



University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Developing Relationships and Workplace Achievement

Student name: Diana Czanasz

Student number: 1808345

Module number: BMSW 5102

Tutor name: Ze Zook

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Developing People – IKEA Case Study

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INTRODUCTION

People were always seen as one of the most important factors of the organisational success. In today's economy services and goods have freedom to movement across the world, only employees are a resource which cannot be easily replicable. Therefore, it makes them single competitive advantage that remains within the company. Thus, is why investing in talent development is so important. This paper uses IKEA furnishing company as the study background. IKEA was founded by Ingvar Kamprad and evolved from small catalogue-based business to one of the world largest furnishing brand. The deciding factor of using this firm as a background is that the company mission and vision reminds the same over years, having its focus on people needs.

This work begins with the company short overview, then it is divided into three chapters. First chapter intends to assess the potential benefits of developing individuals within the workplace. Second chapter evaluates development needs and the methods which can be used to train individuals and prepare them for the future career succession. The last third part of this report is focused on the succession planning, here development plan will be created to meet individual needs. This paperwork will end with conclusion.

Company Background – IKEA

IKEA was founded in 1943 in a small city called Älmhult based in Sweden, by man called Ingvar Kamprad. From being a small business selling catalogue order-based furniture, over the years IKEA expanded, and became one of the largest homes furnishing company, selling ready to assemble pieces, not only in Sweden, but, in many other countries around the world. (IKEA, 2020). Having over four hundred of mortal stores, and 50 e-commerce markets, company sales in 2019 reached over 40 billion euros. Currently company employs over 200, 000 people worldwide (IKEA, 2020).



The vision of IKEA's founder was to offer wide range of functional and well-made furnishings at lowest possible prices so that everyone can afford to buy them. Nowadays this vision remains the same. IKEA company wants to improve daily life for many people including customers, co-workers, and suppliers. Moreover, as an organisation IKEA vision is to have positive impact on the people life and the world itself (IKEA, 2020).

Chapter I

Employee Development – Importance and Benefits

Employee development is the process through which an employee improves, enhances existing skills, and acquires new abilities that are applicable and relevant for the support of the firm goals and objectives. Since people are one of the most important assets of an organisation, developing employees could be beneficial for both organisation and an individual. Through those development processes, workers become more informed, acknowledged, and skilled, and at same motivated to do more. By investing in employee development, company will not only influence retention of the best hard-working employees, but it will also attract top talent. Creating stronger workforce brings competitive advantage to the firm.

1. Importance of Professional Development.

In today competitive environment, we hear more often about how important professional development is to the career success. But did we ask ourselves why it is so important?

In the context of today's competitive enterprise, the importance of employee development is enormous. Personal development programs are the very first steps in creating productive, engaged, and loyal workforce. It is very important to have good understanding of the level of impact that employee development have on the organisational success.

2. Benefits of Employee Development

Well executed employee development strategy can benefit all parties, including HR managers, employees, and broader organisation. Below are some of the examples of potential organisational and individual benefits.

Organisational Benefits:

a). Employee Retention = Cost Saving

Managers might think that investing in employee development programs might seem expensive. However, in the long term it can save big amount of money to the organisation. Employees often feel valued and appreciated when employers provide them with development/learning programs. Building the culture of trust, will foster loyalty, and engage workforce. Having this in mind, the rate of the staff turnover will drop, saving money to a business (Get Smarter, 2019).

b). Creation of the Promotable Employees

Having appropriate development program could help organisation in creating promotable employee. Instead of hiring fresh talents for the upper positions from outside of the company, it is worth to consider promotion of those existing ones, as they already know the business insights and are adapted to the culture like no one else (VALAMIS, 2020).

c). Improved Employee Motivation – Employee Empowerment

Great training opportunities will drive the employee engagement, so that they will stay motivated and sustain same level of productivity. Having your employees fully committed is crucial to the organisational success. Happy employee will bring positive attitude to your workplace, influencing co-workers and boost efficiency.

