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Career Development

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Chapter objectives

The objectives of this chapter are to:

- examine how the notion of career has been defined;
- explore a range of contemporary career concepts;
- investigate the field of career counselling through looking at Schein's Career Anchors Inventory and Holland's Vocational Preference Inventory;
- analyse the importance of continuing professional development.

Introduction

In an ever-changing, fast-paced, globalised world, career development and career planning have become increasingly important aspects of human resource development. Managing one's own career and having the right tools to enhance one's own employability are critical skills that employees must possess in uncertain economic times. With increased mobility of people and internationalisation of firms, a wide set of opportunities exist for individuals to develop their careers in new and exciting directions. Employees are increasingly faced with myriad choices: whether to prioritise work or family concerns; whether to work in the office or remotely; whether to

become a global business traveller or stay closer to home; or whether to become a specialist or remain as a generalist. Such decisions attest to the growing complexity of individual careers where the traditional safeguards of a 'job for life' and 'job security' no longer exist and where employees must be alert to changing market conditions and new workforce and technological trends.

For their part, organisations now view career development as an important aspect of identifying, developing and retaining talent in organisations. Far from seeing career development initiatives as an unnecessary cost and a luxury organisations can ill-afford in recessionary times, the quest to become an 'employer of choice' has led many organisations to invest heavily in initiatives that promote learning and the dissemination and sharing of knowledge. Organisations more and more are seeing value in the notion of careers as vehicles for offering employees a range of learning opportunities and the prospect of gaining valuable experience. Moreover, some studies have shown that job applicants in making career decisions favour organisations who possess a track record in developing and upskilling employees (Winterton, 2004).

However, in spite of research data illustrating the importance of careers, there is also evidence that some organisations fail to take career development seriously, viewing it as a 'nice to have', rather than an essential aspect of their HRD strategy (Sturges et al., 2002). In such cases, organisations often see responsibility for career development resting on employees' shoulders, with limited or no input required from the organisation. Often, such employers adopt a transactional view of employment contracts seeing employee inputs as a monetary exchange, rather than important stages in the development of a career. This chapter explores how careers have been defined and how such definitions have evolved over time. It goes on to examine five prominent career concepts, which shed light on the changing career expectations of both employees and employers. Finally, the chapter looks at the importance of career counselling, focusing specifically on Schein's Career Anchors theory and Holland's Vocational Preference as instruments designed to help employees understand better their career values, needs and work and life priorities.

Defining career

Many definitions of careers have been proposed over the last 30 years (see Table 4.1 for examples), each capturing important aspects of how work activities help fashion a pattern of experiences which shape how individuals define themselves and how they come to be regarded by others. Whilst in the past careers were largely defined in terms of an upward linear sequence or progression of higher status jobs, it is increasingly recognised that careers no longer follow universal or normative stages, but are increasingly individual, fragmented, multidirectional and iterative (Gerstman, 1998). Indeed, Sullivan and Mainiero (2007) describe a growing trend amongst individuals of defining one's career in terms of a patchwork of experiences that enables

individuals to achieve a balance between work and family concerns. That said, it is possible to argue that learning lies at the heart of careers and contemporary notions of careers have embraced the centrality of learning and experience to the individual over time. However, it should be noted that, as yet, there is no agreement among academics on a common definition of career (Greenhaus et al., 2008).

As Sullivan and Baruch (2009) report, not only have increased global competition, economic circumstances and technology altered our conceptions of careers, but social norms and new systems of work have also played an important role. With growing levels of workforce diversity, including greater representation of women across all levels of organisations and the expanding use of outsourcing and part-time and temporary workers, careers are being defined in broad terms, with career experiences now encompassing activities and life roles such as volunteering work, periods of entrepreneurial activity and career breaks to engage with family and caring responsibilities. For his part, Chen (1998) provides three broad conceptualisations of career: career as a life process, career as individual agency and career as meaning-making. First, looking at the notion of career as a life process sees careers as a developmental process that accompanies a person's entire life. Chen argues that careers can help individuals achieve growth, self-satisfaction and life goals, and suggests that careers allow individuals to adopt a variety of roles within the domains of family, school, community and workplace. Second, seeing careers as individual agency emphasises the role of careers in building self-awareness and the self-concept. Chen argues that the self-concept helps individuals see their place in society and understand the constellation of situations and circumstances surrounding the individual. This person-environment interaction allows individuals to build self-efficacy and confidence in

