:** If there is no attempt to measure, no-one will know if the work is up to standards for timeliness, quality, or the vision of the leader.  There are many types of metrics, some very easy to accomplish.  But failure to find and use them regularly is a failure at the top.

- **Support:** A leader's obligation is to make sure that anything he delegates and measures is given a chance of success by providing the tools required to perform the job.  Those include funding, people, training and facilities.

- **Reward:** "A great leader is a great cheerleader", knowing when and how to reward effective achievement through all levels of the organization.  People naturally work for rewards, from simple recognition to financial incentives.

- **Celebrate:** There is no greater feeling than to achieve a goal and to celebrate that with some form of out-of-the-ordinary event.  It can be a simple handshake and comment in front of others who count, or an all-company celebration after achievement of a major goal.  A leader who fails to follow through and celebrate misses a major opportunity to enhance the culture of the organization and motivate the troops to further achievements.

### 2.3 Network

Network is the third component of career development. These are the individuals in your career that you can depend on that will assist you when you ask, or will voluntarily help you without asking. Like all relationships, your business network involves constant attention and coaching. Don't be that person who just comes around when you need something, but be there to help others, and uphold an ongoing relationship (Owyang, 2012).

### 2.4 Experience

The fourth and last component of career development is experience. Solid careers may have a chain of job positions that affiliate around a common career theme (marketing, management, software, etc.) and having a solid track record is key. For those getting ongoing in their career this is a challenge, as most entry level positions are seeking the experienced. Focus on volunteering, interning, and attending local events to get networked. In the end, this row becomes crucial as it's the majority of one's resume (Owyang, 2012).

## 3  Career Development Process
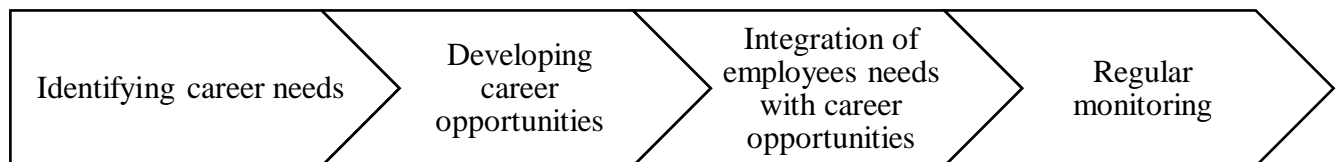


Figure 1: Career Development Process

### 3.1 Identifying Career Needs

Some large organizations have assessment centers or apply career development workshops wherein a group of employees are brought together to undertake psychological testing, simulation exercises, and depth interviews. This process helps the employee to make a decision concerning career goals and the steps to be taken to put efforts to accomplish these goals. The HR manager also plays an important role of providing

information and assistance in making decisions about the career needs of the employee (Risha, n.d.).

### 3.2 Developing Career Opportunities

Career opportunities are identified through job analysis. The manager should identify career path for employees in the organization. He should discuss with the employees what jobs are available in the organizational hierarchy and at the same time find where the employee would want to go up in the organization in future. The employees should be provided information regarding job postings that are available in the organization and, for future reference, what requirements they will have to fulfill to achieve the promotion which they aspire (Risha, n.d.).

#### 3.2.1 Career Path

Career paths are means that individuals take from their first foray into the job market through to their final position before retirement. Commonly, speaking career paths start with the most junior position and end with the most senior position, this isn't always the case but is likely the intent of the individual. It's important to start thinking of career paths early as the alternatives made early on in a career can influence the opportunities available in the future (HR Zone, n.d.).

#### 3.2.2 Job Analysis

Job analysis is a process to identify and determine in detail the certain job duties and requirements and the comparative importance of these duties for a given job. Job analysis is a process where results are made about data collected on a job.

"The Job; not the person". An imperative notion of job analysis is that the analysis is conducted of the job, not the person. While job analysis data may be collected from executives through interviews or questionnaires, the result of the analysis is a description or specifications of the job, not a description of the person (HR Guide, 2015).

#### 3.2.3 Succession Planning

Business Jargons defined succession planning as "the systematic process of recognizing and creating future leaders who are able to take the position of the old ones when they leave the organization due to retirement, resignation, termination, transfer, promotion or death." (Business Jargons, n.d.).

