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# UNIT 14 CAREER AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

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## Objectives

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- 1 follow the aims and objectives of career planning and its various benefits;
- 1 appreciate the role of key players in facilitating career development programmes;
- 1 develop succession planning by identifying high potential employees for key executive positions.

## Structure

- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Aims and Objectives of Career Planning
- 14.3 Career Planning Process
- 14.4 Career Structure
- 14.5 Benefits of Career Planning
- 14.6 Career Planning: A Personnel Function
- 14.7 What People Want from their Careers?
- 14.8 Career Planning Programmes
- 14.9 Facilitating Career planning
- 14.10 Responsibilities in Career Development
- 14.11 Evaluating Career Management
- 14.12 Succession Planning
- 14.13 Summary
- 14.14 Self-Assessment Questions
- 14.15 Further Readings

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## 14.1 INTRODUCTION

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Career planning is a relatively new personnel function. Established programmes on career planning are still rare except in larger or more progressive organisations. Organisational involvement in career planning is increasing, however. Many candidates, especially highly-educated ones, desire a career, not “just a job”. Many of today’s workers have high expectations about their jobs. There has been a general increase in the concern for the quality of life. Workers expect more from their jobs than just income. A further impetus to career planning is the need for organisations to make the best possible use of their most valuable resources - people - in a time of rapid technological growth and change.

A career development system is a formal, organised, planned effort to achieve a balance between individual career needs and organisational workforce requirements. It is a mechanism for meeting the present and future human resource needs of an organisation. Basically career development practices are designed to

enhance the career satisfaction of employees and to improve organisational effectiveness.

A career has been defined as the evolving sequence of a person's experiences over time. It is viewed fundamentally as a relationship between one (or more) organisation(s) and the individual. To some a career is a carefully worked out plan for self-advancement; to others it is a calling - a life role; to others it is a voyage of self-discovery; and to still others it is life itself.

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## 14.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF CAREER PLANNING

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Career planning aims at matching individual potential for promotion and individual aspirations with organisational needs and opportunities. Career planning is making sure that the organisation has the right people with the right skills at the right time. In particular, it indicates what training and development would be necessary for advancing in the career, altering the career path or staying in the current position. Its focus is on future needs and opportunities and removal of stagnation, obsolescence and dissatisfaction of the employee. In the process, it opens avenues for growth to higher levels of responsibilities for each and every employee of the organisation through hierarchy of position, and training and development activities to equip the individuals with the requisites for succession.

The principal objectives of career planning are:

1. to secure the right man at the right job and at the right time;
2. to maintain a contended team of employees;
3. to provide adequate career avenues to employees to higher levels of responsibilities; and
4. to strengthen the retention programme of the organisation.

An effective career management plan takes care of an individual's interest, aptitude, specialisation and expertise while deciding on the placement. An organisation which believes in a sound career management programme is not only committed to and conscious of the development of human resources but also provides structural facilities for manpower research, manpower training and development.

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## 14.3 CAREER PLANNING PROCESS

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Career planning is the process of setting individual career objectives and devising developmental activities necessary to achieve them. It is, in the broadest sense, the personal process of planning one's future work. In this process, an individual analyses his or her interest, values, goals, and capabilities. From the management view point, career planning and development should remain an individual responsibility. However, many individuals lack the insight, skills, or initiative to determine their own career progress effectively. Among the techniques to aid individual career planning are career counseling, career and life planning, and self development activities.

Career planning involves four fundamental elements which, when taken together, represent the career planning process.

*Direction:* This involves the career goals one sets and the organisation's ability to act favourable upon these goals, especially in the light of business objectives and realities.

*Career Time:* This relates to distance and velocity factors - how far one wants to go in an organisation or on the career path and how fast that person expects to get there.

*Transition:* This is the resistance one encounters while moving toward career goals. Transition relates to the changes expected, say, in knowledge, skill and attitude en route to a career goal. Outcomes: This relates to the probabilities that one's investment and sacrifices for career progress will pay off.

