Organizational Career Development in the Rochester Area

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Abstract
This research primarily examines the current state of the practice of organizational career development in companies in Rochester, New York. Reviewing literature indicates a need for more prevalent and comprehensive organizational career development system in the future. Organizational career development (OCD) and human resource development (HRD) practitioners were surveyed. Results were obtained from 45 practitioners culminating in data regarding the prevalence of OCD systems in the Rochester area along with information regarding which employees receive development, what programs are offered, the evaluation methods and perceived effectiveness of OCD efforts.

Document Type
Thesis

Degree Name
MS in Human Resource Development

Department
Education

First Supervisor
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Subject Categories
Education

This thesis is available at Fisher Digital Publications: http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_ETD_masters/147
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Susan D. Johnson

St. John Fisher College

April 26, 2003
Abstract

This research primarily examines the current state of the practice of organizational career development in companies in Rochester, New York. Reviewing literature indicates a need for more prevalent and comprehensive organizational career development system in the future. Organizational career development (OCD) and human resource development (HRD) practitioners were surveyed. Results were obtained from 45 practitioners culminating in data regarding the prevalence of OCD systems in the Rochester area along with information regarding which employees receive development, what programs are offered, the evaluation methods and perceived effectiveness of OCD efforts.
Acknowledgements

I would to thank first my fiancé, Ralph Galletto, for supporting me in this effort. Without his encouragement and support, this project might have been very difficult to complete. Next I thank my children, Brooke and Eric Johnson for cheering me on and using my career and academic endeavors to influence them to explore their future career goals. I would like to thank Wendy Dresser-Recktenwald who introduced me to the history and theory of career development. I’ve always had a deep interest in career development, however Ms. Dresser-Recktenwald’ course influenced me to research the field for this research project. Extra thanks go to Dr. Marilynn Butler for originally guiding me through this process. I always remember her advice and the extra support during the difficult times. I would to thank Dr. Seth Silver for his expertise in coursework and throughout this research project. To Dr. Timothy Franz, last to be acknowledged yet certainly not the least, I thank for his support and encouragement through an interesting Group Dynamics HRD course as well as his undying patience throughout this journey of research.
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Introduction

Purpose Statement

This research primarily examines the current state of the practice of organizational career development in companies in Rochester, New York. More specifically, this paper investigates what programs are implemented, which employees receive development, what programs are offered, and identifies how programs are evaluated. In addition, attitudes about organizational career development (OCD) and perceived effectiveness are studied. Finally, best practices from OCD and Human Resource Development (HRD) practitioners are examined.

A unique opportunity is offered in this research project to analyze current data from companies in the Rochester, New York area. Chapter 1 will address the purpose of this research, its importance, potential benefits, a brief description of the survey and the objectives in this project. An extensive literature review is conducted in Chapter 2 to connect the literature with the objectives of this study. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology used with this study, including the target population, sampling technique, and data collection methods. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research and descriptively analyzes the data. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses conclusions to the survey research and offers recommendations for future studies.
CHAPTER 1
Purpose of the Research

Problem Statement

The development of employees is crucial to successful business strategies as organizations move into the 21st century (Megatrends, 1999). As a result employees in organizations across the country are hearing the phrase, “People are our most important asset” (Pfeffer & Veiga, 1999). Employees in turn are indicating the desire to be provided resources to further develop in their jobs and ultimately, their careers. Now more than ever, organizations in the Rochester, New York area need to implement and maintain organizational career development programs to meet both the critical needs of their organizations and their employees (Herr, 2001).

Introduction

Chapter 1 will address the goals of this research project, its importance in the field of organization career development, statement of interest in this field and a brief description of the background of the survey instrument.

Goal of the Research

The purpose of this research project is to examine the current state of the practice of career development in organizations in the Rochester, New York area. More specifically, it is hoped that this research will identify how many organizations possess organizational career development programs, what types of programs they use and whether or not they are effective. Data from this survey may reveal current best practices in OCD and show what successful OCD programs look like. Other questions to be answered include the following: Are there any barriers that hinder the
implementation or maintenance of these systems? Do companies in the Rochester area have plans to continue and expand their programs? Finally, what do practitioners believe are the current attitudes towards career development systems in their organizations? Identifying the prevalence of OCD programs or systems in organizations is of significance if the Rochester area is to be successful in either maintaining market share or sustaining business in today’s ever-changing, competitive and global marketplace (Simonsen, 1997, p. 13).

Importance of OCD

In today’s changing business environment, individuals need to constantly acquire and update transferable and marketable skills (Kummerow, 2000, p. 51). The founder of adult learning, Eduard Lindeman, may have phrased this most articulately when he wrote, “Psychologically speaking, intelligence is the ability to learn, the capacity to solve problems, to utilize knowledge in evolving, continuing accommodations to changing environments” (Lindeman, 1961, p. 17). In order to meet both the strategic and competitive needs of the organization and to address the desires of their employees, many companies are implementing or improving existing career development programs.

In the last decade, employees have been experiencing a shift from paternalistic to self-directed career and employee development. Gone are the days when employees remained with one company while they progressed on a linear path up the career ladder until retirement. Far-reaching economic and societal changes are transforming the development needs of people and organizations. Global competition has prompted the need for organizations to function at high productivity and deliver superb quality. Advanced technology has increased the rate of change in almost all
aspects of business. All of these changes are resulting in endless company mergers, restructuring, downsizing and, ultimately, fragmented careers. As an alternate to job security, many organizations are offering opportunities for employee development and continuous learning in return for high performance and productivity during an employee’s tenure. Many people will be working for small or medium-size employers, or become self-employed (Gutteridge, Leibowitz, & Shore, 1993). Therefore, career development will be increasingly needed to assist with development and planning for the benefit of employees as well as organizations (Herr, 2001). Examining and analyzing data regarding what programs or systems are currently being utilized in the Rochester area and what combination of programs function most effectively was a significant factor in choosing this area of study. This research includes administering a survey to obtain current and relevant data.

Survey Description

The survey instrument employed to obtain data for this paper is an existing survey entitled the ASTD Survey of Organizational Career Development Practices by Gutteridge, Leibowitz and Shore (1993). The survey was initially created and administered both internationally and in the continental United States. The 1993 Gutteridge study used a broad based sample, which focused on large organizations. The survey consisted of 20 questions containing quantitative and qualitative questions. (Appendix A). For the purposes of this study, the survey was administered using a sample of 107 members of the Genesee Valley Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management organization (GVC/SHRM). This list consists of both Human Resource and Career Development practitioner in the city Rochester, New York and
suburbs encompassing the area. The sample is not limited to large organizations as it includes any companies in the Rochester area from the GVC/SHRM membership list that chose to participate.