According to the research conducted by CEO Joseph Folkman for Forbes (2017), by collecting data from over 7 thousand employees at his firm, he founded that employees who feel the low level of empowerment were rated with very low work engagement of only 24% in comparison to those who felt high level empowerment and had engagement percentage of 79%. This study is just an example of how important is to keep employees motivated.

d). Learning Culture – Attracts New Talents

Nowadays business market is very competitive, there are plenty of organisations that are looking for talented employees. Therefore, advertising available vacation is not enough. In order, to attract right candidates, company must show competitive advantage, perhaps it would be carrier progression opportunity. According to Chad Halvorson (2020), organisations having strong learning culture will most likely use it as recruitment tool in order, to gain competitive advantage over companies that offer same wages and positions.

e). Improved Employee Collaboration

By training employees to not only respond but also to listen carefully to one another, with the understanding and consideration of different viewpoints will have positive impact on the organisation. Such training sessions will improve workers ability to collaborate effectively. When employees are keen to listen to one another and emphasize opinions and points of views, it becomes easier to collaborate and avoid unnecessary discussions, focusing on the common goal instead (Big Think Edge, 2017).

f). Improved Work Environment

Focusing on inclusion and diversity as the part of development program will help to transform your organisation and make it the better place to work. Improving quality of the relationships in the workplace will make your employees happier and positive about working for your organisation. Having a strong workplace network will have big impact on overall productivity. Creating positive atmosphere will improve employee retention (Big Think Edge 2017).

Individual Benefits:

a). Door to new opportunity

Remaining in same position for years to come, will stop you from shaping the potential, building the wall with no access to better future. Career development is designed to give a chance for the individuals to come out of their shell and explore, looking out for the future opportunities and growth (Wisestep, 2020).

b). Boost Confidence

Looking at career development from the perspective of improvement, modification and update will boost individual confidence. Having the confidence will put individual in position where he or she will be able to apply for better position with the higher chances to succeed.

c). Competitive Advantage

Being more informed and acknowledged would result in becoming more competitive. Employers have plenty of candidates to choose from when it comes to recruitment, so by showing them that you have the right skills and are able to do something better than others will rise the chance to become employed.

d). Reputation

When demonstrating the right knowledge and skills in the workplace, whether it is during the team working, complex problem solving, or decision making individual will automatically get attention of its co-workers or even management and be most likely seen as reliable and valued.

e). Increased Chance for Promotion

Career development will prompt person efficiency and increase of productivity. Usually there are two factors which can make one more promotable: seniority or skilfulness. Becoming promoted due to the time-length of working for the firm could take years, so by showing the abilities and skills would get one there faster. Employer seeing how skilful and engaged workers are would most likely invest in further training of such person, giving promotion opportunity.

Summary:

Organisations foremost important benefit is that throughout development trainings that can shape competitive, efficient, and engaged workforce. However, it is not in just company best interest as employees themselves can advantage from such programs. For instance, imagine person that work for same company for almost 3 years and being now expert in everyday tasks, but how about learning something new and enriching his/hers Curriculum Vitae? Development trainings and programs are not designed only for the firm suppression, but those are also for the individual, giving progression opportunities. What if one day the only skill person possess will not be furtherly required due to new technological innovation. Thus, why individuals should look at development processes as something positive and worth participating.

