

THE ROLE OF CAREER IN THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

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Abstract: An organisation capable of accessing and internalize the newest forms of knowledge profitably and efficiently with the human resources available to it, is considered to be a dynamic entity.

Changing of economical and organizational context impose permanent efforts due to assure flexibility and redesigning of organizational architecture, adaptation of career management systems to new conditions. To gain a competitive advantage entities make substantial efforts to raise their profit, performances and innovation capacity, using as much as they can of the potential and talents of the employers.

The paper will explore the importance of concept, role and objectives of career both from individual and organizational perspective. We try to identify particularities of career and his role in the knowledge – based economy, considering the fact that individuals have ultimate responsibility for managing their own careers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

We live in a world where long term stability of a job in an organization is not only an exception but it is also far from the ideal we can aspire nowadays. In the evolution of the organization we remark the flexibility of the structures and their continuous reconfiguration, which underlines changes in the systems of career managing in a dynamic environment which stands continuous changes (Armstrong, 2001).

2. THEORETICAL APPROACHES OF THE MEANING, ROLE AND CAREER OBJECTIVES IN THE SOCIETY BASED ON KNOWLEDGE

In its current meaning, the concept of career is relatively new. A long period of time, the career meant the time in which a person worked for somebody else, most of the individual from employment field or self-directed in career and have tried to progress in the context of the training given by the school system but also through the experiences gained or adopted in the labor market. This situation has continued until '60 as the staff

managing had a limited role in the management of the organizations. In the next two decades, due to a technical development, of the markets globalization, the labor environment suffers important changes and a new concept appears, the concept of career managing characterized by identifying and tracing the steps of the process by the employees and especially that their personal involvement appears in self professional evolution (Manolescu, A., 2001). The passing time has proved that the organizations which have engaged in career development of human resources are advanced in terms of the obtained performances (Manolescu, A., 2001).

The concept of career has a lot of meanings, at present there is no official definition unanimously accepted.

Generally used, the term of career suggest that it is about one individual's professional history (Zlate, M., 2004). The professional career is a complex concept which can be defined in many ways:

- a sequence of jobs, in ascending order of the prestige through which an employed individual is engaged, orderly, after a predictable rule;
- a sequence of positions in a hierarchy, together with the associated jobs.

The term of career was often associated only with the jobs placed in the top of the hierarchical pyramid, chairman, manager, general manager and so on, without including the other employees who have execution jobs, with contributions more or less significant, but which were part of the organizational structure (Novac, E., Abrudan, D., 2008).

The career is undoubtedly linked to work, including the experience gained in work and outside work, through style and working conditions. The professional career represents a fight to achieve the professional objectives but in this context, we can underline the importance of the individuals' options related to the family and life values, because, in the opinion of the majority, family represents that „natural” unit or that institutional model accepted by the history of social organization, whose aim of family solidarity realizes the ways of protection and support, the most accessible and adequate (Manolescu, A., 2001).

In our view, the professional career involves a gain of different personal and professional experiences, separated or intercorrelated, which are successively or in the same time passed by the individual during the life in order to get and maintain the personal, professional and social state. Each individual designs his/her own mechanism of thinking and self-assessment of the aspirations, values, beliefs, own personality, generating a unique mix of arguments, wishing to manage the private life and the professional one in a very equilibrated manner. This process is unique, dynamic and it needs to have a continuous and constant development during life time in the context of a knowledge-based economy.

3. THE CAREER PROSPECTS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN THE SOCIETY BASED ON KNOWLEDGE

Talking about the career prospects in the dialogue with the literature gives the opportunity of launching new challenges in trying to find the adequate answers to a series of key questions:

The professional career is meant to be an individual's simple alternative or it is necessary for it to manifest as a more elaborated process ?

The success in the professional career must be reported to the individual's capability and abilities or to the social norms agreed by the organization ?

Since the responsibility for planning and managing the own professional career are transferred to the individual, which of the attributes belong to the career management at the level of the organization ?

Which could be the report between managing own professional career in and the career management ? (Mathis, R., Panaite, N., Rusu, C., 1997)

In our view, the career development is an organic process, continuous, creative, not an automated, mechanized process, according to a predetermined, strict schedule. Each stage of the professional life brings a superior level of experience and trust its own person, as an effect of validated success and as a result of obtained failure, every time remodelling the way in which the individual is perceived in relation with the universe he lives in, with the potential and limitations imagined through his inner beliefs, of the determination towards the awareness of needs to achieve, self-achievement and self-overcoming of self-capabilities and in relation with the other individuals.

