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Career management and its possible process in the company

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Summary: Career is an important aspect for both the employee and the employer. The employee who is aware of the development of his or her career seeks to achieve the set objectives for his or her own benefit as well as for the organization. The aim of this paper is to present the topic related to the development and management of a professional career in the company, and its interaction with the employee and the company.

Keywords: professional career, career paths, career management, development.

Introduction

“Career” in the present-day world is a popular term. It can be seen that people are more and more aware of that the career development is very important, but there are many adversities which may be encountered along the way, such as dismissal or unemployment. The vision of the future and consequently, the career planning as well as the awareness of what someone wants to achieve and what does he want to do bring many benefits, and above all it brings the desire to work and self-development. The realization of individual goals, as well as organization’s objectives, can satisfy the employee’ needs, both professional and social.

Selected aspects of professional career

The professional career concerns, above all, the entire lifetime. According to Alicja Miś, the career is a unique combination of positions, occupations, tasks and values that an individual possesses and uses in his or her own life, which is formed before starting work and is used during work [6]. The definition of a career is also the statement that it is achieving higher and higher positions in a particular profession or field and consequently, being successful in that field or pro-

fession [10]. A career is also defined as the development of a worker in a specified period of time, that is when the worker is professionally active. He performs a wide variety of tasks, has appropriate and responsible functions as well as he holds various positions in the organization in which he is employed. The career concerns both successes and failures [5].

The career may be approached from two different aspects. From an objective point of view, which is related to a change of position in the company's organizational structure, and from a subjective point of view, which is connected with the personal development of employees, the pursuit of goals and the satisfaction of the needs [7].

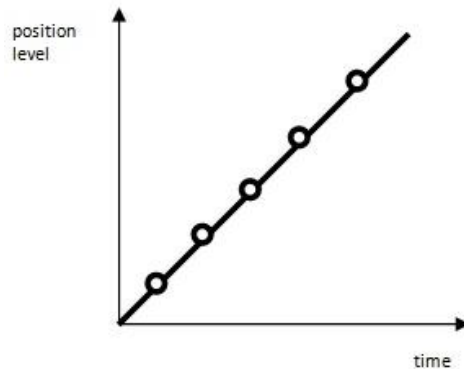
The career also includes considering in a different way – from the point of view of the company, not forgetting the employee. An organization which employs a given employee must be interested in him by ensuring that he or she is motivated and involved in work. A staff must be united with the company and must help fulfill its mission. The perfect combination is when an employee and an organization have the same goals. This is related to the professional goals that the employee wants to reach as well as to the goals set by the organization while giving the employee the opportunity to pursue personal goals [9].

Taking into account that each person has different needs and vision of his or her career, it can be seen that in most cases eight main values can be distinguished:

- Promotion and professional development – they cannot be associated, the professional development is a much broader concept and it includes promotion and many other changes which are related to development.
- Training and improving qualifications – employees need to be willing to learn new information and content. This applies especially to young people and new employees.
- Independency and autonomy in action – this element is connected with a great responsibility, people with such predispositions tend to take managerial positions, but there are also people who choose professions such as consultant, expert or computer scientist.
- Differentness and variability – prevention of monotony which negatively affects the work.
- Satisfactory contacts with people – contact with other employees is extremely important. People-to-people contacts and the atmosphere are an important element that influences the realization of employee tasks.
- The prestige of the company, profession, function or position – thanks to it the employee will identify himself with the company and will take care of its interests as well as he will be willing to fulfill his duties.
- Remuneration – the most important aspect for an employee. The salary should be adequate to the employee's job.
- Stability and security of employment – an important aspect that affects the employee's work.

By observing the career and life paths of people, the literature identifies three types or models of professional career:

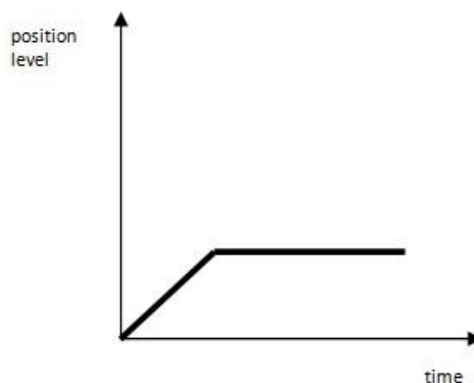
1. Ascending career – its characteristic feature is taking higher and higher positions in the professional or organizational hierarchy, such career is extremely intense.



Graph. 1. Ascending career

Source: Krause E., *Modele (przebiegu) kariery zawodowej człowieka*, “Problemy Profesjologii”, Polskie Towarzystwo Profesjologiczne, Instytut Inżynierii Bezpieczeństwa i Nauk o Pracy – Uniwersytet Zielonogórski, nr 1, Zielona Góra 2006, p. 147.

