

Career Planning – An Imperative for Employee Performance Management System

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Abstract

With the advent of more and more scientifically designed HR Management Systems, the increasing transparency and accountability of corporate governance, Executive Performance Management System (PMS) – adequately supported by vital enablers like Career Planning (CP) - is providing the cutting edge in business. Being a stakeholder in the organisation, employees expect their career cycle to be a concern of their as well as their organisation's. CP is essentially a mechanism to provide opportunities and challenges to employees at each stage of their vertical/ horizontal movement. A career change may have a big impact on the performance of the employee. PMS needs to be supported by a judicious CP System, adequately dovetailed with potential demonstrated by the employees and the opportunities which the organisation can afford to provide.

This paper deals with CP in totality, from concept to implementation stage. An empirical study has been conducted to find out the employee mix based on their performance and potential in organisations from both govt. as well as private sector and management decisions to be taken for each such mix. It is suggested that CP should be done for only those who are performers and/or those who have potential to perform to ensure sustainable development.

Keywords: Performance management system, Career planning, Performance, Potential management decisions.

JEL Classification: M12, M51

1. INTRODUCTION

The need to plan for employees' career issues from both economic and social forces. The human resources of an organisation must be in a constant state of development if the organisation is to survive and prosper in an ever-changing environment. Modern employees are beginning to insist that work demands be effectively integrated with the human need for personal growth, expectation of one's family and the ethical requirements of society. For senior managerial level, soft skills have become more important than technical ability, industry experience or business knowledge. With predictable career paths becoming more/less extinct, professionals seeking advancement are getting confused. The career relationship between individuals and organisations seems to be changing dramatically towards more "protean" and "boundaryless" careers (Hall, 1996; Sullivan, 1999).

Let us focus on understanding the terms career, career development and career planning. A career can be defined as a sequence of separate but related work activities that provide continuity, order and meaning in a person's life. Career development stresses on development of the general, technical and managerial career in the organisation. But Career Planning (CP) implies helping the employee plan his career in terms of his capabilities with the help of reporting officer, of specific career paths of the employee in the foreseeable future. Fletcher (1993) defined Performance Management System (PMS) as it being "associated with an approach to creating a shared vision of the purpose and aims of the organization, helping each employee understand and recognize their part in contributing to them, and in so doing, manage and enhance the performance of both individuals and the organization."

It has been acknowledged world-wide that an effective Executive PMS is an essential pre-requisite for an organisation

to achieve and sustain competitive advantage. As a system for managing employee performance the process of performance management is most commonly represented as a cycle: Ainsworth and Smith (1993) have described the cycle of events as Performance Planning, Assessment of Performance and finally Corrective and Adaptive Mutual Action via Mutual Feedback Discussions. Guinn (1987) also proposed a three-step process: planning, managing and appraising. Torrington and Hall (1995) likewise have three steps of planning, supporting and reviewing performance. Hartle (1995) developed the 'mixed model' which stresses on planning, managing, reviewing and rewarding. Most organisations follow this 4-stage model now-a-days, which can be further detailed as: Setting Individual Business Roles and relating them to the job objectives of work groups and business through Performance Planning, Performance Measurement and review, Rewards and Performance development Armstrong and Baron (2007).

2. THE LINKAGE BETWEEN PMS AND CP

It is necessary that HR policies directed at performance management be supported by effective systems. PMS is one of the most important HR strategy factors; the others being recruitment & selection, career development, performance appraisal, training and development, compensation designing and human resource planning. Career development and performance appraisal have direct linkage with PMS. Conventionally performance appraisal is viewed as the only component of performance management. Such an approach fails to support human performance, and rather ends up inhibiting it. While career development considers career mapping, succession planning, management development and integrating career development with OD initiatives; performance appraisal design appropriate tools and aligns such appraisal with training needs, promotion, transfer and relocation.

