EMPLOYEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Employee Professional Development and Improving Organizational Effectiveness

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Abstract – Professional development is a planned program of activities and events that provides for and contributes to the personal and professional improvement of employees. Professional development opportunities are for all employees in all job categories. In the past decades development of information technologies, increased international competition on the free market, globalization and businesses expanding outside of their countries of origin have led to significant changes in the societies all over the world. All these changes and the world economic and social crisis have to be changed in the demographical structure of the work force, raising the issue of engaging human resources, especially employee, into social and economic development. Responding to these changes and aiming to create a high level of competence, organizations today face the challenge of incorporating diversity management. Human resource management, through its policies and procedures based on diversity management, can recruit, motivate, develop and retain talented employees for all social groups, especially employee. The aim of this study is to present and analyze how policies and procedure developed by the human resources management influence professional development and promotion of employee in organizations. The study will especially analyze four types of policies and procedures: equal opportunities, development possibilities, formalizing the human resources management system and work-life balance and their influence on professional development of employee in organizations. At the end, the study will present potential avenues of further research in this field.

Keywords: Improving, Organizational, Effectiveness, Employee, Professional, Development, etc.

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INTRODUCTION

Many organizations are faced with the problem of retaining employees. It is expensive to replace employees who leave for greener pastures or are lured away by other organizations. New employees have to be recruited, selected, oriented and trained. In fact, it is estimated that it costs an organization approximately 1½ times the salary of the vacated position to replace an employee. Employee turnover can have a demoralizing effect on an organization, and it may also severely impact the overall efficiency of the organization. This becomes even more critical in organizations which are service-oriented, i.e. law enforcement, firefighters, etc., and require highly developed skills and competencies (Ferris, et. al., 2008). Unfortunately, there is no single answer that best addresses the issue of employee retention. However, a number of organizations have responded to this issue by implementing Career Development Programs in the workplace. These programs teach employees how to work toward their own goals while continuing to do productive work for the organization. Organizations with such programs claim they retain a greater number of employees (Aray, 2008). Clearly, career development has evolved from an isolated tool

for individual growth to a key strategic asset for many far-sighted organizations. Once left exclusively to the individual employee's own initiative, organizations have taken a more active role in their employees' careers through Career Development Programs. Traditionally, it has been assumed that every employee wants, or should want, the same thing in a career, usually a direct path up the organizational ladder. However, career development is not about "getting ahead", but rather about getting to be the best an individual can be and finding a place in an organization where they can express excellence and contribute to the goals of the organization (Akçakaya, 2010).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Career development encompasses "vertical" issues such as promotions and upward mobility, but also "horizontal" movement (lateral job transfers) within the organization. Career development deals with the fundamental nature of the relationship of individuals to their work and employees to their organizations (Huselid, 2009). A clearly defined plan of action prepares employees for the future and preserves an

organization's ability to meet both existing and future needs.

Rarely is enough attention given to alternative paths that reflect more personal aspirations, especially when those desires do not fit the familiar pattern of traditional organizational life. Today's employees are demanding more from their work in terms of fulfillment and personal satisfaction. They use words such as "empowerment" and "self-development" in expressing demands. This tells us much about the changing face of the workplace as we prepare to enter the 21st century. In today's competitive environment, it is imperative that all organizations create a work environment which fosters growth and development (Dyer & Shafer, 2010). It is apparent this can be accomplished by implementing a Career Development Program in the workplace. This will enhance organizational loyalty among employees, result in higher levels of job satisfaction, lower employee turnover, and fewer employee complaints.

1. Components of a Career Development Program: The desired outcome of a Career Development Program is to match the needs of the employee with those of the organization. Employees must have the opportunity to identify career needs and the organization should assist them in achieving these needs within organizational realities. A Career Development Program does not require elaborate procedures. The essential components are counseling and training. Career counseling provides an avenue for the employee to assess their career needs (Kumar, 2009). The training component assists employees in growth and development by enhancing their knowledge, skills and abilities in their present job assignments or prepares them for future opportunities. Proficient in-service training and career specialty training can accomplish this. Each of these components is vital to the success of the career development initiative.
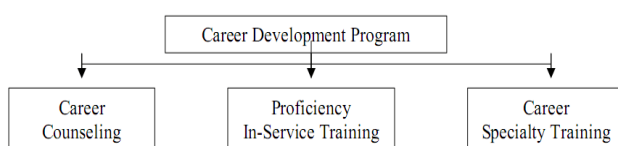

Figure 1 - Components of a career development program

One of the most logical and important aspects of the career development process involves career counseling. It is a key component or the foundation of the employee development process and can produce big dividends for both the employees and organization (Saleem, et. al., 2011). An effective Career Counseling Program not only assists an organization in identifying employees with high performance potential but also assists employees in mapping out realistic career opportunities.

