



Chartered Institute
of Personnel and
Development

Career management

a guide



Career management

– a CIPD guide.

Written by Zella King, University of Reading Business School.

Acknowledgements

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Contents

Introduction to the guide	4
Part 1 – Careers in context	6
What is a career?	6
The wider context of career management	8
Balancing individual and organisational perspectives	10
Part 2 – The five components of career management	12
Component 1 – Career planning and support activities	13
Component 2 – Career information, advice and counselling	16
Component 3 – Developmental assignments	19
Component 4 – Internal job markets and job posting systems	22
Component 5 – Initiatives aimed at specific populations	25
Part 3 – Integrating career management	28
Integrating career management into wider people management activities	28
Involving line managers, employees and HR professionals in career management	29
Part 4 – Supporting the career development of specific employee groups	34
Careers of under-represented employee groups	34
Careers of non-core workers	38
Part 5 – Reviewing and implementing changes to career management activities	41
Conclusion	45
References	46
Glossary of terms	47

Introduction to the guide

In June 2002, the CIPD published an Executive Briefing, *The Future of Careers*, which considered the changing nature of careers in a world of work where the use of short-term or project-based contracts was increasing, but where competition to recruit skilled and experienced staff was intensifying. There were high levels of interest among CIPD members, so a follow-up research project was planned. The 2003 *Managing Employee Careers* survey indicated that many HR practitioners thought their career management activities were not meeting business needs. Among the challenges reported in delivering effective career management were difficulties in securing the active engagement of senior and line managers in the process and a general view that career management is an optional activity, divorced from corporate objectives and performance.

This is not true for everyone. Some of the most successful companies see a clear link between organisational performance and effective career management, weaving the two together in their forward planning to ensure continuing success. The great puzzle is why more companies cannot see that the route to sustained success is through investment in the development of their workforce.

With an ageing workforce, greater job mobility and keen competition in the recruitment market, a strategy of doing nothing about career management is fraught with peril. If we adopt a policy to pay whatever it takes to get the right person at the right time, there is no guarantee that, even if they are available, they will want to join an organisation that won't invest in employee development. There is now a great deal of evidence to show that securing an acceptable balance between work, personal life and individual development is a key factor in people's decision to join one employer as opposed to another. For any organisation, career management is an investment. As with any other investment, care needs to be taken before committing scarce resources, a decision made more difficult by the fact that every organisation's needs are different.

In this guide, Zella King suggests a structured approach to ensuring that career management activities are aligned with organisational objectives and, if they are not, how they can be. The guide doesn't seek to set out a list of 'best practice' career management activities, since what works for one organisation may be inappropriate for another. Instead, it:

- considers the wider context of career management
- considers the effect of contemporary business trends
- aims to create understanding about the differing perspectives of individuals and organisations and helps identify ways in which careers can be managed to reconcile these perspectives
- discusses the 'business case' for career management
- identifies five main components of career management

- provides a series of checklists to help practitioners conduct an audit of current career management practices
- explores how career management activities can and should be integrated with wider people management processes
- takes a wider look at the career needs of particular groups of employees
- help to identify appropriate and productive changes or improvements to career management activities.

It is a practical guide, for use by HR professionals, but sufficiently non-specialist to be of interest to senior and line management. Other groups who will find it useful are mentors (both those who work in formal and informal capacities) and people who provide advice to employees, such as career counsellors.

As with so much HR work, what is proposed is largely common sense. But, as Clement Atlee once said, 'The problem with common sense is that it isn't always that common.' That is not the case with this guide and I hope that everyone who reads it will find practical advice and help in developing and maintaining effective career management strategies to balance the interests of individuals and the organisation for mutual success.

John Mockler

Chair, CIPD Counselling and Career Management Forum

Part 1 – Careers in context

What is a career?

Many people associate the word 'career' with an upward progression of jobs, increasing in pay, status and responsibility. For that reason, many think that the idea of a 'career' is only relevant to the middle or senior management levels of an organisation.

However, these days the use of the term 'career' encompasses a wide range of occupational experiences, not just conventional ones. Careers don't necessarily involve promotion or progression, and they frequently cross occupational and organisational boundaries. 'Career' can be defined as the sequence of jobs that a person has during his or her working life.

Few careers adhere closely to the idea of upward progression through a hierarchical sequence of roles. Some involve sideways moves within an organisation, or frequent moves in or out of employment in a number of different companies, or phases of self-employment, temporary work and permanent employment. People also develop their careers by accumulating and transferring job skills from one context to another, by broadening the range of expertise they apply in each successive job, or by constantly seeking out novel and challenging situations.

The individual perspective

What people want from their careers depends on where they are in their personal and working lives. Their career priorities are determined by their background, age, family situation, financial commitments, lifestyle choices and future life plans. Some people may hope to be promoted into another job with the same employer. However, there are many other ways in which a career can develop, such as moving to a new job with a different employer, taking on new or different responsibilities, investing in new skills or qualifications, taking career breaks, reducing or increasing working hours, and seeking flexible employment. What people hope to gain from their jobs will be determined by their previous experience of work, their current needs (in material terms, and in terms of personal development) and their aspirations for the future.

Figure 1: The individual's perspective



The organisational perspective

Jobs opportunities exist because organisations have work that needs to be done, and groups of individuals co-operate to that end. Employers need to have the right people with the right skills in place if their organisations are to remain viable in the short-term and sustain competitive advantage in the long-term. The kind of people and the kinds of skills needed depend on the sector of the economy in which the firm operates, its occupational make-up, the technology employed, the orientation of its customers, and so on.

These organisational requirements determine how jobs are structured, what sort of individuals are recruited into each job, and how employees are developed once in the job. Within any one firm, jobs vary as to whether they provide the opportunity for career progression. Many employers offer career progression with some jobs (typically those where the skills involved are either unique or highly valuable to the firm) and limited opportunity in others.

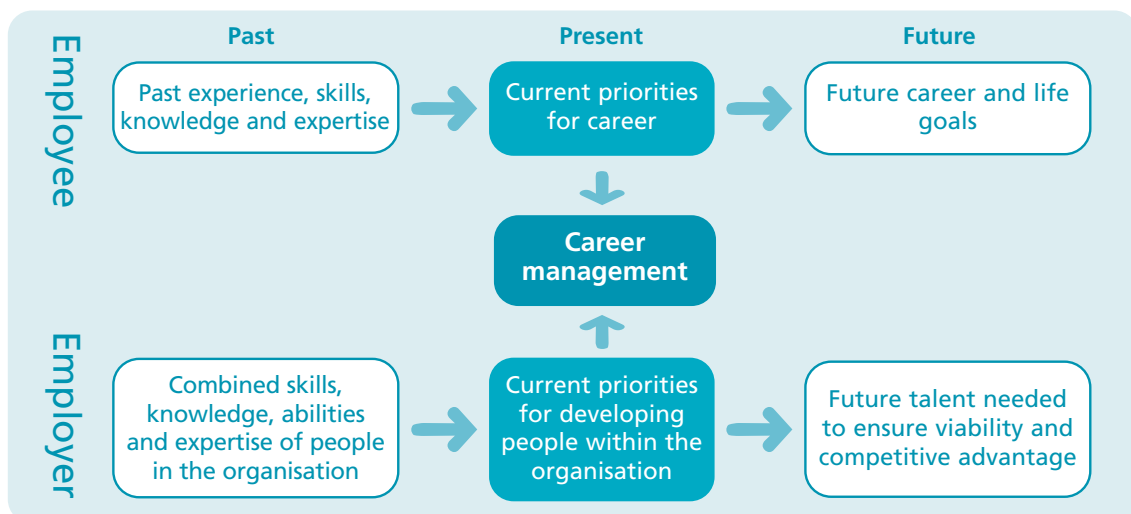
Figure 2: The organisational perspective



What is career management?

Career management aims to find an optimal, rather than a perfect, fit between the organisation's and the individual's perspective. This means finding not the ideal solution for either party but a solution which is satisfactory for both parties. This is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Reconciling organisational and individual perspectives



Effective career management

In this guide, we don't intend to put forward one 'best practice' solution. But we do suggest that there are a number of underlying principles that characterise effective career management:

- **consistency.** Since responsibility for career management is usually shared by HR professionals and line managers, employees can pick up messages about their careers in a variety of situations. Effective career management involves making sure that, in all of those situations, a coherent and consistent picture of the organisation's perspective is presented.
- **proactivity.** Effective career management anticipates the future direction of the organisation and reflects the wider corporate strategy or objectives. It maintains the current capabilities of the organisation while building flexibility and agility for the future.
- **collaboration.** Effective career management is based on partnership between the employer and the employee. Employers should work together with employees at all levels of the organisation to find mutually satisfactory solutions.
- **dynamism.** Career management requires flexibility and compromise over time, as changing organisational and individual circumstances mean that each party wants and expects different things from the employment relationship.

Recent findings from the CIPD's 2003 *Managing Employee Careers* survey of HR professionals supports this. The survey showed that career management is more likely to be thought effective if line managers take it seriously, if senior managers are involved and if it is integrated with wider HR and business strategies.

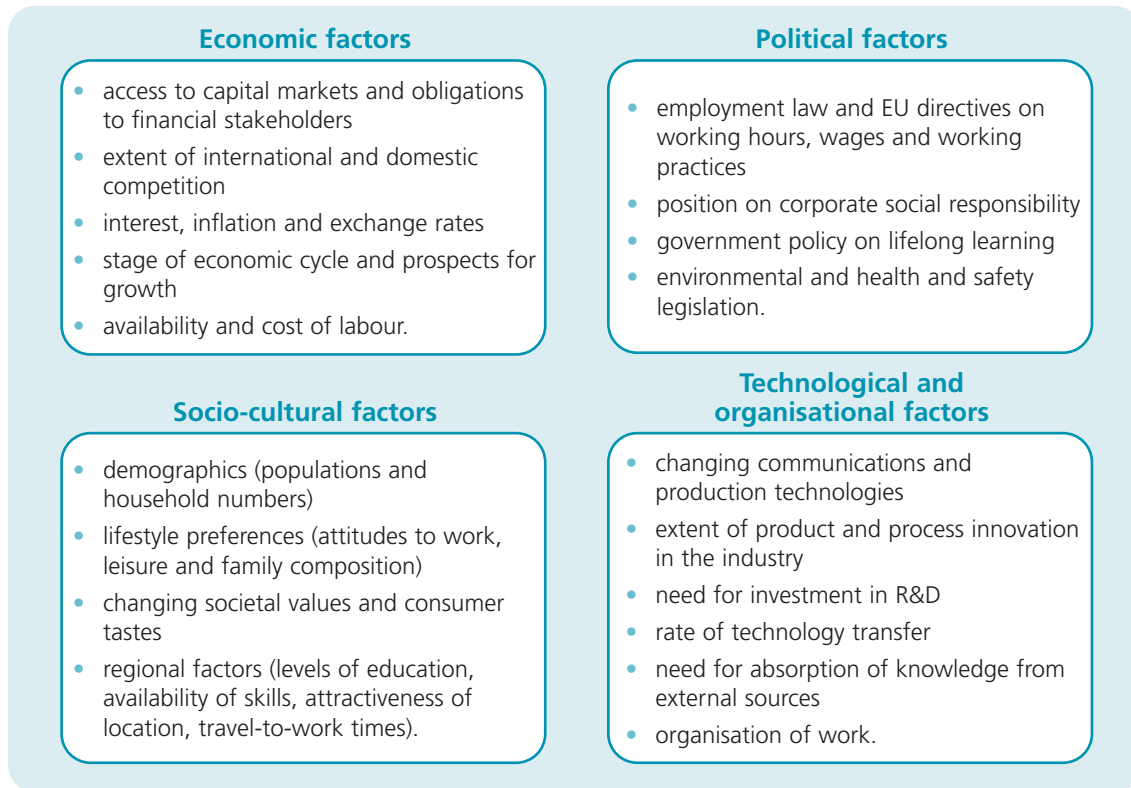
The wider context of career management

Careers are not formed in a vacuum but are directly affected by the wider political, social, economic and technological environment. Figure 4 suggests some factors that affect decisions about career management from an organisational perspective.