Chapter II

Employee Development Needs, the Way of Identifying Them and Development Methods

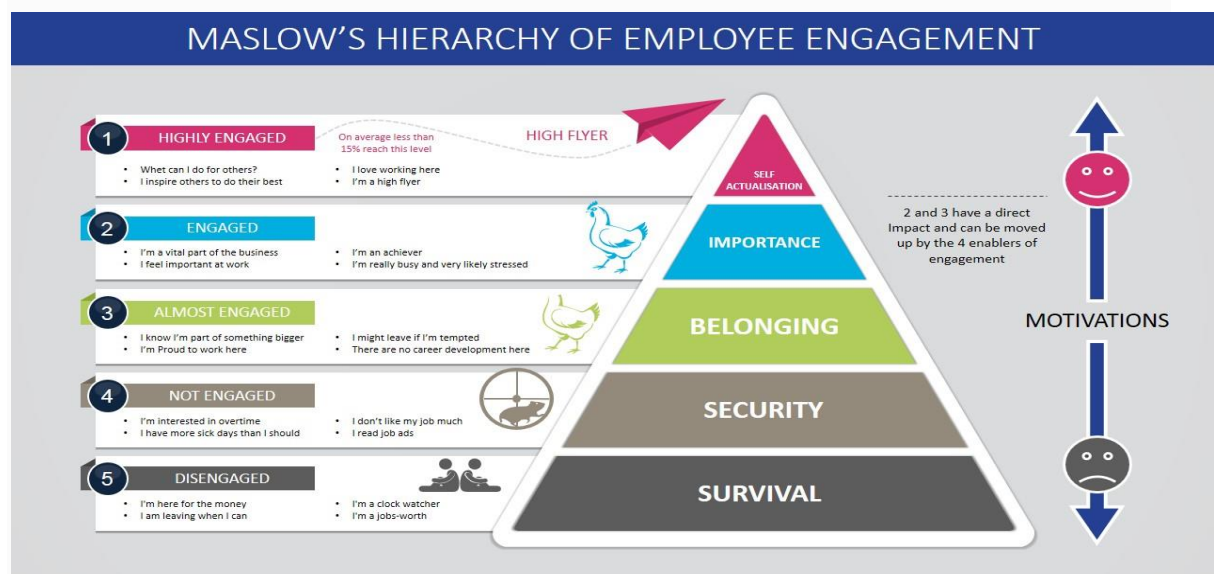
This chapter will cover the followed topics: individual development needs and ways of identifying them, and the methods of employee development including those practiced at IKEA furnishing company. Chapter will end with the summary, concluding all covered materials.

1. Understanding Individual Development Needs

Identifying and understanding individual development needs is a part of management responsibility. Hence, it is very important, as not every person have same career objectives or same personal goals. Each person has different mindset and expectations. Therefore, before engaging in training or selecting development alternatives, both the assessor and reviewee must be clear about what are the individual needs and how she/he and organisation might benefit from such development. In order, to do this, first we must review the core current or future job constraints and agree to what sort of attitudes and skills are needed and, what expertise is required (Mind Tools, 2020).

Because everyone requires different sort of attention, training and development should not adhere to a "single size suits all" approach. As a substitute, management should take some time to recognise individual needs and choose suitable training accordingly. Thus, this approach will help company to save not just time but also the money and resources. Moreover, it will make employees feel empowered, showing the right morale of the firm. According to Maslow Hierarchy of employee engagement, employees in order, to feel strongly engaged firstly must fulfil the basic psychological needs of survival, security and belongingness. Therefore, it is very important for an organisation to identify those needs in the first place.

Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Employee Engagement (Slide Model, 2020).



In accordance with the model of employee engagement demonstrated in Figure 2, employee when approaching the level of importance, feel the need of becoming achievable and independent. This is the time when management should be introducing employee with the development plan, increasing the chances that he or she will retain within organisation. By giving employee chance to achieve, at same we increase his/her motivation to perform better. Creating the win-win outcome.

2. How to Identify Employee Development Needs

Most managers have a good understanding of how important the training and development is for the organisational business growth, but very often they fail to determine individual needs. There is nothing worse than not training your employee but providing the one that is no needed it is counterproductive. According to Get Smarter (2019) carrying out the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) is one of the most effective tools that can be used to identify development needs in company. Dependently on the work nature some of those training analysis methods are questionnaires, interviews, observation, assessments, and reviews. Training needs analysis consists of three different levels demonstrated below in figure 3.

Figure 2. Three - tire approach to TNA (Get Smarter, 2019).



- ✓ **Assess the organisation** – this is where the business mission towards development of employee is identified, along with the sufficient methods of support which can be provided to meet the common objectives and goals.
- ✓ **Assess operations/tasks** – during this step, the skills which are necessary to perform tasks are identified and should therefore be compared with the current abilities and knowledge of the employees. By doing this type of analysis the gaps are also spotted. In order, to ascertain the current knowledge and skills level, in comparison with the ones required assessment centres can be used.
- ✓ **Assess the person** – find out the needs of training for the employee using appraisal and by analysing performance. Asking number of questions regarding the performance challenges are also beneficial as they could help in detection of training needs.