The important influences on careers are of course the organisation and the individual themselves. Both the organisation and the individual are important and career planning can be seen from the perspective of both parties.

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## 14.4 CAREER STRUCTURE

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The characteristics of a good career structure (sometimes known as career ladders) are:

- 1 It has steps consistent with the general value of jobs and with other career structures.
- 1 It makes clear that getting to the top of the structure is not a right but is based on merit and capability.
- 1 The entry requirements for each step are clear.
- 1 There is formal assessment procedure in order to progress from one step to another.
- 1 The career structure is known and understood by all.
- 1 It is controlled and implemented with integrity.
- 1 It links with the development review part of appraisals.

Organisations view careers in a variety of different ways. Some see them as a way of allocating jobs and providing training, i.e. the emphasis is on developing managers. Another way in which organisations view careers is as tracks or ladders, which take people up the management hierarchy. A successful career is one which takes the individual to the top of the ladder. Some organisations view careers as a type of competition - only those managers who are successful in winning the tournament will have a progressive career.

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## 14.5 BENEFITS OF CAREER PLANNING

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The career planning encourages individuals to explore and gather information which enables them to synthesise, gain competencies, make decisions, set goals and take action. Career planning benefits not only the individual employee, but also the organisation. By developing employees for future positions, an organisation is assured of a supply of qualified, committed employees to replace the higher-level employees. This facilitates internal staffing of the organisation and reduces the costs of external recruiting and selection. In addition, a career planning strategy enables organisations to develop and place employees in positions compatible with their individual career interests, needs, and goals. This promotes employee satisfaction and optimal use of employee abilities. Finally, career planning can help to retain and motivate employees. Through the career planning process, employees are helped to set realistic goals and to develop the required skills and abilities for target positions.

**Benefits of a Career Development System**

	<i>Managers/Supervisors</i>	<i>Employees</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
1.	Increased skill in managing own careers	Helpful assistance with career decisions	Better use of employee skills
2.	Greater retention of valued employees	Enrichment of present job and increased job satisfaction	Dissemination of information at all organisational levels
3.	Better communication between manager and employee	Better communication between employee and manager	Better communication within the organisation as a whole
4.	More realistic staff development planning	More realistic goals and expectations	Greater retention of valued employees
5.	Productive performance appraisal discussions	Better feedback on performance	Expanded public image as a people developer
6.	Greater understanding of the organisation	Current information on the firm and the future	Increased effectiveness of personnel systems
7.	Enhanced reputation as a people developer	Greater personal responsibility for career	Greater clarification of goals of the organisation.

*Source:* Z.B.Leibowitz, C.Farren, and B.L.Kaye, *Designing career development systems*, San Francisco, CA; Jossey-Bass, 1986, P.7.

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## **14.6 CAREER PLANNING: A PERSONNEL FUNCTION**

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From an employee's perspective, career planning takes place after some amount of time on the job and after the organisation has had a chance to appraise employee performance. From an organisational perspective, career planning is an ongoing management function with close ties to human resource planning and employee development functions. Performance appraisal information is essential to the setting of realistic individual career goals. Such goals are often set within the developmental performance appraisal interviews. The career planning function also has valuable inputs to the human resource planning function. Human resource planners provide career planners with predictions of expected job vacancies. Career planners use these data to give employees a reasonable expectation of their opportunities for advancement.

One of the responsibilities of the career planning functions is to inform employees of career opportunities within the organisation. This responsibility involves the starting of career paths, logical progressions between jobs or from one job to a target position. With regard to employee development, the career planning function provides goals for the systematic development of employees. When mutually agreed upon, career objectives of individual employees are specified, and developmental activities can be selected and channeled in a direction meaningful to both the individual and the organisation.