Table 4.1 Definitions of career

Wilensky (1964): 'A succession of related jobs arranged in a hierarchy of prestige, through which persons moved in an ordered (more or less) predictable sequence'
Hall (1975): 'A perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviours associated with work related experiences and activities over the span of a person's life'
Arthur et al. (1989): 'The evolving sequence of a person's work experience over time'
Arnold (1997): 'The sequence of employment-related positions, roles, activities and experiences encountered by a person'
Cummings and Worley (2001): 'A career consists of a sequence of work-related positions occupied by a person for the course of a lifetime'
Baruch (2004): 'A process of progress and development of individuals, which is sometimes described as the life stories of people'
Sullivan and Baruch (2009): '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'
Greenhaus et al. (2010): 'The pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of a person's life'

their own abilities and contribution to society. Finally, the notion of career as meaning-making considers an individual's subjective perspective of career and how context and life experiences can shape and mould a person's career and life trajectory.

The notion of career is almost exclusively defined in individualistic terms and largely neglects the role of organisations in shaping and moulding that career. Despite the decline of paternalistic approaches based upon notions of long-term job security and 'a job for life', many organisations are now recognising the value of adopting a partnership approach to managing employee careers. Such an approach acknowledges that both employees and organisations have needs which can best be met through collaboration and discussion. According to Hirsh and Jackson (2004), such a career deal requires employers to communicate realistic and positive career messages regarding the organisational commitment to career development, the accessibility of lateral career moves, the leveraging and maximising of employee skills, and the provision of engaging and challenging work. Sturges et al. (2005) argue that central to the concept of the career deal is that employees need to see themselves as assets in which they and their employers must invest. Such activity requires employees to proactively manage their careers and influence key gate-keepers to provide important career outcomes.

Talking point Visualising your career

One of the goals of career counselling is to help employees gain insight into their careers and how their own personal and work values influence and are affected by their careers. Thinking about your own career and work experiences, answer and reflect upon the following questions:

How do I see my career?

How does my boss see my career?

Where do I want to be in career terms in three years' time?

What things do I need to do to achieve my three-year career goals?

Career concepts

A variety of career concepts have been developed to describe key characteristics of modern careers. With traditional career notions of defined career pathways, promotion based upon seniority, singular employer loyalty and organisational job security

becoming increasingly irrelevant in organisational environments characterised by uncertainty and less clearly defined job roles, career concepts have sought to reflect the increasingly number of non-linear, atraditional careers that now exist. This section profiles five career concepts (boundaryless career, protean career, authentic career, kaleidoscope career and the portfolio career), looking at the implications of the career concept for both individuals and organisations.

Boundaryless career

One of the earliest career concepts was developed by Arthur and Rousseau (1996) and labelled the boundaryless career to describe the notion that careers transcend the scope and boundaries of a single employer. This career concept advances the proposition that individuals are independent of their employers and need to adopt greater control over their careers. It proposes that an individual's career gains meaning through participation in external networks and professional associations and that the individual becomes known for their expertise, independent of their employer. Hytti (2010) maintains that core to the notion of the boundaryless career is that the individual develops a personal reputation for being a key resource and building a repository of experience through paid, unpaid and voluntary work. Consequently, she maintains that skills, employability and marketability constitute important attributes of the boundaryless career. For his part, Weick (1996) sees the boundaryless career as a collection of stories of shifting identities, where the individual zigzags across organisational boundaries in developing a portfolio of skills and expertise. Sommerlund and Boutaiba (2007) posit that boundaryless careers require individuals to possess both alertness to opportunities that arise and speedy decision-making to grasp such opportunities. In summary, it can be argued that this career concept fits with the increased organisational change focus, where greater levels of flexibility are demanded from employees and where employees must increasingly stake out opportunities and proactively manage their own careers.

