

## Management career development

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*The article includes management career development, personal requirements and motivation aimed at becoming a manager. It describes a career path from specialists to managerial positions and covers a typology of skills and methods applied for manager`s assessment. Challenging tasks and providing coaching seem to be effective practices for development of a managerial talent.*

**Key words:** Manager; Leader; Career development; Management skills; Motivation.

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*Статья посвящена вопросам профессионального развития менеджеров, стимулам и личным побуждениям выбора карьеры менеджера. В статье описывается развитие карьеры от специалиста к управленцу и формирование навыков управления. Авторы доказывают, что тренинги и стимулирующие задачи являются эффективными методами для формирования данных навыков и развития организаторского таланта.*

**Ключевые слова:** менеджер, лидер, развитие карьеры, навыки менеджмента, мотивация.

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### INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges for HRM is the effective development of future leaders of companies because these individuals will hold key positions in which they will determine prospective entrepreneurship and be responsible for the performance to a wide spectrum of stakeholders. Currently, many western employers prefer a personnel/HR policy, whose essence is **personal responsibility for own career development**. This approach is influenced by economic development, dynamics of organizational changes, and value shifts of highly skilled workforce.

New technologies need to be learnt during the whole productive life. People, who do not possess the required knowledge, skills and abilities, become unemployable in the labour market. In the current market there are done significant changes in the composition of the workforce, such as growth of older generation workers, increasing the representation of minorities and members of various nationalities, working mothers seeking jobs and a growing number of disabled persons. They all compete for limited jobs and also carry the altered values - they want to find greater

fulfillment at work as well as to participate in planning their careers. That means to get opportunities for professional and personal development at work, enlarging knowledge and enriching skills and abilities. Another part of their expectation is to achieve a work-life balance so that they can simultaneously satisfy their needs in the area of work, personal life and family (Dvorakova et al., 2012, p 416-419). At the same time economic and social changes with the global dimension put pressure on the organizations to act socially responsible, incl. offering family-friendly programs, flexible working hours and implementation of equal employment policy.

The **aim of this article** is firstly to summarize the best practices in management career development, and secondly to provide some suggestions for discussion about prospects of employees who have a potential to become a manager and later a leader, what competencies are required and which approach to developing talents is preferred. Even if the current personnel practice focuses on the implementation of career development model by quick jumps and addresses the fact of frequent changes of employers, examples of the number of transnational companies show that they are prepared to offer its best people a lifetime career with one employer, despite the fact that the world of work is very unstable and changes due to frequent restructuring, mergers and acquisitions.

## **MANAGEMENT CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

A manager in the following text we see an executive who has subordinates, controls and leads. In this sense, it covers to a wide group of managers at various levels in the organizational hierarchy. The company usually distinguishes lower, middle, higher (senior) and top managers. A crucial group usually consists of those who have attained higher education, have key competencies for employers, the potential to further develop their career and want to grow. The subject of this article deals with those who are graduates and achieve specialist positions and their career is orientated towards management positions.

Graduates usually begin their career as specialists in a functional area, e.g. taxation, accounting, marketing, logistics, information technology, manufacturing, etc. (see also Rees – Porter, 2005). Under favorable circumstances, they become supervisors of several specialists in the area of their work expertise. If they master work requirements and achieve desirable team results, then they are promoted to head of a staff organizational unit or a small line unit (an operational unit), which provides activities from different areas of expertise. The next step may be a promotion from a staff position in an organizational unit (or a smaller operational unit) to senior staff function or to a senior line-staff position in an operational unit where they are responsible for wider range activities. That means that they move up from the position of specialists to managerial functions at lower and intermediate levels and

some of them - after a further period - to the level of executive senior or even top managers. To identify suitable candidates from external and/or internal human resources for management positions that require a university degree the employer applies assessment centers; management development uses development centers, 360° feedback and coaching, resp. mentoring.

An interesting question is how long it takes the way when graduates move up from positions in any field of knowledge forward to management positions? The answer is not simple and cannot be made on several lines. The speed in career advancement is influenced by many factors that we outline below knowing that this is only an introduction to a topic and presents an incomplete list of them:

- National culture, where an enterprise comes from, and corporate culture (e.g., faster career track is a common practice in US businesses than in German ones),
- The degree of internationalization of an enterprise, i.e. how long the company operates and to what degree a national or business model of management development accepted the best practices of transnational companies,
- Branch of business in which a company operates (e.g. the difference between telecommunications and IT enterprises and companies in traditional production).

Above mentioned factors point to what we need to consider if we want to give a serious answer to the question. Below is a reflection of view formulated on the base of the factors and it may be a subject of research and professional discussion: European continental companies that operate in the secondary sector, still maintain their long-term experience and good practices in career management, i.e., that the decisive criteria for promotion to senior and top positions are the number of years of professional experience with an employer and achieved work results in the home environment. The counterpart to this model of career development (sometimes called "old") is a career model in high-tech industries such as information and communication technology, telecommunications, biotechnology, and pharmaceutical industries. The late one can be described as a policy of rapid career jumps on the track of university-educated workers who are young and mobile (time and space), are willing to risk and stress achieved results. Advocates of this model are tough competitors to the old model of career development, in particular in case of a talent war.

