

# Significant Aspects regarding Career Management. Means for a Better Career Planning and Development

Adelina Palade

Senior Research Fellow - European Institute for Risk Security and Communication Management, 82-84  
Eminescu Street, Bucharest, Romania  
e-mail: ladelina@dcti.ro

## Abstract

*Developing the professional career is regarded as a means to address both the requests of the employees and of the organization, opposed to the old strategies to address only the institutional needs. The objective of career development is thus the professionalization of individuals and their personal wellbeing, as well as the prosperity of the organizations they are part of. An extremely important component in the career management is the career planning and development activity. This is inseparably related to the human resources planning. In order to monitor the career evaluation manner questionnaires have been elaborated and distributed to the employees of S.C. OMV – Petrom, Petrobrazi branch. The career evaluation questionnaire offers a complete image on the employee's aspirations and on the manner in which he/she understands the professional development.*

**Key words:** *self-knowledge, the stage of the career, career planning and development, the planning of the organizational career, organizational performance*

**JEL Classification:** *J24, O15*

## Introduction

Employees' career management is a basic process in the systematic planning of the human resources within the organization, and is put into effect with the help of particular development programs.

The main *objectives* of the employees' career management are:

- Promoting a career development policy, according to the nature of the activities developed by the employees and, especially, to the individual and organizational needs;
- Addressing the direct needs of the organization and increasing the potential to create a positive image for it;
- Identifying and perfecting personnel with high intellectual and professional potential, for organizational progress;
- Elaborating some structural development plans, to include into major activities the special potential personnel which is not however included in the decision structures;
- Supporting employees which assert forms of absenteeism, indifference or lack of motivation.

Developing the professional career is regarded as a means to address both the requests of the employees and of the organization, opposed to the old strategies to address only the institutional needs. The objective of career development is thus the professionalization of individuals and their personal wellbeing, as well as the prosperity of the organizations they are part of. There are senses according to which the career is a staged development process which unreels along the entire life span:

Ginzberg's *theory* regarding the career planning and development is based on three *postulates*:

- Choosing an occupation is a process which lasts from the first 4-5 years of life until late maturity;
- The process of irreversible;
- The compromise is an essential aspect of each choice.

Super's *theory* is supported on the following *postulates*:

- One must take into account the individual differences regarding the abilities, the interests, and the personality.
- In each of us there is a multi-potential which allows us to gain competence for several professions or occupations. They can be discovered through an interests' and skills' inventory.
- The professional preferences and qualifications change in time, which makes choosing the career a continuous process.
- The work is a way of life. An adequate adjustment of the profession and of the personal life. For a professional development one must pass through 3 stages:
  1. The *orientation* stage involves the establishing of the type of professional career a person wants and the steps which must be taken in order to achieve objectives; in this stage an individualized professional guidance is necessary as well as resorting to different sources of information;
  2. The *development* stage consists of actions undertaken in order to create and develop the necessary qualities for the potential employment opportunities; this can be done through mentoring programs, job rotation, training programs;
  3. The *evaluation* stage which involves activities related to self evaluation as well as the evaluation from others; the objective of this phase is the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the person.

An extremely important component in the career management is the career planning and development activity. This is inseparably related to human resources planning.

The human career planning and development in an organization is an evaluation process of the development opportunities within the organization and a process to establish the objectives and orientation plans in the professional career, process accomplished by balancing the requests of the organization and the preferences and abilities of the employees, through support and reconciliation actions. The elaboration of a realistic career plan presents multiple advantages both for the company, as well as for every one of the employees.

The preoccupation for ensuring the employees' career development commands the following advantages for the company:

- The best employees in the company are attracted and reserved;
- The costs related to the personnel fluctuation are reduced;

- The results of the employees are improved - by establishing a correlation between their interests and the existent positions;
- The potential of the employees is developed in view of their preparation for future positions.

Career planning offers the employee the following advantages:

- The possibility to succeed faster in a career when the employee takes into account both his/her own abilities, as well as the opportunities available in the organization;
- The employee benefits from more autonomy in his/her work and from increased responsibility;
- The employee broadens his/her work experience;
- The employee enjoys increased work contentment.

### **Problem Description**

The planning of the organizational career is done by the department or person responsible for human resources in the company, taking into account the needs and possibilities of the organization. The most appropriate strategies, plans and programs for the development of the human resources within the company are adopted. Many employees permanently analyze their own qualities and interests. This analysis leads to the definition of the career objectives.