3. Employee Development Methods

Developing the employee is based on learning, experience, and training. The ongoing performance and acquiring of new skills and knowledge can be brought by variety of development methods. The methods listed below were introduced in the Business Study Notes by Umar Farooq (2016) and IKEA furnishing company.

Throughout the Job Training - Throughout the job training is a direct training conducted during the actual working hours. It can be also called shadowing. During such training employee is firstly observing the instructor while he or she is completing the task, and after acknowledging the methods that was used, employee is copying the techniques working towards desired outcome. The purpose of “on the job” training is to make one understand what the job nature is and what are the right methods of completing it (Farooq, 2016).

Cross-Training - Cross training is otherwise called job rotation. Namely job rotation is involved with ongoing change of the worker position within the company. Purpose of cross training is to improve the employee abilities and skills and to expand their knowledge. Such rotation could be horizontal or vertical, horizontal is a temporary change of the position and vertical occurs when employee is been promoted.

Vestibules - this method is like the one “on the job” as same equipment is used. What differentiate those two training methods is that vestibules can be done at anytime and anywhere, without disturbances and interruptions. Making it faster and easier for participants to acknowledge the skills (Farooq, 2016).

Training Courses - According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2020) training courses are the series of lessons that prepares individual for specific job by providing the right knowledge and teaching specific skill. It is the traditional form of developing process, focused on the analytical abilities of the workers. This technique of development is usually delivered through the seminars.

Mock-ups - training based on the usage of an imitation in order, to represent a factual situation. The purpose of this simulation is that the applicants can learn by completing the job but under supervised conditions. Those could be delivered via role plays, games, group interactions or even virtual training. Taking in consideration the fact that creating artificial environment might be not that costly, we might look at it as a great training idea. However, creation of identical environment is very difficult.

Self-study - is a very efficient method of development. When it is done through accurate planning it can be very effective. As the tools for this training participants can use the booklets and/or computer programs, having access to different concepts. The advantage of this method is not only effectiveness and ease but also the speed of feedback sharing. This form of training is especially recommended for the employees of the internationally expanded firms. As individuals can participate using devices outside of the workplace.

Bottom Line Training - ADDIE Model

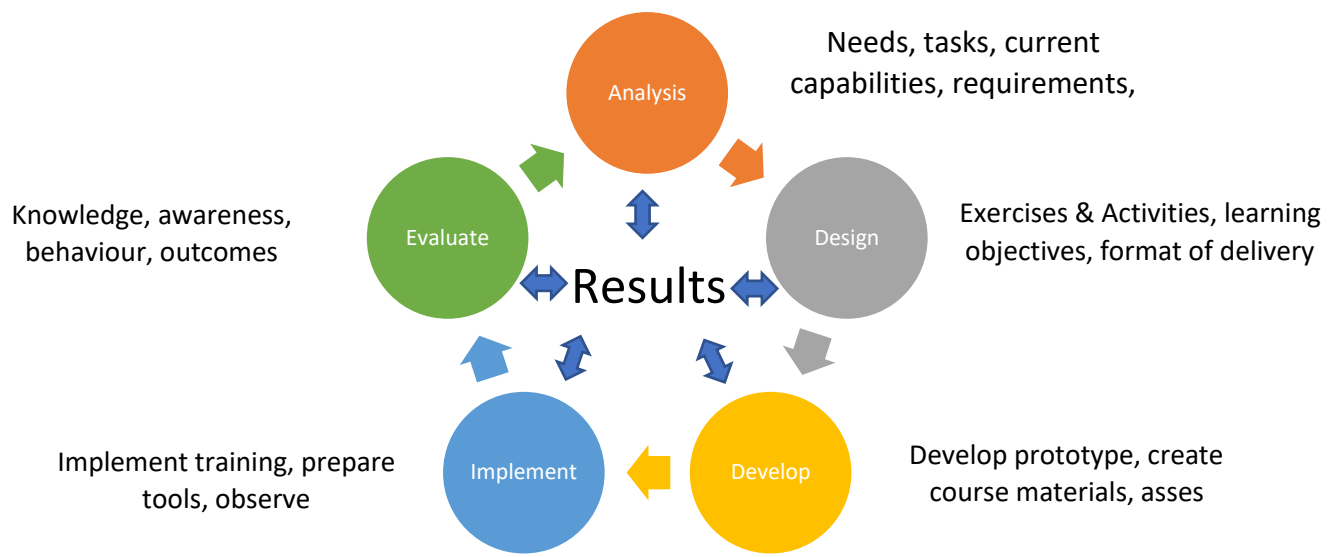


Figure 3. ADDIE Model (Ford, 2017).

