

Reward and Career Management: What's Important and What's Not?

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Background

It was the howling of a lonely dog which brought Salman back from the sleep which had engulfed him a few minutes ago. He sat bolt upright and realized that his computer was on and even his cigarette was still burning and piling up a column of ash. "How many nights like that I have spent since joining the profession of Consulting" ? He asked himself, but he didn't mind waking up till late because he simply loved his work. As he stretched and reached for the half burnt out cigarette, he glanced at the papers across his table, took a deep drag on the cigarette and started to re-read the data and information in front.

He was concentrating on the Reward and Career Management of criteria of one of his client companies, Development Limited. He had a detailed meeting with his Assignment Manager the other day and they had defined knowledge as job knowledge i.e. number of years of experience of an employee in the related industry. Since this was a bench-marking exercise, Salman had similar data on employees from the best in that business company, Development Unlimited, with him as well. Before dozing off he had prepared a comparative study of the two companies which looked like as following:

Development Limited

Employee Name	Job Title	Age	Education	Experience in Years	Skills	Salary (RS.)
Maria Khan	(Assistant Product Manager)	25	MBA	1	Computer proficiency, excellent interpersonal and leadership skills, self-motivated, team player, excellent writing and presentation skills, highly committed	18,000
Tahira Saleem	(Product Manager)	36	MBA	12	no way near Maria on the above mentioned skills	32,000
Rizwan Habib	(Group Product Manager)	47	MA/CA	22	zero computer skills, autocratic style of management, conservative approach	48,000

Brief Company Profile: Development Limited was a leading consumer product company. Over the last few years stiff competition had displayed the company from its number 1 position to number 8 in the industry and the company was projected to record its income in red for the first time in its history.

Salman now looked at the information available from Development Unlimited and saw the following:

Development Unlimited

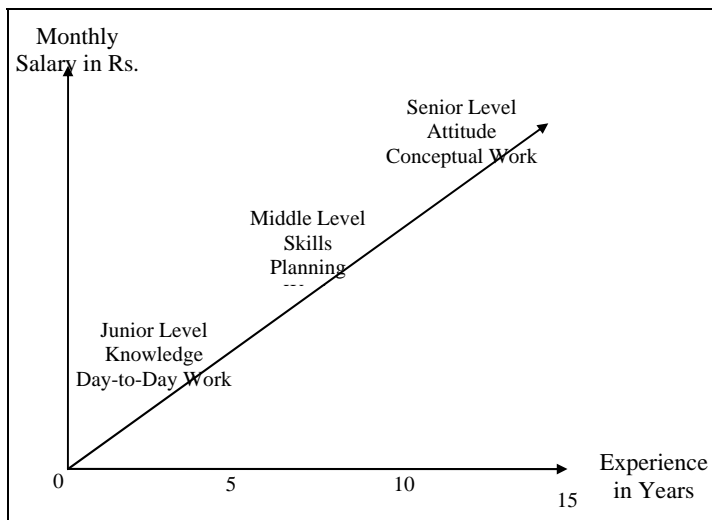
Employee Name	Job Title	Age	Education	Experience in Years	Skills	Salary (RS.)
Kamal Zafar	Assistant Product Manager	31	MBA	9	Average Skill Level (1)	22,000
Afshan Ali	Product Manager	33	MA	6	Good Skill Level	34,000
Naveed Khan	Group Product Manager	29	MBA	4	Excellent Skills,	57,000

Brief Company Profile: Development Unlimited, a new entry to the market of consumer products, had quickly established its position as the market leader. The company was now expanding its operation in the Asia Pacific and EC market.

Salman looked at the watch and was startled to see 3.30 AM but he clearly knew what Development Limited was suffering from. It was valuing its employees on the basis of number of years of experience alone (Knowledge and may be Skills). On the other hand Development Unlimited valued their employees on the basis of skills they possessed. With this thought Salman drowned himself in a well deserved sleep. He leafed through his interview impressions and notes of both the companies first thing next morning and tried to put the attitudes and behaviors of the above mentioned six persons in one word or phrase and got the following outcome:

Name	Company	Work related Attitude/Behavior Type
Maria Khan	Development Limited	Conscious/Competent/Aggressive Assertive ¹ or Learning type
Tahira Saleem	Development Limited	Competent/Passive or Knows-everything type
Rizwan Habib	Development Limited	Passive or Traditional type
Kamal Zafar	Development Unlimited	Competent/Passive or Knows-everything type
Afshan Ali	Development Unlimited	Competent/Assertive or Questioning type
Hatam Khan	Development Unlimited	Conscious/Competent/Aggressive Assertive or Learning type

Now things were much clearer on Salman. Development Unlimited was valuing their employees not only on the skills level but also on their attitude i.e. optimum combination of Knowledge, Skills and Attitude (KSA). Salman suddenly remembered his Vice President telling him one day, "Salman, if you have the right attitude for a job or work then the knowledge and skills are bound to come. The right attitude is like a magnet, it pulls knowledge and skills with it." "Well said sir". Salman murmured and caught himself whistling as he drove along for his home. That night, at 2 AM, Salman abruptly jerked away from his usual slumber on the chair, but this time no dog was howling. It was the force of a thought that had pulled him out of the sleep. And as he lit up a cigarette, he drew to conclusions out of it:



Finding # 1

A research of selected organizations suggests that an increasing number of organizations are linking their staff and management salaries with the acquisition of desired Knowledge, Skills and Attitude (KSA). The old trend of linking salaries with the quantity of experience is no more practiced in these progressive organizations. The first level of management which is from the first 0-5 years of the job is basically Knowledge based or functional. The second level between 6-10 years is skills

based and the final i.e. senior level management job is more of a Attitude-based job where in addition to functional knowledge, people skills and positive attitude including commitment, professionalism, leadership ability, vision, conceptual skills are very important. Generally speaking, it is assumed that one automatically reach at that level once he has completed that time frame. Whereas the research suggests that it is not true. In a number of cases people with only five years of experience were seen at the top level. Their promotion was not due to the time they have spent but rather due to the acquisition of all the KSAs required at the top level.

¹ Refer to article "Conscious and Competent: A Rare Breed"

Finding # 2

One will spend less and less time in day-to-day operation and planning work and more and more time in conceptual work as he/she moves up the ladder. The average time spent by a top executive in conceptual work is almost 80 % of the total work time. Whereas average time spent by a starter on day-to-day work is more than 80 %. The importance of conceptual work is visible from the fact that companies are willing to pay on average five times more for that work.

Conclusions

One can classify the managerial abilities in three broad categories; functional abilities related with academic and technical knowledge, planning abilities i.e. interpersonal skills and group or team building skills and, conceptual or strategic abilities related with leadership potential, positive attitude and vision of a manager, i.e. attitude. It is probably the last mentioned ability which separates a manager from a leader. It is also important to note that the below mentioned levels or hierarchy of skills is not related with age or number of years of experience:

- ⇒ Level I Functional or day-to-day operations (Knowledge)
- ⇒ Level II Planning (Skills)
- ⇒ Level III Strategic or Conceptual (Attitude)