

STRATEGIC TALENT MANAGEMENT THROUGH CAREER PATHS

One of the most salient career paradigm shifts has been the change from job security to employability security. It is well-understood that facilitating engagement and retaining high-potential talent is a competitive advantage to all organizations, despite recent studies suggesting today's workforce is more disengaged than ever.

For example, Aon Consulting reported in a recent study of about 1,800 workers that employee commitment is declining in every industry, age group, income group and job classification. The Gallup Organization also recently reported evidence of declining employee engagement in a major survey that found only 26 percent of employees consider themselves "engaged" in their work.

All too often, organizations are tempted to hijack high-performing technical talent and move them into leadership roles only to have this experiment create havoc — not all technically competent individuals have the motivation and desire to lead others.

Employers of choice understand the changing career paradigm shifts and have developed programs, benefits and career paths to enhance the commitment and retention of its talent. Effective alignment of an employee's career path preferences will result in increased satisfaction, productivity and retention. There are four career path preferences for strategic alignment of talent.

Leadership: This career path preference is best characterized by those interested in continually moving up the ladder into traditional leadership positions with increasing amounts of control, responsibility and authority.

Typical career anchors and motives of these individuals include power, influence, leadership, control, task accomplishment, status, managerial competence and directing others.

Appropriate rewards for these individuals might include promotion,

special perks, titles and organizational symbols of success (e.g., profit-sharing incentive plans, stock options, financial planning, expense account, club memberships, etc.).

Specialist/Independent Contributor: This career path preference is best characterized by those interested in remaining in one career field or profession for much of their work-

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ing life. Along the way, these specialists are able to highly refine their technical knowledge, skills and abilities.

Typical career anchors and motives of these individuals include technical and functional competence, expertise, skill mastery, independence, affiliation and security.

Appropriate rewards for these individuals might include job enrichment, continuing education, membership in professional associations, recognition, motivational programs, sabbaticals, tenure and job security.

Generalist: This career path preference is best characterized by those who actively seek and take on new assignments and projects but use previously acquired experiences, skills, knowledge and abilities. These generalists generally move either laterally or upward, increasing their breadth of knowledge and experience along the way.

As a career path preference, this one is particularly well-suited for project/program management assignments within organizations.

Typical career anchors and motives of these individuals include professional growth and personal development, learning, coaching, developing others and innovation.

Appropriate rewards for these individuals might include cross training, job rotation, educational reimbursement and coaching assignments.



About the author

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Entrepreneurial: This career path preference is best characterized by those interested in rapid job, career and occupational changes over short periods of time. These individuals enjoy working on diverse assignments with measurable and visible outcomes.

Typical career anchors and motives of these individuals include entrepreneurship, achievement, autonomy, risk, challenge and freedom from organizational constraints.

Appropriate rewards for these individuals might include flexible schedules, independent contracts, consulting assignments, start-up operations, job sharing and bonuses.

Because job satisfaction is a strong predictor of turnover, having multiple career paths will help employers facilitate the retention of high-potential employees. **TM**