Protean career

The protean career is defined as 'a process which the person, not the organization is managing. It consists of all the person's varied experiences in education, training, work in several organizations, changes in occupational field, etc' (Hall and Mirvis, 1995: 20). As Hall (2002) argues, the protean career is characterised by the core values of freedom and growth and the core attitudes of work satisfaction and professional commitment. As Manikoth and Cseh (2011) point out, the protean career involves individuals proactively responding to change and involves both a values-directed attitude and self-directed attitude towards career management. As such,

the protean career requires individuals to be highly self-directed and focused in determining their own career trajectory. The notion of the protean career is thus highly subjective and requires an understanding of the personal narrative and changing circumstances of the individual. Sullivan and Baruch (2009) see one of the positive attributes of the protean careerist as their ability to repack and reshape their skills and identity to fit the changing work environment and remain marketable. This ability to be adaptive and take responsibility for their own careers as well as adopting a whole-life perspective accentuates the highly personalised, subjective and sometimes contradictory nature of the protean career. Arthur et al. (2005) argue that protean careerists are likely to engage in high levels of internal reflection to determine whether current employment offers sufficient personal fulfilment and satisfaction. The implications of the protean career mean that managers need to individually meet the values of subordinates and ensure that good job-alignment and working conditions enable employees to satisfy their internal values and needs.

Authentic career

The authentic career is one based upon concepts of self-efficacy, self-confidence and the drive and motivation to pursue one's own life goals and path. According to Svejnova (2005), individuals embracing an authentic career path are truthful to themselves, acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, seek congruence between feelings and communication, and work to achieve continuity between the past and present. For her part, Craddock (2004) defines an authentic career as one where an individual through their work seeks to truthfully reflect their genuinely held values and beliefs. She argues that individuals must pass through four stages – awareness stage, emotional ownership stage, interaction stage and integration stage – to achieve the necessary insights to build a career that responds best to their deeply held values and convictions.

Kaleidoscope career

The kaleidoscope career concept adopts the metaphor of the kaleidoscope to describe the ever-shifting, changeable nature of careers. It argues that such careers are created by individuals who exercise control over their unique circumstances and fashion a particular career path to suit life choices, interests and personal values. Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) maintain that the kaleidoscope career concept embraces the notion of authenticity in that they argue that individuals will seek to be genuine and pursue opportunities that align and fit with their own self-concept, identity and self-worth. Cabrera (2009) argues that the parameters of balance and challenge can affect the career decisions individuals make. She suggests that individuals through

their careers will seek to achieve balance between their work and non-work lives and search for autonomy and responsibility in the jobs that they take. Cabrera reports that the kaleidoscope model has been used to make important distinctions between the careers of men and women. She posits that men follow an *alpha* career pattern, where they seek challenge in their early career, authenticity in mid-career and balance in their late career. In contrast, she proposes that women follow a *beta* career pattern in that they seek challenge in early career, balance in mid-career and authenticity in their late career. To this end, she argues that women's careers appear to be more relational in character and craft unique career paths to fit their own values and lifestyle choices. In this way, it can be argued that the kaleidoscope career concept attributes little control to organisations over employee careers and assigns organisations a more supportive role in helping employees achieve balance and fulfilment in their careers.