## **TYOLOGY OF MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES**

What are the individual prerequisites for management career development? Today we talk about that a good candidate is someone who is able and motivated to develop knowledge and skills towards key competencies decisive for the future of the organization. If we accept the typology of managerial competencies designed by R.L. Katz, whose inspiring work about managerial skills and abilities from 1955 is still current (Peterson - Van Fleet, 2004), then managers are able to effectively lead and manage thanks to **a set of professional, social (human) and conceptual skills**. Professional means understanding or execution of specific activities that require utilization of specific knowledge, technologies and procedures to perform certain specialized tasks. For example, accountants must have the expertise to carry out their work. Mastered professional knowledge and skills enable the manager to coach, manage and evaluate their subordinates. Social skills are focused on people. Such skills characterize the capacity to cooperate with others, communicate effectively, resolve conflicts and participate in a team. The exceptional importance in this set deserves conceptual skills which make competencies to see the organization as a whole or have a systematic approach. They focus on ideas and concepts and synonymous terms are entrepreneurial thinking, visionary or system thinking, etc.

The above outline is general and brief. Every company that follows up an intention to introduce an integrated human resource management has first to define its competencies and then set up them using one of the following methods:

- Line managers and HR professionals analyze behavior of the best performing employees,
- Business leaders anticipate them as the strategic ones,
- Owners and top executives determine them according own standards and values,
- Competencies are a combination of what worked in managerial positions, and what appears to be imperative for the future business success, i.e. a will to go forward to new challenges and be able to learn from experience and own mistakes.

Company specific competencies present criteria applied in recruitment and selection, performance management (incl. performance appraisal), succession planning, in designing training and development programs, talent management and even in compensation by incentive pay.

The purpose of competence concept in the area of management career development is to motivate talented personalities to **developing their global thinking**. It is perceived

that desired competencies point their development to what it is expected from them in the future. The merit consists in that they must

- have a broad and diverse view of things and relationships,
- seek a balance between opposites,
- manage the control processes,
- be able to work in a team and get used to diversity,
- take changes as opportunities,
- be permanently open to new things.

It is a long-term as well as costly process. At the beginning a company searches for in the labor market and identifies high-potential workers. Over the next 5 to 7 years the company verifies the correctness of their selection and any turnover is replaced by attracting new candidates from internal and/or external resources.

Business reality shows that an effective way how to develop talent is **work assignment** which is challenging for high-potentials and exceeds their current capacity (Deal - Peterson - Gailor-Loflin, 2001). The employer's aim is to simultaneously prevent their significant failure, and therefore offers them assistance in the form of coaching (Douglas - Morley, 2000). However, helping hand of the coach is no guarantee of 100% success - anybody would not have learned to solve problems and cope with difficulties independently. A worker, who passes through the pitfalls of the most diverse work and his immediate superior does not hidden his/her potential over the other, begins to be carefully monitored by HR department, because he/she becomes "human capital". They are appraised how good is their performance and potential in line with short- and long-term requirements of the job roles and organizational development.

## **MOTIVATION OF PERSONS WITH MANAGERIAL POTENTIAL**

Employers usually assume that persons selected for managed career development are completely pleased by virtue of such a chance. But in the course of time the promotion can come into conflict with personal interests of candidates for senior management positions or these individuals just find their formal roles in the lower positions for more satisfying than to become strategic leaders. The business executives and HR professionals have to solve issues stemming from **imbalance between work overload** of high-potentials and their development on the one side, and **individual well-being** on the other side. To illustrate how this is a difficult task, we quote Percy Barnevik's words at the time when he served as Chairman of the

Board, President and CEO of ABB. Once he commented that employees have the right to have a balanced work and personal life, with the exception of 400 senior representatives of 200,000 employees. This small group of persons in leadership roles with responsibility for the welfare of the other 99.8% is expected to unconditionally give priority ABB (Evans - Pucik - Barsoux, 2002, p 362).

The fact that an employee is smart and good in the current job, never guarantees that he/she will become a successful leader in 5 or 10 years. Psychologists have spent a lot of efforts to identify personality characteristics that can cause failure in stressful leadership roles or indicate future success. Lists of key competencies present only one part of the standards applied to the evaluation of candidates for managerial positions. Some workers who were included in high-potential pools and became successors to their former bosses, reveal that in each new position they are forced to swim or drown. Therefore, they argue that the best way to go forward is **to actively search for ambitious challenges and to accept honest feedback** and not to wait for inclusion in the corporate management development program and expect that this will bring turn-round.

## CONCLUSION

The current policy and practice in the area of management career development cope with changes in motivation of the young generation of managers. It would be an exaggeration to say that all high-potential "stars" are able to utilize opportunities offered by the new career development model. However, it is obvious that even if national culture influences have a strong impact, the young and capable managers change their career orientation and internationalize its value. Instead of loyalty to the only one organization and a perspective to climb up the bureaucratic ladder they favor the idea of individual career, perhaps pacing between a number of different organizations with a flat structure and tracking a horizontal career.

The business world celebrates risk taking and its effects for courageous individuals. However, the world of work in continental Europe remains conservative and emphasizes the social responsibility of the state. It seems that a number of employers are slowly giving up their traditional personnel practice based on long-term individual labor relations. It is also evident that workers who frequently change jobs,

look like less trustworthy and loyal and they are viewed as risky for investment into their personal development.

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