Improving technical and career development through the creation of a strategy that aligns organization and individual goals

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Abstract

Career development is considered one of the building blocks for the success of both professionals and organizations. High performing companies tend to build career development through business needs with minimal to no concern for the individual's goals. A career development plan (CDP) was designed for a recently established aerospace company as part of the organization's goals to be competitive in the market and retain new talent in the island. It was implemented with the use of survey, self-assessment, and resource allocation. Survey results showed how participants feel about career development within the company. This helped create specific career development plan targeted to support the individual's goals while maintain business needs. For future work isintegration of the CDP platform to a more robust system for ease of use, gain feedback on how the CDP has helped support the employees' goals and measuring the impact of the organization's performance and culture.

Introduction

Career development can be defined as the progression of short-term steps taken to achieve long-term professional goals [1]. A career development plan well implemented enhances employability; employee retention and attract candidates. It promotes an environment where employees can trust their organization, expand their career knowledge and be of use in the right programs, increase performance and drive fastest results. For managers it provides the tools to build a pool of talents and contribute to delivering better solution to customer. [2-3]

The project was performed on a recently established aerospace company in Puerto Rico. As part of the company's initiatives for both retention and market competitiveness is the implementation of a Career Development Plan (CDP).

Methodology

To achieve the objectives of the project, the following steps were taken:

- The development a survey to understand employee satisfaction with current Career Development Opportunities and identify areas of improvement and focus. Survey was aimed to the Engineering Team from the studied Aerospace Industry.
- An employee self-assessment that serves as tool for employees to reflect on their current roles, improvement, and development actions. This will serve as a base for building a formal CDP. The self-assessment includes self-evaluation and peer feedback.
- Developing a Career Development Plan template that target roles and responsibilities, identify career path and future roles, open communications channels for employees to articulate their interest and documents knowledge, experience, and progress.
- Resources, allocation and learning portal: this will allow managers and employees to find trainings, Community of Practices, certifications, and additional information that will help in targeting development actions.

Results and Discussion

A group consisting of mostly engineers from the studied Aerospace Company was asked to provide feedback. Topics targeted by the survey were work-life balance, career development, relationship between management and employees and, career growth. The survey consisted of fifteen questions. Google Forms platform was used due to its accessibility and low cost.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 present participants satisfaction results, where it was interpreted as lack of satisfaction with the career growth measures established by the company.

Figure 1
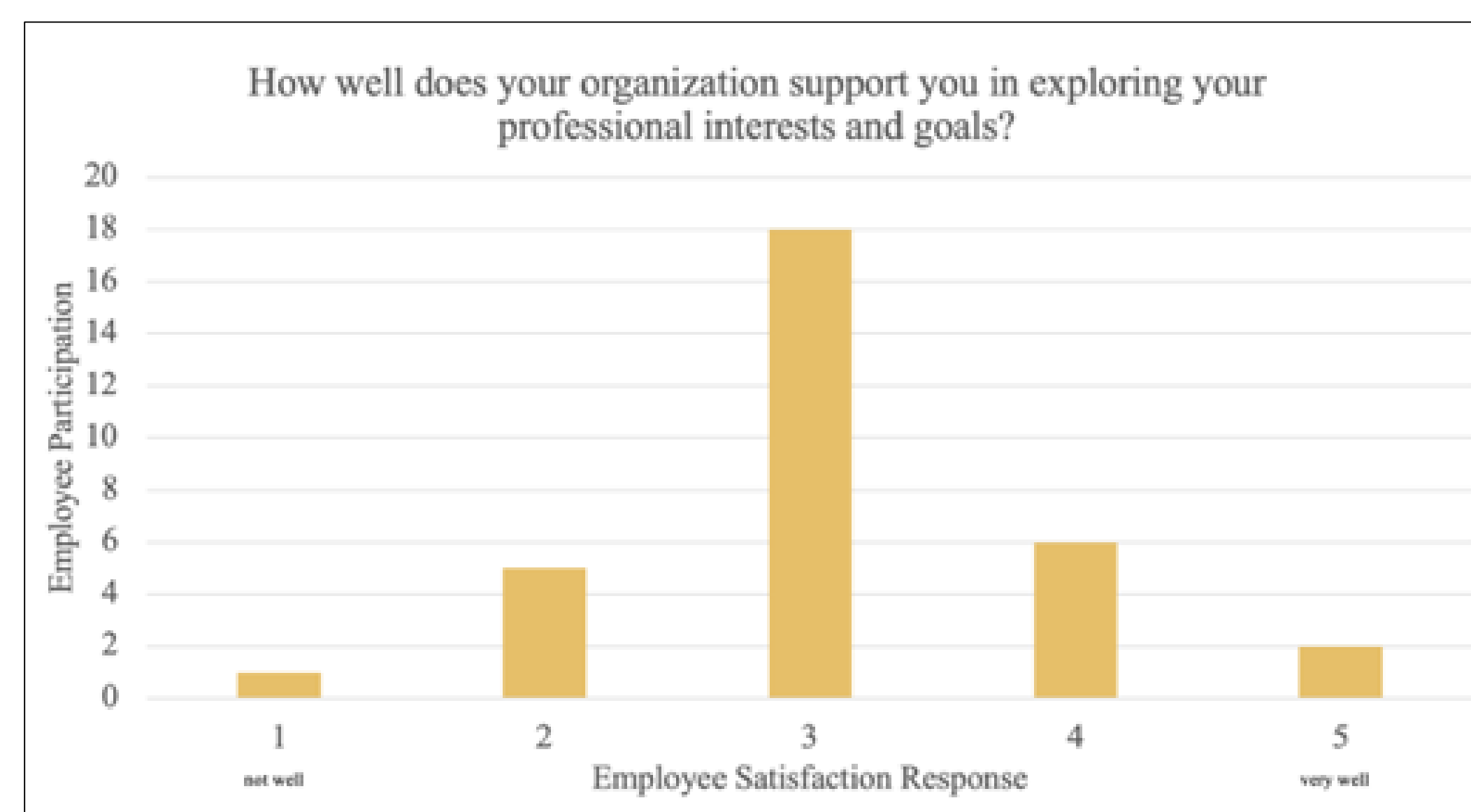**Employee feedback on company's performance**