The training design model illustrated in figure 3, was first introduced in early 1970 by educational psychologist Robert Gagne. Later Dr Don Ford readjust this model adding results as focus point of the model. (Sterling, 2017). In first stage of analysis the objectives, issues, abilities and learning gaps are identified. Second phase – design deals with the form of delivery and learning objectives it should be systematic and aim to develop appropriate training strategies. Development phase is when course materials are created and tested. Fourth, implementation stage focuses on developing training procedures for learners and facilitators. The last, evaluation stage, where all learning levels are reviewed. Training begins and ends with the results. ADDIE model is widely used in leadership, it begins and ends with a result. Is an example of the training design approach that could be used by IKEA.

Development Methods of IKEA:

IKEA grows along with its people. Development and training of the employees is in the company best interest. In IKEA, chances to be promoted are very high, one can easily grow from cashier to restaurant manager or from warehouse worker to floor manager. In the IKEA having diploma or previous education reached is not essential, but what matters is that one has the courage and shows an effort to develop and learn new skills (IKEA, 2020).

IKEA has its own structure of trainings and learning programs tailored to each position. New employees are always provided with an introductory session, where they learn how the company operates, what are their objectives, mission and vision, sustainable approach, and other essential subjects such as security and safety rules. At the beginning of an employment individuals have assigned mentors that are there to answer any questions and give the support that is needed. More trainings are provided at later stage of the employment accordingly to the needs and development plan.

Those are the forms of training and development at IKEA:

Development Talk – it is a meeting with the line manager. It happens minimum once in a year. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the current position and to find out what are the employee aspirations and desires towards the career, so that right development plan can be set up, helping individual to reach the goal.

Work Abroad - as a constantly growing firm, IKEA opens its stores in various locations giving its employees opportunities to be transferred to another city or even country. Moreover, some of the IKEA employees already experienced working in different countries and received grate support from their co-workers. (IKEA, 2020).

Development Centre - this tool is specially designed for assessing the strengths, weaknesses, abilities, and potential of an individual providing the feedback which is important for career progression. Development centre happens on the day when member fulfil different set of tasks, could it be individual or group one.

Management Development Program - is a program prepared for those candidates with the future potential and intention of becoming the manager. It is tailored to each person needs and especially focused on improving leadership skills and boosting up the professional knowledge.

Summary:

This chapter covered the career path, development needs – importance and ways of identifying the needs, and the methods of development and training. To conclude, it is not enough to have the knowledge about training forms and methods of development, what is important is to be able to choose right method for the right person and accordingly to the needs of that person and organisation itself. Each business has their own approaches when it comes to developing employees and those can depend on the size of the organisation, budget and needs those of the organisation and individuals themselves.

Having the right development vehicles available is crucial to preparing employee for the further succession within organisation. This chapter covered 10 different methods of development, some of which are practised in IKEA furnishing retail company. Each of the reviewed methods are grate in its own way, as it all depends on the needs and those needs might continuously change along with the company growth and innovations.

Perhaps, IKEA could adapt the additional training forms such as for instance mentioned above: cross training. The grate advantage of this method is that by exposing of the employee to further, higher in level job, the difference between actual and expected skills can be decreased. Through such experience, employee will have the chance to acquire new skills, boost the confidence, become more acknowledged, what in fact will prepare him for future career position. Having wild range of development methods is crucial in this constantly evolving market as along with the business the workforce should also grow.

