



Career development in organisations: What works and what doesn't

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Overview

- **Career development in organisations is (arguably) in a cul de sac – needs to look outside its field**
- **If a performance orientation is taken, the business case for participation/high road/relational issues is now very strong**
- **Common themes across human relations performance fields of effectiveness: personalised and goal focus, authenticity, and relationships**
- **Career practice has a lot to offer as an individualised glue for workplace relationship, decision making and performance issues – but it has to move beyond helping people change jobs**

Is Career Development in a cul de sac?

- **Presented as employee not employer focussed**
- **Often given lip service only**
- **Focussed on deciding, re-emergence of test and tell**
- **Insufficient attention on behaviours to get there**
- **Not relevant to café discussions**
- **Needs to be relevant to organisations as well as employer – performance**
- **Vacuum is being taken up by career coaches and “work/life balance”**

Are Interventions Effective?

- **Yes**
- **.44 general effect size for human relations interventions**
- **Training programs specifically having an effect size of .77.**

Guzzo, R. Jette, R., Katzell, R. (1985). The effects of psychology-based intervention programs on worker productivity: A meta analysis. *Personnel Psychology, 38, 275-291.*

Career Work Effectiveness

- **Career interventions work (e.g. Whiston, Sexton & Lasoff, 1998; Oliver & Spokane, 1988).**
- **Short interventions, using tools, are common and effective (Whiston et al, 1998).**
- **Counsellor/client relationships are important (Mahoney & Patterson, 1992).**
- **Computer plus counselling seems to be most efficient (Whiston).**
- **Software leads to more specific questions (Kapes, Borman & Frazier, 1989).**
- **More satisfaction when personal and career issues are addressed (Nevo,1990; Kirschner et al, 1994).**

Outcomes of Career Interventions

Outcomes are very diffuse: e.g. decidedness, job satisfaction, few PGs, self esteem, comfort, career maturity. But they seem to be most effective when they target:

- **Career related skills**
- **Career decision making self efficacy**
- **Accuracy of self knowledge (Whiston et al, 1988).**

Career management can result in:

- Direction and motivation
- Sense of being valued
- Adaptability: e.g. should a job change be necessary due to mergers, acquisitions, restructuring, or downsizing.

Career motivation refers to:

- Employees' energy to invest in their careers
- Their awareness of the direction they want their careers to take
- The ability to maintain energy and direction despite barriers they may encounter.

- **To create and sustain a continuous learning environment, develop commitment**
- **Attract employees with new skills**
- **Improve effectiveness of training:**
 - Motivation, expectation and choice of programs to attend

Good career development in organisations fosters (London, 1995)

- **Staff direction, goals and feedback**
- **Self monitoring (London, 1995)**

Career Management and Motivation

(London, 1995)

Career motivation has three aspects:

- ***Career resilience*** – the extent to which employees are able to cope with problems that affect their work

- ***Career insight*** -
 - how much employees know about their interests, skill strengths, and weaknesses
 - awareness of how these perceptions relate to their career goals

- ***Career identity*** – the degree to which employees define their personal values according to their work.

Heppner, 1994 –

Career transitions

- **Readiness - motivation**
- **Confidence**
- **Control**
- **Social support**
- **Decision independence**

Ryff & Keyes, 1995 -

Wellbeing

- **Purpose in life**
- **Personal growth**
- **Self acceptance**
- **Environmental mastery**
- **Relationships with others**
- **Autonomy**

Career Development – Don'ts

How not to do career development in organisations (Kossek et al, 1998)

Sought to develop career self management:

- **Developmental feedback seeking**
- **Job mobility preparedness**

3 day workshop based on premises: professionals in transportation industry

The intervention made things worse. Why?

- **Not integrated with other HR policies**
- **“Higher standard” explanation – people judged themselves more harshly**
- **Raised expectations that weren’t met – training rhetoric didn’t match workplace reality**
- **The course about self management was compulsory – this led to a backlash**

What could have been done differently?

Evolutionary perspective:

- **People have overt and covert agendas**
- **Managers have limited information processing ability.**

The competency model is based on:

- **Command and control**
- **Stable tasks**
- **Fitting people to jobs, not jobs to people**
- **But people have varying strengths and weaknesses, and configure jobs in their own way.**

- **Appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself**
- **Appraisal and recognition in others**
- **Regulation of emotion**
- **Use of emotion to facilitate performance.**

Good Career Practice needs to:

- **be individualised to staff**
- **and reflect organisational outcomes i.e. performance**
- **support existing HR practices**
- **be solution/future focussed, and**
- **will likely concern relational, emotional and agency issues.**

The Psychological Contract

- **“an individual’s belief in mutual obligations between that person and another party, such as an employer” (Rousseau, 1989)**

Some types:

- **Transactional – short-term, based on economic exchange**
- **Transitional – cognitive statement about organisational change – often characterised by mistrust, uncertainty and erosion.**

Types of Contract

- **Relational – long term/open ended. Based on trust and loyalty. Few reward conditions. Stability, loyalty.**
- **Balanced – dynamic and open ended – conditioned on organisational success – both parties contribute to each other’s learning and development. Individual and organisation based [performance based] contingencies. External employability, internal advancement.**

What Works?