Self-evaluation is the necessary starting point. Self-evaluation must be completed by the periodic evaluation of the employee's performances, meant to confirm his/her promotion potential and the degree of fulfillment of the previously established objectives.

To that effect, one can state that the manager:

- Evaluates the realism of the objectives and development needs expressed by the employees related to their career;
- Challenges the employees' interest related to their career in the organization;
- Offers information related to the available positions in the company, as well as to the promotion perspectives for each department and position of the organization;
- Identifies, based on well defined criteria, the candidates for an open position;
- Offers the possibility of training for promotion (professional training courses, job rotation etc.);
- Draws up development plans for the career of the employees;
- Gives the necessary support to the fulfilments of these plans.

The individual career is influenced by an array of objective and subjective factors, out of which some depend on the individual, others on the organization or the social and economic environment.

The subjective factors which can influence the career of an individual are linked to his or her personality, but also to the interests he/she has and the manner in which he/she manages to achieve the self knowledge and self evaluation. According to the opinion of a known ideologist in the field of careers – E. H. Schein – the career represents an array of qualifications, abilities, personal values, needs and motivations which direct them and shape the dynamic of their course throughout their individual lives (Figure 1).

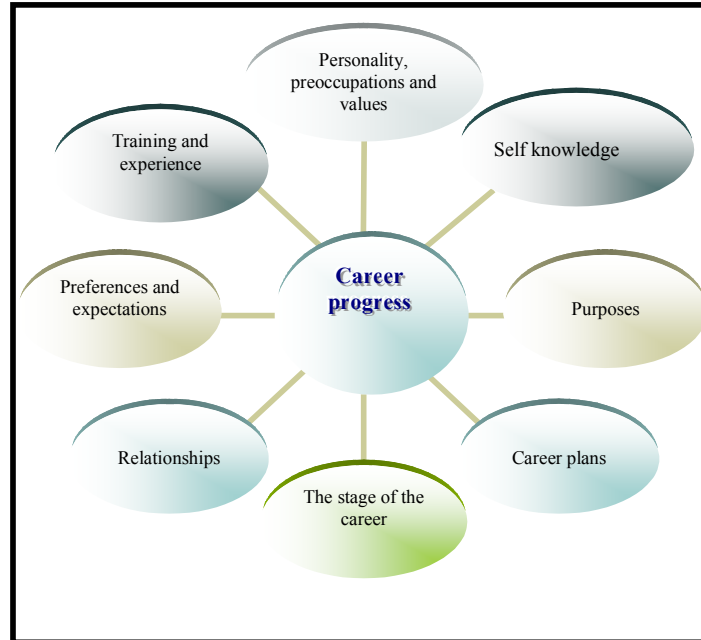


Fig. 1. Subjective factors

The objective factors which can influence the individual career enclose an array of elements linked to the context each individual lives and works in and to the manner in which he/she manages to understand the respective environment (Figure 2).