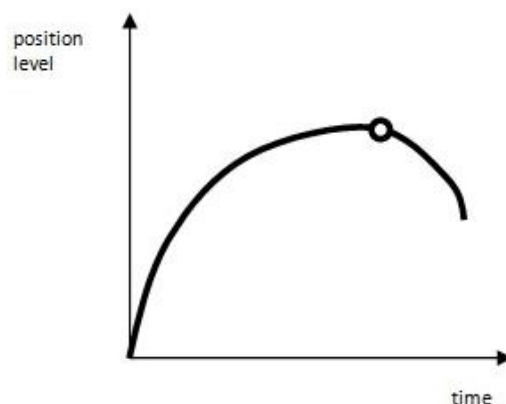
2. Stabilized career – this is a typical career for those who after an ascending career take positions which are as advanced and responsible as the previous ones. This situation is typical among people who have achieved everything they set out at the beginning, the goals have been achieved.



Graph. 2. Stabilized career

Source: Krause E., *Modele (przebiegu) kariery zawodowej człowieka*, “Problemy Profesjologii”, Polskie Towarzystwo Profesjologiczne, Instytut Inżynierii Bezpieczeństwa i Nauk o Pracy – Uniwersytet Zielonogórski, nr 1, Zielona Góra 2006, p. 147.

3. Descending career – at the beginning there is a characteristic growth and taking the highest positions, however, at a later point in time, after a turning point the person takes lower positions which, in consequence, are less responsible. Such things as dismissal as well as the bankruptcy of the company or the end of the contract may constitute the turning points.



Graph. 3. Descending career

Source: Krause E., *Modele (przebiegu) kariery zawodowej człowieka*, “Problemy Profesjologii”, Polskie Towarzystwo Profesjologiczne, Instytut Inżynierii Bezpieczeństwa i Nauk o Pracy – Uniwersytet Zielonogórski, nr 1, Zielona Góra 2006, p. 147.

The presented models show career development in a transparent and simple way, but no model exhausts the opportunities that can be observed in practice [8].

Stages of career development

Irrespective of the type of work performed we can distinguish several stages in a career that create or predict events and experiences related to the individual. Above all, it is important to note that there are three stages of the career which are clearly distinguished. These are the early career, mid-career, and late career.

Table 1. Career development concepts

Miller and Form Concept (1961)		Hall/Nougaima Concept (1968)	
Age	Stage	Age	Stage
0–15	Preparation for work	0–25	Before work
15–18	Start of work	25–30	Introduction at work
18–34	Attempt	30–45	Achievement at work
35–64	Stabilization	45–65	Keeping achievements
65–...	Repose	65–...	The decline

Table 1. Career development concepts (cont.)

Schein Concept (1978)		Super Concept (1980)	
Age	Stage	Age	Stage
0–21	Growth, imagination, eksploracja	0–14	Growth
16–25	Enter the World of work	15–24	Eksploracja
16–25	Basic training	25–44	Introduction
17–30	Full membership in an early career	45–64	Maintenance
25–...	Full membership In the Middle career	65–...	The decline
35–45	Career crisis		
40–...	Late career		
40–...	The decline, exit		
?	Repose		
Webber Concept (1979)		Greenhaus/Callanan Concept (1994)	
Age	Stage	Age	Stage
16–22	Pulling roots	0–25	Preparation for work
22–29	Personal maturity	18–25	Entry into the organization
29–32	Transition period	25–40	Early career
32–39	Stabilization	40–55	Middle career
39–43	Potential Middle age crisis	55–...	Late career
43–50	Re-stabilize and growth		

Źródło: Poczowski A., *Zarządzanie zasobami ludzkimi. Strategie – procesy – metody*, PWE, Warszawa 2008, s. 308.

However, if the additional and important aspect is taken into account, i.e. job preparation, the number of stages increases to four, and they are as follows:

- 1) Stage 1 – career preparation.
- 2) Stage 2 – early career.
- 3) Stage 3 – mid-career.
- 4) Stage 4 – late career.

Career preparation, the first stage, includes the time of acquiring the knowledge and skills. During this stage a person has time to develop his or her interests, has the opportunity to analyze the labor market, he or she also analyzes career options and creates visions of his or her own career. However, considering the career management, the following three stages are the most important.

The second stage, early career, is a contractual period between 18 and 35 years of age. The characteristic feature of this stage is that it is an entry into the professional life, what is connected with gaining experience and developing the own opinion on the career. Lots of disappointments can be observed at this stage and they are related to the transition from school or college to the work environ-

ment. The experts describe such situation using the term “reality shock”. It happens when the person is looking for his or her own lifestyle and starts fulfilling the tasks which were previously unknown to him, becoming an employee and establishing his own family. At the stage of early career education and trainings are respected and appreciated. The studies, their kind as well as the field of study, completed internships or traineeships and other experiences are taken into account. In this case, the individual predispositions cannot be omitted. The ability to learn quickly, dynamism, independency, effective communication, good interpersonal and communication skills are just some of them. At this stage, skills and experience are already assets that will be useful in the following stages of the career.