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## **14.7 WHAT PEOPLE WANT FROM THEIR CAREERS?**

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In addition to opportunities for growth and development, what do people want from their careers? Making generalisations is difficult because of the wide range of

individual differences. Further, what people want from their career tends to change over time : career advancements and advancing age spark new career interests and changing needs. Nonetheless, E.H. Schein has identified five dominant motives which underline people's career choices and long-range goals. Schein refers to these basic motivating factors as "career anchors".

Edgar Schein (1978) says that career planning is a continuing process of discovery - one in which a person slowly develops a clearer occupational self-concept in the terms of what his or her talents, abilities, motives, needs, attitudes and values are. Schein also says that as you learn more about yourself, it becomes apparent that you have a dominant career anchor, a concern or value that you will not give up if a choice has to be made. Schein believed that people developed certain 'career anchors' at an early stage in their career which will govern their individual career paths.

Schein's career anchors represent the aspects of work that are especially valued or needed by people for their personal fulfillment.

They include:

1. *Managerial Competence*: The individual desires opportunities to manage.
2. *Technical/Functional Competence*: The individual desires to use various technical abilities and special competencies.
3. *Security*: The individual is basically motivated by a need for job security or stability in the work situation.
4. *Creativity*: The individual is motivated by a need to create or build something.
5. *Autonomy and Independence*: The individual's primary interest is the opportunity to work independently and without organisational constraints.

Later, he added the need for a basic occupational identity - service to others; power, influence and control; and variety.

Career planning and development activities allow employees to grow in any of the desired directions. What people want from their careers also varies according to the stage of one's career. What may have been important in an early stage may not be important in a later one. Four distinct career stages have been identified: trial, establishment/advancement, mid-career, and late career. Each stage represents different career needs and interests of the individual.

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## 14.8 CAREER PLANNING PROGRAMMES

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There are four distinct elements of a career planning programme. They include:

1. individual assessments of abilities, interests, career needs, and goals;
2. organisational assessments of employee abilities and potential;
3. communication of information concerning career options and opportunities with the organisation; and
4. career counseling to set realistic goals and plan for their attainment.

Career planning programmes vary in the degree to which certain elements are emphasised. Some programmes offer little assistance in employee self-assessment, while others aid this process by providing workbooks and workshops. Assessment centres are a part of some programmes, but the majority of organisations rely on the judgment of supervisors and managers in assessing employee potential. Career path information is provided by some organisations, while others simply post job vacancy information.

Career counseling typically involves a discussion on an individual's interest, work values, career goals, current job activities and performance, and action plans. Counseling can be formal or informal in nature. Formal career counseling is usually conducted by career counselors and vocational psychologists in individual sessions. However, counseling in many organisations is informal, while more established programmes provide staff positions for career counselors. Supervisors are considered a primary source of career information and can do a number of things to facilitate the career counseling process. The way in which organisations assemble the four career planning elements results in a variety of unique career planning programmes.

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## 14.9 FACILITATING CAREER PLANNING

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Organisations can facilitate career planning in a number of ways. D.T. Hall categories the areas of concentration as follows: (1) organisational entry; (2) the job; (3) the boss; (4) organisational structure and procedures; (5) personnel policy. Efforts to facilitate career planning can begin before or at the time an individual takes a job. One of the earliest pre-entry points of influence is contacts between an employer and institute placement staff or faculty. Job counselors and others may discuss career planning with the potential job applicants. Increasingly, organisations have included such information in recruiting messages and materials. Career planning and development can be facilitated in the job itself. Evidence from a number of different organisations and occupations demonstrates the importance of a challenging and demanding first job. Related to the job progression idea is job rotation, which allows employees to work in a variety of capacities and provides growth and development opportunities at all stages of career development. Job rotation is a fairly common method of management development at all levels.

