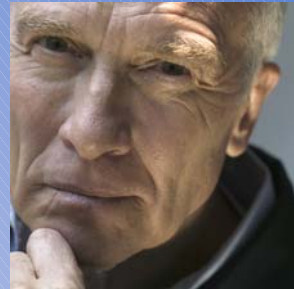


Individual Issues And Career Development



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In addition to personal characteristics that influence the nature of career plans, there are a number of organizational and societal issues that might also have an impact on planning. We've summarized some of these below.

Career Plateaus

Members of the baby-boomer generation have already reached midlife, and many large employers are downsizing, flattening their organizational structures. As a consequence, increasing numbers of employees are finding themselves at career plateaus. If plateauing is a possibility in your organization, you and your employees might have to make preparatory adjustments by developing alternative plans. Unfortunately, these changes suggest that careers are going to be less predictable than in previous decades.



Dual-Career Couples



As we are all well aware, many more women have joined the workforce in the past few decades, increasing the number of dual-career couples. It is important that you and your employees remain aware of issues that might affect career planning and progression. Periodic developmental reviews should touch on the issue. Some companies have reported successful resolution of career issues by involving the spouse in the process, even though they might not be employed by the company. This is not the norm, but there might be situations in which spousal involvement is appropriate. Issues often revolve around relocation (purchasing a new home, getting the children into a new school system, the quality of the local school system, availability of medical care, etc.). Check with your HR department to see what support services are available (payment of agency fees, reimbursement for job-seeking trips, local job bank access, and so on).

Generational Differences



Different generations of employees are likely to have different career concerns based (at least in part) on differing value and belief systems. Generational differences do not always apply to all generation members, but there are a number of common traits that should be considered. One typology that is generally agreed upon contains the following generational groups: Millennials or Generation Y'ers (2004, they are age 1-early 20s), Generation X'ers (2004, they are in their mid-20s to early 40s), Baby Boomers (2004, they are in their mid-40s to late 50s), and Traditionalists or

Veterans (in 2004, they are in their late 50s to early 80s) so-called. Millennials are often concerned about challenging work, global issues, and health issues. They tend to accept nontraditional family structures, change, and additional training in order to retain and enhance their employability. They usually have high expectations of the organization. Generation X'ers tend to be independent thinkers, entrepreneurial, team players, and flexible, and are comfortable with new technologies. On the down side, Gen X'ers tend to bring personal concerns into the workplace, don't want to hold people accountable, and have a hard time accepting authority. Baby Boomers tend to be idealistic and competitive, and question authority. Traditionalists tend to be patriotic, loyal, and fiscally conservative, and have faith in institutions. They are also concerned about having their experience valued, and have more respect for previous generations.

Psychological Issues

There are a number of internal issues that plague all of us and affect our work performance and interpersonal relationships. As a manager, it is part of your responsibility to point your employees in an appropriate direction for help with psychological issues should they affect work performance. Many organizations offer Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) that provide confidential individual and family counseling. If your organization does not, direct employees to private or governmental sources. Talk with your HR department to get further information.



Increasing people's self-awareness and self-understanding is important if you are to truly help your employees create more-effective career and developmental plans. Work life and developmental efforts are affected if individuals feel that everyone else is more successful than they are, or if they experience burnout, a midlife crisis and a lack of motivation whose source cannot be readily identified, a lack of commitment and focus, or a fear of failure. Once again, it is not your responsibility to fix these problems, but you might be able to point your employees in the right direction.