Chapter III

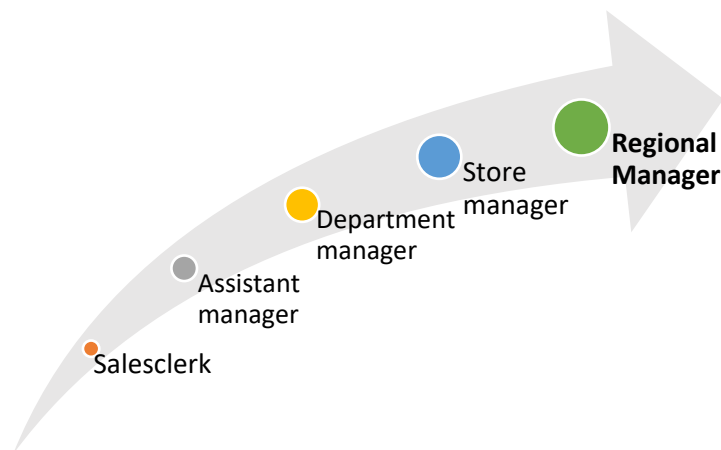
Career Path, Managing Performance and Succession Planning

Helping your employees in professional growth and enhancing their career goals is very important as it does not only benefit individual but also organisation. Keeping in mind as previously discussed that each person has their own potential and aspirations it is strongly advisable that development plan is based on the ability of individual. This part of the report will talk through career path and succession planning and will end by introducing an example development plan.

1. Career Path

Career path strongly depends on the individual needs and aspirations. It consists of the sequential jobs that lead person towards his or her goal. It does not have to be a straightforward way as sometimes in order, to reach personal career goal we must step level down or move sideways to acquire skills needed and to make our way up. Each career path is different, and its nature depends on how determinate person is, some people take less time than others to climb the career ladder (Doyle, 2019).

Figure 4. Career Path Example for IKEA retailer.



Career paths of the employee can be also part of development program and be reviewed during employee meeting with the Human Resources demonstrative. This could be part of the assessment process, where interests, abilities and knowledge of the employee is considered. As a tool to qualify employee for the roles in accordance with their career pathway, trainings and assignments might be additionally planed. In Ikea employees are encouraged to decide on and design their own career path with accordance to personal goals and development plan.

2. Succession Planning

Succession planning is vital to sustainable and rewarding organisational performance. Succession planning is the process of recruiting and developing employees with the purpose of filling a key role within company. The advantage of succession planning is increased disposal of competent and experienced employees who are ready to take place of the previous leaders as they retire, leave, or die, ensuring that there is no leadership gap. (CFI, 2020).

Benefits and Importance of Succession Planning

a). Reduced recruitment costs

By investing in development of internal employees, company can save money which would otherwise be spent towards external recruitment. Having your employee trained by senior leaders or managers will assure that the knowledge is continuously shared and reused. Moreover, promoting person from within organisation would be less cost effective than as example bringing the executive manager from outside of the firm (CFI, 2020).

b). Ease identifying future leaders

Succession planning help to identify ambitious and skilful employees that have the potential to take over key positions within the organisation. Current workers understand better the insights of the company and therefore they are in the better position for the replacement than outsiders. Moreover, promoting people from inside company will prevent the risk of hiring incompetent personnel (Boyd, 2016).

c). Helps detect and tackle performance and knowledge gaps

Strategic succession planning enables organisation to faster and easier detection of the employee competency gaps. Those gaps are the distinction between those required and actual competency level of the worker. It could be the gap caused by lack of employees qualified for the specific role. Having the gaps recognised in time will enable organisation to prepare structured trainings and programs which will further equip people with skills required to accomplish complex tasks and functions (CFI, 2020).

d). Keeps firm floating

Even small change such as exit of key employee could have bad impact on the organisational performance. Therefore, the company should be prepared for having a backup talent if such event occurs, otherwise the chaos caused by lack of expertise could lead towards disruptions and organisational downfall. Preparing your employee for the progression will not only benefit organisation but will also maintain loyalty of workers (CFI, 2020).

At IKEA Human Resources team are doing everything to attract and inspire employees, creating healthy and enjoyable work environment. IKEA's management knows that in order, for firm to succeed and fulfil the company vision, they must assure that co-workers are under succession plan all along theirs career journey (IKEA, 2016).

