Career Development in Organizations
Unit 1 - Career Perspectives

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Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Define what a career is
- Distinguish between individual and organizational perspectives of careers
- Identify new types of careers
- Explain the importance of environmental factors on careers

Why work?

- Provides a sense of purpose, challenge, self-fulfilment, development and money
- Source of identity, status as well as of creativity and mastery (Jahoda, 1982)
- Offers opportunities for social networking
- Helps us pass the time and gives our life structure
- Serve as a shelter and sanctuary from home and family (Hochschild, 1997)
- Provides basic needs as well as opportunities for achieving higher needs

Centrality of work?

- What would you do about work if you had won a lottery or inherited a large sum of money that would enable you to quit working and still enjoy at comfortable lifestyle?

- What would you choose?
  - Stop working
  - Continue working in the same job
  - Continue working but under different conditions

Career dilemmas

- An engineer, 20 years out of university, has been recently laid off in a corporate downsizing move. She is beginning to question her own competence and drive to succeed

- A young physician realizes he chose a career in medicine to please his parents and dreads spending the next 40 years pursuing someone else's dreams

- A recent university graduate has been unable to find employment in his chosen field and has no idea about what career options to pursue

- A busy mother in a dual-career relationship is frustrated in her own career because she receives little support from her husband, children or company

Changing landscape of work & careers

- Sources of changes
  - Economic, political, technological & cultural
- Impact of changes
  - Affect world of work
  - Create uncertainty
  - Play havoc with careers and lives

Types of changes

- Organizational cost cutting and loss of job security
  - Prospect of lifelong career with one employer/industry fades
- Changing structure of organizations
  - Smaller permanent workforce & reliance on flexible workforce
- Changing nature of work
  - Increased adoption of team-based structures as mechanism for task accomplishments, decision making and problem solving
- Change in psychological contract
  - Relational to transactional

- International competition
  - International experiences include expatriation and repatriation
- Technology and churning of jobs
  - Creation of new and more technologically advanced jobs
  - Elimination of old "lower-tech" jobs - churning
- Changes in workforce diversity and demographics
  - Paradox presented by baby-boomers
- Work and family life
  - Dual-career couples and single parents

What is a career?

- Structural property of an occupation or organization
  - Sequence of positions held by a typical practitioner of the occupation
    - Law student, law clerk, junior member of law firm, senior member of law firm, judge and retirement
  - Mobility path within a single organization or multiple employers
    - Sales representative, product manager, district marketing manager, regional marketing manager, divisional vice president of marketing with interspersed staff assignments among these positions

- Property of an individual
  - An acknowledgement that each person pursues a unique career

Definitions

- "The pattern of work related experiences that span the course of a person's life" Greenhaus, et. al. (2010)

- "An evolving sequence of a person's work experience over time" Arthur, Hall & Lawrence (1989)

- "The sequence of employment-related positions, roles, activities and experiences encountered by a person" Arnold (1997)

Career perspectives

- Individual perspective
  - Important skills and knowledge for individuals
  - To provide insights and create options
  - Enhancing flexibility and adaptability
  - Achieve career success and satisfaction
- Organizational perspective
  - Process to help individuals plan careers
  - Meets organization's business requirements and strategic directions

Contemporary employees

- Active and assertive
  - Demand high degree of control over careers and lives
- Observable behaviours
  - High expectations about work
  - Autonomy in job
  - Weakening of sex role boundaries
    - Less rigid divisions over men and women work roles
  - Concern for total lifestyle including a satisfying personal life
  - Diversity of career orientations and work values

Organizational perspective

- Incentive for organizations to understand careers
  - Understand employees' career needs
  - Assist employees to engage in effective career management
- Selection of human resources
  - Organization needs to understand
    - Types of careers it provided
    - Values placed on careers

- Development and utilization of human resources
  - Career planning workshops, job posting, supportive performance appraisals, career counseling and job redesign programs
  - Early career programs such as challenging job assignments
  - Dynamism of career decision making in particular employees' career concerns
- Management of career plateaus
  - Need to keep plateaued employees perform effectively
- Family responsiveness
  - Need to assist employees in resolving work-life balance

Traditional perspectives on careers

- Working under relational psychological contract
  - Presumed loyalty between employer and employee
  - Career viewed as stable and consistent
  - Promotions upward and linear
  - Ideal vision of organizational career – advancement and stability
- Career as a profession (beliefs)
  - A more desirable career choice
  - Involves work of high economic status
  - High degree of autonomy
  - Provide high level of compensation

Psychological contract

The unspoken promise, not present in the small print of the employment contract, of what the employer gives, and what employees give in return

Levinson et.al., 1962

Change in psychological contracts

- New psychological contracts
  - no long term contracts of loyalty and no mutual commitment
- New ideas
  - Employability
  - Organisations being expected to invest in training and development of its employees
  - Employees expected to exert effort and be flexible
- Boundaryless career (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994)
- Protean career (Hall, 1976)

Boundaryless careers

- Characterized by frequent inter-organizational mobility

- Product of changes in organizational practices
  - Increasingly transactional psychological contract

- Also triggered by personal and family characteristics
  - Stage of family development, spouses commitment to careers, parental responsibilities etc

Perspectives on boundaryless careers

- Mobile
  - Non traditional forms of boundary crossing
    - Movement to other organizations for new opportunities
    - Better match with job interests
- Requires use of competencies or strategies
  - Career competencies
    - Looking outside the organization for identity (know why)
    - Marketability (know how)
    - Establishment of networks of information and influence (know whom)
- Individuals highly responsible for career choices
  - Follow personally meaningful values in career decisions

Competencies of boundaryless careers

- Knowing what (Opportunities, threats & requirements)
- Knowing why (Meaning, motives and values)
- Knowing where (Entering, training and advancing)
- Knowing whom (Relationships based on social capital and attraction)
- Knowing how (Technical and collaborative skills)
- Knowing when (Timing of choices and activities)

Protean careers

- Proactively self directed
  - Manage careers
  - Explore options
  - Make decisions
- Values-driven
  - Career decisions to meet personally meaningful values and goals
  - Result in feelings of psychological success
  - Personal values and goals
    - Relevant to "whole life space" or "life's work" rather than on employment

Characteristics of protean careers

- Self-directed
- Flexible
- Adaptable
- Versatile
- Achieve psychological success

Environmental influences on careers

- Social institutions, structures and networks influence careers (Inkson, 2007)
- Family interactions and background influences long term psychosocial development of individual
  - Affects wide range of factors associated with career choices and development
  - Factors – individual characteristics & interpersonal skills
- Other social networks also influence career as person ages

Social capital

- Networking
  - Activities that establish and maintain relationships that can potentially provide information, influence, guidance and support
- Individuals develop social capital through networking relationships
- Social capital
  - Valued resources available to individual through relationships that exist within a social network
  - Provides access to people of influence
    - Information on job openings
    - Obtaining interviews for job not advertised
    - Receiving advice on career paths to pursue or avoid

Impact of technologies on careers

- Can end in de-skilling for many
  - "White-collar" knowledge jobs had overtaken "blue-collar" jobs
  - Advanced technology (robotics & computer numerical control)
    - Reduce number of blue-workers in variety of industries
  - Modern service industries
    - Challenging intellectual jobs in R & D
    - Mundane jobs such as in call centres

- Different culture in cyberspace
  - Qualities such as curiosity, self-reliance, contrariness, smartness, focus, ability to adapt, high self-esteem, global orientation and at ease with digital tools.

CHANGE IS VERY RAPID NOW.
DO WE HAVE TIME TO ADAPT TO ALL THE CHANGES INVOLVED?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?