Figure 2
Employee Satisfaction regards to company's career exploration

The career path allows employee development to align to role they wish to achieve. Figure 3 presents the results of the participants in terms of their career path, where the vast majority answered that they were not aware of a career path or how they can grow within their role or company.

Results supports the need to create a culture where career development is seen a valuable tool for managers to engage. Presenting the benefits of using a career development plan and the effects it has on employees and the organization itself are imperative in creating and preserving the culture.

Figure 3
Employee feedback on career development

A self-assessments was developed that allowed employees understanding current performance, opportunities and determine how skills are aligned to desired career moves. It includes several types of goals: personal, professional, technical and of leadership and served as a tool for designing a Career Development Plan (CDP).

The CDP is a fill-in document that includes a section for each of the following: mentor or sponsors, career interest, strengths, skills, or abilities the employee would like to grow. It is learning-oriented and targets roles and responsibilities, identifies career path or future roles, enables communications channels for employees to articulate their interest and documents knowledge, experience, and progress. The SMART model is the preferred in helping create actions. Each critical item in the CDP is attained to a deadline, allowing management to design a strategy, and focus its efforts on the completion.

Managers serve as a link to facilitate the learning and development of employees' skills. Resources allocation was performed to help managers and employees find trainings, Community of Practices, certifications, and additional information that will help in targeting development actions. It was found that managers were unaware these resources thus, have not been reviewed and assigned to specific roles. This will be addressed as part of future works.

As part of resource allocation was the local implementation of Communities of Practices (CoP). These CoP consist of discipline that presents a topic of interest to the main public. Participation is highly encouraged since employees exposed to new topics that can be aligned to their career's goals. Managers have the responsibility of implementing a good CDP. Their actions are to review, provide feedback and allocate resources that support employees' career path.

Currently, CDP, Self-Assessment and Resources are managed through Microsoft Teams.

Conclusions

Career development is one of the most crucial factors that employees need to achieve individual goals. Whilst it is not always aligned with business needs, those individual goals can help eventually retain employees which maintains the talent for future projects and meet business needs. Survey showed that employees from the aerospace industry felt the need to improve career development. To correctly determine what the employee needs, the self-assessment guided as the baseline to create the unique career development plan. Thus, this career development plan achieves the main goals of the project by enabling communication channels between employer and employee, using the SMART method to set employee's goals and identify experiences to achieve those goals within the organization.

These career development plans will always be changing as goals are constantly changing between the individual and the organization. These building blocks are meant to start a focused path to success to achieve the results that best meets the needs of all stakeholders involved.

Future Work

The implementation of the strategy in terms of timeline, creating metrics to measure the impact on current employees, learning resources platform and CDP integration with current employee company homesite. To develop a Learning Platform where employees can easily navigate through the offered resources. Additionally, create and maintain a career development culture in the workplace which highlights the impact on work environment, performance, motivation, and productivity levels among employees.

Acknowledgements

References

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