

New economy, new deal, new career decisions

The world of work has changed and employees — not their bosses or managers — have become the masters of their own career development. The forces that have shaped our current economy — speed of communication, people working more with their minds than their hands, changing demographics and needs of the work force, volatile business cycles — have redefined the unspoken 'deal' employees have with their employers. The focus is no longer *employment* but *employability*.

Old deal — Work for me and I will give you job security and take you into retirement.

New deal — Work for me and I will give you a satisfying job, plus a steady diet of development opportunities so that if, for whatever reason, you can no longer provide the skills I require or I can no longer offer you sufficient employment challenges, you have the enhanced employability to go elsewhere.

With today's work force watching its back and preparing for any contingency, career development is right there on the negotiating table with compensation and benefits. It's part of how employers attract the best candidates and it's part of how they retain their best and brightest once they hire them.

So whose responsibility is it?

Recognising the conditions of the current work environment, many of today's leading and more progressive employers are offering their employees the kind of career development opportunities that put responsibility for job satisfaction, performance and career management firmly in employees' hands.

In a recent global survey of nearly 1,000 executives and professionals, most respondents indicated that they don't expect their employer to provide a clear career path. Yet less than half knew what they wanted to do next.

There are practical reasons that this is the right approach. First, in many organisations, the spans of control are too large for managers to guide each and every employee's career path. Second, feeling empowered to manage their own careers gives employees confidence and control in times of change and makes them more satisfied and productive overall.

It is the responsibility of the organisation to provide employees with the tools, the open environment and the opportunities for assessing and developing their skills. It is the individual employee's responsibility to then manage his or her own career.

Career Decision Making™ can lead to more informed choices

One common factor among people with successful careers is that they made smart choices. But making a smart choice involves getting a lot of information. *Career Decision Making* equips employees to get information around four key steps:

- Knowing yourself (values and interests, strengths and limitations)
- Knowing what career opportunities exist
- Knowing how to evaluate opportunities to determine what's best for you
- Knowing how to pursue opportunities to get what you want.

The CDM Process

CDM can stand alone or run with MPG® and it's a two-fold process. First, participants complete a prework assignment in which they identify their values, assess their strengths and limitations and obtain feedback from others. Second, they attend a half- or one-day workshop where they:

- Clarify personal values and satisfaction in their current job
- Evaluate current opportunities inside and outside the organisation
- Match their preferences and skills profile with the characteristics and skill requirements of different opportunities
- Create structured 'informational interview' and job interview plans, using peers as resources
- Create a career development action plan.

Career Decision Making tool

During the workshop, participants are introduced to a tool — the Career Decision Worksheet — that helps them evaluate various career options for fit with their preferences and skills. They can also use the tool to regularly update their career action plans.

"This process has given me a framework for thinking about my next steps for achieving maximum contribution and satisfaction in my current job and my next position."

CDM Participant

Outcomes

CDM gives employees 'career resiliency' by helping them maintain a focus on what's important to them in a job, plus future job opportunities (internal and external) and career options. Besides proving its honest desire to treat people with respect in times of change and transition, the organisation benefits through:

- Improved employee job satisfaction and performance resulting from better individual career decisions; these boost employee retention
- Decreased pressure on managers to handle career development for their direct reports
- Maximisation of the organisation's existing career planning resources
- Retention of the best and brightest through attention to their development needs; lower unwanted turnover

- Better fit between applicants and internally available jobs, reinforcing the philosophy of getting the 'best person for the job'
- The personal clarity employees need to make the most of succession planning and high-potential opportunities.

Easily tailored to your specific needs

CDM can be customised to reflect your organisation's career/job posting system, competencies and job profiles, mentoring and coaching programmes and other major organisational change initiatives.

BlessingWhite's most recent State of the Career report revealed that nearly half of employees will look for interesting or meaningful work in their next job. Not a promotion. Not large financial rewards. Work that 'works' for them. *Career Decision Making* can help your employees achieve their aspirations while doing the work that makes a difference for *your organisation*.