Another agent of career planning in organisation is the boss. The importance of the immediate supervisor, especially an employee's first boss, cannot be underestimated. The boss assigns tasks, judges performance, provides feedback, rewards and punishes, and provides a model for the employee's own behaviour and future leadership style. Further, bosses often counsel employees in career planning. Any one of these factors can have a large effect on employee career but taken together they make the boss a key to career progress. Unfortunately, many supervisors and managers fail to make the most of their potential to influence employee careers in a positive direction. Some may feel unequal to the task: they may lack the ability to help develop their subordinates. This problem can be remedied through training. Hall suggests that managers receive training in job analysis and job restructuring so that they can identify a challenging job, or restructure a job to make it more challenging. Additionally, they should receive training in interviewing and counseling skills, interpersonal skills, and performance appraisal, including providing constructive feedback.

The most obvious way to facilitate career planning is, of course, to provide career planning services and programmes. Although this is done on an informal basis in many organisations, established programmes are still rare. Some organisations hesitate to involve themselves in career planning. They believe that career planning activities may raise employee expectations for career advancement and that unfulfilled expectations will lead to dissatisfaction and possible turnover. This may well be true, but risks can be minimised.

This depends to a large extent on the success of career counseling efforts and on the information provided by human resource planners. If expected job vacancies fail to materialize or if unforeseen changes force alterations in the job structure, someone is likely to be disappointed. To avoid this, career planners and human resource

planners need to keep lines of communication open. Personnel Policies can also facilitate career planning. An internal recruiting policy, for example, enables employees to plan their career with greater certainty than does a policy of external recruiting. Additionally, a policy of job posting promotes employee awareness of available openings and necessary qualifications. A policy of making human resource forecasts available to employees also facilitates career planning. Compensation policy can also affect career planning activities. Hall suggests two additional personnel policies to facilitate career planning. They are : (1) providing incentive for an employee not to leave the organisation, and (2) involving families in career decisions. As people's needs for job satisfaction increase, so does the families role in affecting career decisions. Since family considerations are important to employees, organisations should maintain a policy of actively seeking to involve employees' family members in significant career decisions. More emphasis must be placed on growth opportunities within the organisation than through relocation and transfer.

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## 14.10 RESPONSIBILITIES IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

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Three key players share responsibility for an employee's career development: the employee, the organisation and the manager. Primary responsibility for an employee's career lies with the employee, but managers and the organisations can provide vital assistance. To play their roles successfully each must assume a set of responsibilities in career development.

The organisation's responsibilities include:

- 1 providing resources for self-understanding and goal setting;
- 1 setting and communicating missions, policies, and goals and objectives;
- 1 providing information on organisation's options and career paths;
- 1 providing training, education and mobility opportunities; and
- 1 reinforcing and supporting the manager's role in career development.

The manager's responsibilities include:

- 1 giving clear feedback about what employees should reasonably expect;
- 1 providing forums for discussions;
- 1 providing support and opportunities;
- 1 identifying employee potential;
- 1 providing growth opportunities consistent with employee and organisation goals;
- 1 communicating the formal and informal realities of the organisation;
- 1 providing exposure for employees; and
- 1 linking employees to appropriate resources and people.

The employee's responsibilities include:

- 1 self-assessment;
- 1 setting goals and plans;
- 1 expressing expectations; and
- 1 making use of opportunities, education and training.

Career development is an area that organisations must now recognise and address if they hope to find and retain employees who will help them meet their constantly shifting business demands. Most companies do not provide enough, if any, training to their current workforce. Many do not even have adequate

knowledge of their employee’s skills and talents - particularly large organisations. Companies must figure out a way to create an environment that is more adaptive, collaborative, and skill-ready.

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## 14.11 EVALUATING CAREER MANAGEMENT

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Career management is the implementation of organisational career planning. Organisations adopting comprehensive career management systems, or parts thereof, would be interested in evaluating their results on the following lines:

- 1 Are they used by employees?
- 1 Do they provide accurate and useful information?
- 1 Do they extend needed career development opportunities to employees?
- 1 Are employees’ career plans realised?
- 1 Do employees experience fewer or less severe career problems than they did before?
- 1 Do employees who participate have more successful careers than those who do not?
- 1 Are the results worth the costs incurred?