Portfolio career

With increasing focus within organisations and society on employability and more flexible forms of working, it is clear that many individuals are grasping the opportunity to design their own careers to suit both their interests and individual circumstances. The notion of career becomes viewed as a collection of valuable experiences from which the individual builds expertise and networks. The concept of the 'portfolio career' was coined by Charles Handy (1994), who describes the portfolio career in the following terms:

more and more individuals are behaving as professionals always have, charging fees not wages. They find they are 'going portfolio' or 'going plural'. 'Going portfolio' ... means exchanging full-time employment for independence. The portfolio is a collection of different bits and pieces of work for different clients. The word 'job' now means a client. (p. 175)

Within the concept of the portfolio career comes from individuals a lifelong commitment to self-employment, whereby individuals do not become employees as such, but contract their skills to organisations for a specific period of time in order to achieve particular tasks (Templar and Cawsey, 1999). Platman (2003) views this form of career management as offering many advantages to workers including choice, opportunity, liberation from organisations and self-control, so long as individuals have the experience, wisdom and skills to manage this form of employment relationship. She suggests that the portfolio career concept may be especially attractive to older workers who have accumulated a long period of expertise, knowledge and skills. For organisations, she maintains that portfolio-based working arrangements allow firms to keep in touch with reliable, knowledgeable and experienced workers, whilst retaining talent and institutional memory.

Talking point Career approaches at Michelin

A 'paternalistic' model of career management where staff have limited control over their next job move continues to be a successful strategy at the Michelin Group. The unconventional approach to career management was outlined by Alan Duke and Daniel Boulanger, retired international career managers at the tyre company, who both spent 35 years at the group in a variety of different countries and business units.

Their own career paths were indicative of a strategy where 'priority is given to personal development rather than a manager's need to fill a vacancy'. This approach meant that managers and their staff often only worked together for a maximum of two to three years, and 'managers had no right to retain people' – even if they did not want to lose a talented member of their team.

Duke – who was also the company's first diversity director – explained that the company 'based management on a long-term view and a respect for its people', adding that most of Michelin's personnel team had come from the line. The firm was founded by the Michelin family in France in 1898, and while it had grown from 50 staff to 115,000 employees worldwide, the firm still approached career management from the perspective of recruiting 'a personality for a career, rather than competencies for a job'.

It was the responsibility of career managers to identify staff's individual career moves and make them happen, Duke said. Career managers were also tasked with mapping a career path for the company's top 50 performers to reach their full potential, he said, and were appraised on their ability to fulfil these expectations. Career managers were aided by a model known internally as 'the beard', in which employees were spread across job levels from A to K, which helped identify future job moves and talent gaps.

Duke was asked whether staff and managers were receptive to having their career paths decided for them, and finding themselves placed in departments they might have no interest in. But despite the unorthodox approach, Duke said that turnover at the company was very low and that employees remaining at Michelin for the duration of their career was not uncommon. 'That's the real beauty of it – it works', he concluded.

(Adapted from: Stevens, M. (2012) Michelin Succeeds by Managing Employees' Careers. *People Management*, 27 April.)

Questions

What is the incentive for an organisation to help its employees manage their careers?

Do you believe employers have a moral obligation to assist their employees in managing their careers?

What are the benefits to employees and the organisation of a formal career development strategy?

Career counselling

Providing advice and guidance to employees on their career options has become an important function of HRD professionals and career development consultants. In large part, these professionals seek to achieve congruence between an individual's skills, needs and values and their occupational interests. Such work can involve career planning alongside mentoring and coaching interventions to help the employee fulfil their potential. In this section, we examine two well-known and widely used instruments (Schein's Career Anchors Inventory and Holland's Vocational Preference Inventory) designed to bring individuals towards a greater level of career self-awareness.

Schein's Career Anchors Inventory

Since its development in the mid-1970s, Schein's Career Anchors Inventory has become one of the most well-known and utilised instruments in the area of career counselling. In his work, Schein (1996) describes the career anchor as being an individual's self-concept comprising an individual's self-perceived talents and abilities; an individual's values and their career motives and needs. Career anchors keep individuals rooted within particular jobs and roles as they fulfil an individual's inner needs, desires and values as well as making best use of their talents and skills. The Career Anchors Inventory catalogues eight different self-concepts which act as a stabilising force in the lives of managers and employees. For their part, Suutari and Taka (2004) suggest that Schein's work offers valuable insights into the 'internal careers' of individuals, offering an understanding of the career direction employees want to pursue in their working lives. Arthur et al. (1989) suggest that whilst employees may not always have a well-defined career plan, they often examine the pattern of career experiences to date and use this pattern to determine new career options.