### 3.2.3.1 Succession Planning Process

Succession planning process consists of 5 steps: (Business Jargons, n.d.)

| Step | Explanation |
|---|---|
| Identifying Key Business Areas and Positions | First, the key business areas are identified, i.e. the areas which are significant with respect to the operational activities and strategic objectives. After that, those positions are identified which if vacant can cause difficulty in achieving business objectives. |
| Ascertaining Competencies for Key areas and positions | You need to determine the required competencies for key business areas and position, in order to create the selection criteria, establish performance standards and fill the difference between what the viable successors know and what they need to know, through the training and development process. It determines the knowledge, skills, ability and experience required to achieve business goals. |
| Find out the interested and potential candidates and assess them as per the competencies | After competency is analyzed, the next step is to identify among various employees working in the organization, who are interested as well as they have the capability to fill key business areas and positions. The Human Resource Manager discusses future career plans and interests with the candidates and identifies the potential successors who are ready to replace the old ones and can be trained and developed for future contingencies. |
| Develop and Implement Succession Strategies | Strategies for learning, training, development, knowledge transfer, experience sharing is developed and implemented for potential successors. |
| Evaluate Effectiveness | The last step to the succession planning process is to evaluate the succession planning and management, to ensure that all the key business areas and positions are covered under the succession planning. Further, it also ensures that in case of any sudden vacancies in future, key positions can be filled as soon as possible and the successors perform effectively when they hold the position. |

*Table 1: Succession Planning Process*

Therefore, Succession Planning is all about developing a leadership substitute, for a perpetual succession of the organization without any kind of disturbance, when there are changes in the top management.

## 3.3 Integration of Employee Needs with Career Opportunities

It is required to align the needs and ambitions of the employees with career opportunities in order to ensure right people will be available to meet the organizational manpower requirements. Therefore, emphasis is placed on the training, on- and off-the-job, counselling and coaching by supervisor, and planned rotation in positions of fluctuating functions and in different locations. The process is pursued further with the help of periodic performance appraisals. Training and counselling will be a wasteful exercise if the employee does not make progress along his career path (Risha, n.d.)

Two important techniques in this stage are:.

a) Management by objectives (MBO)
b) Career counselling

### 3.3.1 Management by Objectives (MBO)

Under 'management by objectives', the employee sets his development goals and also an action plan to achieve those goals. Steps are taken by the line managers to integrate personal goals with the organizational goals (Risha, n.d.).

### 3.3.2 Career Counselling

In the case of counselling, the manager discusses the strengths and weaknesses of the employee. This helps the employee to identify areas of development so that he/she can meet future chal-lenges of his job (Risha, n.d.)

## 3.4 Regular Monitoring

It is required to regularly monitor the progress of the employee towards his career development plans and see that the provision is being provided to develop those career plans. If there is an incongruity, steps should be taken to recast work as necessary to confirm that career development plans are met. In situations where career opportunities are not available due to influence of technology and economic factors, the organization should redesign jobs or make career shifts (Risha, n.d.).

## 4 Career Development Strategies

There is two critical strategies for career development which are:

a) Individual strategies

b) Organizational strategies

### 4.1 Individual Strategies

Usually, organizations put efforts to develop their employees. However, employees should also take initiatives to develop their own careers. Career is the result of matching individual's goals with the organizational goals. Career development is a joint responsibility of an employee and the organization. If an employee wants only the organization to develop his career, the organization is likely to impose too much organizational control restricting the autonomy of that employee. Therefore, it advised that you should be instrumental to manage your own career (Risha, n.d.).

The self-management of your career will help you control your own vocation and boost your independence. In career decisions, the individual is the only one having appropriate information. He must be assertive to express his feelings so that he does not get deceived with regard to his career. The steps involved in successful self-management of career are:

a) Do it now

b) Know yourself

c) Analyze career opportunities

d) Establish career goal

e) Obtain feedback

f) Manage your career

#### 4.1.1. *Do it Now*

Do not delay in taking the decisions that have an impact on your career. Do not wait for an auspicious day to come; for completing an academic activity, for settling down, and for any other reasons. Pursuing a career will always have uncertainties. Self-management helps to reduce the uncertainties (Risha, n.d.).

