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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 individualized glue for workplace relationship, decision making and performance issues - but it has to move beyond helping people change jobs

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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 cafe discussions
- Needs to be relevant to organisations as well as employer - performance
- Vacuum is being taken up by career coaches and "work/life balance"

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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.

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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).

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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 knowedge (Whiston et al, 1988).

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Employee Benefits (Noe et al, 2004)

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.

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Organisational Benefits (Noe et al, 2004)

- 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)

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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.

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Transitions Motivation Wellbeing

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

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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?

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Kossek et al, 1998 contd

- 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?

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Organisational Ecologies (Colarelli, 1998)

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.

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Emotional intelligence (Law et al, 2004)

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

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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.

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The Psychological Contract

- "an individuals 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 organizational change - often characterised by mistrust, uncertainty and erosion.

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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 organizational success - both parties contribute to eachothers learning and development. Individual and organisation based [performance based] contingencies. External employability, internal advancement.

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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.

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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?

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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 criticized for not meeting my goals."

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

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Self Management (Noe, 2004)

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

- Identify risks and innoculate
- 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?

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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.

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High Performance Systems

Zacharatos et al, 2005

- People are competitive advantage

- Participative decision making

- High quality training

- Sharing information

- Respect

- Commitment in return.

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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 participating when you're under fire"

Didn't stack up no differences across sectors or status.

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Engineering to Interpretative Model

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.

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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

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Impact on Career Guidance

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.

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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 theself." (Savickas, 1997, p. 254).

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Career Coaching & Career Counselling

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?

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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.

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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.

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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 organizational goals.

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Requirements

Worklife balance, Career Development, and Organisational Development 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.

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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.

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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 renumeration 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?

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