The state of careers in Britain today

Many observers of societal and economic trends have suggested that people can no longer count on having a 'career for life', and instead must take responsibility for managing their own careers. They argue that fundamental restructuring of the economy, accompanied by widespread delayering, outsourcing and redundancies, have provoked a decline in job security and a loss of faith in the possibility of a linear, progressive 'career'. This has also led some to question the entire concept of long-term career planning within organisations.

Figure 4: Factors affecting career management



However, a recent CIPD Research Report, *Pressure at Work and the Psychological Contract* (Guest and Conway, 2002) suggests that the traditional psychological contract is still alive and well. Most people expect to stay with their employer for the next five years and to be promoted during that time. Few organisations have moved wholly to fixed-term contracts or done away completely with the traditional tools of career management, such as succession planning or promoting from within.

However, some workers (typically younger and higher-skilled workers) have internalised messages about the decline of traditional careers by favouring jobs that offer 'employability' rather than career progression. Many people think of career success in much wider terms than work-based achievement, with quality of home and personal life, leisure and community involvement becoming more important.

There is a clear consensus emerging from the CIPD (2003) *Managing Employee Careers* survey that individual employees are expected to take responsibility for their own career development, with a supporting framework of advice, guidance and information provided by the employer. It is therefore critical that employers take account of the individual perspective in forming and delivering career management activities.

Balancing individual and organisational perspectives

It seems inappropriate to identify 'best practice' career management, since the most appropriate solution will depend on the needs of the organisation and the individuals involved. The key challenge for employers is to understand the wider set of factors affecting what kinds of careers they can offer employees, and to formulate a consistent, collaborative and proactive approach to managing careers. If a motivated and co-operative workforce is the key differentiating factor in their competitive market, employers need to manage careers in such a way as to realise the full value of employee potential. If they can't promise a job for life, they may need to forge a different kind of contract with employees by respecting their personal aspirations, building employability and perhaps offering greater financial security.

In practice, however, discussions about careers and the psychological contract are often difficult to have in an open-handed way. Employees are often reluctant to divulge their long-term aspirations, for fear of seeming uncommitted. Managers often feel uneasy about engaging in discussions that may lead to unrealistic expectations, disappointment or demotivation. HR professionals often try to implement 'interventions' that are intended to make people feel something is being done, but which in practice do not address the underlying issues.

For these reasons, investment in career management is often perceived to be too complicated and too future-orientated to be justified on the basis of immediate financial returns. But there is a very clear business case to be made for career management, which is set out in Figure 5. The crucial point to make is that, at a time when many employers are facing recruitment difficulties, developing resources from within is critical for future growth and sustained competitive advantage. HR professionals need to think carefully about how these messages can be communicated to their line management colleagues.

Figure 5: The business case for career management

The CIPD Research Report, *Understanding the People and Performance Link: Unlocking the black box* (Purcell et al, 2003), found that employees' job performance is a function of their **ability**, their **motivation** to engage with their work, and the **opportunity** to deploy their ideas, abilities and knowledge effectively. Effective career management contributes to this by:

- drawing from and developing the widest possible pool of talent and ability, including employees on non-conventional career paths
- reconciling individual and organisational objectives for the development of relevant skills and abilities over time, increasing the likelihood of return on investment in career development
- engaging employees' with their work, making them feel valued, and fostering commitment to the organisation
- promoting self-responsibility and initiative, and facilitating adaptation to new challenges and change
- accommodating and supporting employees' obligations to their home lives such that they are productive and effective while they are at work.

By developing able and motivated employees and giving them an environment in which they can excel, effective career management should, in conjunction with other factors, enable the business to achieve superior performance in terms of labour productivity, cost-effective investment in HR, quality, innovation and customer satisfaction.



Part 2 – The five components of career management

In this section we consider a range of practices, processes and techniques that can be used to balance the career priorities and objectives of individual employees with those of the organisation. There is a set of choices to be made about how extensively these various components are applied across the organisation, and how consistently they are applied to different employee groups. It is also important to ensure that career management activities are designed to be consistent and aligned with one another. We consider some of these choices in our discussion, and include a checklist of points for practitioners to reflect on.

We describe the components of career management in five groups:

- 1 career planning and support activities
- 2 career information and advice
- 3 developmental assignments
- 4 internal job markets and job posting systems
- 5 initiatives aimed at specific populations.

These groupings are derived from the *Managing Employee Careers* survey conducted by the CIPD (2003) which looked at current practice in UK organisations. They are illustrated in Figure 6.

Figure 6: The five core components of career management



Component 1 – Career planning and support activities

Typical activities:

- setting objectives for development (eg through personal development plans)
- formal appraisal or developmental review with manager, supervisor or boss
- informal appraisal, developmental feedback and career support from boss, other managers or peers
- informal career support from HR or training function
- developmental programmes which include work or career experience.



Reasons for organisations to provide career planning and support activities

Some people have a very clear idea of what they want to achieve in their careers, and how to go about it. However, many people need help to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to plan their own development in a structured manner. Setting developmental objectives (for example, through personal development plans) helps the individual take responsibility for their development, but with support from their manager and the HR function. This process can also help to align individuals' development goals with the future business needs of the organisation.

Key considerations

People should be encouraged to be realistic when formulating their development plans. It may not always be appropriate to think in terms of promotion and upward progression. They may need to think about how they can develop by facing new challenges in their current role, or through job transfers or secondments. Development on the job through coaching from a manager or colleague may be more appropriate than formal training courses.

All parties should be clear about who is responsible for identifying developmental objectives. The *Managing Employee Careers* survey showed that line managers tend to focus on short-term goals, project roles and promotion, with long-term career aspirations being less frequently explored. Line managers also tend to think in terms of relatively 'traditional' careers, without addressing more complicated issues such as career breaks, secondments or career changes. Individuals may find it productive to also discuss development objectives with another manager, an HR professional or an external person.

Some organisations incorporate a discussion of personal development as part of the appraisal process. In such cases development issues are often overshadowed by discussion about performance and reward. Employees may be reluctant to talk frankly about weaknesses and areas for development if they think this will compromise perceptions of their performance.

Responsibility for the implementation of developmental objectives also needs to be thought through. If it is the manager's responsibility, processes need to be in place for the manager to communicate the employee's aspirations to colleagues responsible for staffing decisions. If employees are expected to nominate themselves for new responsibilities or roles, they need support to develop self-presentation and networking skills. Employees who are disadvantaged or in a minority may also be those who lack self-nomination skills. It may therefore be appropriate to provide targeted training in this area.

Table 1: Career planning and support activities – diverging perspectives

Organisational perspective	Individual perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees are encouraged to take responsibility for their own development. • Managers are involved in setting developmental objectives; they are most likely to have accurate perceptions of individual performance and potential. • Changing organisation structures may mean that career paths that worked historically are no longer appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messages about individual ownership for careers may be interpreted as the organisation having no interest in developing employees. • Employees are reluctant to be completely open with their manager about development needs or future aspirations, particularly if the discussion takes place during appraisal. • Expectations about progression and development are based on historical career paths through the organisation.

Practitioner checklist

- Are employees given support to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to form development plans, for example, through career workshops, guidance or self-help materials?
- Is career information and advice available to all employees, not just key staff? If not, what messages are other staff receiving about their value to the organisation?
- Is information about career opportunities and future organisational skills requirements provided to all employees?
- Do some employee groups have problems accessing information about career opportunities? Does advice provided online disadvantage employees without access to computers and those with poor IT skills?
- Do managers have the skills to talk about complicated career management issues, such as secondments, work–life balance or career changes? Is support available for managers when issues arise?
- Is it clear to employees where responsibility lies for implementing the development plan? If line managers are involved, do they have the time and resources to make it happen? Are they committed to the process?

Nationwide – Career planning and support via the intranet

Historically, career management activities at Nationwide were focused on managerial-level staff. In the past, junior staff had career development reviews as part of the performance management process, but these were generally viewed as an exercise to arrive at performance and career ratings rather than as a real opportunity for a career discussion.

The need to extend and expand career advice was reinforced by a customer adviser, who used the staff suggestion scheme, 'Brainwaves', to vocalise the need to make career guidance available to all staff. In addition, the 2001 employee satisfaction survey, 'Viewpoint', confirmed that Nationwide could improve in meeting staff expectations in this area.

Senior management at Nationwide realised that career development opportunities and guidance were crucial to helping staff feel satisfied in their jobs and committed to the business. It was felt that this in turn would lead to improved customer satisfaction and therefore improved business outcomes. With the support of the chief executive and senior management, Nationwide established a project team comprising 14 people from all areas of the business. The team was tasked with producing a career management intranet site, which would provide access to career guidance for all staff.

How was the intranet site produced?

The website was built in-house, keeping costs down and providing development opportunities for IT staff. The chief executive launched the site to staff via a video presentation. Initially the website consisted of existing Word documents made accessible on the intranet. However, staff found these documents difficult to view, and also found the site awkward to navigate and unengaging. An external consultant helped Nationwide look at their intranet sites as a magazine-style information source, rather than a repository for information. As a result, the team reviewed the site and created an engaging, appropriately targeted and easy-to-navigate site. A new and simple four-stage process also made career discussions easier to undertake.

What kind of information does the intranet site provide?

- Job application form
- Application advice
- A section on assessing and developing an individual's potential
- Advice on how to prepare for and conduct a career development discussion
- Career planner form
- Career planner exercises
- Career query (pose a career-related query)
- Career statements explained
- Current vacancies
- A section on career development (advice and exercises)
- Interview guide
- Job investigator (job search tool with 'Job Alert' facility)

The 2002/2003 scores on the 'Viewpoint' attitude survey demonstrate increased employee satisfaction about career guidance. This intranet site is one of a number of initiatives, launched by the current CEO, aimed at improving how staff go about their work. Nationwide has seen the positive effects of these measures: increased staff commitment, improved customer service and help for the organisation in meeting its objectives for employee development.

Information provided by Steve Lassman, Career and Leadership Development Consultant.

Nationwide is a mutual building society providing financial services to over 10 million customers. It has a staff of 15,000, the majority serving 681 branches in the UK. In 2003, Nationwide was ranked 22nd in *The Times*' 100 Best Companies to Work For.

