



SmartHR

Monthly People Management Feature

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Are your career discussions *effective*?

Following on from last month's article on talent management and succession planning, I thought I would look at ***effective career discussions***.

There are a number of purposes and business benefits of holding effective career discussions - they can...

- Help to grow and deploy the skills and experience that the business needs
- Help improve performance
- Help employees focus on self-development and reaching their potential
- Help to attract and retain staff

Career discussions can be held formally or more informally, and can be planned or unplanned. They can be held with a variety of people, including: the person's manager, senior manager, HR department, colleagues, a coach or mentor. More often than not they will usually take time and can benefit from being planned and prepared for.

The CIPD has a useful tool '*Career discussions at work – practical tips for HR, Managers and Employees*' which can be found at: http://www.cipd.co.uk/binaries/tool_10.pdf. It provides a '**4 Stage Model of an Effective Career Discussion**' as follows:

- 1 **Setting up the discussion** – getting a discussion to happen and preparing for

it by gathering information, reflection and planning the agenda

- 2 **Establishing trust** – helping to set a positive atmosphere for the discussion
- 3 **Sharing information** – listening and questioning, exploring career options
- 4 **Agreeing action** – concluding the discussion and getting practical follow-up action

It also has 'career capability checklists' that are designed to make organisations think about the different aspects of their career activities: strategy and climate, processes, people to talk to, and training in career support.

By completing these checklists you can review items such as:

- If your organisation has an appropriate and positive career strategy of encouraging employees to develop their careers and potential
- If the senior leaders role model the strategy and help others with their careers
- Whether employee surveys ask if employees have had useful career discussions in the last 12 months

- If personal development plans address development for the future as well as current job roles
- If there is someone 'off line' that people can talk to about their career e.g. HR or a mentor
- Whether managers receive training in how to support the career development of others

Providing information and advice on career opportunities and the kinds of jobs that it may be possible to work towards can make the 'path of progress' clearer in a person's mind. This, coupled with giving constructive feedback on the individual's skills and future potential; being positive and enthusiastic, and showing a real interest in the person are central to *effective career development discussions*.

Employees can gain a lot of benefit from discussing their career aspirations and being provided with advice, guidance, encouragement and support; and conducted well they can be very motivational. In addition, discussing career aspirations can assist organisations with their talent management and succession planning activities.

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