

Career Resilience: Building a Change-Ready Workforce

Ci Virtual Roundtables – Monday 21st March, 2011

The objective of the two roundtables was to explore the relevance and importance of *career resilience* and its role in supporting individuals and organisations to develop adaptability, to discuss opportunities and challenges, and to share best practice.

Part 1: INSIGHT - Understanding the organisational perspective

Participants in the VRT made the following observations:

What is working well?

- Online career development services.
- Advertising all jobs internally.
- Secondments for high potentials.
- Working around roles, competencies, developing an academy offering, skills accreditation.
- Working on differentiation (high potential).
- Focusing on integration and a new career strategy
- Exploring segmentation and career-pathing for those segments.
- Regular 2 day career workshops.
- Increasing the visibility of career discussions.

What challenges are organisations facing?

- With smaller companies options can be limited within them, and mobility is restricted.
- Need to recognise that people move on no investment is made in them.
- Current talent management process ignores high performers who are not labelled high potential.
- Losing specialists with valuable expertise.
- The changing nature of the general manager role.
- Motivating people to use online career management tools.
- With an ageing population there is a need to keep the knowledge base as strong as possible.
- Culture change, moving from a “civil service” mentality to a mobile and flexible workforce.
- Very high staff turnover - bright staff use some organisations as a first career step.
- The need to grow broad leaders (cross-functional and cross-business).

What would organisations like to put in place?

- Move from a paternalistic culture - traditionally the company delivers your career to you.
- Develop one page ‘tables’ for options, goals, and sequencing post.
- Identify a skills market - these are the skills that we need to invest in.
- Migrate people’s skills from where they are now, to where they need to be.
- Create trust, the right sort of environment to keep people in the long term.
- We are multi-generational, and need to think about life-cycle questions.
- We’re looking not for ‘best practice’, which often means ‘past practice’ but for “**future-focused practices**”.

Part 2: INNOVATION – “Career Resilience: Building a Change-Ready Workforce” research (2011)

Anne Winter (Ci) outlined the key historical shifts in the importance and focus on career, highlighting that change is now the norm and this has during the last decade led to a “**career vacuum**” with many organisations unwilling to articulate any long-term view of career. A key barrier to effective career support is manager capability to have career conversations, and few organisations reward managers explicitly for developing people. It can be difficult to understand the impact of interventions, as there is a lack of evaluation and connection with business strategy within organisations.

Jessica Stewart (Creative Metier) discussed the launch of the research in Singapore, which supported the key research findings despite the different market context. Themes around the need for a clear articulation of the “career deal” and manager capability to hold career conversations remained key. Career resources were often available, but not articulated coherently, or communicated to employees in a relevant way.

Innovative solutions suggested by participants:

“We will stop external recruitment for 30 days and will implement an internal mobility programme.”

“We recently introduced the concept of the **“stay interview”** it enables us to have a career discussion with all staff.”

“We are moving to a much more flexible and fluid model which accepts people move in and out and we make the most of them.”

“We have run a nomination for people that grow talent and developed role models for careers – we have never had such enthusiasm for an internal initiative.”

“Peer-to-peer learning and exchange programmes do not require much resource, but work much more effectively than any form of management training.”

Part 3: IMPACT – How might the research relate to your organisation?

Participants made the following points:

- Management capability comes up time and time again.
- I see a gentle shift in some of our key growth markets. It goes back to the career “promise” that leads to career aspiration.
- As a business we are changing so fast we can’t keep up. It is often easier to look at external environment to manage your career.
- If we think about the company first, we may “win” in that people move into a position that is not best for them, but in the end we will “lose” because people will realise that we are not doing what is best for individuals.

Key “take-away” points for participants included:

- Employees do not understand how to manage their own careers. We need to find different and simple tools to understand their own drivers.
- We should be doing more specifically with regions to make career support relevant.
- We have to position how users use the information; we have a wider opportunity to help people build their own resilience.

- Talent is a small element of the population. We need to look at what the proposition is for the wider employee base.
- To make sure we develop an inclusive approach to talent **“careers for all”**.
- We need a clearly articulated **“career deal”**, with tools, resources and appropriately equipped managers.
- Talent management is not a panacea – what next?
- I really like the idea of career portfolios and workshops.
- The use of role models is very powerful, along with evaluating and rewarding managers for developing people.
- We need a coherent framework to align performance management with business needs. We need a career development unit.
- Career is going to be what really drives employees, and it is an on-going evolving interest for employees.

Research references:

In addition to the ‘Career Resilience’ research presented during the roundtables, participants also made reference to the following research sources:

The importance of making it local

Research cited by a VRT participant, indicated a shift in the Asian talent market away from multinationals and towards local Asian companies, due to their greater ability to provide job security, work-life balance, clear career paths and opportunities for leadership: the fundamental career building blocks.

Tailoring career support to aspiration

Another VRT participant pointed to a recent study by Accenture which indicated that only 23% of recent graduates are interested in achieving a top position in an organisation; 60-80% in China and India. It seems there may be regional differences in career aspiration towards leadership roles.