Component 2 – Career information, advice and counselling

Typical activities:

- career counselling by trained individuals (internal or external)
- career information/advice from staff in a learning centre or career unit
- career workshops or careers courses
- career coaching
- career information/tools on the intranet or on paper.



Reasons for organisations to provide career information, advice and counselling

One way of encouraging people to take responsibility for their own development is to make available information, exercises and resources to aid career planning and decision-making. These can be provided as 'drop in' career centres, workshops run by trained facilitators, one-to-one discussions with trained counsellors, coaches or mentors, or by completing online self-help tools.

Such opportunities are typically provided in 'crisis' situations, such as outplacement, resettlement and pre-retirement. But some employers recognise the benefits of encouraging all employees to regularly consider their situation, and to identify personal goals, lifestyle preferences and future career development in an impartial context.

Senior managers are often concerned that, if people are encouraged to think about their personal development, they may decide they want to leave the organisation, or they may develop aspirations that are difficult or impossible to satisfy. However, such interventions often make people more willing to consider how they can develop in their current job, and be more creative about looking for opportunities within the organisation. In many cases, they serve to confirm to participants that they are in the right job at that time.

Key considerations

Where counselling or coaching is given by an independent, external counsellor, the individual can engage in a frank discussion about preferences and future intentions in the knowledge that the information will go no further. However, the *Managing Employee Careers* survey shows that in the majority of cases it is the line manager who is involved in coaching and counselling activities.

The use of managers and other internal staff as counsellors or coaches is appropriate where employees want to talk through possibilities within the organisation and discuss what openings might be expected and how best to prepare for them. However, the use of internal staff may mean that employees refrain from being

completely honest about their own preferences and goals, not wanting to disclose anything that might jeopardise their future in the organisation.

After any career planning intervention, employees need to be able to pursue the new opportunities they have identified. If there is no clear process for this, people may feel disappointed or let down. If they are expected to initiate discussions with managers and other senior colleagues, this needs to be made clear.

Table 2: Career information, advice and counselling – diverging perspectives

Organisational perspective	Individual perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals are encouraged to consider a broad range of opportunities for them in the organisation, and possibly beyond. • Confidentiality is maintained and a supportive environment provided to assess development needs. • There is the risk that the individual will decide to leave because internal opportunities are not appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees may form unrealistic expectations about future jobs or progression in the organisation. • With internal advisers or coaches, employees may not wish to be completely honest about their future intentions if they don't intend to stay with the same organisation. • Employees can find out exactly what future opportunities are available within the organisation and assess the suitability of external opportunities.

Practitioner checklist

- Are the objectives of workshops and career discussions clear? Are participants reassured that the outcomes will not be used for assessment purposes or fed back to line managers?
- Is information provided about the characteristics of different jobs in the organisation and the kind of skills required? Is information about career paths, training, secondments and transfers also available?
- Do the providers of advice (line managers, other staff or external counsellors) have adequate information about opportunities in the organisation? Are they adequately trained?
- Are participants encouraged to form realistic impressions of their potential? What information do they have to draw on? Is it reliable?
- Are confidentiality, accessibility and equality of opportunity assured? Are the organisation's needs made explicit, so that the individual is clear about the adviser's position?
- What are the 'next steps' after career advice activities? Are employees expected to seek out new opportunities for themselves? Do they need help to research and pursue new opportunities?

Eli Lilly and Company Ltd: Career information, advice and counselling

In 1997, Lilly introduced one-day career workshops for staff groups faced with change and/or restructuring. Since then, the UK Employee Development team has recognised that career development workshops could be useful to other employees, including those who recognise they need a career change but don't know how to go about it, and those wishing to move from a technical role to a management role.

Lilly now offers a two-day career workshop which is open to all staff and is run three times a year. This has widened participants' understanding of the career options available across the four UK sites. The workshops are advertised on the careers development section of the UK Employee Development website.

Summary of workshop content

Day 1

Career development – what does it mean?

- considering the role of the individual
- making the shift from company-driven to self-managed careers
- looking at different career options
- starting the Lilly career planning process

Review of self-directed search – Holland's theory Completion of individual 'Career Puzzles'

- introducing the concept of the 'Career Puzzle' (prioritised inventory of elements for the future, including skills, values, interests, work-life balance, etc)

Verification of self-assessment (overnight assignment)

Lilly offers other closely linked activities, including a one-day workshop for managers called Handling Career Discussions; Development Planning Clinics (sessions to discuss career/development plans); and Winning Edge (a programme to identify individuals' career aspirations). In addition, tailored workshops are used on an ad hoc basis to meet specific needs, such as helping managers implement change management programmes, and equipping HR staff to provide informal career support to employees. Also, within the annual performance management system, line managers have both formal and informal career development discussions with their team members. These discussions are fed into Lilly's twice-yearly succession planning activities.

Lilly believes that these proactive career management activities promote low staff turnover because they help people understand the range of options open to them. As a direct result of participating in the workshops, a number of staff have moved to different functional areas.

The key focus in Lilly for the UK Employee Development team is to deliver the right people in the right jobs, at the right time. All of their career development efforts are focused on this, while also considering an individual's needs in terms of the stage they are at in their career and working life.

Information provided by Julie Catlin, UK Employee Development Manager.

Eli Lilly and Company Ltd is a pharmaceutical manufacturing company, employing 43,000 people worldwide and with four sites in the UK.

Day 2

Application, implementation and action planning

- review of verification
- application of Holland type theory to results
- practical networking
- reputation management
- effective influencing
- goal-setting – helpers and hinderers
- building a career development plan
- examining roles and responsibilities
- preparing for a career discussion.

Component 3 – Developmental assignments

Typical activities:

- external secondments
- managed career break schemes
- internal secondments, project assignments, work-shadowing
- international assignments.



Reasons for organisations to provide developmental assignments

In flat organisations with minimal hierarchy, upward career progression will not be possible for many employees. One alternative is to encourage lateral and cross-functional moves. Internal secondments or assignments provide developmental challenges, increase a person's range of skills and experience, provide greater exposure to, and knowledge of, the organisation, and offer job variety.

External secondments are an excellent source of opportunities for development, particularly in the absence of internal opportunities. Secondments, work-shadowing and project assignments can be an effective way to achieve knowledge exchange by seconding employees to clients or alliance partners or by having them work on external projects or ventures.

Many organisations use international assignments or secondments for developmental purposes. Such assignments help employees to develop sensitivity to working in cross-cultural contexts, build up knowledge of global processes and develop an international network of contacts. They also facilitate the transfer of skills and knowledge between operations in different countries. Cross-border moves include sending people from the corporate centre to subsidiary operations in other countries and bringing local staff in to gain experience at the corporate centre.

Key considerations

Promoting lateral as opposed to hierarchical moves can be problematical if employees have not come to terms with career development taking place within one organisational level rather than up a career 'ladder'. Lateral progression often acquires negative connotations among employees, particularly when it is introduced at a time of upheaval and downsizing. Managers also often resist releasing their employees for lateral moves or secondments, wanting to hang on to valued staff and only 'let go' of the poorer performers. This reinforces the negative perceptions of lateral moves.

Developmental assignments need to be 'sold' positively to all of the parties concerned. Communicating the benefits of knowledge transfer between the roles can be a very convincing way to do this. However, the return from development assignments or secondments needs to be carefully facilitated. If the individual is

keen to apply their new skill or to disseminate their new knowledge but returns to the same job with no opportunity to do so, it can lead to disappointment and demotivation.

These issues can be particularly challenging with international assignments. It is no longer possible for employers to demand that employees accept international assignments. Although international experience is desirable for some people (particularly the young and those with flexible lifestyles), others are more reluctant to relocate, especially if it will disrupt their family life or partner's career or if the destination country is not desirable. Career break schemes can also be difficult to implement in a consistent and equitable manner. It is quite common for employees without dependants or caring responsibilities to feel that they miss out on career break opportunities.

Table 3: Developmental assignments – diverging perspectives

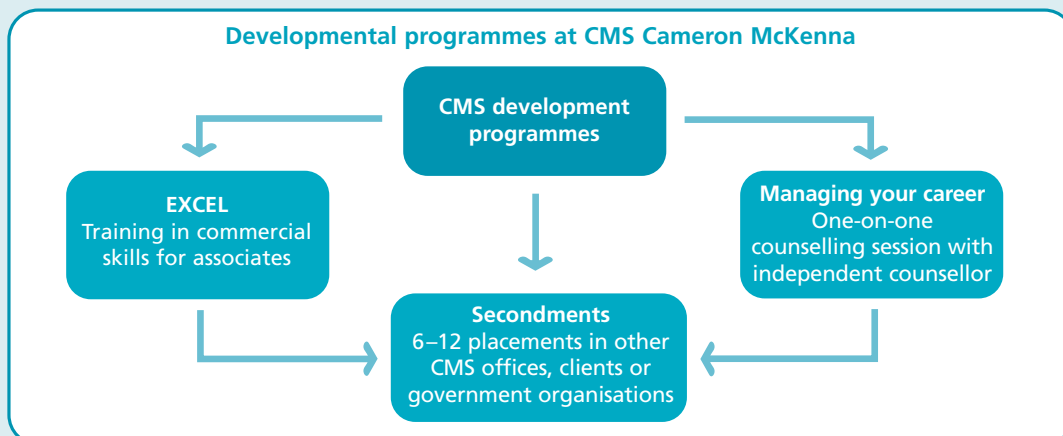
Organisational perspective	Individual perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of retraining and replacement due to lateral moves or secondments are kept to a minimum, maintaining the effectiveness of each team. • People returning from secondment or international assignment are accommodated with minimum disruption or costs. • Staff who are most evidently committed to the organisation (ie not those who take career breaks) are promoted and developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees make use of opportunities for lateral moves or secondments to broaden their skills base and increase employability. • New skills are deployed in the employee's old job on return from secondment or international assignment and their enhanced contribution is rewarded. • An employee may take a career break for personal reasons, but is assured of equitable treatment and promotion opportunity on return.

Practitioner checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have staff been given information about how secondments or developmental assignments can be achieved? • Are managers encouraged to facilitate secondments or developmental assignments, for example, by being given resources to cover absence? • Are lateral moves rewarded through accompanying salary increases? Are non-financial types of reward, such as training or development options, appropriate? • Are staff who are currently on career breaks or external assignments taken into account in resource planning? • Is support provided to people returning from secondments or career breaks? • Are staff who take career breaks treated equitably in subsequent promotion decisions? • Are all employees entitled to apply for career breaks?

CMS Cameron McKenna – developmental programmes and assignments

CMS Cameron McKenna (CMS) was formed from a merger of Cameron, Markby Hewit and McKenna and Co. in May 1997. The merger was the catalyst for the adoption of a more formal approach to career development. Faced with a hugely aggressive recruitment marketplace, CMS recognised that to attract and retain the best lawyers the firm needed to differentiate itself. The provision of a coherent development plan, making transparent how to achieve partnership, was seen as one way of doing this. Their first step to achieving this route map to partnership was to establish what excellent performance in CMS would look like. This was then converted into a competency framework, which is directly linked to all CMS development activities. CMS now provides development programmes for junior lawyers (associates), senior lawyers and partners, as well as support staff.