In this chapter, the purpose and the importance of the study has been outlined along with a brief description of the survey that was used to obtain data. The next chapter presents a review of literature on the theoretical origins of career development, a brief history of the evolution of career development and a discussion on recent literature as it relates to organizational career development.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

In today’s business climate, organizations are operating at tremendous speed and changing at an unprecedented rate. Advances in technology and increased global competition have caused companies to function in a constant state of flux. Companies need to retain employees who possess knowledge of their organization and its products. Most importantly, studies have shown that the way in which an organization manages its employees is ultimately reflected in their financial success. Employees who are valued are more committed to their jobs and their employer. (Pfeffer & Veiga, 1999). In turn, downsizing, restructuring and mergers or acquisitions have limited upward career opportunities at many organizations. Employees need to continually reinvent themselves to keep their skills up-to-date or change their careers to find new employment. For many, the path to success has changed from a linear vertical climb to fragmented, horizontal movement. In order to fully understand the evolution of career development to organizational career development it is helpful to review the beginnings of this field of study.

Organizational Career Development Defined

Prior to the 1960s, the term career development was rarely used. When it was used, it usually referred to an individual’s career development. Since that time, the practice of career development has changed and become broader in scope. It has evolved into the practice called, organizational career development (OCD). (Kummerow, 2000). The term organizational career development is defined as “a
planned effort to link the individual's career needs with the organization's workforce requirements. It is a process for helping individuals plan their careers in concert with an organization's business requirements and strategic direction" (Gutteridge et al., 1993, p. 1). Three key concepts help to define OCD. First, development is not a one-time event but rather an ongoing practice. Integrating career development with human resource policies, procedures and structures is the most advantageous approach because it adds a strategic element to this process. Second, organizational career development is not a stand-alone practice. The employee, managers or supervisors and the organization as well play explicit roles in career development. The employee is responsible for initiating self-assessment, chartering a plan within the scope of the organization's future plans and acting to bring their goals into fruition. Managers assist the employee in understanding the requirements or desires of the company as well as offering guidance and support. Providing the resources, tools and structures to enable the process is the organization's responsibility. The final, central assumption that helps to clarify the meaning of OCD is the concept of a systems approach (Gutteridge, et al., p. 3). Each element of the system can function independently, however, these elements are more effective when working in concert with one another. Career development systems may consist of diverse activities such as workshops, manager-employee career discussions, resource centers, career planning software, and succession planning. Other potential programs in an OCD system can be tuition reimbursement, job postings, job matching, job rotation, self-assessments, individual career development counseling, mentoring programs, and career computer software programs (Gutteridge, et al., p. 4).
The practice of employee training should not be confused as OCD. Employee training may be used as practice within an organizational career development system. Training focuses on an employee’s current job development and OCD focuses on both current and future career development aligned with an organization’s strategic business objectives. Corporate employee training classes are normally skills training for a particular job. (Ferguson, 2002). Training is defined as, “...the field of activity that focuses on identifying, assuring, and helping develop, through planned learning, the key competencies that enable individuals to perform current or future jobs. Training’s primary emphasis is on individuals in their work roles. The primary training intervention is planned individual learning” (Rothwell, 1996, p. 26).

Theory

Theories help us to understand past or present events and provide direction. Therefore, it’s important to examine the theories behind career development with a brief review of theories and the theorists that were most influential in this field. Many events and theorists have activated and shaped the current practices in career development. The following is a brief chronicle of theoretical events that have been instrumental in bringing career development practices into the workplace. There are two categories of theories in career development; structural theories and developmental theories. Structural theories focus on individual characteristics and occupational tasks. On the other hand developmental theories focus on human development across the life span.

Parsons. Frank Parsons is a structural theorist who is considered the founder of vocational guidance. Vocational refers to the responses an individual makes in choosing and adapting to an occupation. Parsons developed the oldest theoretical
approach to vocational choice in 1909 when he introduced the trait and factor theory. This theory involves matching an individual's abilities and interests with the requirements of a specific occupation or vocational opportunities (Brown & Brook, 2002, p. 150). Parsons believed that “if people actively engage in choosing their vocations rather than allowing chance to operate in the hunt for a job, they are more satisfied with their careers, employers' costs decrease, and employees' efficiency increases.” (Brown, et al., 2002, p. 4.) He generated the vocational guidance movement in response to the changing role of work in the 1900s. Thousands of immigrants were streaming into the United States only to face dim working conditions and poor economic opportunities (Herr, 2001). Parsons founded a college in 1905 called, the Breadwinner's College in 1905 and opened the first organization to offer vocational guidance and counseling, which was called The Vocation Bureau and was located in Boston, Massachusetts (Herr, 2001). By the mid-nineteenth century, the economy was shifting from an agricultural-based economy to an economy based in industrial work. Parson's advice to keep up to date on industry-related information was now useful. This is still good advice for workers in the 21st century (DeBell, 2001).

Super. Another influential theorist was Donald Super. Super focused on one's career development over time (Brown, et al., 2002, p. 150). Super recognized the changes that people go through as they mature. He believed career patterns are determined by socioeconomic factors, mental and physical abilities, personal characteristics and the opportunities to which persons are exposed. Specifically, people seek career satisfaction through work roles in which they can express themselves and implement and develop their self-concepts. Super's life-span theory is manifested in the
successful accomplishment of age and stage developmental tasks across life span. In brief these development stages include growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and decline. Although Super originally presented the stages and tasks in a sequential manner, he later added that cycle and recycle throughout our life span as we adapt to changes in ourselves as well as to the trends in the work place. He also looked at different roles people play in their lifetimes and the relative importance we give to those roles at different times in our lives.

*Holland.* Other theorists emerged and helped to shape what is now called career development. In 1959 the developmental theorist John Holland created the person-environment fit theories. Holland believed individuals found job satisfaction in work environments when they aligned with their personality. Holland based his theory of personality types on the assumptions that people tend to choose a career that is reflective of their personality. The closer the match of personality to job, the greater satisfaction the employee derived from it (Brown, et al., 2002, p. 5).

*Krumboltz.* In contrast to Holland’s personality typecasting and environmental fit theories, J. Krumboltz believed that much growth takes place as a result of learning and imitating the behavior of others. Krumboltz developed a theory of career decision-making and development based on our social learning, or environmental conditions and events, genetic influences and learning experiences. In his social learning theory, Krumboltz purported that people choose their careers based on what they have learned. Certain behaviors are modeled, rewarded and reinforced (Brown, et al., 2002, p. 10).
Summary

This brief depiction of theorists is by no means all-inclusive. Many more theorists presented theories to that explored and attempted to explain career development. Each of the theories discussed offers different approaches to career development. The concept of career development, therefore, is defined as, “the implementation of a series of career decisions that constitute an integrated career path throughout the lifespan” (Brown, et al., 2002, p. 316). Just as theories are used to help explain developments, reviewing past and present events also helps to determine how career development is practiced in organizations today.

Changing Views of Career Development

Past views. Before and during the early 1950s, career development in organizations existed as a psychological contract between the employer and the employees. The employee was entitled to lifetime employment at an organization and the employer, in turn, was responsible for creating a linear career path to guide the employee through over time (Sullivan, 1999). Therefore, the focus was on the individual. The emphasis on individualism was evident in the 1960s as people were socially encouraged to express unconventional behaviors and thinking. This emphasis on individual focus on career development and planning, however, changed in the 1970s (Herr, 2001).