### 4.1.2. Know Yourself

First thing you have to know is your strengths and weaknesses. You must know how others see you; view your behavioral pattern, and opinions they possess. You must have the ear to hear what others are telling about you (Risha, n.d.).

### 4.1.3. Analyze Career Opportunities

Try and examine the sources of career opportunities. There are many sources of information concerning occupations and career opportunities. You may also collect information from some of your friends or relatives who keep themselves informed. Spend few hours browsing the internet to determine what potential employers are seeking (Risha, n.d.).

### 4.1.4. Establish Career Goals

In the previous steps, we discussed that you should not delay decisions related to your career, you need to know yourself, and you must analyze career opportunities. Putting it all together, now you should develop your specific career goals. These goals must be SMART, and may be for short or long term (Risha, n.d.).

#### 4.1.4.1. SMART Goals

Goals are part of every attribute of business/life and afford a sense of direction, motivation, a clear focus, and clarify importance. By setting goals for yourself, you are providing yourself with a target to aim for. A SMART goal is used to help guide goal setting. SMART is an

| Specific | Measurable | Achievable | Realistic | Timely |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| •Who is involved in this goal? <br>•What do I want to accomplish? <br>•Where is this goal to be achieved? <br>•When do I want to achieve this goal? <br>•Why do I want to achieve this goal? | •How many/much? <br>•How do I know if I have reached my goal? <br>•What is my indicator of progress? | •Do I have the resources and capabilities to achieve the goal? If not, what am I missing? <br>•Have others done it successfully before? | •Is the goal realistic and within reach? <br>•Is the goal reachable given the time and resources? <br>•Are you able to commit to achieving the goal? | •Does my goal have a deadline? <br>•By when do you want to achieve your goal? |

acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely. Therefore, a

SMART goal incorporates all of these criteria to help focus your efforts and increase the chances of achieving that goal (Corporate Finance Institute, n.d.).

### 4.1.5. *Obtain Feedback*

Feedback from relevant people help one correct his errors. You are required to think and plan how you will gather feedbacks from others with regard to your self-analysis and current career planning (Risha, n.d.).

### 4.1.6. *Manage Your Career*

This is not just implementing your plan, it is an ongoing process. Evaluating and modifying career goals and plans should be a continual process. You must be flexible while taking decisions. You should not be tied up completely with a particularly job, department, or organization (Risha, n.d.).

*Figure 2: SMART Goals*

### 4.1.7. *Self-Management*

Self-assessment is the essential tool for self-management, self-assessment is researching within you. Self-assessment aspects include: (Risha, n.d.)

a) Achievements
b) Skills and abilities
c) Personal values
d) Interests
e) Disabilities
f) Personal and family circumstances

## 4.2. Organizational Strategies

For the aim of developing human resources management, and career issues such as reducing employees attritions, developing high-potential employees, preparing for managerial positions, enhancing problem solving skills…, organizations spend efforts on designing programs for their employees' career development. Literatures suggest a number of specific drives that organizations can take to make the career programs effective.

### 4.2.1. Human Resources Planning and Forecasting System

Considering and analyzing the targets of the organization, it should develop the job specifications and recruit personnel of the required quantity and requisite quality. Companies need to develop procedures to meet the target in fluctuating situations. They need to select the appropriate forecasting technique to assess manpower needs.

