

PREVIEW ONLY - SEVERAL PAGES OMITTED

Career Development: How It Unfortunately Often Works

Ever wondered why so many people start a career development discussion, often at work with the manager, but actually nothing really happens when you look at it afterwards? Even if something gets written down. Is it not frustrating and a huge waste of time? Numerous of my former direct reports¹ told me in the very beginning of the working relationship that they do not believe in this ‘career development stuff’ any more... that it is just ‘hot air’, just bla-bla from a company or manager trying to keep the employee temporarily happy – quite often, of course by chance, shortly before the annual employee satisfaction survey is sent out... what a coincidence!

Yes, numerous mid-size and large global companies have officially institutionalized career development frameworks in place – in theory... but how it is done, if at all, is a different story. Either way, I noticed after years of observations that in most cases, there are two main reasons why career development or people development far too often does not bring any fruitful results:

1. The **employees** themselves do not put enough emphasis on career development discussions, and let it go or postpone it on a regular basis – even over years. Maybe they are a bit lazy, maybe they are in their comfort

¹ *A term widely used by American companies. It stands for all team members (directly) reporting to their manager. In other words: a manager leads a team of direct reports.*

zone, or they may have unsuccessfully tried it several times, became frustrated and finally gave up.

2. Numerous **managers** either... *preview only, rest of paragraph omitted.*

Well, we cannot change what has happened in the past, but we can for sure influence the future. Therefore, let's stop moaning and move on. First, we want to understand why most of today's used career development approaches fail, and then we will fix it. Stay tuned!

Issue One: Why the Term 'Career Development' Does Actually Not Make Sense

It already begins with the name. I argue that the term 'career development' is misleading and already one source of the evil. In my opinion, one cannot just look at developing his or her career (I use the terms career and work-life interchangeably) without taking the entire life situation of a person into account. Why? Well, you are one human being, you do not live in two completely separated silos *private-life* and *work-life*. In other words... *preview only, rest of paragraph omitted.*

Issue Two: The Wall... But There Is No Wall Between Work and Life

The often used term 'work-life balance' connotes and implies that there is kind of a wall between work and (private) life – which is simply not the case. Living in today's world of internet and smartphones with its cognitive information overload from various sources (private and business) causing a tremendous amount of interruptions, can we still sharply split between working time and private time? I do not think so. Things you do or things that happen in your

private life may influence your work-life to a certain degree, and vice versa, e.g... *preview only, rest of paragraph omitted.*

Issue Three: Starting With Step Two Instead of Step One

“First walk, then run” – I will never forget what my first Google manager, Dr. Andreas Schönerberger, told me many times. He was so right. What does it have to do with people development? Based on my experience, one of the main reasons why development approaches are far too often not successful is the simple fact that most of these approaches start with the 2nd step instead of the 1st one. Hmm... 2nd step? Yes. Comparing at least 15 different development approaches being used at companies (Dell, HP, Google, IBM, Unilever etc.) or being taught at schools, most of them... *preview only, rest of paragraph omitted.*

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PDP Pro: Some Advanced Tips

A lot of people do not suffer from not having numerous ideas, good intentions (whether they are well planned and well challenged or not) and/or lots of new-year resolutions. What is mostly missing is GTD (Getting-Things-Done). What counts is not just having good intentions, but actually doing something... getting a measurable output as well as real and sustainable results, right? This chapter intends to help you move from plans to results, from intentions to actions.

Advanced Tip #1: Do Not Fall in the Ostrichism Trap

How to figure out if you also suffer (a bit) from ostrichism? Very easy, just do the following exercise for a while... *preview only, rest of paragraph omitted.*

Advanced Tip #2: Getting Things Done Thanks to Post-Its

It is very easy to have a nice PDP hidden somewhere – be in on a hard drive, in the cloud or on hardcopy in a drawer. In other words: after having completed your PDP, you may easily hide yourself from your own projects and objectives, you may get distracted or may even end up in the hamster wheel of your daily stuff. So how to make sure you turn your objectives into actions (GTD)? *preview only, rest of paragraph omitted.*

Advanced Tip #3: Getting Things Done Thanks to Friends & Peer Pressure

Another truly powerful tip... *preview only, rest of paragraph omitted.*

Advanced Tip #4: Suggested Reading to Boost Your PDP

First things first: No, I do not get any commission for recommending the following two books. They just helped me a great deal in my professional life and supported the design and fine-tuning the Swiss PDP Approach[®] as well.

The first one I have already mentioned earlier... *preview only, rest of paragraph omitted.*

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Q&A

Here is a collection of the most common and typical PDP questions I have gathered over the last ten years working and refining the Swiss PDP Approach[®] around the world. If you cannot find the answer to your question, please let me now: beat.buhlmann@gmail.com.

Q: The **development approach at my company** seems to be much more serious, apparently having more meat on the bone as I have to fill out a form with about 250 questions. Further, I get a nicely-looking three-dimensional diagram or a multi-branch spider diagram, about 40 pages in total. Is the Swiss PDP Approach[®] not too simple to be effective?

A: *I recommend... **preview only, rest of paragraph omitted.***

Q: **I have a partner** (wife, husband, boyfriend, girlfriend etc.): What do I tell my partner? Anything at all?

A: Great question... ***preview only, rest of paragraph omitted.***

Q: If I **do not want not share** my life-map or life-cycle model **with my manager** – does it still make sense to talk to him about professional development?

A: ***preview only, rest of paragraph omitted.***

Q: As a **manager**, I am a bit worried to propose and support PDPs because once a team member has completed the process, there might be a high risk of losing him/her. Reason: My team member might figure out that the current job does not fit him/her at all and quit – so is it actually not **better to try to prevent people from doing PDPs?**

A: *Good question... preview only, rest of paragraph omitted.*

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