Responsibilities: While it seems clear that career counseling will improve an organization's effectiveness and assist employees in achieving their individual needs, it is less clear who should do the counseling. In the vast majority of organizations, career counseling responsibilities are normally assigned to personnel within the organization, either by a specialized counseling staff or the employee's immediate supervisor. They are often knowledgeable about the employee abilities, experience and skills. Additionally, they have a good understanding of the work environment and the developmental activities within the organization. They are able to effectively monitor employee progress and facilitate, as well as advice on career directions. However, many employees may not want to open up to their supervisors and may be concerned about ramifications of their counseling sessions. The employee may also have a hard time taking seriously advice that comes from a nonprofessional. Additionally, a comprehensive effort to interest and train supervisors in career counseling can be extremely costly to an organization. Trained professionals may be better prepared to evaluate an employee's strengths and weaknesses than the employee's supervisor (Ali & Aroosiya, 2010). Also, since they do not work directly with those employees they counsel, they are often able to create an atmosphere of greater ease and candor. In addition, employees being counseled feel that a professional knows more and, as a result, can be taken more seriously. Few organizations rely on an external counseling staff. They can usually conduct a more comprehensive appraisal of the employee.

Process: Employees are ultimately responsible for assessing themselves, creating opportunities within the context of organizational needs, and carrying out certain development activities. In fact, most practitioners believe that 70% of that responsibility belongs to the employee (Myers, 1984). Employees who fail to plan their careers may do so because they think the organization or supervisor will assume that responsibility. The earlier employees are permitted to establish goals, make commitments and take action, the greater the chances of achieving long-term success within the organization. The organization is responsible for providing the resources and structures to support the career counseling process. The organization's supervisors and managers play an important role by assisting the employees in the understanding of the organization's needs. Career counseling is not about making job commitments or promises to employees (Khanfar, 2011). The career counseling process involves four basic steps. It begins with an employee's self-assessment. Secondly, it involves an assessment of one's work environment. The third step determines whether a match exists between one's preferences and those of the organization. It concludes with an action plan outlining specific tasks that the employee will pursue to accomplish the established goals. This structured process is designed to reduce or eliminate an employee's false hopes and expectations. Prior to a career counseling session, the employee will be required to complete a self-assessment outlining their accomplishments and aspirations. The employee

Debadutta Mahapatra*

should assess his/her goals, aspirations, and expectations with regards to their own career both short-term (1-4 years) and long-term (4+ years). This will enable employees to become more knowledgeable regarding their own needs, values, skills and personal goals. The employee should be encouraged to solicit feedback from both peers and supervisors, as well as, engage in private reflections in completing their self-assessment.

2. **Balancing between the professional and private life:** Based on numerous researches we can safely say that 2/3 of women in the world, and possibly more, take care of family members and perform household jobs making work – private life balance very important to professional development of women. Forming a family has a strong influence on women career development, with varying effect in different societies. In USA marriage does not influence the number of women employed but the arrival of children does influence the number of hours women are paid for while in China, marriage and children have little influence on the composition of woman in the work force. Trying to balance professional development with family obligations women are looking for options to improve the work – private life balance. Organisations are trying to adapt to the changes with different policies, especially with young employees who are trying to maintain balance between work and other aspects of life.

3. **Effectiveness of training programmes of Industry:** Training and development are essential in providing employees with the right skills for their present and future jobs. The world today is constantly evolving, with customers demanding more, which in turn adds pressure to companies and their employees. Therefore, in times of recessions, decreasing the budgets of training programs is a way for companies in all industries to manage and minimize their financial losses. The purpose of this study is to identify the different techniques that the hotel industry could use to maintain the training and development of their employees during an economic recession. This study will also look at the literature supporting the cost-effective practices of training and development and the methods used to evaluate training programs. In concluding the study, a set of general recommendations is suggested for the hotel industry and the human resources department when developing cost-effective training programs (Bowra, et. al., 2011). Training and development are essential in providing employees with the right skills for their present and future jobs. The high attrition rate and part time employment systems followed in the hospitality industry is a major concern which needs to be addressed. These warrant the need for continuous training of the people working in the hospitality industry. Apart from the technical knowledge and skills, life skills are also equally important in hospitality, enabling the individual to become a composite professional for delivery of excellent customer service. It is not enough for hospitality employees simply to know how to perform the tasks requires in their jobs. Most of the jobs in the hospitality industry involve customer interaction. So they must also know how to demonstrate behaviors associate with good service.

CONCLUSION:

After researching the Career Development Program with support mechanisms in place will greatly assist us in retaining our most valued resource. If we are able to assist all employees in meeting their needs, then both the employees and department will benefit in the long run. The success of a Career Development Program for the Altamonte Springs Police Department can be measured through employee satisfaction, development of promotable employees and lower turnover. In order to properly assess "why" employees leave, it is necessary that our department conduct timely exit interviews. This would enable the department to further evaluate the success of our Career Development Program. A proposed policy and procedure for a Career Development Program has been drafted, along with a form to be used by supervisors/managers in a career counseling session. It has been my desire since the inception of my research study to choose a topic that benefits the Altamonte Springs Police Department and its employees. Our department is extremely progressive and the implementation of a Career Development Program will prepare us to enter the 21st Century and the challenges that confront us.

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