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Performance appraisal helps to rate the performance of the employees and evaluate their contribution towards the organisational goals. Performance appraisal leads to the recognition of the work done by the employees, many a times by the means of rewards and appreciation, etc. It plays the role of the link between the organisation and the employees' personal career goals. A feedback communicated in a positive manner goes a long way to motivate the employees and helps to identify individual career developmental plans. Based on the evaluation, employees can develop their career goals, achieve new levels of competencies and chart their career progression. Performance appraisal encourages employees to reinforce their strengths and overcome their weaknesses. Potential appraisal helps to identify the hidden talents and potential of the individuals. Identifying these potential talents can help in preparing the individuals for higher responsibilities and positions in the future. The performance appraisal process in itself is developmental in nature.

The IPD Performance Management Survey, conducted in 1997 in the UK, studied among others, the performance management practices in 35 organisations. It showed that PM is regarded as a number of inter-linked processes rather than a single system. A number of linked people management activities like communication strategies, competency development, job design and evaluation, payment systems, motivation practices aligned with PM for its development. However, the commonest link found were between performance management and career progression or development of skills and capabilities, where, for example, in 3M healthcare, supervisors' assess individual's capabilities and potential for progression by earmarking their status : well placed (ready: next year), career broadening (ready: lateral move) and increased responsibility (ready: different job). Walker, 1973 had shown the linkage between the CP process and management as given in Figure 1.

Individual Career Planning	Human Resource Planning
Occupational and organizational choice	The way we attract, recruit, and orient new talent to the organization
Job assignment/choice	The way we match individual interests and talents with opportunities
Performance and development planning and review	The way we help individuals perform effectively and develop capabilities
Retirement	The way we help individuals prepare for satisfying, secure retirement

Fig.1. Linkage between career planning process and management (Walker, 1973)

3. ROLE OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATION IN CP

Although it is the management's responsibility to provide the organisational climate, support and development programs needed for effective career planning, it is the individual's responsibility to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for managing his career. Career management, then, has two perspectives: individual and organisational (Badawy, 2007). Individual careers consist of work positions, activities, and

development in one or more organisations during the course of their working lives (Driver, 1979), and organisations offer various career opportunities and paths to their prospective and existing employees (Gunz, 1989). Successful professional employees pass through four distinct stages (Dalton and Thompson, 1986). Each stage differs from the others in the tasks that must be performed, the types of relationships engaged in, and the psychological adjustments to be made. The stages start from apprenticeship, then move on to being specialists and independent; the third stage is playing multiple roles, including informal mentor, idea person and manager. Many retire at this stage and a few move on to the fourth stage where as a senior manager, internal entrepreneur or idea innovator they have a high degree of influence on the direction of their organisation or one of its major segments. Company policies and practices can substantially affect an employee's ability to work out a satisfying career – right from determining the human resource needs of the organisation to analyzing the distribution of the employees in the four stages, assigning jobs tailored to employees' needs and to the organisation's business goals and providing career-based training and development programmes supported by appropriate reward systems.

A survey conducted in a multinational manufacturing firm to find out the views of 312 respondents about their individual career concepts, motives, and the organisational strategy and culture showed that the career-and culture-based motivational capital is positively associated with how effective the people view the strategy, how well-functioning the structure is experienced, how relevant the performance appraisal is considered, how satisfied the people feel, and how long they stay in the organisation (Larsson, R., Brousseau, K. R., et al, 2007).

Research has been conducted to validate the theoretical discussions on the association of individuals and organisational career development interventions, implying that organisations need to design their career mobility systems or performance incentive systems in accordance with employees' career orientations (Kim, 2005). International assignments have become an integral part of individuals' careers and are considered one of the most effective talent development tools. Yet, one problem that is particularly acute from a talent development perspective is that of high turnover rates among repatriates. While vulnerability to turnover varies depending on the type of assignment, i.e., developmental, functional and strategic, two sets of variables were found to play a key role in international assignees' decision to stay or quit: the perceived company-provided support and effectiveness of the repatriation management system, as well as the career advancement opportunities within the company relative to those available outside the company (Stahl, Chua, et al, 2007).