Table 4.2 describes each of the eight career anchors developed by Schein (1996). A facilitator can guide individuals to achieving a career anchors profile, or individuals can take the career anchors self-assessment online (available at <http://careeranchorsonline.com>).

Table 4.2 Schein's Career Anchors**Technical/functional (TF) competence career anchor**

Individuals with this career anchor possess strong feelings of competence in a particular area – not necessarily interested in management per se. It is the area of work that 'turns them on'. Individuals in this group actively disdain and fear general management, viewing it as a 'jungle', 'political arena' and waste of talent and skills. Due to their disdain for general management positions, they tend to leave companies rather than be promoted out of their area of specialism.

General management (GM) competence career anchor

Individuals with this career anchor possess a strong motivation to rise to positions of managerial responsibility and believe they have the skills and values necessary to do so. In the initial stages of their careers, they may take technical/functional jobs, but view these jobs as interim stages to higher general management jobs. They perceive their competence as a combination of three areas: analytical competence; interpersonal competence; emotional competence.

Autonomy and independence (AU) career anchor

Individuals with this career anchor find organisational life to be restrictive, irrational and intrusive into their private lives, and favour careers which give them independence and autonomy. Individuals with this career anchor may also possess high technical/functional expertise, so outward possession of this career anchor is not always obvious. Individuals with this career anchor experience little conflict over missed promotion opportunities and feel little failure or guilt about not aspiring higher. They often experience a trade-off between status and income versus lifestyle freedom.

Security and stability (SE) career anchor

Individuals with this career anchor look for long-run career security, good benefits, basic job security, decent income and good pension and retirement provision. They 'trust' the organisation to do the right thing and have often become heavily socialised to organisations' norms. They may sometimes be regarded as 'organisation man/woman' and in so doing, they may do little to develop their own careers.

Entrepreneurial creativity (EC) career anchor

Individuals with this career anchor have an overarching need to build or create something which is entirely their own product. They see their creativity as an extension of the self. Sometimes, individuals with this career anchor may end up transitioning to managerial roles through four mechanisms: (1) they get bored and turn the organisation over to others; (2) they have difficulty managing a larger organisation and are forced out; (3) they develop a special role in the organisation to continue to express creativity; (4) they express creativity through a senior management role.

Service/dedication to a cause (SE) career anchor

Individuals with this career anchor seek to pursue work that achieves something of value, such as making the world a better place to live in, solving environmental problems, improving harmony amongst people, helping others, improving people's safety or curing illnesses. They may pursue opportunities even if it means leaving the organisation and may decline promotion opportunities if it takes them away from valued activities.

Pure challenge (CH) career anchor

Individuals with this career anchor enjoy working on seemingly insolvable problems and difficult complex tasks. They look to overcome barriers and obstacles and compete against difficult opponents. For them, novelty, variety and difficulty become ends in themselves. Challenges may take the form of intellectual, strategic, interpersonal or sporting trials amongst others.

Lifestyle (LS) career anchor

Individuals with this career anchor seek to balance personal needs, family needs and career requirements. They want to make all aspects of life work together in harmony and an integrated whole. Success is defined in broader than career terms and in relation to life as a whole. Often family can take overall priority dictating the geographic area where the individual lives, type of work and how life works as a whole.