EXCEL was the first programme to be introduced at CMS in 1998. This is aimed at associates (lawyers with 2-years' post-qualification experience) and is intended to improve lawyers' awareness of broader commercial issues. The programme includes a review of skills using psychometric tools, and confidential one-to-one feedback to map out development activities.



CMS identified that, although EXCEL enabled fee-earners to develop many of the competencies valued by the business, what they lacked as they progressed within the organisation was individual ownership for development. To address this, in 2001, CMS introduced the **Managing Your Career** programme. All fee-earners who have been qualified for five years participate in a one-to-one confidential career review process with external counsellors.

Secondments are often identified as an outcome of the EXCEL/Managing Your Career programme. Employees are seconded to CMS offices outside the UK, a client or a government organisation. CMS recognises that it can be difficult to ensure that what is learned during the placement is applied on return to the workplace. For this reason, they developed detailed guidelines to help staff capture, measure and report on the secondment experience. Before the secondment, the employee writes a proposal outlining their learning objectives and the benefits to CMS, which is sponsored by a partner and, throughout the placement, sponsors and secondees are encouraged to adhere to the secondment guidelines. In 2003, CMS organised 52 secondments that were oriented towards career and personal development as well as client relationships. CMS believes that their focus on the development of people has been a key contributor to their increased position in the league tables on profitability and market share.

Information provided by John Renz, Human Resources Director.

Component 4 – Internal job markets and job posting systems



Typical activities:

- internal job market, enabling individuals to be considered for internal job vacancies
- online job posting or vacancy boards
- use of web-based systems for receiving CVs and vacancy applications online, and filtering of applicants based on psychometric tests, biographical data and other measures.

Reasons for organisations to use internal job markets and job posting systems

Many organisations adopt a system where vacancies and promotion opportunities are advertised for any interested employees to apply. Forthcoming vacancies are notified on electronic or physical notice boards, with details of preferred experience, qualifications and a job description. Jobs may be advertised externally at the same time. Where large numbers of applicants are dealt with, web-based systems can facilitate the application process and help to filter candidates. Job posting systems can help organisations move towards a self-development culture, where employees are expected to make their own plans for career development. They can also generate substantial savings in recruitment costs.

Key considerations

The process of moving employees between jobs within the organisation determines the skills they develop and the experience and knowledge they acquire. If the employer drives this process, it can be used to shape organisation capabilities for the future. There can be risks involved in leaving it to employees to participate in internal job markets. People may not consider internal job moves that don't develop their external employability, or that are deemed undesirable in some other way.

Another risk of leaving decisions to employees is that the most suitable candidates may not put themselves forward, through ignorance that opportunities exist, inertia or lack of self-confidence, or because they actively choose not to for personal reasons. There are implications for equal opportunities, since disadvantaged or minority-group employees may eliminate themselves from the process.

In highly structured organisations, the slight variations in levels of responsibility at each stage of the hierarchy allow for a more gradual acquisition of the skills and experience needed for senior roles. In flatter structures, the jump between one layer and the next is substantially greater. It may be much harder for an individual to prove that they have the competency to progress to the next layer, or to develop the skills that they need to

do that job. This problem is exacerbated if those making selection decisions choose candidates on the basis of their existing skills, rather than their potential for development.

The use of web-based systems, although operationally efficient, can sometimes make these issues worse. Pre-determined selection criteria may deter disadvantaged or minority employees from applying and may also discriminate against employees with potential rather than demonstrated experience. However, web-based systems can also widen up the talent pool by improving the awareness of vacancies/jobs across the organisation.

Table 4: Internal job market – diverging perspectives

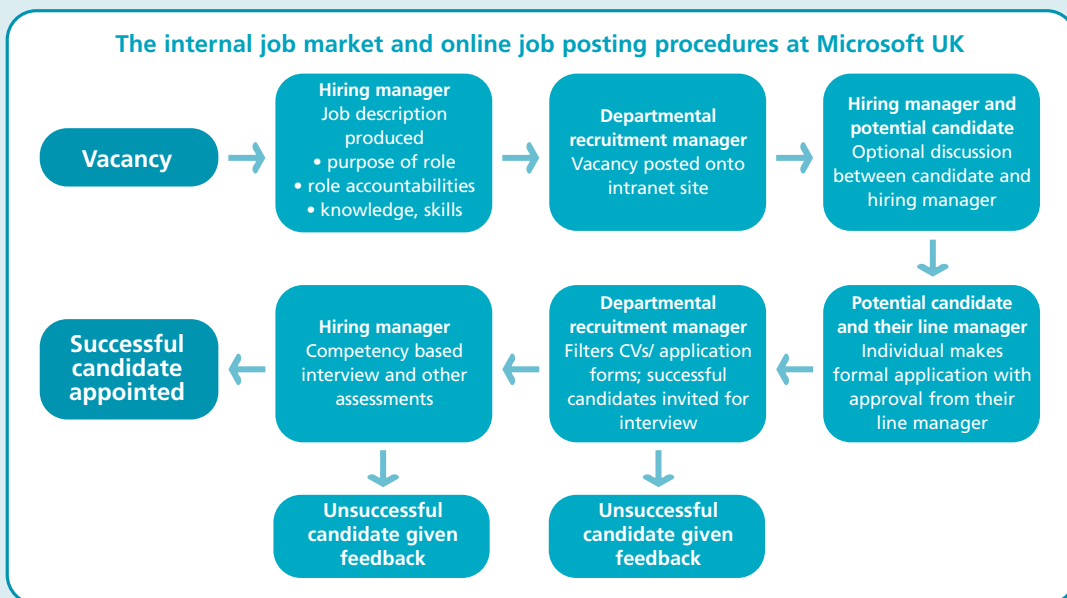
Organisational perspective	Individual perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness and self-development by advertising vacancies are encouraged, rather than people being nominated for new roles. • Each vacancy is filled with the best person for the job. • Vacancies in unpopular locations or jobs which involve high levels or risk unsociable working arrangements are filled. • Candidates are filtered through web-administered pre-selection tests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best candidates for the job may not be aware of possible vacancies, or may self-eliminate from the process by choosing not to apply. • Skills that enhance employability are used and developed and experience acquired. • Employees resist undesirable job moves if no prospect of an eventual upside (such as promotion) is perceived. • Employees may be deterred from applying if they are not a 'mainstream' or obvious candidate.

Practitioner checklist

- Do employees have a clear idea of how the internal job market works? Do advertisements make clear what skills, knowledge and experience are required for each post? Are employees given feedback after an unsuccessful application?
- Are employees given incentives (for example, financial or other benefits) to take jobs which are undesirable in terms of career progression or skill development?
- Are vacancies advertised in such a way that all target employees (including, for example, those at remote sites, those without computer skills, or those who work from home) will see them?
- Are managers aware of vacancies? Do they encourage individuals to apply? Should current line managers be involved in the application process?
- Are selectors encouraged to consider how candidates will develop into the role as well as how well they will perform on the basis of existing skills?
- Do web-based pre-selection tests discriminate unduly against certain groups of employees?

Microsoft UK – internal job markets and online job posting

One of Microsoft's core philosophies is that, as a business, it is 'nothing but people and their ideas'. Developing people is considered to be a key determinant of its success. Microsoft has had an internal job market and online job posting for many years and sees this as an effective way of helping staff realise their potential by progressing within the organisation. These procedures also support another of Microsoft's core philosophies, which is to make its systems as transparent as possible. Any employee of Microsoft can access any vacancy in any location in the company from the intranet. The majority of jobs are posted internally for a minimum of two weeks before external advertising.



Mechanisms to give feedback both to successful and unsuccessful candidates form a key part of the open job posting procedures. Unsuccessful candidates are given competency-based feedback, which they can use to plan their future development activities. Receiving feedback in this way is considered to be an important career development opportunity. Previously unsuccessful employees who manage to take on board the development requirements identified in this feedback process are often successful when a similar opportunity arises subsequently.

Microsoft recognises that there is a risk that the most suitable candidates don't put themselves forward. They attempt to reduce this risk through a parallel succession planning process and through the annual development review process, which encourages both employees and managers to be aware of individual aspirations. Careers in Microsoft are seen as a partnership between an individual and their line manager, with line managers expected to play a central role in helping their team members progress their careers.

Microsoft believes that having an internal job market that is open to all employees not only motivates and provides development opportunities for staff but also helps the company save money and time.

Information provided by Samantha Welch, Senior Human Resources Consultant.

Microsoft UK is a subsidiary of Microsoft Corporation. It employs 1,500 people in five offices and its main functions are service, support, sales and marketing for Microsoft customers and partners across the UK.

Component 5 – Initiatives aimed at specific populations

Typical activities:

- high-potential development schemes
- succession planning
- graduate entry schemes
- development or assessment centres
- career moves managed by the organisation.



Reasons for organisations to use initiatives aimed at specific populations

Where particular groups of employees have skills that are very specific to the organisation, or where their skills are difficult to replace, it makes sense for employers to plan and develop the careers of these employees very carefully. Succession planning assists an organisation to plan for the strategic development and deployment of staff over time. By identifying individuals to fill key jobs in the future, employers can make sure they have an adequate 'talent pool' of people from which to fill vacancies and senior positions in the future.

Increasingly, the focus of succession planning processes is being widened beyond senior management positions to incorporate all posts that require unique skills or skills that are difficult to replace. Similarly 'high-potential' employees are also often singled out for careful career planning and development. These groups, and other populations such as graduates, are often the focus of highly managed interventions.

Development and assessment centres are often used to select employees for these programmes. Development centres use the same tools as assessment centres (group discussions and activities, presentations, interviews and psychometric tests) for different purposes. In an assessment centre participants are usually aware that the principal objective is to assess their capability for a job. Development centres are used to identify high-potential staff and encourage discussions about their future development.

Key considerations

Most employers recognise that succession planning or interventions for high-potential staff need to be developed in partnership with the individuals concerned. Where this is possible, it does not make sense for the employer to make long-term investments if the individual has conflicting objectives.

Development centres can be used to help employers and employees identify development needs. However, if participants are required to share the results of a development centre with their managers, or if they are perceived to be a means of selection, it may affect participants' behaviour and their openness to feedback. For this reason, the purpose of the development centre needs to be made very clear.

In some cases initiatives aimed at specific employee groups acquire connotations of elitism and exclusivity, particularly where they are associated solely with high-flyers or fast-track employees. This may result in excluded groups of employees feeling demotivated.

Employer-directed succession planning may appear contradictory in an organisation where self-development is encouraged through internal job markets. The use of succession planning or fast-track programmes in such cases may send mixed messages about career development, appearing to favour job moves for a privileged few. Organisations must be careful about communicating consistent messages to staff.

Table 5: Initiatives aimed at specific populations – diverging perspectives

Organisational perspective	Individual perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnover of high-potential individuals is minimised to realise return on investment in their development. • High-potential employees are given sufficient breadth of exposure through job moves but avoiding the demotivation of other employees. • Organisations ensure that individuals have a realistic view of their potential, but demotivating individuals who have reached their full potential in current role is avoided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees benefit from all possible development opportunities, but keep options open for jobs elsewhere. • Employees may become demotivated if vacancies aspired to are filled by a perceived 'elite'. • They have access to information about how the organisation views potential and future development plans.