1970s. The early 1970s proved to be an important year for career education. In 1971 the U.S. Office of Education introduced career education as a priority. The Career Guidance and Counseling Act of 1975 was introduced into Congress. Computer-assisted career guidance systems began to emerge. The later part of the decade grew
into a less positive period for employees as companies began reengineering and restructuring their workforces. Large, multi-layered organized structures were being forced to condense and flatten due to economic and environmental factors. Rapid technological advances and global competition could no longer support structurally weighted organizations. The psychological contract of the paternalistic organization and the entitled employee was changing (Herr, 2001).

1980s. During the 1980s, several political changes occurred. The Cold War ended, apartheid ended in South Africa, many nations formerly under Communism moved to market economics; the global economy became a reality; the practice of career development became a worldwide phenomenon and women and minorities began to emerge as major sources of new entrants to the workforce. In 1984, the credentialing of nationally certified career counselors (NCCC) was initiated. Toward the end of the 1980s and into the early 1990s, the Internet grew rapidly incorporating job search and career counseling Internet sites. New ethical questions emerged concerning the preparation for and use of the Internet by career counselors and, later, appropriate use by employees at work as well (Herr & Shahnasarian, 2001)

1990’s. Employees in the 1990s experienced yet more downsizing resulting from restructuring and company mergers. In fact, literature claims that OCD actually started from retraining projects that were utilized to help retain some employees who were being displaced rather than subjecting them to downsizing. These retraining projects enabled the employee to develop the necessary transferable or marketable skills to successfully shift to new employment. This was an option offered by the more humane organizations. (Finney, 1995). The majority of downsized employees were considered
responsible for their own re-employment and future career development. Individuals lost trust in organizations in which they worked, or once worked. Instead of job security and career advancement, employees shifted from employment for merely the value of security to offering their highest performance in return for continuous learning to ensure marketability or employability at other firms. In turn, organizations utilized employees' high performance and updated skills or competencies as a competitive advantage. Career Development has changed and materialized as a competitive strategy for improving organizational effectiveness through a well-developed and career resilient workforce (Sullivan, 1999).

Current State of Career Development

Changing workforce

As companies continue to downsize, reorganize and merge with other companies, managers and employees alike are realizing that change is constant. Demographics in the United States are shifting and changing the landscape of its workforce. One of the most significant changes in the workforce today is that employees are aging. According to the U.S. Bureau of Census, the average age of workers in the 1980s was 34 years of age. The median age of the workforce is predicted to reach 40 years of age by 2005. By 2030, one-fifth of the labor force will be over 65 years of age. It is also important to consider that there are currently 76 million Baby Boomers as opposed to 66 million people in the generation that immediately follows them, the GenXers. The GenXers will be replacing the Baby Boomers in the workforce when they retire. These statistics imply a serious labor shortage by the year 2030 as one-fifth of the labor force will be over 65 years of age (U.S. Bureau of Labor
Statistics as cited in Noe, 1999, p.18). The GenXers will need to be prepared to take over the Baby Boomer generation’s positions when they retire. This is where the need for succession planning comes in; to ensure that the GenXers, although smaller in number, can competently and adequately replace the Baby Boomer workforce.

*Succession Planning*

Succession planning is a process by which an organization ensures the continuity of its leadership into the future. It is a critical aspect of business strategy yet planning for succession often goes neglected or takes place when it is too late. (Cope, 1998). As a result, organizations may find themselves in the midst of a crisis or without clear leadership for the future. Organizations that promote self-development help to promote succession planning naturally. Promoting self-development puts the responsibility of career development with the employee and, therefore, de-emphasizes management driven career development and planning. This is reflected in the following statement by Simonsen (1997):

“In a development culture, strategic objectives of the company lead to assessment of talent to determine future staffing needs and bench strength. The assessment may be by 360-degree instrument with feedback to the participants on which to base development planning. Candidates for key positions are still identified, but the strategic objectives are communicated to everyone, and with the expectation that everyone would have a development plan, so there isn’t an “us-versus-them” environment set up. Succession candidates’ goals and needs (such as mobility) are incorporated
into the succession planning process, and their development plans are
based on competencies needing development." (p. 102)

Another significant change in the American workforce is the mobility of its
workers. Many of our grandparents or parents worked at only one company their entire
lives or began working at an organization right after college. Here they built their
careers by following the corporate ladder at one company and subsequently retired from
that organization. Employees today typically experience a much shorter tenure at one
company and a less stabilized work environment within an organization. In 1996 more
than half of U.S. workers had been with their current employer for four years or less.
During this short time period, employees may rotate among an assortment of project
teams, departments or divisions. The challenge for these mobile employees is to
continually learn new skills and view each position as a piece of a broader, ongoing
career path (Simonsen, 19977, p. 35).

Fewer promotions

Due to the phenomenon of more lateral movement, career ladders have nearly
dissipated. In fact, “only about one third of all careers in the United States are pursued
as traditional or vertical careers in corporations, and this number is decreasing all the
time” (Caudron, 1995). Employees must now manage their own careers and the need
for development for lateral career movement has increased due to increased flat
organizational structuring. Therefore, OCD can be used as an alternative to
promotions.

It is not surprising, therefore, the desire that employees are expressing for
access to career development and planning in the workplace. They need and want to
keep learning. They seek what is necessary to achieve continuous professional satisfaction, growth, and effectiveness. Olesen (1999) states “employees want training.” A 1999 survey by the Society for Human Resource Management which demonstrates that as many as 94 percent of American companies provide professional development while 85 percent of employers offer some educational reimbursement. Employees view career development programs as a benefit. Up to 41 percent of employees will eventually leave their employer if they do not provide some type of training. This amounts to a financial loss for the organization. For a company with 1,000 employees or more, this can mean employee turnover costing up to $14.5 million a year (Olesen, 1999). This is significant because both professional development and educational assistance are considered elements of career development programs. For employees, the lack of career resources can cause frustration, feelings of being undervalued, and difficulty in adjusting to employment changes as a result of downsizing, mergers, globalization and other changes in business (Noe, 1999). Therefore, the forces driving organizational career development constitutes not only career responsibilities for the employee but also for the organization to ensure their workforce possesses the skills and knowledge necessary to transcend from to internal assignments as well as building marketable skills (Kummerow, 2000, p. 50.)