Adapted from: Schein (2013) <http://www.careeranchoronline.com>

Work by Feldman and Bolino (1996) led to the categorisation of these eight career anchors into three distinct groupings: talent-based anchors, needs-based anchors and values-based anchors. The talent-based anchors category includes individuals who hold technical function competence, general management competence and entrepreneurial creativity. While individuals with technical/functional competence are often promoted to managerial positions because of their superior technical skills, Schein (1996) argues that these individuals often recognise that being an effective manager requires a completely different skillset. He argues that effective managers possess technical expertise as well as political awareness, financial and analytical skills, interpersonal and negotiation skills and the emotional intelligence necessary in handling difficult complex decisions. The needs-based category encompasses individuals who hold security and stability, autonomy and independence or lifestyle career anchors. For these individuals, work meets an important internal need, allowing them to pursue a particular lifestyle or providing the long-term stability which they yearn for. In difficult economic times, Schein (1996) argues, the shift from 'employment security' to 'employability' is likely to discomfort individuals with a security and stability career anchor. In some cases, this prompts these individuals to seek employment in the public sector, which is perceived as offering greater security and stability than the private sector. The values-based anchors category includes individuals with a pure challenge or service/dedication to a cause career anchor. For these individuals, life meaning and life purpose is often found through work and such individuals become committed to tackling a range of societal problems. As a result, these individuals are likely to be highly self-motivated and driven to achieve in their goals.

Schein's Career Anchors Inventory is subject to several important limitations. Suutari and Taka (2004) argue that the typology has to date been subject to limited empirical investigations and greater work is needed to address some of the inconsistencies that have surfaced in empirical research. They also question whether individuals possess a single overriding career anchor and suggest that career anchors may change over time dependent upon an individual's life experiences and external influences. For their part, Feldman and Bolino (1996) maintain that there has been little refinement of Schein's original career anchors classification and they argue that the concept could be reframed to reflect changes that have occurred over the last 40 years.

Holland's Vocational Preference Inventory

Holland's Vocational Preference Inventory is a widely used career counselling instrument which seeks to align an individual's personality type to a particular organisational working environment. Holland (1966, 1985, 1997) viewed working environments as falling within six key interest domains (realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional) and argued that individuals would strive to achieve congruence between the working environment and their own personality type. According to Hogan and Blake (1999), Holland is clear in his belief that vocational interests are an expression of personality. Table 4.3 describes each of the six interest domains.

Table 4.3 Holland's Vocational Preference Inventory

Realistic: Individuals who possess a realistic vocational preference tend to be practical and enjoy physically demanding activities. They may like working with tools and machinery, being outdoors, working with their hands and perhaps working with animals. They approach problems in a practical, problem-solving manner.

Some indicative careers: Surveyor; tree surgeon; engineer; mechanic; electrician

Investigative: Individuals who possess an investigative vocational preference tend to enjoy intellectual and scientific pursuits. They enjoy complex, abstract problems and possess a logical, analytical technical mind. They often like to perform experiments and conduct research.

Some indicative careers: Chemist; geologist; physicist; computer programmer; lawyer

Artistic: Individuals who possess an artistic vocational preference value creativity and self-expression. They view their work in terms of their own identity and rely strongly on their own feelings and intuition. They often like the freedom to dress the way they wish, keep few appointments and keep their own agenda and timetable.

Some indicative careers: Author; artist; journalist; composer; playwright; sculptor/sculptress

Social: Individuals who possess a social vocational preference place a high emphasis on human relationships. They often seek to help others overcome personal and professional problems and adopt a caring, individual approach. They enjoy group and teamwork and value friendship, generosity and kindness.

Some indicative careers: School principal; nurse; counsellor; social worker; teacher

Enterprising: Individuals who possess an enterprising vocational preference enjoy managing and persuading others in their efforts to achieve their goals. They can often be found in economic and financial environments and are often energetic, confident, optimistic and assertive individuals. For many, the accumulation of wealth and power is important.

Some indicative careers: Hotel manager; business executive; salesperson; buyer; trader

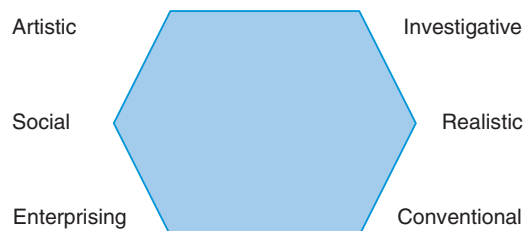
Conventional: Individuals who possess a conventional vocational preference enjoy routine, structure, organisation and planning. They enjoy being in control and are highly reliable and dependable. They often gravitate towards office environments and prefer rules and regulations. They are precise, accurate and detail oriented.