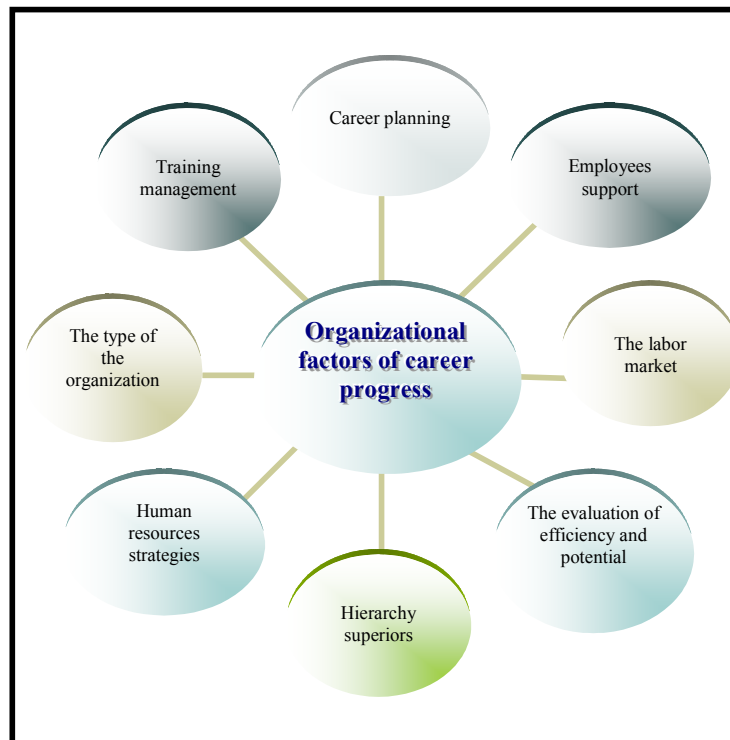


Fig. 2. Objective factors

The evaluation of the training and professional development activities consists of the comparison of the degree of fulfilments of the previously established objectives, with the beginning of the professional training program.

The evaluation takes place before the beginning of the program, during its development and after it is finished, following two main *directions*:

- Individual performance;
- Organizational performance.

The effectiveness of the personnel training and perfecting process and of using active methods increases when several elements are taken into account:

- The content of the programs is closely related to the work of the participants within the organization;
- The problems approached are prepossessed both by the leaders as well as by the subordinates of the participants; the participants in the programs have, within the organization, the liberty and competence to use the acquired knowledge, skills and qualifications;
- They notice the existence of some relationships between using acquired elements and attaining the individual objectives of the division they are part of;
- The personnel participant to the training and perfecting programs achieves work satisfaction, being motivated to apply the new knowledge and methods.

## **Methodology, Research Description and Example**

In order to monitor the career evaluation manner questionnaires have been elaborated and distributed to the employees of S.C. OMV – Petrom, Petrobrazi branch.

The elaboration of questionnaires represents an abiding operation and it is highly dependent on the object of the inquiry. The questions asked must be easy to understand, close to the language of the respondents, in order to offer the possibility to state reliable, easily intercepted answers.

The attitude scale questions which identify, measure the intensity and the force of the action with the help of scales, are expressed symbolically, numerically or non-numerically, the degree to which an object or a phenomenon possesses a certain characteristic or property.

The scales can be built as physical instruments, such as those for measuring weight (weighing scale type) or length (ruler type) or as appreciation instruments for qualitative data in order to measure the attitudes, preferences, images or other competences of the subjects' behaviour.

The scales building activity is called scaling, and in the elaboration of a scale one must take into account two priority demands: the intelligibility of the scale and its ability to establish the differences between the levels of intensity of the properties, the object or the phenomenon subjected to research.

The career evaluation questionnaire offers a complete image on the employee's aspirations and on the manner in which he/she understands the professional development.

Applying a career evaluation questionnaire helps the organization to know the perception of the employee towards the development level of his/her career up to the moment of the evaluation, but also to know the degree of satisfaction related to the professional activity developed by the employee until that moment. Also, factors which can contribute to the development of the career from the individual point of view, the projects and future perspectives of the professional activity, the degree of honesty of the employee, the extent of the employee's awareness of his/her own professional training level, the factors which can motivate individuals can be identified and, very important, one can identify the extent to which there is a correspondence between the expectations and aspirations of the questioned employees and the objective and opportunities of the company.

Regarding the *sampling criteria*, the major subject of the study was mainly analyzed from the following points of view:

- *Socio – professional* (management and executive personnel);
- *Gender*. Starting from a hypothesis, that males show an increased interest for career, as compared to that shown by females, explanation pertaining to the field of activity of the company, one can prove that for example males are willing to work overtime, to travel for business more often;
- *Age*. A division of the study on the following age categories is necessary: 22-35 years old; 35-45 years old; 45-60 years old.

The questionnaire is structured on three dimensions: *organization*, *hierarchic chief*, and *individual*, and it also contains in its main structure for each separate dimension 6, 14 and 23 questions (aspects) regarding to career.

For instance, in the following table (Table 1) is presented the third dimension:

**Table 1.** The questionnaire related to the dimension of the individual

No.	Dimension of individual	To a very great extent	To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To some extent	To a small extent
1.	To what extent do you agree to reduce from the time devoted to the family, for accomplishment of the career?					
2.	Own abilities – did they help you in your professional evolution?					
3.	Personal qualities – did they help you in your professional evolution?					
4.	Did family help you in your professional evolution?					
5.	Did professional training help you in your professional evolution?					
6.	Did personal relationships help you in your professional evolution?					
7.	Did luck help you in your professional evolution?					
8.	To what extent are you content until now of the development level of your career?					
9.	To what extent do you consider that working abroad represents the career?					
10.	To what extent do you consider that the activity to more companies represents the career?					
11.	To what extent do you consider that a certain professional competence represents the career?					