Organizational Forces

Due to these trends of the changing composition of the workforce, the globalization of business and continuing advances in technology, organizational career development has emerged as a competitive strategy for enhancing organizational effectiveness through creating a well-developed workforce (Kummerow, 2000, p. 34).
In 1979 a survey of the Human Resources Division of the American Management Association (Walker & Gutteridge, 1979) revealed, “many companies view career planning practices as a desirable and necessary component of human resource management. Most companies provide the basic elements: career counseling and communications. Workshops, workbooks, and special career planning techniques are relatively recent but appear to be growing...” (Gutteridge, et. al., 1993, p. 29) The 1993 study of OCD practices by Gutteridge, et. al., 1993) revealed “widespread support” for career planning, but also a “wide gap” between actual and ideal practices. In the study it was discovered that organizational leaders perceive significant results due to OCD efforts. These results included empowered employees, improved human resource planning and selection, increased employee retention, and the enhancement of employees’ skills and morale. More benefits can be found in literature by P. Simonsen, 1997):

Reduced turnover of highly skilled or experienced employees
Revision of outdated expectations for career opportunities after flattening or reorganizing
Motivated employees who take responsibility for their own development and continue to add value
Understanding by employees of the urgency to keep skills current
Employee and manager buy-in to the need for continuous learning
Increased "bench strength" (based on increased retention of experienced employees) for succession planning
Ensured equal opportunity for minorities and women
Managers who are convinced of the importance of developing employees
A competitive organization through productive and motivated employees
Flexible employees who can move out of functional "silos" or narrowly defined roles
Matching of realities in the organization to recruiting practices
International flexibility
Employees with meaningful development plans (p. 66).

Having identified these benefits, it appears that organizations have much to gain by either executing or continuing development programs.

Despite the numerous benefits realized from having career development programs, organizations often run into barriers when they attempt to start the programs or as they attempt to retain these systems. In the 1993 OCD study by Gutteridge, Leibowitz & Shore, practitioners encountered at least three main barriers when implementing career development programs. The first was lack of support from top management. This is an obstacle because formalized career programs are not likely to be successful if they do not receive support from management (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1994). The second barrier was the lack of financial resources. Many organizations are not budgeting funds toward creating or maintaining career development programs or systems. Finally, Human Resource departments lacked the internal talent or innate interest to develop these programs. These barriers created a gap between what organizational career development specialists implemented for employee development versus what they believed were the most current and effective practices. (Gutteridge,
et. al, 1993). While barriers create obstacles to implementing and maintaining OCD systems, much can be learned from successful programs.

Best Practices in OCD

Career development has been in existence since the early 1990s, however, organizational career development is still a fairly new concept and there is much to learn from those who have managed to launch and maintain these programs. The 1993 OCD study by Gutteridge, Leibowitz and Shore was conducted on both a national and international basis identifying several commons practices used by successful organizations practicing OCD. They found nine practices that led organizations to having strong OCD programs. These researchers contend that the most significant commonality among the nine practices is that they adhered their practices to a systems thinking approach. (Gutteridge, et al., 1993, p. 189.) Systems thinking was defined by Peter Senge, as "a of thinking about, and a language for describing and understanding, the forces and interrelationships that shape the behavior of systems. This discipline helps us see how to change systems more effectively, and to act more in tune with the larger processes of the natural and economic world. (Senge, 1994, p. 6). An organization that uses a systems approach devises career development activities based on a common language and assumptions and integrates this system with other HR activities and overall business goals. The following practices are considered to be best practices in organizational career development that operate on a systems approach and integrate the needs of the organization and the employees. These practices were obtained from data collected from the 1993 Gutteridge OCD survey.
Best Practices 1993

1. Link development to business strategy. In order to be efficient, a career development system should be fashioned in response to the business needs of the organization.

2. Align employee and organizational needs. To create a situation where both entities win, employees need to plan their careers in connection with the organization's overarching strategic plan or business strategy. This process ensures that the individual's career plan is in alignment with the organization's future goals.

3. Build systems and linkages. This approach entails having a long-term, global vision of the career development system. Beginning with a vision of how the company will operate differently after implementing OCD programs involves asking how the career development interventions will tie together and how they will interact with other HR systems and activities.

4. Use a variety of tools and approaches. Not all adults learn using the same techniques or processes. Eduard Lindeman who is considered the father of andragogy supports this in research. Adult learners create their own strategies and resources to accomplish their learning goals. (Lindeman, pg. 125).

5. Create a corporate infrastructure, but implement career development systems individual business units or divisions. It is imperative that organizations implementing OCD systems create and follow a guiding philosophy to be utilized in every business division. When systems develop locally and voluntarily, they fit
better with specific business needs and thus gain more buy-in, ownership, and commitment.

6. Ensure line manager participation. Because managers are a critical link in a career development system, it is essential to get their buy-in and participation early in the process. If managers are to develop their employees, they in turn need to be developed so they can perform their role effectively.

7. Hold line managers accountable. Mechanisms, which ensure accountability, have to be built in so that the effects are sustained over time. In essence, managerial career support needs to be made a part of the managers' performance appraisals.

8. Evaluate and continuously improve the career development effort. OCD programs need to be continuously evaluated, revised, and refined. For example, programs such as employee surveys and workshops can be audited to record progress and the overall effects of its career development system.

9. Maintain high visibility and ongoing communication of career development. To incorporate OCD into the company culture, it needs to be a highly visible and documented. In other words, the program needs to be recognized and reinforced by senior management (Gutteridge, pg 189).

These practices demonstrate the use of a systems approach wherein career development is integrated with other organizational systems and takes into consideration strategic business needs. Using a system approach helps to ensure that
career development is less targeted to a special population within the organization and more likely to be broad-based (Simonsen, 1997, p.27).

OCD in the 21st Century

Potential Benefits

The practice of career development is likely to be more comprehensive in scope in the twenty-first century. Herr (2001) also states that career development will be “more evenly distributed and accessible, and more indigenous as nations increasingly identify how the practice of career development will best meet their needs.” Career development professionals will be increasingly expected to assist individuals in identifying and learning the skills, which can help employees to manage their careers more effectively. In order to prepare for the changes in the twenty-first century, it seems imperative that human resource and career development practitioners find ways to effectively implement and maintain career development systems. In order to do this, they will need to reduce any gaps that may exist between ideal and actual practices in organizational career development.

In this chapter discussed how career development has grown, changed and taken shape over the last several decades. Career development began as vocational guidance to assist the laborers and immigrant workers in the industrial era. Frank Parsons pioneered vocational guidance into the field that is now called career development. Numerous other theorists offered different approaches to career development to help explain and bring more depth to the field. Holland, Super, and Krumboltz were significant contributors to the field. Over the last several decades vocational guidance has been molded by social, economic and demographic changes
and culminated into a broader spectrum now called career development. The field continues to grow and respond to current challenges such as increased competition from globalization, advanced technology and demographic changes. The next chapter focuses on the methods used for the research employed to investigate the current state of career development practices in organizations in the Rochester area.
Chapter 3
Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will discuss how the target population and the sample for this study were chosen. Also discussed in this chapter is the survey research instrument used to collect the data and the method that was utilized. Maintaining the dignity and confidentiality of respondents is also a concern. Confidentiality was promised and, therefore, should be provided. An increase in response rates may occur in reaction to the assurance of confidentiality. The importance of confidentiality is reinforced in this chapter, as it relates to this research.

Possible limitations or assumptions were considered before administering the survey. This section will also discuss possible limitations with a brief explanation of concerns.