Some indicative careers: Auditor; administrative assistant; bank employee; tax expert; pharmacist

Adapted from: Holland (1997).

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As Nagy et al. (2010) point out, Holland represented the six key interest domains in a hexagon across a two-dimensional space (see Figure 4.1). Within this space, Holland hypothesised that interest domains would be located next to those to which they were most similar. The presentation of the six interest domains in a hexagon allows

**Figure 4.1 Holland's hexagonal model**

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individuals to gain a more rounded understanding of the types of working environments most suited to their personality.

To date, research indicates strong support for Holland's Vocational Preference Inventory and its ability to link personality traits and key interest domains, particularly in a US context (Day and Rounds, 1998; Sodano, 2011; Tracey and Rounds, 1993), although there are some indications that its reliability may vary somewhat internationally (Rounds and Tracey, 1996).

Continuing professional development

Continuing professional development (CPD) has long been considered a crucial component of career growth and learning. Defined by Madden and Mitchell (1993) as the maintenance and enhancement of the knowledge, expertise and competence of professionals throughout their careers, it looks at the processes and procedures by which professionals stay up-to-date with current knowledge, skills and environmental trends. Lammintakanen and Kivinen (2012) argue that CPD includes both formal interventions as well as informal, individualised activities that may emphasise individual or collective learning. They suggest that formal learning focuses on narrow job-related skills and concentrates on building professional expertise, whilst informal learning promotes portable skills tied to social elements not always linked to a single organisation. For his part, Owen (2004) suggests that CPD is a central element in strategic organisational change that supports growth, maturity and increased prosperity of businesses. He argues that CPD is critical to bridging the skills gap, helping businesses develop in new and innovative ways. He identifies an increase in spending in corporate sponsored senior management development as firms appreciate the need to have strong organisational leadership. Brosnan and Burgess (2003) also witness a significant uptake in the use of the internet to deliver continuing professional development. They argue that web-based CPD offers employees the opportunity to engage in organic learning and build relationships with other employees and learners online.

One of the key benefits to CPD is that it can be delivered in a work setting. Cooper et al. (2010) argue that CPD in the workplace can be facilitated through guided learning, mentoring and coaching. They argue that workplaces provide useful sites for translating knowledge into practice and to engage in active experimentation in relation to new practices and work activities. Reflection lies at the core of CPD and learners are encouraged to mull over their own practices and consider new and more effective ways of working. For many learners, a key aspect of CPD relates to accreditation and the ability to gain professional recognition for engaging in learning activities. In many cases, professional bodies prescribe particular forms of CPD or pathways that learners must follow to achieve certification of knowledge and skills. Similarly, such systems often mandate learners to update their skills at regular intervals to ensure competence is maintained (Murphy et al., 2006).

In recent times, there has been a move to recast CPD within the context of sustainable professional development. As an approach, it acknowledges that both employers

and employees have an important role to play in building employee competence and expertise. It recognises that CPD approaches need to move away from being ad hoc and reactive and that the professional development of staff needs to be structured, affordable and linked to longer-term individual and organisational learning. Sustainable professional development approaches have a systemic underpinning with both employers and employees forging a commitment to lifelong learning and viewing CPD as an investment in both the employee's and organisation's future. However, it accepts the reality that organisational resources are finite and that CPD efforts must be in line with what is affordable and linked to organisational priorities.

Conclusion

Career development remains a vibrant and important area within the field of human resource development. The concept of careers has changed significantly in the last two decades in line with economic and technological change. It is clear that careers can no longer be defined in terms of attachment to particular organisations, but rather careers have become more strongly associated to the identity and values of individual employees. Active management of one's own career has become a critical activity for employees in order to retain employability and relevance in the jobs market. Indeed, individuals need to pay close attention to current jobs and career opportunities that arise to ensure an appropriate work-life balance and that their career ambitions and values are satisfied. For their part, Sullivan and Mainiero (2007) attest to the growing pervasiveness of work-creep leading to a blurring of work-family boundaries through the proliferation of wireless and mobile technologies and remote working facilities.