Practitioner checklist

- How would your organisation fill senior management/critical jobs if they become vacant? Is there a sufficient pool of talent internally to fill them?
- What information does the succession planning process draw on? Are these sources reliable?
- Have succession planning candidates or high-flyers been told how the organisation rates their potential? Are their personal career ambitions and mobility preferences taken into account?
- Have people been told what future opportunities they can expect? Are other employees receiving messages that they are not valued?
- Does the process of succession planning conflict with messages about self-responsibility for career?
- Are the objectives of development and assessment centres made clear? If development centres are being used for selection purposes, are the participants made aware of this?
- Are traditionally disadvantaged groups (eg women or ethnic-minority groups) adequately represented in fast-track or succession planning programmes?

Defence Procurement Agency (DPA) – Initiatives aimed at specific populations

The Ministry of Defence has several graduate schemes from which the DPA can receive candidates. The schemes include: fast stream (which grooms staff from all departments for the Senior Civil Service); engineers/scientists; and business graduates (who are fast-tracked from junior management level through a management development scheme).

However, despite these schemes, the DPA has faced a serious shortage of staff at junior management level in the past three years, particularly in finance and commercial disciplines. To address this issue the HR team at the DPA decided to run dedicated recruitment campaigns. As a result they have successfully employed over 110 people in finance and commercial roles over the last three years.

How did the DPA achieve success in recruiting and retaining finance and commercial managers?

Targeting specific populations of graduates/professionals	The DPA chose graduates/professionals with economics or accountancy degrees/backgrounds for finance and law roles, and business studies for commercial posts.
Offering professional training	CIPS for commercial roles, CIMA or ACCA dip for finance roles, or MBA.
Providing general courses and management training	Induction, leadership training, project management etc.
Self-selected, specific skills courses, e.g. IT, communication and presentation skills etc.	Individuals are encouraged to develop a personal training plan with their line manager that reflects their development needs and interests.
Job diversity opportunities	Individuals are encouraged to move posts after approximately two years eg finance accounting into auditing. In addition, individuals are encouraged to gain experience in different functions, which is considered important for senior-level promotions. Individuals are also eligible for inclusion for the internal development scheme, named MIDIT. Staff on this scheme are groomed for senior management appointments by the age of 40. In part this is achieved by ensuring that staff gain solid experience via guaranteed moves every two years across functions and the option of additional development opportunities.
Promotion opportunities	After gaining three to four years of experience, staff joining these schemes can expect to apply for promotion opportunities. This process can be fast-tracked if an individual has previous industry experience as the DPA values experience gained in external environments.

One problem that has arisen is that there is no single, published route map of career paths that graduates/new recruits can expect to pursue. Work is now in hand to publish a route map along these lines. However, the DPA feels that this has been offset previously by the opportunity to take up a variety of roles in the UK and abroad, and to make lateral moves within the DPA and the MOD.

Information provided by Martin Skipper, Human Resources Manager.

The Defence Procurement Agency (DPA) started life in the 1960s, as the Procurement Executive of the MOD. The function of the DPA is to equip the armed forces. The majority of its 4,000 civilian and 500 military staff are based in Bristol, with the remainder in regional offices or based overseas.

Part 3 – Integrating career management

Part 2 focused on the five components of career management and explored problems and challenges in implementing them. Most of these problems and challenges are about making sure activities are consistent with one another so that the employee receives consistent messages about how careers work in the organisation. This section considers how these career management activities fit into the wider context of people management within the organisation.

We consider the wider question of integrating career management in two parts:

- 1 integrating career management into wider people management
- 2 involving line managers, employees and HR professionals in career management.

Integrating career management into wider people management activities

Here we consider the need for career management activities to be consistent with other HR practices and strategies. Figure 7 illustrates how career management and wider people management work together.

Figure 7: Integrating career management into wider people management activities

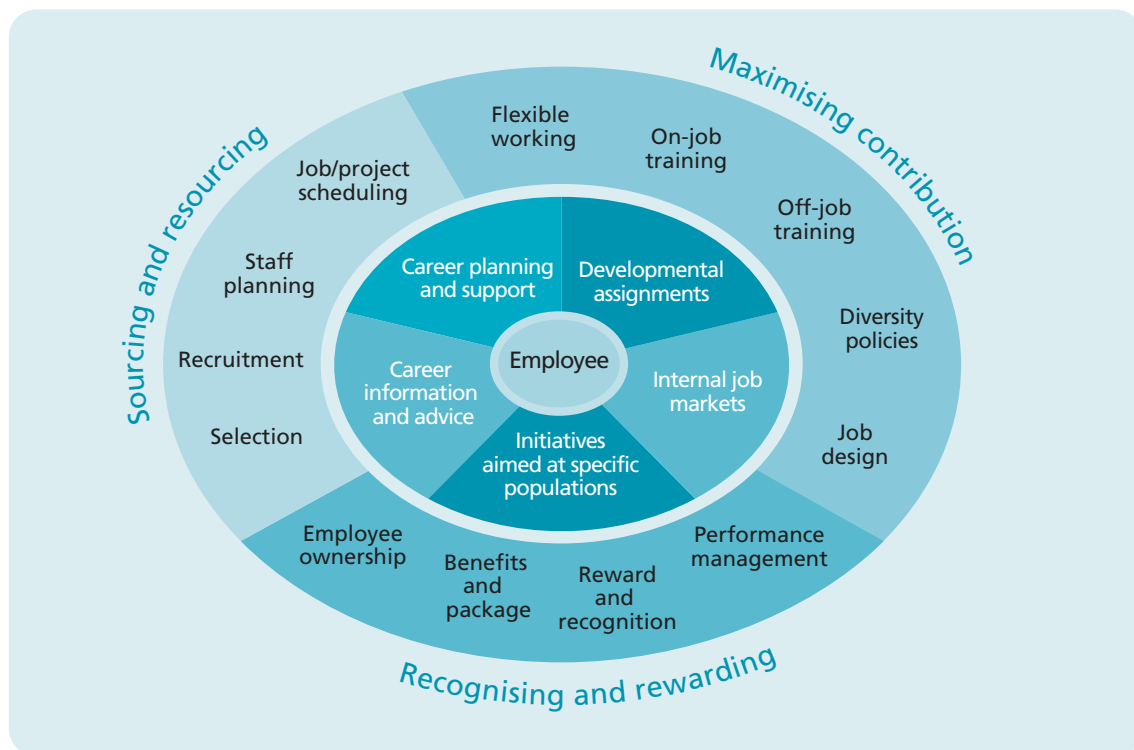


Figure 7 shows two ovals – the inner one depicts the five components of career management discussed. The outer oval shows a wide range of other activities that relate to the management of human resources within the organisation. These fall into three broad groups:

- **sourcing and resourcing** – bringing people into the organisation and deploying them effectively, including the use of forward-looking planning and scheduling processes
- **maximising people's contribution** – training for effective job performance, designing jobs to make optimum use of skills and abilities, and helping employees fit their work into the wider context of their lives
- **recognising and rewarding that contribution** – by assessing performance, considering non-financial rewards, determining pay and benefits packages and by giving employees a financial stake in the organisation.

The two ovals in Figure 7 can be considered to interact loosely and in any orientation. The key message of Figure 7 is that an employee's impression of the organisation will be determined by both the inner and outer sets of activities. For career management to be integrated effectively, it needs to be consistent with everything that goes on in the outer set of activities. The three checklists in Figure 8 (page 30) are designed to help you consider whether this is the case in your organisation.

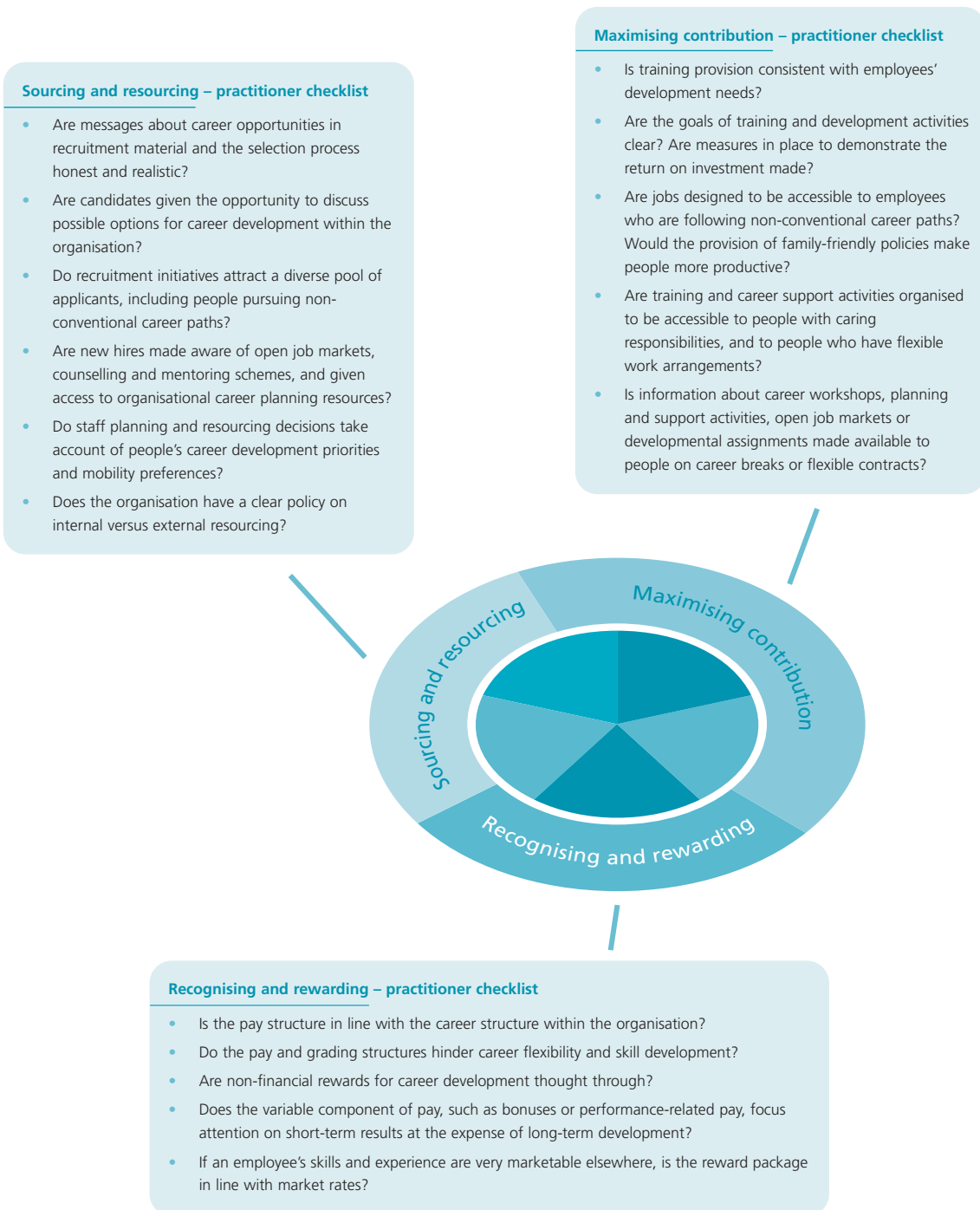
Involving line managers, employees and HR professionals in career management

Effective career management involves a three-way partnership between line manager, employee and HR professional, as illustrated in Figure 9. The employee will often be the lead partner, identifying his or her career and life aspirations and then working with managers and HR professionals to dovetail these aspirations, where possible, into the opportunities available within the organisation.