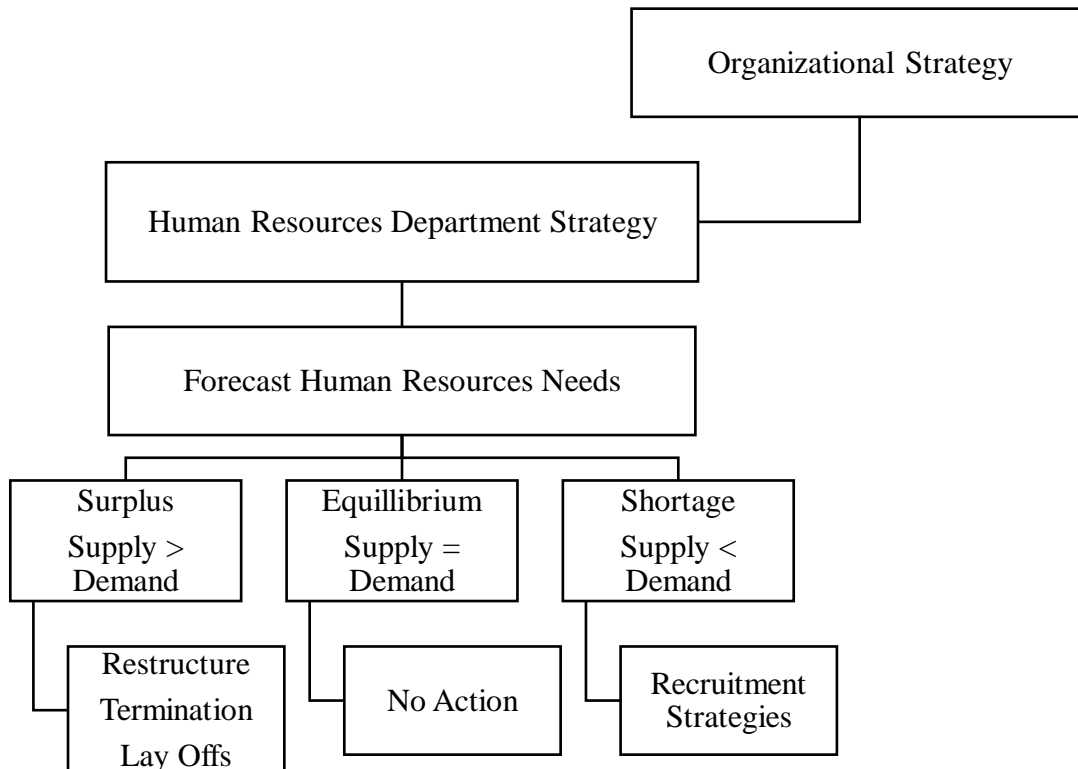### 4.2.1.1. Human Resources Planning



*Figure 3: Human Resources Planning Process*

Management Study Guide defined human resources planning as "Human Resource Planning (HRP) is the process of forecasting the future human resource requirements of the organization and determining as to how the existing human resource capacity of the organization can be utilized to fulfill these requirements" (Juneja, n.d.).

### 4.2.2. Improving Dissemination of Career Option Information

Organizations that have career development systems should share the information with the employees because they always remain impatient to know more about their career and the various available options. Organizations can share information through administrative manuals,

circulars, or other documents. By sharing information with employees, they can concentrate more on their assigned work (Risha, n.d.).

### 4.2.3. Initial Career Counselling

Career counselling is a way of periodic performance appraisal, in addition to that, counselling provides the opportunity to discuss career issues of employees, their goals and opportunities available for developing in career (Risha, n.d.).

### 4.2.4. Support of Education and Training

Education and training systems support all the levels of employees to improve their careers. First, prerequisites for further career growth are identified, and a training needs analysis is conducted accordingly. Education is imparted for further employees' growth (Risha, n.d.).

### 4.2.5. Job Posting

Employees seek to advance their careers. Employees need to be informed about advancements in their careers, and organizations must provide all information regarding job openings. Moreover, a job posting system helps organizations to attract talents, and this system simulates employees of all levels in career planning and development (Risha, n.d.).

### 4.2.6. Special Assignments and Job Rotating

Doing the same job over a long period of time generates boredom. Employees should get the opportunity of gaining new experience by way of performing special assignments and through job rotation. These actions enable employees to learn new things first-hand and performing them in different settings. Simultaneously, management can also ascertain the capacity and potential of an employee to accept challenges, working in new settings, and with new people (Risha, n.d.).

### 4.2.7. Career Development Workshops

Considering the importance of employees' career development, organizations are arranging workshops and seminars as essential career development activities. These workshops clearly indicate organizations' concern for career development. However, the central assumption of these workshops is the joint responsibility of individual and the organization for career development (Risha, n.d.).

### 4.2.8. Flexible Rewards and Promotional System

Financial and non-financial rewards are used by ost of the organizations. The scope of rewards and determining success criteria are limited due to limited thinking about them. Nowadays, in the financial area, there is a growing trend toward giving employees a choice among several forms of financial rewards.

In fact, organizations need to develop multiple ladders to consider promotion and rewards. The promotional system should reflect the desires for spiral as well as linear careers. The employees will definitely contribute their best to the organizations if flexible rewards and promotional system are installed.