3. Plan for Employee Development

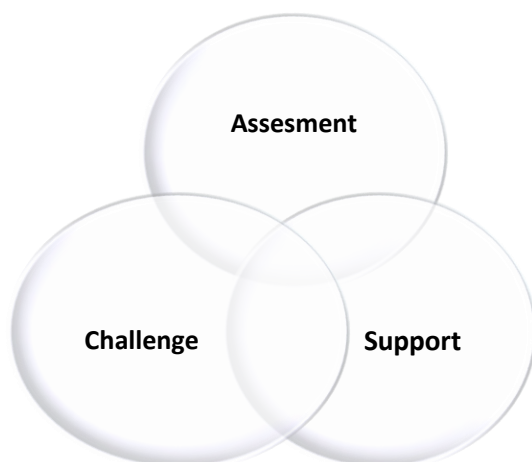
According to IKEA's career progression is strongly dependent on how motivated and eager the person is. Development plan for an individual is nothing more but action plan, intended to improve skills and knowledge of individual. This plan is also a reflection of the employee aspirations towards the growth within an organisation. Such document is designed to set the challenges and steps that must be taken by employee in order, to be promoted as desired (Spacey, 2018).

The employee and supervisor are negotiating the employee's level of involvement in development plan. It is a standard that each worker be supposed to have minimum of one form of activity planned in his/her implementation program. Personal Development could be designed towards improvement of the currently required skills (if some areas of improvement are noted) or associated with the future role responsibilities. (Buffalo State, n.d.).

Approaches to Professional Development

- a). Assignments - learning by doing, involves new responsibilities, short term projects, challenging tasks.
- b). Relationships Developments – interacting with co-workers (team project, complex problem solving, discussion).
- c). Training Based on Skills- by attending that kind of trainings, trainee will be able to acknowledge not only new information and set of skills but also learn the behaviours which are necessary for desired role.

Figure 5. Components of Professional Development Plan



Assessment- using the standards upon which the performance of an individual is assessed

Challenge – using the tasks that would require one to use critical thinking and go out of the comfort zone acting in unusual manner

Support – this is environmental support system, it could be the trainee's assistant or mentor, person which would guide, observe, and provide employee with the feedback.

If the performance of employee is still relatively low, the short-term goals should be oriented towards immediate performance. However, it does not mean that he or she must resign from the long-term goals. According to John spacey (2018), considering the organisational preferences individual development plan preferably should align to the role related to this current one. Below the example of the development plan for the position of the Graphic Communication Leader at IKEA in accordance with the needs and requirements, is suggested. Scenario is that the flor manager wishes to change role and become the graphic communicator leader (IKEA, 2017).

Individual Development Plan				
Long term goal: Graphic Communication Leader				
Short term goals: time management, improve graphic communication and team management.				

Goal	Objective	Resource	Measurement	Completion date
Improve time management skills	Deliver content in less time using graphic approach without affecting desired outcome.	N/A	Monitor the time consumed by meeting and collect feedback from participants regarding the content.	28/07/2020
Improve team management approach towards coaching and supporting of employee's	Recognise development needs and deliver appropriate trainings employee career succession.	Online based learning & coaching sessions	Feedback gathered from performance improvement, direct reports, and employees.	Usually duration of 3 months is required to notice improvement
Develop graphic communication skills	Convey emptions, concepts and, information using the layout, design, images (IKEA, 2017).	Work closely/ shadow other graphic communication leader & team projects.	Feedback from the interior design and communication manager.	End of Q4

Figure 6. Development Plan Example for IKEA employee.

CONCLUSION

Employee development and training is crucial in creation of competitive workforce. It enables the personnel to enrich their skills within the organization and at same it increases the value of the organisation, securing the key talents and keeping advantageous knowledge. By delivering development programs to people at the company management creates supportive work environment, boosting the confidence and productivity of employees. This report in its first chapter, highlighted the importance and benefits of developing people within the workplace, the second chapter was dedicated towards development needs and methods of training delivery, last third report was related to the career path and succession planning. Nevertheless, there are tremendous advantages that both individual and organisation can gain from mentioned in this paperwork training approaches. Therefore, IKEA should keep on good practice in investing time and capital in their best assets which are their employees.

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