

# Career Development

## Meaning of Career Development

Career development is the series of activities or the on-going/lifelong process of developing one's career. Career development usually refers to managing one's career in an intra-organizational or inter-organizational scenario. It involves training on new skills, moving to higher job responsibilities, making a career change within the same organization, moving to a different organization or starting one's own business.

Career development is directly linked to the goals and objectives set by an individual. It starts with self-actualization and self-assessment of one's interests and capabilities. The interests are then matched with the available options.

The individual needs to train him to acquire the skills needed for the option or career path chosen by him. Finally, after acquiring the desired competency, he has to perform to achieve the goals and targets set by him.



Career development is directly linked to an individual's growth and satisfaction and hence should be managed by the individual and not left to the employer. Career development helps an individual grow not only professionally but also personally. Learning new skills like leadership,

time management, good governance, communication management, team management etc also help an employee develop and shape their career.

## **Objectives of Career Development**

### **1. Fostering Better Communication in Organization:**

The main objective of designing a career development system is to foster better communication within the organization as a whole. It promotes communication at all levels of organizations for example manager and employee and managers and top management. Proper communication is the lifeblood of any organization and helps in solving several big issues.

### **2. Assisting with Career Decisions:**

A career development system provides employees as well as managers with helpful assistance with career decisions. They get an opportunity to assess their skills and competencies and know their goals and future aspirations. It helps them give a direction so that they can focus on achieving their long term career goals.

### **3. Better Use of Employee Skills:**

A career development system helps organization in making better use of employee skills. Since managers know their skills and competencies they are put them at a job where they will be able to produce maximum output.

### **4. Setting Realistic Goals:**

Setting realistic goals and expectations is another main objective of a career development system. It helps both employees and organization to understand what is feasible for them and how they can achieve their goals.

### **5. Creating a Pool of Talented Employees:**

Creating a pool of talented employees is the main objective of organizations. After all, they need to meet their staffing needs in present and future and a career development system helps them fulfill their requirements.

## **6. Enhancing the Career Satisfaction:**

Organizations especially design career development systems for enhancing the career satisfaction of their employees. Since they have to retain their valuable assets and prepare them for top notch positions in future, they need to understand their career requirements and expectations from their organization.

## **7. Feedback:**

Giving feedback on every step is also required within an organization to measure the success rate of a specific policy implemented and initiatives taken by the organization. In addition to this, it also helps managers to give feedback for employees' performance so that they can understand what is expected of them.

## **Stages of Career Development**

### **1. Exploration**

The exploratory stage is the period of transition from college to work, that is, the period immediately prior to employment. It is usually the period of one's early 20 s and ends by mid-20 s. It is a stage of self-exploration and making preliminary choices.

### **2. Establishment**

This career stage begins when one starts seeking for work. It includes getting one's first job. Hence, during this stage, one is likely to commit mistakes; one has also the opportunities to learn from such mistakes and may also assume greater responsibilities. He/ she accept job challenges and develop competence in a speculating area. He/she develops creativity and rotates into a new area after three-five years.

### **3. Mid-Career**

During this stage, the performance may increase or decrease or may remain constant. While some employees may reach their goals at the early stage and may achieve greater heights, some may be able just to maintain their performance. While the former may be called 'climbers', the later ones are not very ambitious though competent otherwise. During this stage, an employee

tries to update himself/herself technically and develops skills in coaching others. He/she may rotate into a new job requiring new skills.

#### **4. Late Career**

This stage is usually a pleasant one because during this stage, the employee neither tries to learn new things nor tries to improve his/her performance over that of previous years. He/she takes advantage of and depends on his/her reputation and enjoys playing the role of an elderly statesperson. He/she may shift from a power role to one of consultation. He/she starts identifying and developing successors and may also start activities outside the organization.

#### **5. Decline**

Since it is the final stage of one's career, it ends in the retirement of the employee after putting up decades of service full of continuous achievements and success stories. As such, it is viewed as a hard stage.

### **Career Development – Initiatives taken up by Organizations**

Now a day, many organizations take initiatives to help the employees in managing their careers.

#### **1. Career Planning Workbooks:**

Workbooks are prepared by organizations to guide their employees individually through systematic self-assessment of values, interests, abilities, goals and personal development plans.

#### **2. Career Planning Workshops:**

- a. Career workshops offer experiences similar to those provided by workbooks.
- b. Workshops have the added advantage of providing a chance to compare and discuss attitudes, concerns and plans with others.
- c. While some workshops focus on current job performance and development plans, others deal with life career plans and value.
- d. Career workshops help people assume responsibility for their own career.

e. The workshops help the employees learn how to make career decisions, set career goals, and create career options.

f. Career workshops build confidence and self-esteem in employees.

### **3. Career Counseling:**

It is the process of discussing with employees their current job activities/performance, their personal and career interest and goals, their personal skills and appropriate career development activities. Career counseling is usually voluntary. Career counseling may be provided by HR managers, line managers, specialized staff counselors or consultants outside the organization.

#### **Enhancing Career:**

Every employee should consider managing his/her career like an entrepreneur managing a small business. Employees must think of themselves as self-employed even if they work in a large organization. A successful career requires maintaining flexibility and keeping skills and knowledge up-to-date.

#### **i. Knowing Oneself:**

Every employee must analyze his/her strengths and weaknesses. They must list out what talents they can bring to an organization. Personal career planning begins by being honest with oneself.

#### **ii. Managing one's Reputation:**

Without over-doing one must let others, within organization and outside the organization, know about one's achievements. Accomplishments must be made visible.

#### **iii. Building and Maintaining Network:**

Contacts- Joining national and local professional associations, attending conferences and networking at social gatherings improve contacts.

#### **iv. Keeping Current:**

One must develop specific skills and abilities which are in high demand.

**v. Balancing Special Competencies and General Competencies:**

That is, being a specialist and also a generalist to have versatility to manage on ever-changing work environment.

**vi. Documenting Achievements:**

All achievements must be recorded with proof.

**vii. Keeping one's Options Open:**

One must also have contingency plans. Employees who are particular about career development must understand the cliché “Hope for the best but is prepared for the worst”.

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