### Activity A

Is there any involvement of your organisation in career development of employees?  
If yes, give a brief outline.

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## 14.12 SUCCESSION PLANNING

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Forecasting the availability of inside or outside candidates is particularly important in succession planning. In a nutshell, succession planning simply refers to the plans a company makes to fill its most important executive positions. In practice, however, the process often involves a fairly complicated series of steps. A more comprehensive definition of succession planning is that it is “the process of ensuring a suitable supply of successors for current and future senior or key jobs arising from business strategy, so that the careers of individuals can be planned and managed to optimise the organisation’s needs and the individuals’ aspirations.” Succession planning includes these activities:

- 1 Analysis of the demand for managers and professionals by company level, function and skill.
- 1 Audit for existing executives and projection of likely future supply from internal and external sources.



**Key HR Practices**

- 1 Planning of individual career paths based on objective estimates of future needs and drawing on reliable performance appraisals and assessments of potential.
- 1 Career counseling undertaken in the context of a realistic understanding of the future needs of the firm, as well as those of the individuals.
- 1 Accelerated promotions, targeted against the future needs of the business.
- 1 Performance-related training and development to prepare individuals for future roles as well as current responsibilities.
- 1 Planned strategic recruitment not only to fill short-term needs but also future needs.
- 1 The actual activities by which openings are filled.

Succession planning identifies high potential employees as possible replacements for key jobs, by encouraging hiring from within, succession planning helps employees develop careers, not just hold jobs. Succession planning is part of a long-term HR strategy that plans for future vacancies and changing work requirements. A sophisticated succession planning system is oriented at developing leaders at the levels of the organisation through ongoing training, education and development. Also it involves proactive planning for future talent needs at all levels and implementing programmes designed to ensure that the right leaders are available for the right jobs in the right places and at the right times to meet organisational needs.

The accelerating rate of change, both within the organisations and in the environment which they function has created an ever-increasing need for management succession programmes. Advances in information technology, changing management concepts and requirements have added new dimensions to succession planning. Professional management have to cope successfully with various changes affecting succession planning programmes, particularly in expanding organisations. The expectations, as well as managerial and personal philosophies of today's younger managerial employees have changed.

They expect to be able to mature and progress in a professional management atmosphere that will permit them to realise their full potential. Each organisation, therefore, must have a well-designed and understood system of management succession, with carefully spelt out principles and guidelines. Further, all levels of management must know each of the processes in succession planning and understand how they fit into the total organisational system.

**Activity B**

Give a brief outline of succession planning programme, if any, for key positions in your organisation.

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### 14.13 SUMMARY

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Career planning is the focal point of a human resource management programme of an organisation. A career is a sequence of separate but related work activities that provides continuity, order, and meaning to a person's life. The increasing rate of change in the existing political, economic, technological, and social systems has made career planning and development much more important than it was in the past. Career planning and development is primarily the responsibility of the individual. However, the organisation and the immediate manager should act as catalysts in the process. The key ingredients of an effective career-management programme are: (1) integrate with human resource planning, (2) design career paths, (3) disseminate career information, (4) publicise job vacancies, (5) develop career counseling, and education and training. A career plan should be periodically evaluated and updated as changes occur in the work situation and in the individual. Where career planning, career development, and career counseling are combined in the appropriate sequence, a comprehensive career management system is created. Clearly, organisations must use career planning programmes carefully to ensure positive results.

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### 14.14 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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- 1) What is a career? What are the factors which go into the shaping of a career?
- 2) Name at least two ways that career planning might benefit an individual.
- 3) Is the concept of career planning and succession planning realistic in today's rapidly changing environment?

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### 14.15 FURTHER READINGS

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Hall, D.T., *Careers in Organisations, Pacific Palisades*, Goodyear Publishing, California, 1976.

Hall, D.T., and Lorgan, M.A., *Career Development and Planning*, 1979.

Schein, E.H., *Organisational Psychology*, Prentice-Hall of India, New Delhi, 1973.