Understanding the concept of career and career management within a knowledge-based economy depends on the establishment of the perspectives upon concepts: either from the individual's point of view or the organization's point of view.

Some authors have considered the career management as a process through which individuals develop, implement and monitor the strategies and objectives related to career (Gutteridge, T.G., 1993). It can be noticed that in the literature of speciality, career is mostly treated through individual, but at the beginning of 1990 Gutteridge *et. al.* has noticed a change in vision from the perspective of the individual to an approach from the organization's perspective. (Gutteridge, T.G., Leibowitz, Z.B. and Shore, J.E., 1993).

We believe that a balanced approach would have realistic chances of being provided today, emphasizing the potential benefits both in terms of individual development and the development of organizations which actively takes the role of planning and managing careers. If the individuals and the organizations involve in the establishment, formation, development and evolution in professional careers, this becomes one of the meeting point between the organization's aspirations and the individuals' interests and wishes. Thus, the employees' successful careers would be helpful in the establishment of successful organizations (Ilieş, L., et al., 2002).

As Peter Drucker asserted some years ago (1955): „*development always means self-development. Nothing is more absurd than an enterprise which assumes its responsibility for an individual's development. It is the individual's responsibility, skills and efforts.*” But Drucker goes on: „*every manager in a company has the responsibility to stimulate and prevent self-development, to guide it correctly or wrong. The manager must be specifically with the responsibility to help those who work with him, to focus and concentrate efficiently the efforts of self-development.*” (Pastor, I., 2007)

Various authors state that these different meanings behind the concept of career management, having two aspects which must be highlighted. First, the personal identification with the work, which allows anyone to be seen as „*I am the one who makes*” and vocation which allows to say „*my life is work*”. Secondly, the society tends to measure the individual's value, his professional success, existing a risk of social assessment (Pastor, I., 2008).

In this context, it suggestively appears Herriot and Pemberton's „*Contractual model of career*” (Herriot, P., Pemberton, C., 1966), a reference model in the literature of speciality, which integrated captured the relations and intercorrelated interactions organization-environment-individual. The authors underline which are the four essential properties for any career model:

- the conceptualization (systematic approach, considering not only the organization, but also the business, political, economic, social, cultural environment);
- the cyclical nature and process of any model;

- subjectivity in terms of perception referring to success in career;
- the interactive nature of the relation between individual and organization.

The first approach of the model, in terms of organization, associates the environment with the organization, in terms of strategy, structures and processes, which correspond to the philosophers, structures and processes. In this sense, factors such as sector, national culture, business environment or market prosperity influence the way in which the organizations set their strategical objectives, how they organize and how it manages the people and processes.

The second approach of the model, in terms of individual, suggests the fact that the social context where people grow and develop, influences the values, norms and beliefs. These influence the aspirations and their options related to career, their progress and development as individuals in society. On one hand, the organization's strategy, structures and processes will be those aspects which will determine what the organization expects from people, and their careers, while the individuals, through what they are, will generate the wishes that the organization will fulfill for them.

The conclusion reached by analyzing this model is the recognition of a mutual understanding, negotiation and acceptance of what is offered and received in relation individual-organization or at least mutual perception on both sides upon the compromises made by both sides.

4. FEATURES OF SUCCESSFUL CAREER SYSTEMS

The career systems are dependent on the processes which take place between individual and organization. They can be differently understood in the context of multiple dimensions (Baruch, 1999a.):

- Internal: how a person understands the development of its own career through own aspirations, values, aims;
- External: how success is perceived in the career by the external environment, from the point of view of state, hierarchical position, income, power;
- Organizational: in terms of influence and power made upon the organization;
- Social: the evolution on the labor market, professional development, globalization.

From an organizational prospect, the literature reveals as being of major importance, the aspects related to the practices used in planning the career and the management of the career as essential components of the human resources management. Establishing the theoretical bases of the organizational management of the career is considered to be quite close as period of time (Arthur, M.B., et al, 1989).

Significant conceptual contributions and the theoretical models of the relevant career are those given by Sonnenfeld and Peiperl (Sonnenfeld, J.A., Peiperl, M.A., 1988) and by Herriot and Pemberton (Herriot, P., Pemberton, C., 1996). Sonnenfeld and Peiperl (Sonnenfeld, J.A., Peiperl, M.A., 1988) have examined the career systems considering two dimensions: the supply chain, referring to the labor markets where the organizations look for their managerial potential and the transference flux, referring to the base of development and promotion.

