

The attractiveness of Career Development systems; To what extent do they motivate Civil Service employees in Zimbabwe.

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Abstract

Career development systems play a pivotal in the organisation development. Career development is viewed today as a kind of partnership with employees. It is also a key component of a company's attraction and retention strategy. Many individuals will not consider employment with an organization unless it offers career development as a basic component of its culture. The current unfavorable economical situation in Zimbabwe is gradually driving away the prioritization of career development in many organizations especially civil service. It is deliberated that Zimbabwe has to seek for bigger competitiveness in the entire continent and the world in general. However, the duty of civil service to create the environment benevolent for increasing competitiveness is evidently lacking. The challenges associated with the changing nature of work and the workplace environment is a matter of life concern that requires a skilled, knowledgeable workforce with individuals who are adaptive, flexible, and focused on the future. Career development systems have a great influence on motivating employees in civil service. Today's employees are more career conscious than ever. They are demanding more in terms of personal growth and development. Organizations that fail to allow employees to meet their individual needs always perished. This paper analyzed the extent to which the attractiveness of career development system motivates civil service employees. The author explored in the Career Development systems that seek to match the needs of the employee with those of the organization with the great intention of motivation. It is however essential that organizations place a high value on Development systems career. This allows employees to fulfill their career needs, and organizations in future benefit by retaining a greater number of their competent and qualified employees.

Introduction

Civil service organizations are faced with the problem of retaining employees. It is expensive to replace employees who leave for greener pastures or are lured away by other organizations. It is understood that it costs an organization approximately twice the salary of the vacated position to replace an employee (Kaori Saito 2014).

Employee turnover can have a demoralizing effect on an organization, and it may severely affect the overall efficiency of the organization. This becomes even more critical in organizations which are service-oriented, i.e. law enforcement, Security organizations per say require highly developed skills and competencies. Unfortunately, there is no single answer that best addresses the issue of employee retention. However, a number of organizations have before responded to this issue by implementing Career Development practices in the workplace. These practices teach employees how to work toward their own goals while continuing to do productive work for the organization. Organizations with such practice claim that they retain a greater number of employees.

Clearly, career development practices have evolved from an isolated tool for individual growth to a key strategic asset for many far-sighted organizations. Once left exclusively to the individual employee's own initiative, organizations have taken a more active role in their employees' careers through Career Development practices. It has been suggested that selecting candidates with civil service values, designing meaningful jobs, creating conducive work environments, encouraging leaders with values and promoting a civic-minded society are useful ways to improve the motivation of employees in form career development practices (L. E. Paarlberg, J. L. Perry and A. Hondegheem 2008).

Traditionally, it has been assumed that every employee wants, or should want, the same thing in a career, usually a direct path up the organizational ladder (Fink, 1992). However, career development is not about "getting ahead", but rather about getting to be the best an individual can be and finding a place in an organization where they can express excellence and contribute to

the goals of the organization. According to Elmer B. Staats (1988) career development encompasses "vertical" issues such as promotions and upward mobility, but also "horizontal" movement (lateral job transfers) within the organization. Career development deals with the fundamental nature of the relationship of individuals to their work and employees to their organizations. A clearly defined plan of action prepares employees for the future and preserves an organization's ability to meet both existing and future needs.

There is not enough attention given to alternative paths that reflect more personal aspirations, especially when those desires do not fit the familiar pattern of traditional organizational life. Today's employees are demanding more from their work in terms of fulfillment and personal satisfaction. They use words such as "empowerment" and "self-development" in expressing demands.

In today's competitive environment, it is imperative that all organizations create a work environment that fosters growth and development. This apparently can be accomplished by implementing Career Development practices in the workplace. This enhances organizational loyalty among employees, results in higher levels of job satisfaction, lower employee turnover, and fewer employee complaints (Werther & Davis, 1992).

The aim of Career Development systems

Scholars argue that public officials have an intrinsic motivation to serve the public good. Working in the civil service sector has been associated with "an attitude, a sense of duty" and "public morality" (Elmer B. Staats 1988). Nonetheless, this intrinsic motivation, civil service morale and the sense of self-worth among public officials have been in decline for many years.

According to International Civil Service Commission (2008), four factors draw individuals to the civil service:

- attraction to public policymaking;
- commitment to the public interest and civic duty;
- self-sacrifice;

- compassion.