### 4.2.9. *Development and Use of Assessment System*

Many organizations use formal assessment and development system in order to evaluate potential of employees to help them advance in their careers. Use of assessment systems have emerged as a practice while selecting people. Later, organizations use assessment systems for career planning as well.

## 5. Career Management Model

The career management model describes how people should manage their careers.

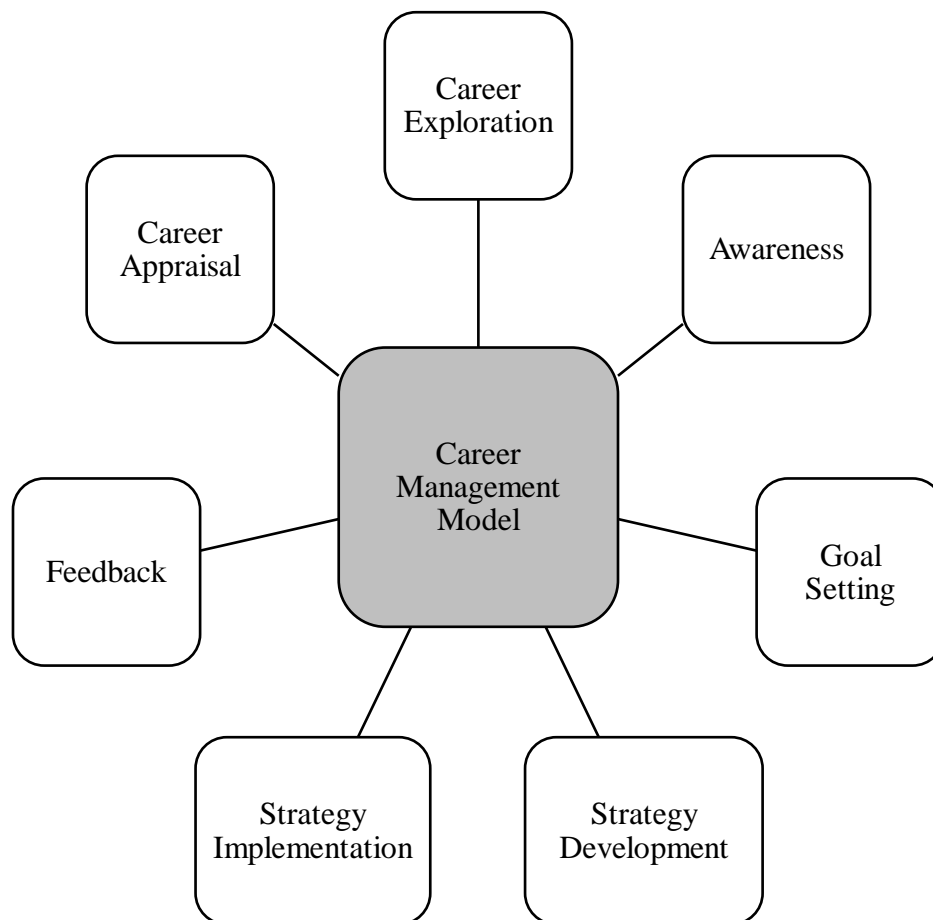It consists of a few important components: (iEdu Note, n.d.)



*Figure 4: Career Management Model*

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## 5.1. Career Exploration

Career exploration is the collection and analysis of career related information. The employee should be aware of his own talent, interest, values, the importance of work in his life, and about alternative jobs inside ad outside the organization. Career exploration advances awareness.

There are two types of career exploration: self-exploration and environmental exploration. Career exploration should enable an individual to become more fully aware of himself and his environment (iEdu Note, n.d.).

### *5.1.1. Self-exploration*

Self-exploration can provide a greater awareness of personal qualities. A person ought to gain insight, for example, into his values, interests, and talents in both his work and non-work lives.

Self-exploration provides information about strengths, weaknesses, talents and limitations in order to let employees possess a deep understanding of their activities, whether they like it or not. Self-awareness or self-assessment involves identifying and understanding one's interests, skills, and values as a foundation for career decision making, planning, and action.

Assessing and understanding your interests, skills, and values is the first step in identifying the career path that is right for you.

There is a big difference between getting a job and pursuing a career you love. Research has shown that individuals who choose careers that are closely aligned with their interests, skills, and values tend to be more satisfied in their jobs and enjoy greater career success.

