



## CAREERS - CREATING RESPONSIBILITY AT INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEVELS.

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Creating careers for professional managers through the varied methodologies of career templates, career anchors, career pathing has in itself an inherent dimension of the concerned individuals point of view about careers as well as the organizations design for the individuals career. The question we seek to answer in this paper is whether these two plans and expectations match, if so why and if not why.

Increasingly careers are seen as successive job responsibilities ultimately leading to the top echelons of the corporate hierarchy in one or many organizations. Shortly hierarchies would cease to exist and in a flat, horizontal organization careers would mean intellectual contribution. This eventually means that in situations where the career match does not take place within the organization the individual continues to look for career opportunities in various other organizations.

This leaves organizations fewer options for retaining trained manpower for extensive lengths of time and would force organizations to select and extract productivity in as short a span of time frame as possible from professional managers. Harsh but true. This phenomenon would also lead to defining people oriented strategic policies keeping knowledge management in the horizon. In specific short-term situations, reward orientation of a selective lot who are perceived as high performers is done exclusively and explicitly. And from whom the demanded levels of performance is obtained. For the others who are relatively at the middle order/solid performers of the performance scale are rewarded overtly conveying the organizations point of view about them on where they stand for long term continuity. The Common terminology would be "See the writing on the wall - We have no specific ambitious plans for you other than what has been disbursed and therefore you have received a tempered reward".



## CAREER PLANS - A POINT OF VIEW

### Consideration for the organization

Selection is a basic and time-tested methodology for identifying a careerist. Although all organizations recruit, few use selection as a career start up tool. In fact interview evaluations of mediocre top management would simply state , "Technically Sound/Positive Attitude/HIRE". If only hiring were to be so simple that with the 4 word statement corporations are built. These statements articulated by responsible top managements show foolishness and scorn for the basic people concern premises assumed in well-managed organizations.

Socialization and cultural integration is a prerequisite to help individuals expeditiously adapt to the new or the changing environment. The changing environment would apply to older managers who have been in the system for longer period of time, who definitely need to accept and adapt the changing scenario as well the College graduates who have just about begun seeing corporate life.

On the job development inputs for merely sustaining the present level of performance in the case of old timers and on going inputs for trainee confirmed managers and young direct recruits.

Formal training courses as a methodology for upgrading an individual knowledge, competencies, and functional and managerial skill or attitude base and also to act as an implicit communication methodology to managers to learn or perish. Make application of learning as the point of transition.

Creating opportunities for contribution through challenging and change oriented assignments, creating work pressures genuine or otherwise, pulls and pushes perceived as appropriate and need oriented, all with the noble intention of getting the best out of your people.

Identification of potential for growth through consistency in performance over a period of time, skill attributes identified and accepted by the organization as imperatives and assessment of potential through specific formats by immediate superior as well as by the human resources personnel.



Ambitious work plan, goals and objectives to match the ever-changing needs of the business and identification of lateral opportunities for contribution.

Creating an administrative environment supports staff and facilities for promoting performance and increased management productivity.

Work environment conveying a message that what matters at the end of the Day RESULT MATTERS.

Make the corporate culture conducive to learn and share. Competing environments make collaboration difficult. Competing individuals make sharing impossible. Corporate degenerates when a significant portion of its management staff choose to retain their learning and experience. More importantly they are doing so consciously and politically. This lot is what I call the "Tyrannical Destroyers of Corporate Value". Sadly it is this same set of management staff who also seek career growth and advancement.

### **Considerations for the individual**

Gaining acceptance among organizational members through professional and personal credibility building. This is achieved through competence as perceived by one's own standards, self-insight and sensitivity to the environment.

Application of academic/previous work experience knowledge into the new situation in an appropriate and relevant manner.

Seeking recognition for the contribution as an individual as well as a member of a relevant peer group in the form of rewards as per organizational standards. The relevant peer group in this context would not openly include colleagues within the organization but also the batch mates from institutes/colleges working in other organizations. A typical trainee considers his entry into the organization not only as an achievement but also as a professional sacrifice for having given up other better compensation jobs at the campus for the sake of the inherent advantages of joining an organization of professional standing, market leadership etc. This



parameter would also apply to direct recruits who join with an air of expectation and hope. To every individual the change means a sacrifice for an unknown opportunity.