Figure 9: Three-way partnership for effective career management



Figure 8: Practitioner checklists



- **Line manager and employee.** The key relationship in the career management framework is that between employee and line manager. Ideally, informal career discussions become a regular feature of the interaction between employee and manager. Such discussions should help the employee think through their career plans and also enable the manager to stay in touch with the employee's development and career aspirations.

Effective career discussions

A key aspect of career development is the giving and receiving of information and advice. This nearly always takes place in a conversation or discussion with another person. Some people are career guidance professionals, highly trained to conduct detailed and impartial career conversations. But a wide range of other people at work can usefully support employees' careers if they know how to conduct an effective career discussion. Line managers are often expected to do this, for example, in appraisals or development reviews. Staff may also have access to mentors or coaches, or to HR professionals who offer career support. Research has shown that, in addition to these formal sources of career conversations, employees get much of their most valuable career advice quite informally from other people at work (Hirsh, Jackson and Kidd, 2001). These conversations lead to concrete outcomes such as job moves, but they also give employees a sense of career direction and boost their confidence.

Employees often need to initiate these conversations and choose the person they wish to talk to. They choose people because they respect and trust them, but also because they have information or insights which will be helpful. Some career conversations are short, one-off exchanges. Others develop into informal mentoring relationships that can last for years.

What makes a career discussion effective? The implications of research by Hirsh *et al* (2001)

- The person 'giving' the career support needs to focus strongly on the individual they are trying to help, rather than on their own issues (for example, a job they may be trying to fill). Showing empathy is important.
- The employee 'receiving' career support should try to be as objective and realistic as possible, being open to feedback and advice, and willing to see how their career aspirations relate to the business.
- Talking about career issues is very personal and requires a high level of trust. Trust starts with empathy and honesty but also requires givers of career support to respect the employee's need for confidentiality, and to carry out any actions they promise.
- An effective career conversation needs to dig deep. Each person must be able to challenge and probe the other in constructive ways, for example, in examining skills and aspirations, and also exploring the pros and cons of possible career options.
- Sharing information on career opportunities is important too. Some 'givers' have a lot of knowledge to share, but sometimes the best thing to do is to put the 'receiver' in touch with someone else who has the information they need.

All managers and employees need to develop the skills to talk about careers. Having internal or external careers experts can also play an important role. And a climate is needed in which employees are encouraged to seek out their own best career advisers.

Information provided by Wendy Hirsh.

This topic is further explored in a web-based, practical tool on effective career discussions for employees, managers and HR practitioners www.cipd.co.uk/tools

- **HR professional and manager.** Ideally, the HR professional's role is one of actively supporting, rather than directing, career management activities. That means proactively helping managers to identify training and long-term development needs, assisting in identifying talent and providing them with information about development and progression opportunities within the organisation. HR professionals also have a role to play in equipping managers for their wider career management role, and alerting them to potential issues and difficulties that may arise.
- **HR professional and employee.** The HR professional's role should focus on the employee as well as the manager. This includes helping employees to formulate development plans and providing access to relevant resources, such as workshops, development centres, training, coaching, counselling and fast-track programmes. The HR professional should be able to offer an objective, independent view that enables the employee to develop objectives and career plans in a neutral and supportive environment.

In reality, these relationships are often strained by day-to-day demands and by conflicts of interest. Line managers often face a conflict between the short-term business pressures of running their teams and the long-term development of their people. Career management is often seen as a distraction from the day-to-day running of the business, and informal career discussions and processes can be squeezed by work pressures. Where they do happen, career discussions may be focused on short-term goals and roles, rather than long-term considerations. Managers may be particularly disinclined to talk about careers with employees who are not considered to be 'core' or long-term assets. In such situations, HR professionals often find themselves in a 'policing' role, monitoring progress and chivying managers to fulfil their responsibilities.

But too much intervention in this 'policing' capacity will undermine the HR professional's credibility as a partner in the career management process, reducing his or her ability to support and collaborate with the line manager. As far as possible, HR professionals should aim to support managers but not to intervene. They need to put systems in place that facilitate managers' involvement in career management, without being unduly bureaucratic or onerous, preventing them getting their day-to-day work done. They also have a wider responsibility to ensure that line managers are aligned to the organisation's career management strategy over and above the needs of individual teams or local units.

Senior managers have a key role to play in helping to alleviate these conflicts. The CIPD's 2003 *Managing Employee Careers* survey showed that, where senior managers are committed to career management, activities are more likely to be aligned with core business needs, and line managers take it more seriously (Figure 10). In addition, where senior managers are committed, greater investment is made in knowledge, skills and tools for career management, increasing the likelihood that career management will have a positive impact on the organisation. Achieving senior management buy-in is a key priority for senior HR professionals.

Figure 10: Factors contributing to effective career management



Practitioner checklist

- Are managers aware of the business benefits of investing in career management, and are they encouraged to give sufficient priority to career management activities?
- Are line managers aware of staff development objectives for the organisation as a whole? Are line managers committed to objectives for the development of individuals in their teams?
- Should line managers' performance be judged, in part, on their ability to develop their teams? If so, do their objectives reflect this, and is it discussed in their performance appraisals?
- Are managers equipped for their career management role? Do they need training in career management skills, such as coaching, identifying potential and managing poor performance?
- How much time (per week/month) are line managers currently expected to devote to career management processes? Are they able to give this amount of time? How could time issues be resolved?
- Could employees benefit from training to help them hold more effective career discussions?
- Are senior managers projecting the right kind of messages about career management to the wider organisation?

Part 4 – Supporting the career development of specific employee groups

Part 3 largely referred to groups of ‘employees’, as if they have broadly similar needs with regard to career management. In reality, of course, people have very different objectives for their working lives and their careers, depending on their age, life stage, domestic situation and lifestyle preferences.

Some groups of employees have historically been disadvantaged in career management. They may have chosen to pursue non-conventional career paths or they may be at a disadvantage because they are under-represented relative to the wider workforce. Part 4 considers the needs of such groups, including those who may be in a minority in an organisation due to their gender, ethnic group, or age, or because they have caring responsibilities. We also touch on the career management of employees who may be considered to lie outside the core group of employees within an organisation, such as those who are on short-term or fixed-term contracts.

Careers of under-represented employee groups

Under-represented groups can be considered to be those employees who are in a significant minority in a particular job or job group. Typical groups of such employees include:

- **parents with dependent children**, especially those in roles where most peers are non-parents, who may struggle to commit the time and energy that is required of the role. Employees with other caring responsibilities, such as dependent elders or spouses, face similar challenges, although often with less recognition and support from colleagues in the workplace
- **those without caring responsibilities** working in roles where most peers have such responsibilities, who may feel they cover for colleagues’ shorter hours or flexible work schedules by bearing an undue proportion of the workload
- **people whose gender, ethnicity or disability places them in a minority** relative to others doing the same job, or in a minority relative to the whole workforce. Such minority groups are often well represented at junior levels of an organisation, but there may be a ‘glass ceiling’ beyond which few progress
- **older workers** who are reaching a career ‘plateau’, while younger colleagues are hired or promoted into equivalent or senior roles
- **younger workers**, such as students working part-time, whose career aspirations are not recognised in their current job roles, but whose experiences at work are highly formative in determining later choices and priorities for their career.

Most HR professionals recognise the need to help people in these traditionally disadvantaged groups develop their careers, although the *Managing Employee Careers* survey suggests that in most UK organisations little is being done in terms of proactive assistance. Employers are therefore missing out on a critical source of potential, since developing staff from non-traditional sources may be essential to the future growth of their organisations. It therefore makes good business sense for employers to look at how they can attract and develop a more diverse employee pool.

Implementation of career management activities

There is no clear, single solution to career management for under-represented groups. The extent to which the organisation can and should provide a structured career management framework will be unique to each situation. There are two key principles to bear in mind, however:

1. HR professionals and managers need to take adequate account of each individual's career perspective, acknowledging that this may be different from others who do the same job or hold a similar set of responsibilities.
2. Career management activities should be as accessible to people in these under-represented groups as they are to 'majority' individuals in similar roles, and in some cases, additional proactive interventions may be required.

Monitoring diversity – practitioner checklist

- Are women and other minority-group employees represented in all areas of your business and at all levels? Is this in proportion to their overall numbers?
- Have you considered setting up a forum or committee to review progress towards diversity targets?
- Does promotion in your organisation depend on access to informal networks? Are these networks less accessible to some employee groups?
- Do interview panels for selection and promotion fairly represent all employee groups?

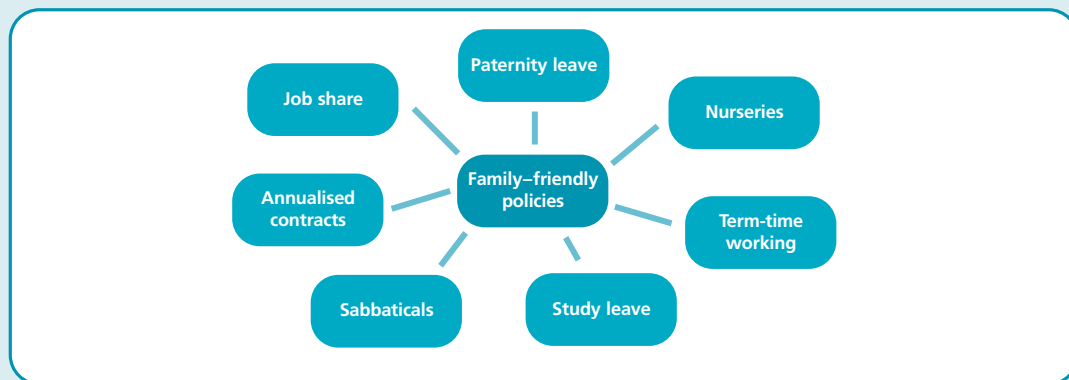
Organisations should think through how these issues may be manifesting themselves in the different areas of career management activities. Practitioners should consider the questions in Figure 11 (page 37).

The Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust – addressing particular needs in career management

Recruiting and retaining skilled staff is essential if the trust is to offer a quality service and meet its performance targets. The trust is committed to staff development, providing career development programmes, appraisal, access to further qualifications and support in meeting continuing education requirements.

One area where recruitment and retention of staff has been particularly challenging is in midwifery. Historically, midwifery followed traditional nursing shift patterns (ie shifts from 07 00 to 15 00, 14 00 to 22 00 and night shifts) in rotation. Brighton Health Care Trust found that 50 per cent of the local skilled workforce was aged between 31 and 39 – an age range often associated with parenthood and other carer responsibilities. To enable this key group to balance work and home-life responsibilities, Brighton Health Care Trust (now Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust) has introduced formal flexible working practices.

Family-friendly policies at Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust



The majority of the policies that are promoted in the trust's recruitment advertising have been well utilised, especially term-time working, job share and study leave. As a result, midwifery is proving to be an attractive career option to a wider group of people who may have previously felt that their caring or other personal commitments would have prohibited them from undertaking a midwifery post or from progressing within the profession. In addition, sabbaticals have helped to retain staff in the longer term by offering an option to those who feel they need a change or have personal commitments to address in the short term.