4. THE CAREER PLANNING MODEL

The career concept model was originally developed by Michael Driver (1979) and has been extended and applied together with Kenneth Brousseau, et al (1984) to various person and organisation issues, such as change (Driver, 1980), advisement (Brousseau and Driver, 1994), organisational culture (Driver and Coombs, 1983), demographics (Driver, 1985; Brousseau, 1989), human resource management (Von Glinow et al., 1983), mergers and acquisitions (Larsson et al., 2001), and international expansion, leadership, and brand management (Larsson et al., 2003).

Developed by Michael Driver (1979, 1980) and Kenneth Brousseau (1984), the career concept model tries to understand and describe individual views and experience of careers. Based on the following two primary conceptual factors:

- (1) The frequency of career change (durability in a given field of work)
 - (2) The conceptual “direction” of career movement or change
- four distinct career concepts – expert, linear, spiral and transitory – are built.

(1) Expert: Career choice is made once for a lifetime, commitment to an occupation, “upward” advancement is less definitive of success than is “mastering” of the skills, knowledge and work of the expert’s choice

(2) Linear: Career choice focuses on upward movement on an externally defined “ladder” (such as a managerial hierarchy) with infrequent (rare) changes in career field, while upward promotions are desired as frequently as possible

(3) Spiral: Career choice evolves through a series of occupations (with moderate, five-to-ten years’, duration in each) where each new choice builds on past choices in order to develop new skills (lateral related movement).

(4) Transitory: Career choice involves frequent change of field, organisations, and jobs (one-to-four year intervals) with variety of experience being a dominant force (unrelated movement in multiple directions).

A questionnaire helps identify an individual’s career profile that simply reflect individual orientations regarding his/her career.

Career concepts have been linked to other career models [e.g. Schein’s (1978) career anchors and Derr’s (1986) career orientations] and empirically related to motivational differences (e.g. Driver and Coombs, 1983; Coombs, 1989; Larsson et al., 2003). Expert concepts relate to in-depth competence and security needs as do Linear to needs for power and advancement, Spiral to self-development and creativity, and Transitory to needs for novelty and independence.

The career concept model has made specific linkages between operational HR appraisal and reward systems, organisational strategy and structure, and the career concepts and motivations of co-workers, managers and executives (Driver and Coombs, 1983; Brousseau et al., 1996; and Larsson et al., 2003).

5. OBJECTIVES

1. To bring clarity in the perception of those organisations which are not practicing CP
2. To enable organisations in appreciating the benefits of CP system
3. To clarify the role of organisation and the individual employee for implementation of CP step by step
4. To provide a scientific tool to organisations for segregating the employees in various categories and combinations of “Potential” and “Performers” Keeping in view the importance of CP in any organisation, the authors were part of the implementation of CP in a private organisation. Since organisations generally rotate “select few” employees from one function/sub function to another on the basis of their demonstrated performance and/or observed potential, they wanted to use a scientific tool to segregate employees according to their potential and performance and provide interventions accordingly instead of devoting equal time and energy to all employees irrespective of their potential and

performance.

6. METHODOLOGY

According to Pareek and Rao (2001) 3 types of employees can fall under the purview of CP:

- (1) New recruits – freshers
- (2) Employees with long tenure in organisation but stagnating in same position for 6-7 years and may have shown potential
- (3) Those who have reached a stage beyond which they cannot advance

Based on the matrix designed to handle difficult people (Rao, 2004), a Potential-Performance matrix was developed and data collected from a PSU and a private organisation, both doing comparable business in engineering sector, manufacturing various types of industrial equipment. Both organizations have multi-location set-up and belong to the SME (Small and Medium enterprises) category. The sample size was approximately 20% of the Executives in both the sectors selected randomly; in the surveyed PSU, the sample size in numerical terms was 150 out of 710 and 60 out of 295 in the private organisation. The target group was limited to the Executives – from HODs to Junior Managers. The data was given by HR department of the two organisations on the basis of the annual appraisal of the employees. A line graph was drawn based on the data and suitable interpretation done for necessary action pertaining to the four quadrants.