Target Population

The target population consisted of Organizational Career Development or Human Resource practitioners in the Rochester area. The participant selection process included any representatives of profit or non-profit organizations. Excluded from the selection process were any participants that were obviously identified as self-employed consultants as this did not fit the target population profile. Also excluded were duplicate participants that were listed as being employed at the same organizations. Finally, I excluded members who did not possess electronic communication access. In simpler terms, an electronic address was not provided by the GVC/SHRM member on their data list.
Sample

The initial sample was derived from a list of the 500 members of the Genesee Valley Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management organization (GVC/SHRM) list. Not all of the GVC/SHRM members qualified as participants due to several barriers. First, those members who did not have email did were not able to participate because this survey was administered as a web-based only option. This eliminated 125 GVC/SHRM members from taking the survey. Secondly, several emailed surveys came back as undeliverable. Attempts were made to resend the survey to all subjects that were sent back as undeliverable. The total loss for undeliverable electronic access was 49 potential participants or GVC/SHRM members. Finally, I eliminated any members who worked at companies that I previously sent a survey to which totaled 55 duplicate employees of organizations. This action was taken to avoid duplicate response from the same organization. This usually occurred with the major employers of the Rochester region such as Eastman Kodak Company, Xerox, The Document Company, Bausch and Lomb and Wegmans Food Markets. Therefore, of the original GVC/SHRM listing of 500 members, I was able to send the survey to 107 participants. Forty-five survey responses received resulting in a 42% response rate.

Data Collection

Sampling technique. Non-probability sampling was used. Because the data are to be used as part of a research thesis paper and not to disseminate or advocate, a non-probability convenience sampling method was used. Non-probability sampling is appropriate when choosing a select portion of the population. In this case, the survey was geared toward Career Development or Human Resource professionals practicing in
organizations in the Rochester area. Some participants did not have a chance to participate due to barriers such as lack of electronic mail addresses, employees working at the same companies or those individuals working as self-employed consultants.

Survey instrument. The survey instrument is an existing survey entitled the ASTD Survey of Organizational Career Development Practices by Gutteridge, Leibowitz & Shore, 1993. Gutteridge used a broad-based sample and focused on large organizations. The survey consists of 20 questions consisting of quantitative, qualitative and scaled survey questions. (Appendix A). Survey research and an examination of extant data were employed. The main purpose of the survey was to obtain data on the state and prevalence of OCD in Rochester, New York. A secondary purpose was to obtain data to identify obstacles to implementing or maintaining these programs.

Survey Administration

The survey was created and used as a self administered, web-based survey. Web-based surveys offer the respondent the ease of access as well as convenience in sending back responses. Survey participants were sent an introductory letter via electronic message to their email address. (Appendix B). The introductory letter indicated a website address where the survey could be accessed. This address is identified as http://ocdsurvey.webpath.net. When completed, the participant clicked the submit button and the survey was sent to the researchers electronic address of www.sdj1228@aol.com. The completed surveys were delivered without the respondents return address. This reinforced and ensured confidentiality for survey participants. The website was used solely for survey respondents to the organizational career development survey. Participants were asked to take the survey only one time.
Follow-up reminder electronic messages were sent to the sample group approximately one week after the initial survey announcement was mailed as a prompt to generate maximum participation. In the event that an electronic message was sent back as undeliverable, the address was reviewed for detail and resent if possible.

Confidentiality

Of primary concern is the privacy of survey participants and any information received in connection with this research project. Using a separate website to receive responses solidified confidentiality. Responses are received at the site with no record or indication of whom or which organization the response was received. Only general demographic information such as type of business, number of employees, and approximate annual sales or budget are included in the responses. This demographic information is needed for analysis purposes only and cannot identify a given organization.

The selected survey population was sent an introductory letter identifying the student researcher and contact information such as phone number and electronic address location. This was provided for questions and concerns and potential participants were given the assurance that the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects had approved the administration of the survey. The potential survey respondents were also assured that any information received would be kept confidential. Data from individual survey results will not be released at any time. Upon completion of this research, data will be destroyed.
Research Limitations

Before implementing and administering the survey several possible limitations were realized. These factors include response rates that could influence the quality of the survey and its results. The following are the limitations of this survey.

Limitation 1. The first limitation of this research is non-probability sampling. Using non-probability sampling does not guarantee that all eligible groups or participants are included that can possibly be identified or reached. Since this is an electronically accessed web survey, potential participants who do not have access to a personal computer will not have access to the survey. Therefore, this possibly eliminates potential survey respondents who do not own or have access to a personal computer. Furthermore, individuals who do not possess electronic mail addresses will not receive this survey since it is being announced and introduced via electronic mail only. Finally, individuals who provided the wrong electronic mail address to the GVC/SHRM Association or individuals for whom the association has transcribed the wrong address, will not receive notification of this survey. This factor can potentially eliminate some practitioners from having the opportunity to participate.

Limitation 2. Surveys in general do not allow for extensive probing or easy follow-up. In addition, essay type answers can be difficult to analyze. Surveys do not allow the researcher to expand on quantitative or qualitative data. For example, the researcher cannot go back to the respondent and ask the individual to elaborate on an answer to a quantitative question nor can the researcher go back to the respondent to elaborate on a qualitative question. Perhaps research can be expanded or improved with these tools.
Limitation 3. Length of the survey. Longer than many current surveys. Questions number 12 and number 13 visually appear long, however, the answer take a split second to respond. Some respondents may become weary and stopped mid-stream or not complete the qualitative survey questions near the end of the instrument.

Limitation 4. A web-based survey does not allow for the researcher to clarify any misunderstandings the participant may have before attempting to respond or while in process of completing the instrument. For example, survey respondents who do not have organizational career development programs because they are a small company or have discontinued their programs, may assume that their input is not significant. This can result in failing to receive responses from valuable participants. Their information could contribute important data regarding why organizations do not implement or discontinue OCD programs.

This chapter discussed the target population, survey sample and research instrument used to collect data for this research project. Limitations to this study were identified. The results of the survey are presented in the next section, Chapter 4.
Chapter 4
Research Results

Introduction

This chapter focuses on results obtained from the Organizational Career Development survey. Specifically, this research focuses on responses to the survey from career or human resource development practitioners in organizations in the Rochester area.

Demographic Data

Business type. Of the 45 participants in this survey, 42 percent were from manufacturing, 27 percent came from the services field, 13 percent derived from education or non-profit organizations, 9 percent from the financial fields, 4 percent from health and the last 4 percent of the survey participants were in the energy or retail business. Table 1 represents respondent's answers to this question.
Table 1

Question 1: Which of the following best describes your organization?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>42.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail / wholesale trade</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking, finance, insurance, real estate</td>
<td>8.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy (public utilities, petroleum, chemicals)</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education or Not-for-Profit</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government / military</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services (business services, food and hospitality, recreation)</td>
<td>26.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical / health care</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Annual sales or budget.* The annual sales of the respondents varied with forty percent claiming to have annual sales of fewer than 25 million dollars while 29 percent had 1 billion dollars or more in annual sales or budget. Thirteen percent had 25 million to 49 million in annual sales while 11 percent noted between 50 to 99 million dollars. The budget or sales for the last group was 7 percent at 100 to 499 million dollars annually. Table 2 represents respondent’s answers to this question.
Table 2

Question 2: Your organization’s annual sales or annual budget?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual sales / budget</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $25 million</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25 million to $49 million</td>
<td>13.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50 million to $99 million</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100 million to $499 million</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500 million to $999 million</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1 billion or over</td>
<td>28.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Number of employees.** Over half of the survey participants, 51 percent, had under 500 employees in their organizations. Twenty percent responded that their companies employed 500 to 999 people, 11 percent had between 10,000 to 24,000 employees. The last two groups come through at 9 percent each with either 1,000 to just under 5,000 workers or over 50,000 employees in their organizations. Table 3 represents respondent’s answers to this question.