Career development has become primary activity of organizations in order to create a pool of talented employees as well as enhance their career satisfaction (P. Leisink, and B. Steijn 2008). Along with this, it is also considered as an organized and planned process to improve the efficiency of organization. Employees have their own personal desires and aspirations and need to effectively utilize their personal skills to attain their career goals and objectives. On the other hand, organizations have needs for staffing and meeting present and future human resource requirements. A career development system according to P. Leisink, and B. Steijn (2008), is a mechanism that takes both the parties in to consideration and helps them meet their requirements as well as objectives.

Objectives of Career Development Systems as outlined by (M. Dewhurst, M. Guthridge and E. Mohr 2009)

Better Communication

The main objective of designing a career development system is to foster better communication within the organization as a whole. It promotes communication at all levels of organizations for example senior civil services manager and their subordinates. Proper communication is the lifeblood of any organization and helps in solving several big issues especially in the bureaucratic structure of the civil service.

Career Decisions Assistance

A career development system provides employees as well as managers with helpful assistance with career decisions. They get an opportunity to assess their skills and competencies and know their goals and future aspirations. It helps them give a direction so that they can focus on achieving their long-term career goals.

Better Use of Employee Skills

A career development system helps organization make better use of employee skills. Since managers know their skills and competencies and therefore, can put them at a job where they would be able to produce maximum output.

Realistic Goals:

Setting realistic goals and expectations is another main objective of a career development system. It helps both employees and organization to understand what is feasible for them and how they can achieve their goals.

Creating a Pool of Talented Employees

Creating a pool of talented employees is the main objective of organizations. After all, they need to meet their staffing needs in present and future and a career development system helps them fulfill their requirements.

Enhancing the Career Satisfaction

Organizations especially design career development systems for enhancing the career satisfaction of their employees. Since they have to retain their valuable assets and prepare them for top-notch positions in future, they need to understand their career requirements and expectations from their organization.

Feedback

Giving feedback on every step is also required within an organization to measure the success rate of a specific policy implemented and initiatives taken by the organization. In addition to this, it also helps managers to give feedback for employees' performance so that they can understand what is expected of them.

A career development system can be very effective in creating a supportive culture in the organization and help employees grow and utilize their skills to achieve their desires and aspirations related to their career. Both organization and employees can meet their goals simultaneously.

Main elements of Career Development Systems

Career development systems critically recognize the various elements that promote the achievement of the desired organisational goals in both public and private sectors (Elmer B. Staats 1988).

Self-Assessment Tools

This is the first technique that is widely used by organizations in their efforts to career management of their employees. This is a career exploration tool where individuals complete self-assessment exercises and fill information about their skills, interests, competencies, work attitudes and preferences, long and short-term goals and obstacles and opportunities. The whole exercise helps them understand their own desires and aspirations and likes and dislikes

Career Planning Workshops

Once employees are through their self-assessment, they share their findings with other individuals and their supervisors in career-planning workshops. It allows them to receive feedback from others and check the reality of their plans and aspirations. They may change their plans if they find them unrealistic and move in new direction (OECD 1998)

Individual Counseling

It is one of the most common activities that are undertaken by almost all people developing organizations. Generally, career development specialists, Human Resource specialists or life skills development trainers provide individual counseling. Some organizations hire them from outside while some have their own full-fledged departments where they recruit and hire trainers for full time. It helps employees in understanding their own goals, making a change in them if required and working on improving their skills and competencies.

Organizational Assessment Programs

Organizational assessment programs include tools and methods for evaluating employees' potential for growth within the organization. Johnson & Johnson is one company that uses these programs to assess the careers of their employees and evaluate their potential in order to facilitate the staffing and development of special teams known as "tiger teams". These special teams are formed to speed up the development of new products. The most popular programs under this category include assessment centers, psychological testing, 360-degree appraisal, promotability forecasts and succession planning.

Developmental Programs

Developmental programs are used by an organization to develop their employees for future positions. They can be internal as well as external and can be performed under the supervision of human resource staff or trainers and specialists from outside. These programs include assessment centers, job rotation programs, tuition refund plans, internal training programs, external training seminars and formal mentoring programs.

The importance of Career Development system in Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean business environment has been endlessly experiencing negative changes such as economic downsizing and restructuring resulting in fewer hierarchical positions but at the same time the need for improving productivity while keeping a pace with continuously changing technology has also increased. Organizations, therefore, instead of engaging new staff from the labour market prefer to promote the already existing employee to a specific position to protect

the organizational culture and minimize training costs. The process of organizational career development is important for both employees and employers.

