# Study unit 9: Career Planning and Management

# Introduction

Today's world of work is characterized by dynamic and changing labor force which is different than yesterdays. This means that employees need to take responsibility for managing their own career. Change and uncertainty is the norm. It is most likely that you will be changing jobs 5 to 10 times in your life. This may mean you may need to simultaneously pursue career education and employment. To expect a path of formal education followed by one’s career in an established discipline, followed by retirement, is no longer realistic. Today emphasis is on lifelong learning and multiple job/career transitions. The aim of career development is to help you understand your potential and to help you maximize this potential in the work force and in the future. From the start, you will need to have a clear idea of the kind of career path you would like to follow. Good career planning can lead to a satisfying career. People who do not career plan usually get sick from stress working in fields they do not like, and students’ waste time and money pursuing educational areas in which they have no interest. The decisions we make about careers and leisure activities throughout our life span are critical to our sense of well-being. Satisfaction in our work can be a key ingredient to our feelings of self-worth.

# Learning Outcomes of Study Unit 9

By the end of this topic you should be able to:

9.1 Explain the basic concepts as used in career planning

9.2 Roles of Stakeholders in Career Planning and Management

9.3 Apply the knowledge of career planning in their work life and future individual planning

9.4 Design a personal career plan using steps of career planning process.

9.5 Explain the challenges faced in career planning

## 9.1 Explain the basic concepts as used in career planning

**A career:** Is the sum total of all the work -- paid and unpaid -- you have done and will do in your lifetime. A career includes not only occupations but pre-vocational and post-vocational activities and decisions as well as how you integrate your work life with your life roles such as family, community, and leisure activities.

**Career development:** Is interaction of psychological, sociological, economic, physical and chance factors that shape the sequence of jobs, occupations or careers that a person may engage in throughout a lifetime. Career development is a major aspect of human development. It can also be defined as a process where employees strategically explore, plan, and create their future at work by designing a personal learning plan to achieve their potential and fulfill the organization's learning, seeking opportunities, taking risks, and finding ways to contribute to the organization in a productive and motivated manner. Career development involves a person's past, present, and future work roles. It is linked to a person's self-concept, family life, and all aspects of one's environmental and cultural conditions.

**Career management** is about achieving a satisfying and rewarding career. It involves identifying what you want from a career, and then identifying the means by which you might achieve your objectives. Career management is a life-long process.

**Career planning:** Career planning is a process that can help you plan your career. Career planning is when workers map the course of future careers, deciding what type of jobs & activities they will pursue in the future. As one plans a career it’s important to note that the future is unknown and cannot be predicted

## 9.2 Roles of Stakeholders in Career Planning and Management

**A. Individual**

1) Accept responsibility for your own career

2) Assess your interests, skills, and values

3) Seek out career information and resources.

4) Establish goals and career plans.

5) Utilize development opportunities

6) Talk with your manager about your career

7) Follow through on realistic career plans.

**B. Manager**

1) Provide timely and accurate performance feedback

2) Provide development assignments and support.

3) Participate in career development discussions with subordinates.

4) Support employee development plans.

**C. Employer**

1) Communicate mission, policies and procedures

2) Provide training and development opportunities including workshops.

3) Provide career information and career programs

4) Offer a variety of career paths.

5) Provide career oriented performance feedback.

6) Provide mentoring opportunities to support growth and self-direction.

7) Provide employees with individual development plans.

8) Provide academic learning assistance programs.

**E. Employees roles:-**

To take the initiative in the sense of requiring feedback from peers and chiefs regarding the strengths and weaknesses of their skills

To identify the stage of career development and the development needs

To seize as many opportunities to learn (about sales, product design etc.)

To interact with employees from different work groups within and outside the organization (eg D. **D. The Organization’s Role**

The organizations are responsible for providing the necessary resources to be successful in the employees’ career planning. These resources include:

-**Career workshops:** seminars on various topics (how does the system of career planning, self-assessment or setting goals)

**-Career centers or information systems** (or databases places where / from where the employees can learn about job openings or training programs) professional associations, project teams

**-Career planning guides** (printed matter for guidance the staff which contain exercises, discussion and advice on career planning

**-Career counseling** (advice by a specialized professional counselor in assisting the employees interested in career planning)

**-Career paths** (directions) (planning job stages, identifying the skills needed to advance within the same family of channels such as wireless promoting a technical professional position in a managerial position).

The organization must monitor the career planning system to ensure that both managers and employees use it properly and especially to assess how it is useful in achieving its business objectives (eg. reducing the period of coverage vacant posts).