Table 3

**Question 3: How many employees are there in your entire organization?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer than 500</td>
<td>51.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 to 999</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 to 4,999</td>
<td>8.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000 to 9,999</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 to 24,999</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000 to 49,999</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000 or more</td>
<td>8.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prevalence of OCD Systems

Of the total respondent group, 47 percent had organizational career development programs currently running in their companies and 11 percent were launching new programs. Overall, 58 percent of the respondents had OCD systems in operation. Forty-two percent of the survey participants did not possess functioning OCD programs. Forty percent have never had the programs and two percent discontinued the systems.

Table 4

Question 4: Is there currently an organizational career development system in your organization?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCD System</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting one</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had one but discontinued</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Duration of Programs

The respondents were asked to indicate how long their programs had been in existence. Over half of the survey participants, 53 percent, had OCD systems in place for less than 1 year. Three percent responded a program duration rate of 1 to 2 years and twenty-five percent come in at three to four years. Only 13 percent had OCD systems in place for over 6 years. Table 5 below represents survey responds to the
question of how long programs have been in existence.
Table 5

Question 6: How long have you had a career development system in place?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of programs</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than a year</td>
<td>53.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to two years</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to four years</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five to six years</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than six years</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who Has Responsibility

Overall, responsibility for career development is considered to be shared by the individuals as well as the organization. Sixty-two percent of all the respondents stated that responsibility is viewed as a shared responsibility.

Table 6
Question 7: Where does responsibility for your career development system reside?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centralized</td>
<td>62.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralized</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>31.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Many Dedicated Staff.

When asked how many human resources staff persons were devoted full time to career development, over half at sixty-five percent stated that less than one individual per organization is assigned to OCD programs or systems work.

Table 7

Question 8: How many human resource staff persons, if any, are there in your organization devoted full time to career development, including yourself?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Staff Persons</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than one</td>
<td>64.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>12.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>12.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or Four</td>
<td>9.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five or more</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Level of Recipients

The main recipients of career development programs in organizations are fairly evenly spread with a slight percentage more of the exempt salaried employees gaining more focus in this area.

Table 8

Question 9: Which groups are covered by your career development system?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exempt salaried employees</td>
<td>40.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-exempt salaried employees</td>
<td>29.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hourly employees</td>
<td>29.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reasons for Not having or Discontinuing OCD

Quantitative data and qualitative data demonstrates a range of reasons for non-existent or defunct OCD systems. The three top reasons in order of significance were: Insufficient budgetary resources, organization’s needs were not in line with career development and, finally, Lack of interest on the part of managers or supervisors. The percentage of responses to this question can be found in Appendix C. Qualitative data gave some insight into reasons for not having OCD systems. Lack of stability and inconsistency was one of the items noted. Until some consistency is realized, organizational career development receives low priority in the mix of priority projects. Another respondent said that their organization was a flat organization, which limited promotions to higher classification of employees. Most promotions tended to be in-
grade and because of this structure, there was no need to devote the resources to a formal career development plan. Another practitioner indicated since their organization was a law firm, its human resource function was limited. The majority of their employees were attorneys that possess a set career development path which is associate to partner. Therefore, they believed there was no real need for a career development system. Finally, one survey respondent said that “We do have some bits and pieces for specific individuals, but not enough to call a system or program” (Anonymous, 2003).

Drivers of Organizational Career Development

Various factors influence the establishment of career development programs in the Rochester area. Survey participants were given a list of 15 possible factors that might influence the prevalence of career development within an organization. Practitioners were asked to indicate which of the 15 factors they believed were most important in influencing OCD programs. Next the factor, which was the second most important factor, followed by the third most important reason. Over half of the respondents, 65 percent, choose organizational commitment to career development as the most important aspect of having an OCD system in place. The second most important factor (38 percent) was the desire to develop or promote employees from within the organization. Finally, the third most important factor to influence the existence of OCD, at 19 percent, was the development of the organization’s strategic plan. (Appendix D).
Types of Career Development Practices Used

A list of thirty-two career development practices were given to survey participants. Respondents were asked to indicate the current status of each in their organizations. The results are provided in Table 9 and indicates a wide array of career development practices exists in organizations in the Rochester area.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top ten programs currently being practiced:</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External seminars or workshops</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee orientation programs</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition reimbursement</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job posting</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor training or career discussions</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement or succession planning</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor or line manager</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel staff</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview process</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

External seminars or workshops are the most frequently offered practice followed by employee orientation programs. The complete table of responses to this question can be found in Appendix E.

Barriers to Implementing OCD systems
Survey participants were asked to indicate whether or not they encountered any obstacles when implementing OCD programs. Qualitative responses were sparse, however, a three practitioners replied that they encountered no barriers to OCD implementation. Others reported that lack of resources was an issue. More specifically, they indicated lack of budgetary resources needed to enhance or improve programs. Additional obstacles included communication, recognition, and change management. (Appendix F).

Attitudes Toward Career Development

Included in this survey were twenty-two attitudinal questions about organizational career development. Ninety-six percent of the forty-five survey participants strongly agreed that career development must be connected to the organization’s strategic plan. Responses indicated a strong belief that career development improves an employee’s job performance. Respondents, ninety-six percent, strongly agreed employee participation in OCD programs enhances job performance. A proportionate number of survey participants disagreed with the statement, “career development strains the capacity of other human resources systems such as job postings, employee training, tuition reimbursement, etc.” Respondents also agreed that career development does not disrupt an organization.

Negative attitudes were also found to attitudinal questions. Seventy-six percent of the respondents indicated agreement that senior management believes that career development raises the expectations of the employees. Ninety-six percent of practitioners indicated the belief that few supervisors are equipped to hold employee career discussions. (See Appendixes G for complete qualitative responses.)
Evaluation methods

Survey participants responded that many organizations do not use any form of evaluation methods to measure the effectiveness of their career development programs. If they do utilize evaluation processes, the method of informal verbal feedback from OCD participants is used most often followed by the use of interviews with questionnaires to measure attitudes, learning or behavioral responses. Practitioners also use data analysis methods on productivity and performance improvements to determine results. Qualitative data showed that discussions with immediate supervisors or department heads, tracking promotability, recording how much the system is utilized, and gauging efficiencies with performance evaluation forms is done. Table ten shows the qualitative data results regarding how career development programs are measured or evaluated. Both the quantitative and qualitative data can be found in Appendixes H.