Career development programs are most effective when they are integrated with the organization's ongoing training and development strategies. For being able to do this, an organization must have a carefully designed career development system especially designed to meet its own unique needs and requirements. A programmed and well-designed career management system not only benefits organizations but also help employees and managers or supervisors in establishing effective communication with each other (Wright B. and Grant A. (2010). All the parties gain different benefits and combining which they can together set an organizational culture that supports such types of activities in an organization.

Importance of Career Development System to Organization

- Once organization has a fair idea about employee's strengths and weaknesses, attitude and behaviour, values and future aspirations and skills and competencies, they are able to make better use of employee skills and put them at the right place.
- The organization can disseminate all important details and information at all organizational levels in order to ensure effective communication at all levels. It fosters and lays emphasis on better communication within the organization as a whole.
- It also helps organization retain valued employees by providing them what they want. Since the organization is able to collect all necessary information about a specific individual, it can make efforts to retain them.
- It establishes a reputation of the organization in the market. More and more working professionals see it as a people developer and get attracted towards it.

Importance of a Career Development System to Employees

Employees may also choose to participate in other developmental programs such as job rotation, seminars and workshops, tuition reimbursement, mentoring and dual career path programs (Campbell & Moses, 1986, p. 280).

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- The major benefit of career development system to employees is that they get helpful assistance and guidance with their career decisions. They get to know about their own aspirations, objectives and desires and understand how to shape their career.
- By using this system, they can set more realistic goals and objectives that are feasible to be accomplished over the span of one's life.
- It fosters better communication between the employee and the manager as well as at all levels of the organization.
- The best part is that they can get feedback on their performance. This helps them improve their working style and compels them to upgrade their skills.
- The process leads to job enrichment and enhanced job satisfaction.

Importance of a Career Development System to Managers

- A career development system helps managers and supervisors in improving and upgrading their skills in order to manage their own career. Even they get to where they are heading to and what their aspirations are.
- It fosters better communication between managers and employees.
- It helps them in retaining valued employees as they get to know about their skills and competencies and future aspirations as well.
- It helps in discussing productive performance appraisal of employees and planning their promotions as well as their career graph.
- It leads to greater understanding of the organization as a whole and cultivate a supportive and conducive culture in the organization.
- It helps managers in understanding the hidden aspects of employees and guides them to allocate employees the right job that matches to their skills and competencies.

Lack of career development systems effects

If the public sector wants to position itself as an employer of choice, it is clear that favourable opportunities for career development and progression will be a crucial motivational tool when it comes to recruiting and retaining competent staff.

According to Goldsmith Fitzgerald,(2002) “Staff Retention Survey”, *in the Irish Civil Service*, lack of career development is still a central factor influencing resignations from the public service. In particular, the survey discovered that the top six employment-related issues for civil servants were:

- earnings and career progression,
- task responsibility,
- reward and recognition,
- job security,
- progressive work arrangements and
- training/development.

The above mentions reasons bring about dissatisfaction among public service employees especially the young and energetic employees who are scrambling for life development. This scenario is also being experienced in Zimbabwe where senior employees are hanging on their senior positions up to a very advanced age. This frustrates the young ambitious public employees who unhesitant opted for resignation for private sector.

The argument that career development is a significant work aspiration is also stressed by other studies conducted in the private sector (Rob Goffee, Richard Scase, (1992).

The results reveal very clearly that early promotion is perceived as an additional psychological reward, while “late promotion” or “getting stuck” can often result in anxiety, frustration and self-doubt (Goldsmith Fitzgerald, 2002). This means for instance that too lengthy career paths in the public service that only take into account seniority, insufficient promotion opportunities and slow advancement can become significant sources of job dissatisfaction.

However, the *Dutch Van Rijn*, report identified the improvement of career prospects as an important attractiveness factor of public employment, while a study on Human Resources Management and job satisfaction in the Dutch public sector showed that the lack of career possibilities is an important factor for staff leaving public sector posts (Bram Steijn, 2002)

Conclusion

Approach to building Career Development Systems enables organisations to identify required future skills needs and provide an environment where staff can take responsibility for their own career management and develop those needed skills as appropriate. The Career Development System needs to support the strategic planning objectives and be integrated with organisational key Human Resource initiatives. In particular, strong links to civil service Performance Management Systems maximizes the benefits of both systems to the organisation and to the targeted development civil service employees.

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