Herriot and Pemberton (Herriot, P., Pemberton, C., 1966) update a model of career system in which is reunited what the individual and the organization offer and get.

A great part of the literature is dedicated to an approach of the career from the individual's point of view and an acute lack of theoretical formulation is refelt in terms of the practices met in the organizational management.

What we can notice from the managerial practice and after the discussions with the specialists from the field of human resources is the fact that, just as the concept of the new psychological contract has developed, the organizational system of the careers should be permanently given to the dynamic demand of work and the relations created at work (Rousseau, D.M., 1995), it is no need to create and develop, from the beginning, all the systems, practices, techniques and programs. This aims to assess the traditional practices and then to adapt, improve and eliminate, where is necessary, the present trend in management, developing new directions where is necessary. After studying the literature, we found that there are career systems adapted to the specific, structure and dimensions of the organization and we have identified a series of activities of human resources specific to the career management met in more studied organizations, activities which can be the object of a further detailed analyze: posting and promoting jobs within the organization; formal education as part of the career development; achieving the performances as base of the career planning; career advice given by the direct manager; career advice given by the department of human resources management; side mutations on the job; training programs for the retirement; planning the success; mentoring, coaching, facilitation; alternative and usualways in career; plans personally written for the employees; training centres; development centres; using the assessment system 360°C; practical workshops (workshop-uri) about career; induction on labor market and career orientation; special programs dedicated on age, minorities and so on.; create a psychological contract.

Baruch, Y., (Baruch, Y., 1999a) argued that it is necessary to apply an integration of the career management on vertical and horizontal, on two levels: „internal”- horizontal coherence – inoculation in the variety of practices (selection, rewards, integration, assessment, preparation, career development) and „external” – vertical integration between the career system, strategy and organizational culture.

A wide range of application is held by the concept of individual who invests in himself. This principle refers not only to the investments in formal school and after school qualification but also the investments in family, as care given to the child and time spent with the child, the preoccupation for the child's health, investment for information regarding the labor market and looking for a job.

In our opinion, the changes deeply determined by the global crisis, lead to the awareness of the fact that it is necessary to have an active involvement, not only moral involvement, and especially professional involvement in all the structures we belong to, ensuring the chances of success in the new challenges of the modern world.

For a sustainable development of the human resources it is necessary to perform actions which allow a continuous improvement of life quality for the present and future generations by creating sustainable communities, capable to efficiently manage and use the resources and to realize the potential of innovation in order to ensure prosperity, environment protection and social cohesion.

The issue of investment in human capital whose results are „seen” on medium and long term is the hot topic of all countries in the competition for progress and welfare, including Romania.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The strategy from Lisbon aims the transformation of the European Union in a dynamic and competitive economy, based on knowledge. In our view, the foundation of an organization behaviour on knowledge, must determine the entity, to represent its accumulation of existent knowledge at an individual, group level, organization or assimilated in artificial supports and to extend the knowledge by stimulating the development processes, continuous learning and innovation in individual and organizational context. In this respect, the organization must actively develop their skills for an intelligent transformation the knowledge it has, in successful actions, a decisive contribution is detained by the adequate managing of the career and talents.

No matter what informational technologies it uses, the existence of the organizations was, is and will be conditioned by knowledge at the level of their members' behaviour because each of them is aware of the relations aims-ways-results and at the level of the whole organization and its environment.

We consider that the foundation of the organizational behaviour on knowledge is necessary to analyze the following aspects: the held knowledge and skills, valued and developed in time are changed in the competitive advantage of organization, playing a decisive role to get its strategical performance; the processes of the intensive intellectual accumulation are determined for the organization functioning in order to achieve its objectives; for all the components, the entities can structure roles and responsibilities which refer to knowledge management and the processes related to it; the organizational culture promotes the values related to communication, creativity, learning, skills, career; the identity of the organization in terms of structure, strategy and action.

The managers can not simply do what they had known and used to do in the hierarchies, and for what they should do they need new competences; the knowledge, as resource and organizational process, needs a type of managerial intervention, which is officially and professionalized imposed.

The organization based on knowledge is inevitable. The development or the creation of organizations based on knowledge needs strategical engagement and the exploitation of the whole human and managerial potential in the capitalization of the innovation, learning and interaction between employees and organizations.

The development of the informational society as a society of knowledge is conditioned by the presence of some intelligent organizations, with advanced management capabilities of the individual and collective skills as real sources of performance.

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