# 9.3 Purpose of career planning

* Helps a person to identify the skills and qualities needed for both current and future jobs
* Aligns and integrates personal needs and aspirations with opportunities available in the work environment.
* It improves the organizations ability to attract and retain high talented personnel.
* Outstanding employees are always scarce and there is always considerable competition to secure their services. Such individuals normally give preference to employers who demonstrate a concern for their future growth. E.g. If an individual is employed in an organization that offers career advice, this person may exhibit greater loyalty and commitment to their employer.
* It renews (revitalizes) a person who is experiencing stagnation in his/her career.
* It provides a person with the opportunity to develop himself in his career.
* Good planning enables an individual to make the future he/she wants to have rather than simply react to changes taking place.

## 9.4 Steps involved in career planning process

Making the right plans for your future during these turbulent times can be difficult. Knowing how to identify opportunities for choice and how to make responsible choices can empower you to enrich your life and career. Unfortunately, many people have neither taken the time nor made the efforts to logically think through and plan their career development. Therefore, career planning process helps in answering the following question

Where do I want to go?

What do I want to do?

What kind of a career should I pursue?

***The following are the steps that can be followed in the career planning process***

**1. Self-Assessment stage:** This helps you to know yourself. This involves getting to know yourself, your interests, abilities, values, skills, and personality. This stage is characterized by unawareness, in that you are not sure what your values, strengths, & weaknesses are. You start to feel as though you want to know more about yourself and make a conscious effort to get in touch with who you really are. It answers some of the following questions

• What do I want to do?

• What are my skills?

• In what ways do I most enjoy using them?

• What are my skill priorities?

A number of commercial and non-commercial instruments are available to help you conduct a self-assessment.

**2. Investigation stage:** This is referred to exploration stage. This involves gathering information about occupations. One of the best ways to obtain information is through information interviews. Interview someone working in the field. Here you are researching what work exists in the world. The task at this stage is to gain knowledge about careers and the world of work. This stage is characterized by feelings of confusion, in that you are not sure what career options exist for you.

**3. Preparation stage:** Under this stage you are still getting ready to do your life's work. This stage is characterized by feelings of excitement, as you think of how wonderful it will be to perform meaningful work. However, there is still much work to be done, and to be successful, you have to prepare. Gaining knowledge and experience. Setting career goals and adopting a successful -oriented mind-set

Setting career goals is an important step in career planning and goals guide you in making appropriate career decisions. Goals are general plans for what you would like to achieve. Objectives are specific, interim steps that you must take in order to reach a larger goal.

After you set a goal - such as becoming Human Resource director of a bid well established Organization in 10 years or becoming a Professor in the next 6-10 years - think about the objectives you need to establish in order to reach your goal.

For example, if your goal is to be a HR director, your objectives might include: learning more about the individual departments within the organization and the interaction between them, taking a management course, or identifying a mentor who has the experience you think will be helpful for your career goal.

Gather as much information as you can that is related to your goals and objectives. Ask your friends and colleagues about what it means to be a HR director

In reviewing all of the information you collect, you may discover a vital detail that helps you focus your objectives further or maybe even causes you to readjust your plans. For example, you may learn that there are organizations that are widely considered to be excellent training grounds for moving up, leading you to change your objectives to aim for a position in one of these organizations.

Whatever your ultimate career goals might be, make sure to ask around for input and information.

**4. Commitment Stage:** This stage is also known as implementation or action stage. At this stage you have figured out what you are meant to do. Sometimes people have known all along what they were meant to do but could not commit to the process of making it happen, for whatever reason. After all the exploration and research, you’ve done, the time is ready to put into motion the plans and goals which you’ve set for yourself. At this stage, more than ever, you must focus your energy and keep your eyes on the target. At this stage, action plan is important. This requires you to decide on which career is best for you, and then take action with an action plan.

**5. Retention stage:** At this stage you will feel comfortable in your career field, since you have figured out how things work in your industry. You will want to remain committed to your career by continually updating your skills & staying current with industry standards. This stage is characterized by providing first-class customer-service, skills building and creating professional network

**6. Transition stage**: The stage is characterized by feelings of discomfort in that you are unsure of what you will be doing next (and/or if you will be happy). In this stage, you will learn to make conscious changes in your career direction. It is characterized by Making career changes and developing personal resiliency.

## 9.5 Challenges of Career Planning

1. Some people are unable to effectively manage their careers because previous choices ie they may not have continued their education or updated their skills.

2. Work place changes which are beyond their control have left them few options

3. Labor market characteristics ie there is lots of uncertainty in the market & higher levels of unemployment

4. Failing to keep up with new technologies. I.e. it’s affecting both the work we do and how we do it.

5. Lacking career-related self-reliance skills.

6. Lack of skilled career counselors to guide us in career decision making

ITQ

a) Use your knowledge of career planning and development and explained the various career concepts known to you