

# The impact of a dual career path



In today's world, many organisations seem to undervalue technical professionals because they do not always occupy management positions, which tend to be associated with success in an individual's career. This observation suggests that organisations forget that outstanding managers and distinguished specialists have different skills and abilities. As a result of the failure to distinguish the managers' and specialists' skills, many organisations, especially large ones, face challenges in balancing the workload of administrative roles, while expecting administrators to have the technical expertise. A need for creating a better option to overcome such challenges has become inevitable, with increasing work complexities and the development of modern performance management systems. One way of striking a balance between managerial and technical skills is through a dual career path.

Dual career paths are said to exist where professionals are given a choice at a certain point of their career development. This choice is for two equivalent career progression paths, one to recognise managerial ability and the other to recognise technical dexterity.

This is a better way of looking at career paths, where an employee moves upwards to higher levels of management based on the level of academic qualifications, years of experience and technical competence. The traditional career path presents limited chances for managerial progression and has resulted in loss of motivation, leading technical specialists to seek job opportunities in the market.

With a Dual Career Path, regardless of the career structure of an organisation, employees can have options that will help them grow their career and attain their career goals, technically as well as through managerial levels. This option enables recognition of technical contributors that do not have managerial ambitions.

When employees are presented with career choices, it increases employee's satisfaction and retention. What one can see is those whose careers aspirations are on purely managerial roles, will be offered with roles at administrative path and those that wish to fully focus on providing technical contributions in their expertise will undertake a technical path in the career model. This approach of career management has a benefit of reducing the pressure on the organisations flexibility in career and reward structure to meet both individual and organisations objectives. Also this career path, recognizes technical career specialist to contribute their expertise to the organisation without having to become managers.

The ultimate result of dual career path is having motivated employees who will consequently remain with the organization for longer periods. In addition, this career option increases talent attraction rates.

In the light of the above, it is clear that alternative career progression system is vital for today's organisations. The importance of such career progression systems lies on promoting career choices that meet individual career aspirations, addresses promotion challenges by creating more vacancies and choices of career path. In addition, the path recognizes and appraises the role of the technical contributor.

A trial remains to the organisations to analyse their career structures and challenges associated with them in line with the nature of the operations, in order to determine the fit of Dual Career Paths in addressing both individual and organisational career expectations. It should also be noted that, this career path operates effectively with modernization of other HR systems in areas of performance and reward.

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