In recent years, a number of career concepts have emerged to describe the changing nature of careers and help explain how environmental and economic conditions and personal values are affecting how individuals think about and conceptualise careers. Such concepts recognise the changing expectations of both employers and employees and how their respective roles have evolved in relation to career management and development. It also attests to more strategic approaches to careers being taken by both employers and employees.

In light of current recessionary pressures and declining levels of job security, there is an increasing focus and emphasis being placed on career counselling. A key focus of career counselling lies in ensuring a good fit between an employee's personality traits and vocational choices. Instruments such as Schein's Career Anchors Inventory and Holland's Vocational Preference Inventory are valuable in guiding employees towards jobs that are particularly suited to them. Moreover, they can offer particular benefits to organisations who engage in succession planning in achieve person-job fit and sourcing development interventions to help employees move upwards to the next level.

Finally, continuing professional development remains an important aspect of career development in that it helps professionals keep their knowledge, skills and competence

updated. Labelled as either continuing professional development or continuing professional education, it recognises that formal and informal interventions play an important role in helping both individuals and organisations grow and develop. While there is evidence that participation in CPD is sometimes discouraged by supervisors and managers, CPD can be beneficial to employees in helping them connect with other learners, build their confidence and competence and ensure that learners perform up to certifiable standards.

CASE STUDY

Managing careers and talent at Barclays

Barclays is a financial services company with 75,000 employees worldwide. It has long practised succession planning, but the process was onerous and lacked a group-wide perspective. As a result, the discovery of talent was ad hoc and subjective, and there was little development or movement of high potential people across the organisation.

A central Talent Team was charged with the task of refreshing and improving the end-to-end talent-management processes, including executive resourcing, succession planning, leadership development, middle-management talent identification, and graduate recruitment and development.

The new approach involves senior managers working with HR business partners in a more collaborative way to identify and develop talent. There is less emphasis on paperwork, and more concentration on dialogues between senior managers, HR and high potential individuals. It is corporately managed for the top three organisational levels (roughly the top 500 posts), and more devolved for the 'emerging talent' below this level.

'Talent' is now defined through 20 characteristics Barclays looks for in its future group leaders. These are grouped together under 'the three E's': be Exceptional (e.g. driving for success, stretching the boundaries), Edge (e.g. learns quickly, demonstrates sound judgement) and Energising (e.g. mobilises others, makes things happen).

The refreshed succession planning framework has a strong focus on the distribution of potential so that areas of risk can be identified. It asks leaders what action they are taking to develop and deploy talent in their business area.

Talent Development Forums (TDFs) have been introduced to ensure that high-potential people, identified during group talent conversations, gain access to the key experiences they need to reach group-wide leadership roles. TDFs bring 'talented' individuals into a direct discussion with senior executives (outside their own

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line management), plus an input from HR. The process started with selected talent identified in the top three levels, and is now being extended downwards. The outcome is a set of agreed career development actions. The process has also helped senior executives get to know the high-potential population better.

For the 'emerging talent' group of high-potential middle managers, Talent Partners are assigned. These are senior managers who develop individuals towards group leadership roles through an intensive coaching relationship.

(Adapted from: Hirsh, W. and Jackson, C. (2004) *Managing Careers in Large Organisations*. London: The Work Foundation.)

Questions

What is the impact of the recent recession on individuals' careers?

Given the increased emphasis on 'talent', should organisations be committed to developing and promoting existing staff or are they better off 'buying in' talent from external labour markets?

What are the benefits of getting your training and development programmes accredited?

Discussion questions



Platman (2003) argues that portfolio careers offer many advantages so long as individuals have experience, wisdom and skills to manage this form of employment relationship. What are the downsides of portfolio careers?

Debate the usefulness of tools such as Schein's Career Anchors and Holland's Vocational Preference Inventory.

How can employees be encouraged to take a more structured and strategic approach to their continuing professional development?