Mid-career is the third stage. It is a period of time between 35 and 50, also known as a period of proper professional activity. While characterizing this stage, the most important element can be highlighted, i.e. the use of previously collected capital. At this stage people build their own professionalism using their knowledge and experience, what is often a big advantage over new employees. The priority for the employee at this stage is the pursuit of success, what is often connected with promotions, financial benefits, authority or recognition. However, this is not the final stage [8].

The crisis of the middle of the career can be frequently observed at this stage, what is affected mainly by changes in employee's life. Frequently, the age of the worker is an obstacle in achieving career goals. To the employee's disadvantage, there may occur a slowdown in career development without any perspectives for promotion [7].

A late career, the fourth stage, occurs from the age of 50 until the employee retires. The majority of employees have the same goal, that is to maintain the current position and achievements as well as to prepare for the end of working life.

The hope of many employees is that their career will be stable and secure, but this is a rare situation. However, it can often be observed that immediate dismissal causes breaking off a career, what forces to take a break. A disadvantageous phenomenon is when the break lasts for too long, and as a result, it has a bad influence on the mental health and various difficulties may also occur. Career disruption may result in the lack of previously discussed opportunities such as the promotion or personal development [2].

Career management

Career planning for employees is a process that is designed to subordinate human resources in the organization, due to the mobility of the power structure in the company. An important tool in this process is setting up career paths which outline the rules concerning the movement of workers in the company between specific workstations.

Key aspects of the career path are career stages, competences that are required at each stage and the planned time needed to move a lower level employee to a higher level in the company's hierarchy.

Two variants of career paths in the organization may be considered, i.e. an employee's career or an expert career. The expert career is assigned to employees who perform specific functions within a particular area of the organization (apart from management function). The employee's career is assigned only to coordinators or people who take the managerial position [4].

One strategy for staff management is career management. The definition says that these are opportunities offered to people, which allow developing their skills and careers in order to provide the organization with the talents that are needed and to meet the aspirations of employees. The realization is determined by the combination of the needs of the individual and the needs of the organization [1].

Career management is related to the distinctive approach of the organization to the professional development of its employees. It is usually a process involving two parties: the company and the employee. However, company's help seems to be pointless if an employee does not have a proper approach towards his career development [8].

On the employee's part, career management is a process in which it is absolutely necessary to:

- Generate information about oneself and about career space in an objective way,
- Shape the image, above all it is important to remember the elements such as lifestyle, values, aspirations,
- Shape the image of the work that is going to be performed, including, among others, professions, working conditions, workstations,
- Create accessible goals basing on reliable information,
- Implement and develop specific strategies in order to help to achieve the expected goals,
- Provide feedback concerning the goals initially set and strategies used [1].

On the company's part the appropriate organization and planning of the career management of employees can allow to:

- Employ the right employees and organizing trainings which aim to prepare them to achieve high professional performance,
- Provide employees with the right path, thanks to which they will be able to use their potential,
- Achieve fluency of succession, which concerns managerial and specialist positions [8].

Career planning is at the heart of career management scheme. It is closely connected with identifying specific career paths which have to be followed in order to focus on the development in the company. These paths can be created only for selected employees or, on the contrary, for all employees of a particular

organization. Such a path is a detailed plan that includes positions that are within reach as well as promotions and a range of trainings thanks to which the employee has the opportunity to climb up. Career paths are ideal motivational tools that give a clear view of the career and the sense of keeping control over the entire working life [3].

Conclusion

Personal life and professional career are closely interrelated, and therefore they are so important and they are mutually influencing each other. Career planning, its process, development, and realization are activities that help employees and people to meet their needs such as ambitions and striving to attain the goals initially set, thus these are not just elements connected with a professional career. However, such elements as striving for the goals set at the beginning of the career, improving competences, and setting the own barriers to overcome, create a career path.

Employees who are aware of their own values, skills, and talents will always have the need to develop their careers. As the professional experience is gained, when his skills and knowledge develop and he is increasingly needed and appreciated in the organization, he wants to climb the hierarchy ladder in the organization. However, the whole process of professional development and creating the career paths requires long-term and appropriate management.

The companies create many opportunities in order to help their employees to develop their personal skills as well as to improve their skills which are connected with the experience. For a company a skilled and satisfied employee is the key to creating long-term cooperation.

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Zarządzanie karierą zawodową i jej możliwy przebieg w przedsiębiorstwie

Synopsis: Kariera zawodowa to ważny aspekt dotyczący zarówno pracownika, jak i pracodawcy. Pracownik, mając świadomość rozwoju swojej kariery zawodowej, stara się realizować wyznaczone cele na korzyść swoją i danej organizacji. Celem pracy jest przedstawienie tematyki związanej z rozwojem i zarządzaniem karierą zawodową w przedsiębiorstwie oraz jej wzajemne oddziaływanie na pracownika oraz przedsiębiorstwo.

Słowa kluczowe: kariera zawodowa, ścieżki kariery, zarządzanie karierą, rozwój.