Table 10

Question 14. How are your career development programs or practices evaluated?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation tool</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No evaluation is done</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal verbal feedback from participants</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews of focus groups to measure attitudes, learning or behavior</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires to measure attitudes, learning or behavior</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis regarding productivity, performance, mobility, costs, etc.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perceived Effectiveness of OCD Practices

Out of the 45 respondents to this survey, ten percent indicated that their OCD programs or systems were very effective. The highest percentage of respondents, 36 percent, stated that the career development programs within their companies were somewhat effective. Comments provide some interesting and somewhat repeated data. One respondent added that enough resources were not put into the OCD program to make it successful. Another survey participant responded that most of their career development is experienced at the senior management level and that most of the employees are located at decentralized division. Finally, a respondent commented that he or she believes that more can always be done to ensure employees are receiving what they need to realize their full career potential. Complete data for these responses is attached as Appendix I.

Table 11

Question 15: Overall, how effective is your career development system?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Effectiveness</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Effective</td>
<td>9.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat effective</td>
<td>36.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In between</td>
<td>22.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat ineffective</td>
<td>18.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Ineffective</td>
<td>13.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to obtaining quantitative data on the effectiveness of organizational career development systems, survey participants were asked to identify the major impacts deriving from OCD practices.

**Major Impacts of OCD Programs**

Survey participants were asked qualitative questions to state their opinion on the impact their career development systems made on their organizations. Major impacts resulting from having OCD systems varied with positive and negative findings. Some statements give insight as to what Rochester area organizations are doing and perhaps how past restructuring and downsizing has affected them. A practitioner stated that they are adding about 2,000 employees to their company a year. While the majority of the comments are positive such as finding lower employee turnover and higher retention rates, the survey uncovered some negative comments. One organization reported the following, “We do not do enough at the facility level to help the workforce achieve their goals” (Anonymous, 2003). Additional comments demonstrated positive results such as the desire from employees to have more programs and the realization by one respondent stating their organization does not do enough at the facility level to enable the workforce to achieve their goals. Another indicated having an OCD systems engages employees in their career development resulting in greater employee interest and satisfaction. (Appendix J).

**Best Practices**

*Recommendations from practitioners.* The following represents the advice practitioners offered for others considering implementing OCD systems or those attempting to maintain programs. The qualitative survey responses can be found in
Appendixes K. OCD and HRD practitioners recommended employee participation in programs function on a voluntary basis. Practitioners should ensure that cross-functional teams, such as Human Resources and the Operations division, are in place to support OCD systems. Before career development programs or systems are implemented, it is important to assess the organization's readiness for them. Before implementation, practitioners in the start up phase should convince top management of the program's benefits and importance. Another survey respondent recommended make OCD a formal rather than informal process. Tracking processes, goals and results were given as best practices. Finally, add resources and increase visibility of the program to ensure success. The next question asked of survey participants of what they might do differently if given the chance, can be used as a part of or in addition to best practices in the field.

Changes to Programs in Progress

Survey participants were also asked what they would do differently if they had the opportunity to change their organization career development systems. These responses can also be used to improve existing systems or as advice for future practitioners implementing a program. Practitioners said they would make their OCD programs more formal process. They would also give it visibility. More than one practitioner stated they would add more resources, and focus to the program. Another suggested that with additional resources they would have implemented a career center. Finally, a positive respondent indicated the need to add some on-line assessment tools.
Advice for Implementation

OCD practitioners were asked to give advice to professionals planning to considering implement OCD systems. Again, a respondent recommended making it a formal process. Another suggested reviewing several models and obtaining buy-in from senior management before implementation. Other recommendations included starting small and simple, yet growing the program quickly. Obtaining employee input is suggested as well. Finally, a respondent advised future program planners to just start it, adjust along the way and minimize focus on every last detail or the program will not get up and running.

Future Planning

The final question asks practitioners what their organization’s future plans for OCD programs or systems entail. The answers range from improving or adjusting their current system to adding new OCD activities. The complete table of responses can be found are included as Appendixes M. One survey participant stated their organization was in the process of revamping and reevaluating their practices to serve the workforce more effectively. Again, others practitioners planned to increase resources and focus to their programs. Responses included the following:

Creating a link directly to our HRIS System
Using specialized training opportunities such as Six-Sigma and Lean
Manufacturing, and promoting MBA participation as well as some minor special assignments
The need to constantly remind supervisors of their importance in these practices and to remind staff that career development is a partnership.

Step back and try to coordinate the different pieces of the program better and at different levels of the company.

In the next chapter, recommendations are presented based on the results obtained from this study. In additions, recommendations for future research are offered.
Chapter 5

Recommendations and Conclusion

Introduction

Results from the OCD survey were presented in Chapter 4. This chapter will offer recommendations based on the results and relevant literature. In addition, suggestions for future researchers is presented.

Findings

Basic demographic data. The sample population consisted of GVC/SHRM practitioners from organizations in the Rochester, New York area. A total of 45 surveys were completed resulting in a forty-two percent response rate. Practitioners that responded to the survey showed that forty-seven percent of organizations in the sample possess OCD programs or systems. The majority of the organizations, 43 percent, represented the manufacturing industry. The representatives from these organizations provided quantitative and qualitative data resulting in several interesting key findings. These key findings include a gap between top managements’ versus managers’ attitudes toward OCD, the need to continue to gain top management’s support, improvement in access for all employees to OCD, and a lack of emphasis on evaluating programs

Key Findings

Attitudes Toward OCD Systems

There is a gap between top management and managers’ attitudes towards OCD systems. Eighty percent of top management believes that career development is an important part of employee development while sixty-eight percent of managers believe
OCD is not needed. This gap in belief in OCD programs may contribute to the attitude that eighty percent of the practitioners believe few managers and supervisors are not equipped to hold employee career discussions. If managers or supervisors do not believe in the programs, they may not be supporting them. According to the literature, formalized career programs are not likely to be successful if they do not receive support from management (Simonsen, 1997, p. 186).

Support from Top Management

Practitioners expressed that although top management supports OCD programs and believes there are significant benefits, adequate resources are not allocated to validate management’s claims. OCD and HRD professionals also expressed the need to communicate the effectiveness and progress of the programs and make them more visible to top management and the organization. This advice appears to be relevant since dedicated staff to these programs appears quite low. Note that survey participants were not asked to indicate the exact monetary amounts allocated to OCD systems.

Employees Covered by OCD

High potential employees, those targeted for future management or managerial positions were once the main group offered the opportunity by organizations to receive career development (Gutteridge, 1993, p. 46). Results from this study show that this is not the case in Rochester as 30 percent non-exempt individuals as well as 30 percent of hourly employees are included in career development programs. Ten percent more, (40 % total) exempt employees are covered by career development activities. It stands to reason that exempt-salaried employees receive additional or specific career
development practices as these employees are typically candidates for future managerial and leadership positions. Often called high potential candidates, these employees are targeted for succession planning initiatives which require comprehensive development objectives (Cope, 1998). Sixty-percent of non-exempt and hourly workers also have the opportunity to participate in career development, perhaps this demonstrates that organizations in the Rochester area are realizing the value of all employees, not merely high potential candidates. Literature indicates that putting people first and valuing them as important assets contributes to an organizations financial success and offers a source of competitive advantage (Pfeffer & Veiga, 1999).