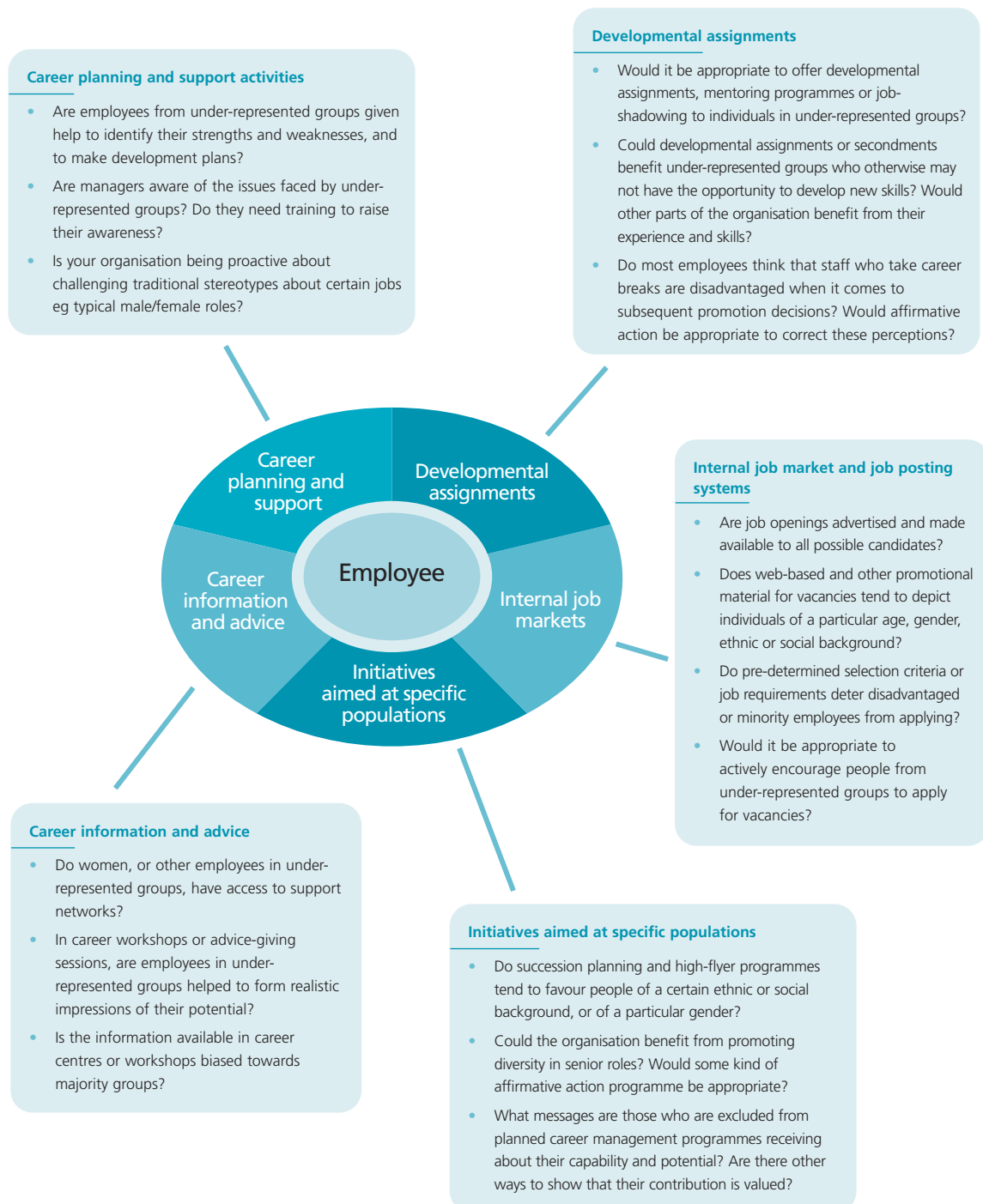
Previously, flexible working arrangements had been agreed informally. Senior midwifery managers are now holding one-to-one meetings to formalise these contracts and to check that the reasons for a staff member having a flexible contract are still current.

Although supportive of flexible working patterns, senior midwifery managers need to manage the number of flexible contracts carefully so that they can maintain a 24/7 acute maternity service and monitor this balance carefully. To ensure that they achieve this, senior midwifery managers are in constant communication with staff on flexible contracts to outline the trust's position and to ensure that flexibility is a two-way street.

Information provided by Carol Drummond, Head of Midwifery.

The Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust was established in April 2002 bringing together Mid-Sussex and Brighton Health Care NHS Trusts. The new trust provides district general hospital services to the local population of some 460,000, as well as a range of specialist services, including intensive care for children and new-born babies, to a population of approximately 1 million.

Figure 11: Practitioner checklists to audit activities with regard to the careers of under-represented groups



Careers of non-core workers

In most organisations, there is a key group of employees who are particularly valuable, either because the jobs they do are critically important for value creation or for operational credibility, or because they have skills or expertise that are difficult to replace. Such core employees may be found at all levels of the organisation, and could include senior managers or executives, key technical or professional personnel, supervisors or front-line workers. Non-core workers are those who lie outside this critical group. They include so-called 'contingent workers' (such as people on temporary or short-term contracts, freelancers, consultants, outsourced staff) and may also include other groups of support staff for whom replacements could easily be found.

Given that those in the core group are a source of value for the organisation, the employer has a vested interest in developing their careers. The logic for developing the careers of non-core workers is less obvious. If labour market conditions mean that it is relatively easy to 'buy' a person's skills on the external labour market, how much sense does it make for an employer to invest in their development?

The significance of this question is becoming increasingly evident as more companies, particularly those in fast-moving sectors or involved in project-type work, are moving towards flexible models of employment. From an immediate cost perspective, the most economical approach from the employer's perspective may be to invest only in their development to the extent that it equips them to do their current job better. Why should employers invest beyond this point? There is no single and clear answer to this question. However, there are a number of factors to consider that might make it worth investing in non-core workers.

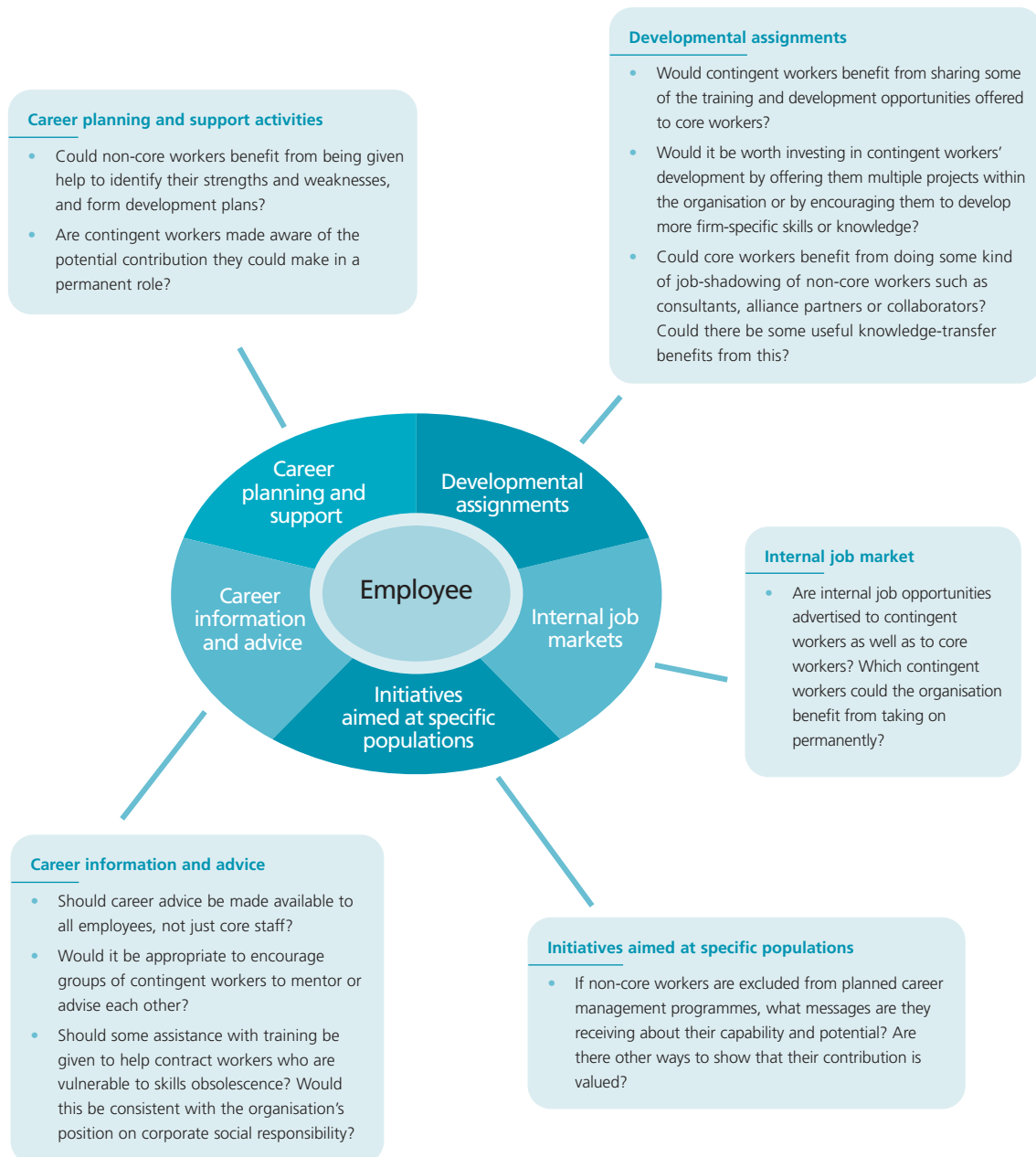
The business case for investing in the development of non-core workers

- It is unlikely to be tenable for the employer to rely on employees' choices and the labour market to supply required skills, rather than taking an active role in developing those skills.
- Some contingent workers may not be interested in developing extensive firm-specific knowledge. This may have a detrimental impact on their performance in their current role. Investing in their development may incentivise them to develop such knowledge, and help to retain them so that they can utilise it on subsequent projects or assignments.
- Increasingly, developing staff from non-traditional sources is important to the future growth of many organisations, particularly those who encounter recruitment difficulties. Non-core workers may be a key source of future core workers.
- In industries where alliances and collaboration are important, organisations need to be able to absorb knowledge from external sources. Investing in the careers of employees at the 'boundaries' of an organisation is important if this is to be achieved.

- Investing in non-core workers' careers sends powerful messages to both core and non-core employees about the organisation's commitment to its people. This in turn affects the kind of people the organisation can attract, select and retain. In an era where competitive advantage is said to derive increasingly from human (as opposed to other) resources, such employer branding is increasingly important.
- An ethical argument in support of investing in contingent workers can also be made. Many people, and especially the lower-skilled, are forced into contingent work through circumstance. Often they can't upgrade their skills because they can only find work on the basis of their existing, proven skills. The employer, perhaps, has as much responsibility for these stakeholders as it does to its core employees.