Table 1 (cont.)

12.	To what extent do you consider that the professional development represents the career?					
13.	To what extent do you consider that professional experience represents the career?					
14.	To what extent do you consider that the leadership position represents the career?					
15.	To what extent do you consider that being high in the social scale represents the career?					
16.	To what extent do you consider that promotion represents the career?					
17.	To what extent do you consider that social appreciation represents the career?					
18.	To what extent do you consider that professional responsibility represents the career?					
19.	To what extent do you consider that the large salary represents the career?					
20.	To what extent do you consider that the professional specialization means to run a career?					
21.	To what extent do you consider that the high professional status means to run a career?					
22.	To what extent do you consider that the succession of jobs means to run a career?					
23.	To what extent would you like a counselling (additional information, assessments, guiding) from someone specialized?					

The criteria are indicated to each of the subjects whose opinions are going to be scaled. The subject is required to express his consent or dissent with regard to the assertion in each sentence. The score obtained by a subject will be calculated by getting the algebraic sum of the numeric values defining his opinion on each sentence composing the set.

In the following section, we will present an example of the achieved processing and, of course, conclusions or interpretations of the processing of the obtained answers. The example will use only the first two forms of the questionnaire which is using dimension of the organization and dimension called "hierarchical chief".

## Analysis of the Information and Interpretation of the Results (Partial Results)

*Research aims:* Obtain a general view on the final result at dimension level; identify the level of satisfaction and perception of the importance of the questions (aspects) contained in the actions portfolio and determine the key points on which action should be taken.

A successful planning of the career follows from the addition of efforts of employees and direct superiors, but also of the company's management: the employee plans, the direct supervisor provides support and incentives, and the organization ensures the resources and the development framework.

As regards the first set of information obtained based on the questionnaire, we started from the following distribution of opinions (Table 2):

**Table 2.** Distribution of opinions related to the dimension of the organization

No.	Dimension of the organization	Very much	Quite	Moderately	Not quite	Barely
1.	How pleased are you of your professional evolution within the organization?	-	4	2	1	-
2.	How pleased are you of your position within the organization?	1	3	3	-	-
3.	How pleased are you of your professional achievements within the organization?	1	5	1	-	-
4.	How pleased are you of your independence while acting within the organization?	-	4	3	-	-
5.	How pleased are you of your independence in making decisions within the organization?	-	4	2	1	-
6.	How pleased are you of your professional specialization within the organization?	1	4	2	-	-

This set of questions was meant for the executive personnel of the company.

To provide useful information, the following were calculated:

1. Professional evolution:

$$\frac{(4 \times 1) + (2 \times 0) + (1 \times (-1))}{7} = 0.42$$

2. Position:

$$\frac{(1 \times 2) + (3 \times 1) + (3 \times 0)}{7} = 0.71$$

3. Professional achievements:

$$\frac{(1 \times 2) + (5 \times 1) + (1 \times 0)}{7} = 1$$

4. Independence in action:

$$\frac{(4 \times 1) + (3 \times 0)}{7} = 0.57$$

5. Independence in decision-making:

$$\frac{(4 \times 1) + (2 \times 0) + (1 \times (-1))}{7} = 0.42$$

6. Professional specialization:

$$\frac{(1 \times 2) + (4 \times 1) + (2 \times 0)}{7} = 0.85$$

The global level of the organization's dimension is evaluated by getting an arithmetic mean of the 5 assertions.



$$G = \frac{0.42 + 0.71 + 0.57 + 0.42 + 0.85}{5} = \frac{3.97}{5} = 0.794$$

The obtained score shows the level of satisfaction for what the organization can offer.

One can easily acknowledge that the high level of satisfaction is due to the following two aspects: professional achievements and professional specialization.