Evaluation of OCD Programs

Lack of evaluations. It is difficult to ascertain how the effectiveness of these organizations programs can be evaluated without some documentation that relates to the success rate of the organizations’ efforts in career development. It is recognized, that sixty-eight of practitioners use some type of evaluation method such as informal verbal feedback, focus groups, questionnaires or data analysis.

Effectiveness ratings. Despite a 32 percent lack of evaluations performed to measure the effectiveness of career development programs to measure effectiveness, survey respondents rated their OCD programs as nine percent very effective, 36 percent somewhat effective and twenty-three percent somewhere in-between in usefulness. Thirty-two percent of the respondents indicated their programs were either somewhat or very ineffective. It’s difficult to ascertain how the 32 percent of respondents can accurately answer the question of effectiveness when no evaluation whatsoever is conducted.
Discussion

Recommendations

Key findings indicated a gap between top managements’ attitudes toward OCD versus managers’ or supervisors’ perceptions. In addition, the need to continue to gain support from top management is needed as well as the lack of evaluations being conducted as an element of practice of OCD. To enhance the effectiveness and progress of organizational career development, the following recommendations are offered.

Obtain Managers’ and Supervisors’ Buy-In

Practitioners recommended obtaining and reinforcing top management’s buy-in into OCD programs. However, there is a gap between top management and managers’ or supervisors’ attitudes toward OCD systems. Eighty percent of top management believes that career development is an important part of employee development while sixty-eight percent of managers believe OCD is not needed. This attitudinal gap may contribute to the response to another attitudinal question that eighty percent of the practitioners believe few managers and supervisors are not equipped to hold employee career discussions. If managers or supervisors do not believe in the programs, they may not be supporting or promoting them. Additionally, managers and supervisors need more training, or more effective training, to fully understand the benefits of OCD in order to realize it’s importance. The following quote supports this recommendation:

“If career development is to be a means of creating a development culture, it needs to be institutionalized and pervasive—owned by line management as well as the human resources department. An
intervention must be based on real and perceived needs and have buy-in from stakeholders. This is not to say that a successful career development effort cannot start small, but it must be planned and designed for long-term commitment rather than for a quick fix."

(Simonsen, 1997, p. 26).

Gain Support from Top Management

Survey data indicates the importance of gaining management support up front and early in the process of implementing OCD programs. Practitioners also expressed the need to communicate the effectiveness and progress of the programs with top management. This advice appears to be relevant since, according to qualitative advice from OCD practitioners, senior management is not allocating the budgetary or staff resources necessary to maintain or improve these programs. Quantitative results relating to staff dedicated to OCD confirms the lack of resources as sixty-five percent of the organizations in this survey, dedicate less than one person to OCD activities. This could be an indication that top management does not truly believe in OCD systems although it is purported by them as necessary and important. Literature confirms that top management’s buy-in is necessary to assist in maintenance and success of this practice (Simonsen, 1997, p. 186). It is recommended that practitioners continue to obtain top management’s support. The next recommendation takes the above-mentioned suggestion, one step further.

Evaluative Programs

It is possible that top management is not allocating adequate or more resources to OCD systems because the value of OCD is not recognized due to lack of evidence of
it's effectiveness. OCD and HRD practitioners must begin to evaluate their programs on a consistent basis if they are to be able to determine and demonstrate its effectiveness. They also will want to do this so that they can confidently defend, or not support if appropriate, OCD systems to top management. The literature shows that accountability and measurement to evaluate effectiveness is expected of practitioners by senior management.

Practitioners need to take the extra time to conduct evaluations. Ongoing evaluation, revision, and improvement occurs in most companies possessing state-of-the-art systems. Corning Glass has developed conditions of success against which local organizations can benchmark their activities. AT&T has conducted several employee surveys and audit on workshops to track the progress and effects of its career development system (Gutteridge, 1993, p. 192).

Recommendations for Future Research

*Future Research*

**Evaluation methods.** OCD or HRD research should consider examining how or what methods companies use to evaluate their programs. Research can be done both short-term and long-term evaluation tools. Realizing the return-on-investment from organizational career development programs can assist in defending the effectiveness, benefits and future need for OCD systems.

**Duration of programs in connection with effectiveness.** Over half of the respondents stated that their programs were in operation for less than one year. While twenty-five percent of respondents indicated programs were functioning for at least
three years but not more than four years. The high percentage (fifty-three) percent of practitioners who have only had programs in place for less than one year would undoubtedly have difficulty indicating how effective their programs were at this point which may be a part of the reason for the 32 percent of respondents who indicated programs as somewhat or very ineffective. Career development programs need time to evolve and certainly need time to be evaluated. Thorough evaluations take typically one year to conduct (Simonsen, 1997, p. 248). Given this high percentage of short duration of programs, it was difficult to ascertain if the 68 percent response rate of programs to be somewhat or in-between in effectiveness.

Longitudinal studies. Researchers should conduct a longitudinal study to examine how effective OCD programs are over an extended period of time. Just as it takes several years for an employee to grow and develop, OCD systems take time to improve and evolve. Literature demonstrates that the OCD practitioners who rated their OCD programs were most satisfied with the systems. Companies with systems in place for over three years were most satisfied with overall results from the programs (Walker, 1979, p. 34). Therefore, researching OCD programs and their effectiveness should provide an interesting study.

Interview instrument. A research study can be used by interviewing methods as opposed to using a survey instrument. This will allow the researcher to obtain the most current, relevant data on either the state of OCD, barriers to investing in the systems or possible attitudes that restrict the future progress of the practice.
Conclusion

*Importance and Relevance to HRD*

Organizational career development is an element of Human Resource Development (HRD). HRD means "the integrated use of training and development to improve individual, group, and organizational effectiveness" and one important role of the HRD professional is advice individuals on career developments matters. (Rothwell, 1992). Since the prevalence of OCD in the Rochester area is indicated as existing in over fifty-percent of it’s companies, many HRD practitioners will have some involvement in this area. As we move into the 21st Century, the trend of constant change appears to be continuing. As a result, organizations are continuing redesigning and reinventing to remain viable. Organizations need to find methods to enable their employees to adapt to change and to gain transferable skills to enable them to shift to various projects.

Career Development systems, approached appropriately for the realities of the times and changing needs of the organization, should meet the needs of both individuals and organizations (Simonsen, 1997, p.15). The need for OCD systems will be more prevalent, more widespread as companies identify how the practice can best meet their needs (Herr, 2001). OCD and HRD professionals can use this study as a base for identifying the barriers and attitudes that inhibit the implementation or progress of Organizational Career Development systems in the Rochester, New York area and beyond.
References