- **Develop confidence, sense of control**
- **Pursue intrinsically important goals that are personal**
- **Develop relationships with others**
- **Aspirations and individual uniqueness**
- **Tools x people x limited time (Whiston et al)**
- **Goal oriented (Locke)**
- **Awareness raising and information giving**
- **Feedback and monitoring focussed**
- **Motivational and problem solving.**

Career Development as a Framework

- **Meets criteria of being effective, authentic, personalised, goal oriented, relational**
- **Adaptable to individual circumstances**
- **Opportunity to impart skills**
- **Can operate at individual level of detail – adaptable to individual circumstances**
- **Ethical issues need to be managed**
- **Can be aggregated up to organisational level**
- **Anything else?**

Example

“My name is Jane. I have been asked to get coaching by my CEO. I have a habit of shouting at staff when I get stressed because their work is just not good enough and there is so much to do. A recent climate survey of my team shows I am not trusted and people are reluctant to raise problems with me. I sense they talk about me behind my back for a lot. In my last performance review I got criticised for not meeting my goals.”

- **As a trainer / career developer / coach how would you address this?**

Getting people to apply what they have learnt under their own steam

- **Identify risks and inoculate**
- **Set goals**
- **Self reinforce**
- **Monitor**
- **Engage others – get support and understanding**
- **Report back**
- **What sort of obstacles can self management overcome?**
- **Time management.**

Is this career development?

The Business Case

The case for high commitment work systems is very strong:

- **Command and control versus commitment (Arthur, 1994)**
- **People and culture provide competitive advantage (Bresnahan et al, 1999)**
- **Human relations are essential to be able to use technology (Bailey).**

Winning firms: T & D, participation, staff satisfaction.

Zacharatos et al, 2005

- **People are competitive advantage**
- **Participative decision making**
- **High quality training**
- **Sharing information**
- **Respect**
- **Commitment in return.**

Benefits of participation (Miller & Monge, 1986)

Different models are not mutually exclusive

Cognitive – **more informed decision making**

“We know more than management”

Affective/human relations

“Happy workers are productive ones”

Contingency

“You try participation when you’re under fire”

Didn’t stack up – no differences across sectors or status.

Herzenberg, Alic and Wial (1998):

- **Ability to elicit, understand and respond to situations**
- **Many require both**
- **Extends to “unrationalised labour-intensive work” – such as hotel room cleaning and home care.**

The Personal Case

The rise of relationships and character:

- **Technology 1st replaced manual skills, now technical skills**
- **People expect work to fulfil**
- **Soft skills are replacing hierarchy**
- **People problems often underlie career problems**
 - Why do people change jobs
 - What underlies performance problems
 - Who gets ahead

**Beyond deciding - to performance,
motivation, wellbeing, relationships**

- **Self knowledge**
- **Wider and more dynamic view of self than personality and IQ**
- **Personalised goals**
- **Self management and soft skills.**

Know why, know whom, know what.

From 'Decidedness' to Adaptability

Savickas (1997)

Planful attitudes, self and environmental exploration, and informed decision-making provide a counselling framework based on developing adaptability. Counsellors could help:

- **“individuals to continually, throughout the life course, look ahead to and anticipate choices and transitions, explore possibilities, and improve fit and develop the self.” (Savickas, 1997, p. 254).**

Coaches stress that coaching is not counselling because it is (Williams & Davis, 2002):

- **Effective:** Client centred (Rogers)
- **Personalised and goal oriented:** Goal and solution oriented
- **Authentic:** Strengths based (Krumboltz)
- **Relational:** Closer relationships between practitioners and client.

Solution-focussed brief therapies bridge coaching and traditional “therapy”

But have career counsellors ever done therapy?

Career Development Programmes

Effective: Meta analysis (Whiston et al., 1998)

Identify barriers to performance

Personalised and goal oriented: Identify aspirations, developmental

Relational: Succession planning, Training needs, Performance (Knowdell)

Authentic: Help supervisors coach by fostering dialogue and constructive openness.

Team and Group Development

Requires (Landy, 1989; Zacharatos et al, 2005)

- **Effective:** Moderate effect sizes
- **Personalised and goal oriented:** Solutions that are likely to be achievable
- Detailed information, not high level labels
- **Authentic:** Awareness of issues and willingness to address them
- **Relational:** Support from team/group members
- Feedback loops.

Work/life balance (O'Driscoll et al, 2003)

Effective: Better recruitment, retention, productivity, less stress

- **Personalised and goal oriented:** Needs to be tailored specifically to needs of individuals e.g. don't assume childcare is the issue
- **Authentic:** Needs to balance responsibilities and obligations, manage psychological contract, change norms rather than just rules, or there is a gap between management rhetoric and supervisory practice
- **Relational:** Help match personal goals with organisational goals.

Requirements

Worklife balance, career development, and OD all require:

- **Motivation and constructive engagement about issues**
- **Choice at which level to target the intervention**
 - e.g. individual or group
- **Solutions not rumination**
- **Context and reality check, not labels.**

But People Actually Want Help

- **Should I stay or should I go?**
- **What are my strengths/skills?**
- **How do I solve these relationship difficulties with work/family?**
 - Dealing with conflict
 - Self management
 - Relationship management
 - Raising difficult issues
 - Basic supervision skills.

Conclusion:

Why is career development important?

- **For employers: Need to win the war for talent**
- **For employees: Changing world of work and the need to develop adaptability**
- **Interventions/instruments need to be quick and future focussed**
- **Standard, rational business issues such as remuneration are over-rated as predictor of turnover, performance and good hiring:
Savickas: “The career is personal”: Figler
“Emotions are the genie in the bottle when people talk about their careers”**
- **Hidden costs of avoiding these issues?**