To an individual not only new recruits but also to careerist of a long term nature what matters is not only the end result, which needless to mention is important, but also the means of achieving the result.

### **KEY ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSES**

Structuring of rewards based on performance standards that are relevant and tailor made for the needs of the organization and standards that are absolute and unique. It is critical to move away from generic, across the board compensation structures to a competency based individualized reward system. Perhaps even the concept " system" may necessitate elimination and the reward program becomes truly one on one.

Communication of the individuals performance level to the individual explicitly, to others through policy statements, the levels as assessed by the organization and demonstrated through rewards like increment quantum, special MD's awards, elevation, creative task forces, international assignments, international training opportunities etc.

Individual communicated of his/her worth in monetary terms not with the intention of reflecting on the person but on the performance.

### **DISSONANCE**

Organizational careerists are of three categories:

- 1) High Fliers
- 2) Operating Core consisting of capable/ above average performers, who have been running their present show well but who may show slower potential for growth within the company. They too have a set of aspirations that needs managing.
- 3) Organizational member misfits:



- 1) Older age managers and managers who have been in the traditional businesses and whose performance has consistently been below basic expectation.
- 2) Incorrect selection and mismatch occurred at the time of joining and for which corrective action has not been taken for internal peer grouping, benchmarking or any miscellaneous reasons or so called humanitarian approaches.
- 3) Diminishing performance levels of specific managers given radical shifts in business environment, competencies and performance demands.

Concrete dissonance also emerges:

Communication and understanding of organizational performance standards as voiced by the immediate superior, departmental/unit head, and Management Committee members. And as told upfront to the subordinate. It is but true and shameful that few managers have the uprightness to give and receive feedback.

Understanding of rewards by the individual as direct indicator of his worth and value to the organization, whether the organization intended it or not.

Individuals understanding of this reward as a direct indicator of his potential for growth in the company. Reward may have meant something completely different from what has been perceived by the recipient.

Understanding of the individuals assessment of his/her own performance vis a vis his/her perception of the performance of his peer group further aggravated by his knowledge of the various kinds of rewards meted out to others. It is not, "how much" have I obtained as much as why has "so much" been given to another.

### **ISSUES OF CONCERN**



High fliers have been recognized, rightly so, and rewarded- Is a high flier really a one-company careerist, can the organization sustain his/her aspirations and quest for continuous growth in a long term?

Operating core communicated that they are not high fliers, rightly so, and therefore a tempered reward- Would he/she really continue to make a career or would he/she begin to look for greener pastures? Has he/she understood his/her worth and value to this organization as the backbone of strength or does he/she see himself/herself as victim of circumstances, may be pushed around when need be by the organization?

Poor performers communicated so, disappointment temporary in nature, not an issue as far as the organization is concerned.

### **TAKING THE BULL BY THE HORN**

If an incorrect decision has been taken at the time of selection or if it is subsequently found that the individual has been unable to fit into the environment do we review his case for continuity in employment?

If we do not have the right incumbent for the jobs do we consider a quick and demonstrative shift?

Do the units as well as corporate have a responsibility to the individual to provide him/her on the job inputs as well as developmental courses on a crash basis?

Do we review whether we have provided challenging and creative opportunities for contribution in specific cases?

Do we communicate to individuals the organization point of view about his/her potential for growth in the company or in the existing job?

Does the organization take upon itself the responsibility for helping individual managers set ambitious work plans for achievement?

Do we communicate as one organizational voice the standards, absolute and unique, for performance?



Do we make visible corporate view of top management's who do not share knowledge or transmit success experiences across the board ?

Do we actually need as a corporate more aspirants for growth and visibility than actual performers for whom growth happens naturally? (Live to Grow or Grow to live).

Do we tell a manager what is in it for him/her in making a career in the organization and why he should continue or not in the organization?

### **CONCLUSION**

Given the expanse of concerns in managing careers of individual managers many issues come to our mind, the question I have often sought to answer is whether an overt means of integrating the individual and organizational needs is possible in a typical work environment.

If I have succeeded even in a small measure I would consider my effort amply rewarded.