The self-assessment process is important, not only in pursuing your first internship or job after college but also throughout your life as you move forward in your career (iEdu Note, n.d.).

### *5.1.2. Environmental Exploration*

Environmental exploration includes types of occupation, types of industries, necessary skills, and job alternatives within a given organization or alternative future jobs, experience needed to move from current line position to a staff position, company alternatives and impact of family on career decisions (iEdu Note, n.d.).

## 5.2. Awareness

As discussed before, exploration advances awareness. Awareness is an accurate perception of person's own qualities and characteristics of his relevant environment. Furthermore, awareness is a central concept in career development. An exhaustive awareness of the self and the environment allows a person to set his career goals and strategies of development (iEdu Note, n.d.).

## 5.3. Goal Setting

People set career goals to maintain motivation, have something to look forward to and achieve success. Effective career goals follow the SMART model that is explored previously (iEdu Note, n.d.).

### 5.4. Strategy Development

A career strategy is a structured approach to developing capabilities, tools, and resources in an organization, which will enable people to navigate their career 'journey' successfully. The main strategies are, for example, competence in the present job, extended work involvement, development of skills through training, opportunity development, development of supportive relationships (mentors, sponsors, and peers), image building, and organizational politics (iEdu Note, n.d.).

### 5.5. Strategy Implementation

"Strategy implementation put simply is the process that puts plans and strategies into action to reach goals. The implementation of a reasonable strategy can produce progress toward the stated career goal" (iEdu Note, n.d.).

### 5.6. Feedback

The implementation of a career strategy can provide useful feedback to the person. This feedback can enable the person to appraise his career (iEdu Note, n.d.).

### 5.7. Career Appraisal

Whether the employee is progressing in his career toward his goal or not, the career strategy implementation provides a useful feedback. This feedback, in conjunction with feedback from other work and non-work sources, can allow a person to appraise his career. "Career appraisal is the process by which people acquire and use career related feedback to determine whether their goals and strategies are appropriate" (iEdu Note, n.d.).

## 6. Indicators of Effective Career Management

Greenhaus and Callanan have identified four indicators of effective career management.

They suggest that effective career management requires: (iEdu Note, n.d.)

a) Deep knowledge of the employee himself/herself and an accurate picture of the environment.
b) The development of realistic goals that are compatible with one's values, interest, abilities and desired lifestyle,
c) The development and implementation of appropriate career strategies and
d) Continual feedback process that permits adaptation in the face of the changing situation.

## 7. Benefits of Career Development

Career development fosters open communication within the organization. This indorses the open communication upon all organizational levels, the top managers and managers, and the employees and managers. It is important to know that open communication is the root of any organization

Career development also encourages better use of employee skills. It aids the organization by means of allowing managers to be aware of their skills and competencies do that they can apply them at a position or occupation where they'll be able to have better results.

Career development offer employees and the managers with beneficial assistance with regards to career decisions. Moreover, they acquire an opportunity to evaluate their skills and competencies and discover their objectives and future plans.

Due to the fact that organizations need to retain their indispensable assets and prepare them for top-level positions in the future, they have to understand their career expectations and requirements from their organization, and this is accomplished by the aid of career development plans.

Career development plans provides feedback. This is necessary to evaluate the success rate of a particular policy employed and the initiatives taken by the organization. Correspondingly, this also helps managers to provide feedback for employees' performance (Management - Training Guru, 2015).

## 8. Recommendations

According to what has been discussed above, here are some recommendations for organizations and for employees.

### 8.1. For Organizations

It is recommended for organizations to:

a) Plan and implement for an effective career development strategy
b) Increase budgets for training programs and workshops related to career development
c) Develop a succession plan
d) Implement for job posting systems
e) Communicate all the above recommendations with employees

### 8.2. For Employees

It is also recommended for employees to:

a) Don't wait organizations to develop your career path
b) Take the initiative to develop you skills and competencies
c) Stay up-to-date for any new features related to your field
d) Set SMART goals for you career path

## 9. Conclusion

As a conclusion, a career development strategy is essential for both organizations and employees, it has several benefits for both as we discussed. It is challenging to do that effectively, but it can be effective if all career management components are took into consideration when planning and implementing the career development plan.

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