There is no clear, single solution to career management for non-core workers. The extent to which the organisation should provide them with career management initiatives will be unique to each situation. The checklists in Figure 12 (page 40) may help you to think about these issues in relation to career management in your organisation.

Figure 12: Practitioner checklists to audit activities with regard to careers of non-core workers

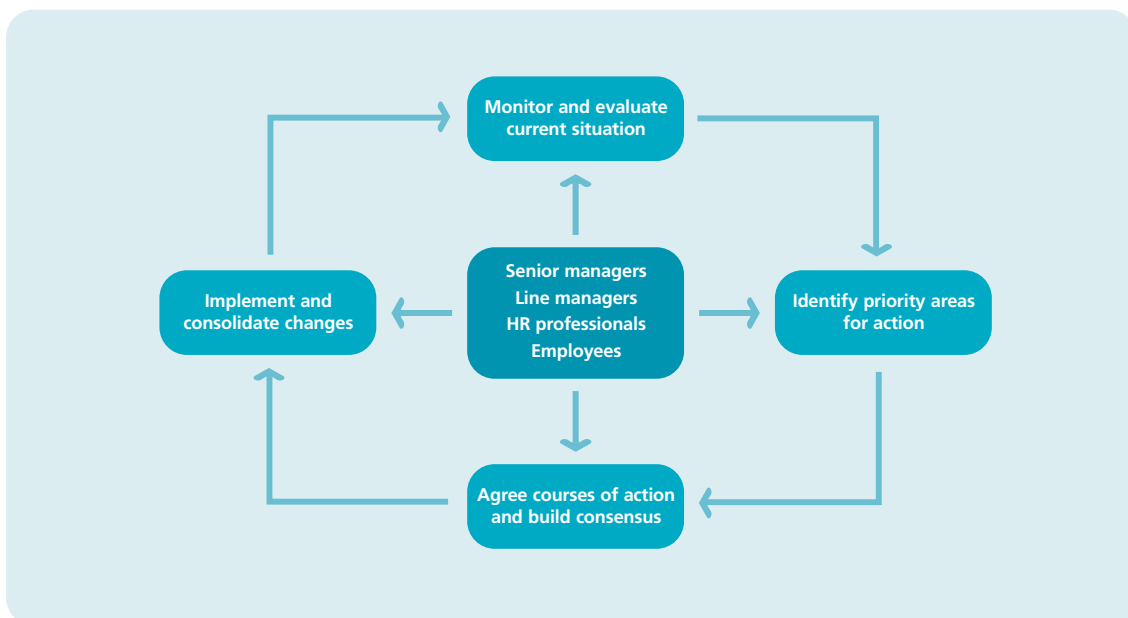


Part 5 – Reviewing and implementing changes to career management activities

Career management is a dynamic process, requiring flexibility, compromise and continual adjustment in the face of changing organisational and individual circumstances. This section considers how HR professionals can help their organisations implement this process in their organisations, and sustain it effectively.

Any changes to career management should emerge from a clear organisational need, recognised by senior managers, line managers and the employees themselves. Figure 13 depicts the review and implementation of career management as a partnership between the four key groups. It also shows changes to career management as a cyclical, ongoing process that may be led by the HR function, but may equally emerge from employees (as in the Nationwide case study, page 15) or from managers. In any case, responsibility for identifying priorities for action, building consensus and implementing changes should involve all four parties. (Of course in some organisations, especially smaller businesses, there may not be clear distinctions between these four groups, but, even then, the principles set out here remain the same.)

Figure 13: Implementing changes to career management



Monitoring and evaluating the current situation

HR professionals, line managers, senior managers and employees are all likely to have a different perspective on the current state of career management in the organisations. The HR professional may be the best person to keep track of their views and to identify potential issues. These questions, and the checklists in the rest of this guide might help to illuminate some issues.

- **From an organisational perspective:** What are the key issues the business is facing? What has been happening to jobs in the organisation? Is the organisation getting what it wants from its people now? What is it likely to need from its people over the next few years? Are skills needs changing? What does management really think about employee development? Does this conform with stated strategy or policy? How is the organisation structured? How does this impact on careers?
- **From an individual perspective:** How well equipped are people to perform their current roles? How satisfied are they with the employment situation? What other employment options do they have? How do they see their development needs? How would these needs best be met? Where can employees go for help and advice in the organisation? What do people think of the formal and informal career management systems or processes that are in place?
- **From an HR perspective:** Are career management policies and processes in place? What is effective or ineffective about current career management systems? What other HR processes help or hinder employee development? What other initiatives are going on that may affect career and skills development? Who is responsible for career management? What resources are available in the HR function and elsewhere?

Identifying priority areas for action

Through this ongoing monitoring and evaluation process, HR professionals may reach the view that something needs to be done. In collaboration with senior and line managers and employees, some priority areas for action may be identified. It is important that all parties appreciate the business benefits of the change and that the change is not seen by line management colleagues as an irrelevant initiative or as the HR function embarking on change for change's sake. (For an insight into how line colleagues tend to view HR initiatives, see the 2002 CIPD Research Report, *Voices from the Boardroom*.)

Agreeing courses of action and building consensus

Once a need for change is acknowledged by senior and line managers, and ideally also by employees themselves, the four parties should work to agree an agenda for action. This may include:

- the practical outcomes sought
- the required changes to career management, and the objectives of these changes
- the priorities within the list of actions
- how the agenda for action will be taken forward, and who is responsible
- how the agenda, once agreed, will be communicated more widely
- how success will be evaluated and measured.

Figure 14 (page 44) shows an example of a form that organisations can use to document their action plans.

Building consensus means making sure that all the relevant parties understand the need for change, making them aware of how, in terms of day-to-day behaviour, they will be required to act differently, and eliciting their commitment to making this change. Senior managers need to be visibly committed to the change.

Implementing and consolidating changes

Once a consensus for change has been achieved, with appropriate senior management leadership, new behaviours should emerge over time. The HR professional may need to lead the implementation from a supportive rather than policing point of view. It is important that staff within the HR function lead by example, demonstrating visibly to colleagues that they have embraced the change within their own teams.

Figure 14: Action plan

Issue to be addressed:

What are you trying to achieve?

Outcome objectives:

How are you going to get there?

Prioritised actions:

When are you aiming to get there? Who is responsible?

Timescale:

Agreed responsibilities:

How will you demonstrate that you have achieved the target?

Evidence:

How will we engage key groups in understanding and supporting the required actions?

Communication plan:

Conclusion

Career management is a critical challenge for HR professionals in the twenty-first century. It is essential for developing and sustaining organisations in the long-term and for giving each individual within the organisation a meaningful focus for the future. However, short-term business horizons and a focus on financial results mean that the need for effective career management, with its more intangible, long-term outcomes, is often overlooked. HR professionals need to champion the cause of career management within their organisations, helping every line manager, senior executive and individual employee understand and embrace its importance.

This guide provides a framework that HR professionals can use to audit their current career management practices and identify steps forward. Its principal message is that employers and employees bring different perspectives to the situation, and that these differences need to be recognised and resolved. Each employee has their own set of past experience and future priorities, which may or may not fit with what their employer can provide in the long term. The challenge for employers is to understand what kind of careers they can offer, and to formulate a consistent, collaborative and proactive approach to managing careers.

Meeting this challenge will become even more important as working patterns continue to evolve. We can expect to see more international resourcing, global collaborations, multicultural teams, virtual working and project-based organisation as technological, social-demographic, economic and political environments continue to evolve. Individuals and organisations both have an increasing complexity of choices to make in the process of developing and managing careers. Doing so effectively depends crucially on open-handed discussion between employers and employees about what each side expects to give and to receive on an ongoing basis.

Useful CIPD resources on career management

HR professionals need access to information and advice if they are to manage careers effectively. The CIPD aims to provide its members with research, guidance and practical support on career management issues via the information resources it provides on its website (www.cipd.co.uk). Events and workshops on current 'hot' issues are run by the CIPD Forum on Counselling and Career Management, which is free for CIPD members to join. Further information about the Forum and its activities can be obtained from the CIPD website (www.cipd.co.uk/forums).

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Glossary of terms

Career	The sequence of employment-related positions, roles, activities and experiences encountered by a person.
Career break	A period of absence from regular employment.
Career centre	A drop-in centre with open access to career resources such as literature, videos and CD-ROMs and information about financial and educational support.
Career coaching	As career counselling, but including directive feedback and training in career-related skills.
Career counselling	Impartial advice provided on a one-to-one basis to an individual about their capabilities and career options, often by a qualified counsellor who is external to the organisation.
Career management	The design and implementation of organisational processes that enable the careers of individual employees to be managed in a way that encompasses organisational and individual career perspectives.
Career path	The actual sequence of jobs that an individual follows.
Career perspective (individual)	An individual's needs, desires and short- and long-term priorities for his or her career, determined by his or her previous experience, capabilities, family situation, financial commitments, lifestyle choices and future life plans.
Career perspective (organisation)	An organisation's needs and priorities for individual jobs and the development of its employees, determined by its strategic objectives.
Career workshop	A drop-in or scheduled group session, run by an impartial facilitator, where employees have access to information, exercises and resources that aid career planning and decision-making.
Contingent worker	A person on a short-term, temporary or self-employed contract (see also flexible worker) or who is not directly employed by the organisation, such as freelancers, consultants or outsourced staff.
Corporate social responsibility	A position adopted by an organisation acknowledging, accepting and managing the implications and effects of its decisions.
Development centre	A scheduled group session, run by an external facilitator and/or a member of the organisation, to identify individuals' development and training needs.

Family-friendly policy	A policy covering working arrangements or facilities that are geared toward accommodating the needs of employees with caring responsibilities, such as workplace nurseries, term-time working, parental leave, staggered or compressed hours, part-time work, shift-swapping or working from home.
Flexible worker	A person employed on a short-term, temporary or self-employed basis.
Flexible working arrangement	A working arrangement that gives employees some flexibility over when, where and how they do their jobs.
Internal job market	The open advertisement of job openings to employees within the organisation.
Lateral move	A move to another job at the same level in the organisational hierarchy.
Mentor	A senior member of the organisation or a colleague who provides advice and guidance and who may also act as protector, advocate, counsellor or sponsor.
Occupation	The line of work, trade, profession or vocation pursued by an individual at a given point in time.
Outplacement	A programme of advisory facilities and resources provided to individuals who are leaving an organisation to help them clarify and implement plans for the future.
Personal development plan (PDP)	A statement of how a person's skills and knowledge might develop, for which the individual takes primary responsibility.
Psychological contract	An individual's belief regarding the (unwritten) agreement with the employer about what they will contribute and what they can expect in return.
Secondment	A temporary posting to another company, department or job.
SME	A small or medium-sized enterprise.
Succession planning	The identification of individuals who are expected to occupy key posts in the future, and the planning of their development accordingly.
Under-represented groups	Groups of employees who, because of their gender, ethnicity, age, caring responsibility or other characteristic, are in a significant minority (perhaps less than 25 per cent) in a particular job or job group.
Vacancy notification	Information about a job vacancy in the organisation, made available to all employees.

The CIPD explores leading-edge people management and development issues at a strategic level. Our aim is to share knowledge to increase learning and understanding to improve practice. We produce surveys, think-piece change agendas and introductory fact sheets and topics for trainers that all are available to download from our website.