Other questions, synthesized in the following questionnaire, were prepared as well for the execute personnel:

**Table 3.** Distribution of opinions related to the dimension “hierarchic chief”

No.	Dimension “hierarchic chief” <i>To what extent do you think your chief appreciates the aspects listed below in his relationship with his subordinates?</i>	Very much	Quite	Moderately	Not quite	Barely
1.	Do you think that direct communication is appreciated?	2	5	-	-	-
2.	Do you believe that creativity is appreciated?	-	3	2	2	-
3.	Do you think that open-mindedness is appreciated?	1	5	1	-	-
4.	Do you think that professional efficiency is appreciated?	3	3	1	-	-
5.	Do you think that professional involvement is appreciated?	1	5	1	-	-
6.	Do you think that professional initiatives are appreciated?	-	5	1	1	-
7.	Do you think that inventiveness is appreciated?	3	3	1	-	-
8.	Do you think that professional motivation is appreciated?	-	2	4	1	-
9.	Do you think that organization is appreciated?	1	3	3	-	-
10.	Do you think that promotion is appreciated?	-	-	3	4	-
11.	Do you think that yield is appreciated?	1	5	1	-	-
12.	Do you think that professional achievements are appreciated?	-	4	2	1	-
13.	Do you think that coping with novelties is appreciated?	1	3	1	2	1
14.	Do you think that specialization is appreciated?	-	2	4	1	-

The global level of the dimension “hierarchic chief” has been evaluated by getting an arithmetic mean of the 14 assertions. Based on the same principle used above, a global score was established:

$$G = \frac{1.28 + 0.14 + 1 + 1.28 + 1 + 0.57 + 1.28 + 0.14 + 0.71 - 0.57 + 1 + 0.42 + 0.42 + 0.14}{14} = \frac{8.81}{14} = 0.629$$

The score shows the level of satisfaction as regards the support given by the direct chief. We noticed an expectation level maybe too high, considering the increased dissatisfaction as regards promotion.

The results, their processing as well as the interpretation of the obtained information will constitute the object of a subsequent study, the present one having the purpose of highlighting significant aspects regarding career management, an effective manner to evaluate the employees’ careers in the case of a petrochemical industry company and offer a flavour of what

will be done by using designed questionnaires in order to give a better solution to career planning and development.

## Conclusions

By synthesizing the information obtained by processing the questionnaires used in research, several ideas quite interesting and useful can be extracted.

*Career development involves a wide range of activities mainly conducted by the personnel of the Human Resources departments, but also by each separate person. The process involves the professional evolution of the person through a succession of jobs, degrees and levels of training.* This cannot be achieved overnight. Everybody must make efforts to develop their own careers. They must evolve in accordance with their career plans and which, in their turn, contain short-, medium-, and long-term components. Personnel guides, human resources consultants must develop a proactive role and the activity they carry out must be as person-oriented as possible. They must efficiently manage the allotted personnel and get involved in the activities that are requisite as a result of the individual professional skills assessment process, looking for development opportunities for those whose career they manage.

Such interventions include – no doubt about it – both professional training courses and periods of temporary assignment/relocation to other positions, in view of gaining a plus of experience.

Career development is the career management process and refers to the person's evolution, depending on its needs and on its performance, potential and aspirations.

Career development is important both for the individual and for the institution. Career development is always based on the needs of the organization. However, we must admit that the needs of the institution will be covered only if the individual needs are satisfied. Career planning must envisage the following:

- The members of the organization must be recognized as individualities that have unique needs, desires, and skills;
- At individual level, persons are much more motivated by an institution responding to their aspirations and to their needs;
- The members of the organization can develop in terms of career, may change and look for new directions for action, provided they are offered the right possibilities/opportunities and guiding.

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## Aspecte semnificative privind managementul carierei. Căi pentru o mai bună planificare și dezvoltare a carierei

### Rezumat

*Dezvoltarea carierei profesionale este văzută ca un mijloc pentru a satisface atât cerințele angajaților cât și ale organizației, contrar cu vechile strategii de a răspunde doar la nevoile instituționale. Obiectivul dezvoltării carierei este, așadar, profesionalizarea indivizilor și bunăstarea lor personală, cât și prosperitatea organizațiilor în care aceștia lucrează. O componentă deosebit de importantă în managementul carierei este activitatea de planificare și dezvoltare a carierei. Aceasta este indisolubil legată de planificarea resurselor umane. Pentru a verifica modul de evaluare a carierei am recurs la o aplicație practică. Au fost elaborate chestionare care au fost distribuite angajaților de la S.C. OMV – Petrom S.A., sucursala Petrobrazi. Chestionarul de evaluare a carierei oferă o imagine completă asupra aspirațiilor angajatului și a modului prin care acesta înțelege dezvoltarea profesională.*