

Is 'personal agency' the key to helping individuals manage their career?

Ci Virtual Roundtable - Tuesday, 16 July 2019

Personal agency refers to an individual's ability to originate and direct actions to achieve a given purpose. With employees increasingly expected to manage their own careers, this Roundtable focused on the relative importance of personal agency in modern day career management.

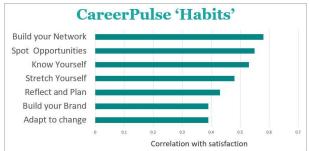
PART 1: INSIGHT

Participants shared the challenges and opportunities of equipping people with the confidence, skills and support needed to exercise personal agency and develop the right 'mindset' for careers today:

- What is the best balance between the support and direction the organisation provides and expectations that individuals should be in the driving seat?
- Gaining acceptance that careers and career progression should be measured by experience and skill building as much as job moves and promotions.
- Using technology to ensure stretch experiences are visible, and successfully matching individuals with opportunities across the

organisation

 Equipping individuals to recognise the likely disruptive impact of future change on careers and the need for repeated cycles of learning and reskilling.



- Supporting busy people to find time to reflect and learn from their experiences.
- Fostering personal agency supports social mobility.

PART 2: INNOVATION

Dr Nathan Iverson, Program Director, Industrial & Organisational Psychology, California Baptist University, introduced his Phd research into the link between the seven dimensions of career health in the Career Innovation Company's

CareerPulseTM diagnostic tool and job and career satisfaction. Across cultures, he found that the 'Build your Network' dimension essentially 'Connecting with Others' had a significant correlation. The evidence for building a deep and varied network of relationships as a key enabler of career satisfaction and personal agency is compelling, and was seen as a useful evidence base to promote internal relationship building activities.

Nathan also shared how he applies well grounded theory to raise agentic behaviour in his students by: providing **stretch experiences**, showcasing **role models** that reflect their backgrounds, and continuously reminding them of **their potential**.

PART 3: IMPACT

Referring to our <u>Careers of Tomorrow</u> research and related Career Strategy and Support model, David North reflected on the balance between organisations having a clear career development framework that helps direct and inform careers, along with nurturing employee <u>self-efficacy</u>.

Other ways discussed to impact personal agency included:

- 'Burning platform' stories to build urgency, 'hero narratives' and telling the career stories of others to foster an agentic culture
- Understanding what helps and hinders employees in exercising 'personal agency'
- Equipping managers with coaching skills
- Focusing on helping people to build their networks
- On-line courses such as our evidence-based 'Be Bold In Your Career' which helps individuals to develop, and plan how to use the seven key career building skills to increase their confidence and agency.