6.1 Implementation of CP

CP aims at providing good career opportunities to promising employees of the organisation, improve its overall “skills inventory”, minimise the number of “indispensable” employees and achieve flexibility in placements/postings of employees. CP is also used as a strategy for retention and to create a “feeder” line for succession planning for senior positions in the organisation.

Designing and implementation of the CP System depends on the following -

1. Nature of business of the organisation (manufacturing, continuous process, batch-process, services, etc)
2. Future business plans, new projects, etc
3. Opportunities available (intra-function as well as inter-function) in present & future business
4. Availability of “right” candidates for career planning

The pre-requisites of CP System are as follows:

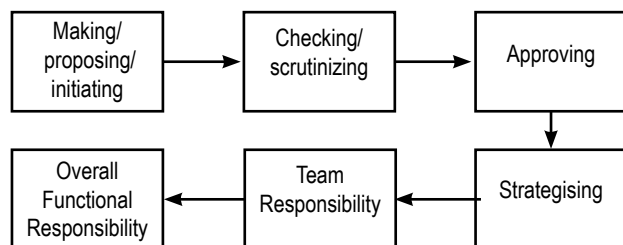
- List of discipline wise sub-functional roles/categories
- Training Needs Identification Process/system
- Availability of Job Description/Key Result Areas for each role at each stage of career progression
- Skills/Competencies required at each point of responsibility
- Potential Assessment System
- Promotion policy
- List of “right” candidates to be covered under CP System

An Illustrative List of Functions & sub-functions (Avenues for Career Planning of Employees) is given below in Table 1.

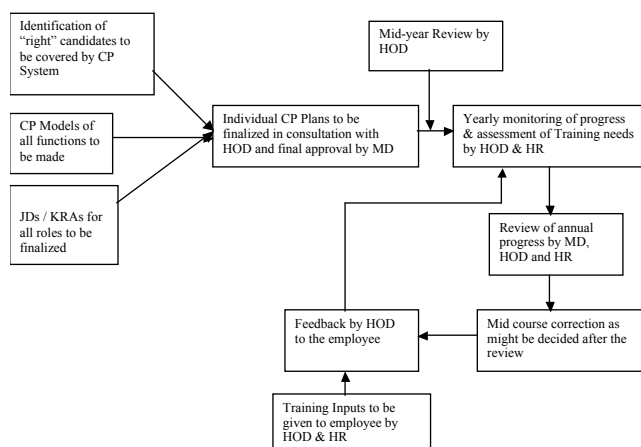
The Hierarchy of responsibilities / roles which the employee will have to handle during career progression must be clear to them right at the onset, as shown in Figure 2. Some of the roles mentioned can be clubbed to maintain a lean structure.

Table 1: Illustrative List Of Functions & Sub-Functions (Avenues for Career Planning of Employees)

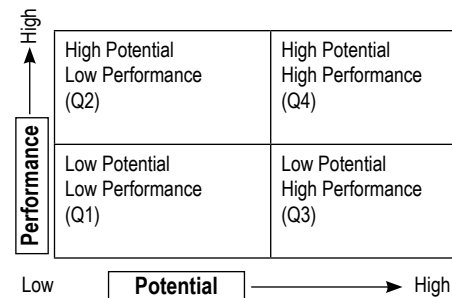
Name of function	Sub-functions
Design Engineering	Civil
	Mechanical
	Electrical
	Instrumentation
	Process
Projects	Project Planning / Costing
	Execution
Material Management	Procurement
	Storage
	Inventory Control
HR / Administration	HR
	Training & Development
	Administration
Finance & Accounting	Finance
	Accounting
	Taxation
Maintenance	
Quality Assurance	

**Fig. 2. Hierarchy of responsibilities / roles during career progression****6.1.1 Steps in Implementation –**

A Process Flow Chart of Career Planning System Implementation is given in Figure 3. The steps are as follows:

**Fig. 3. Process flow chart of implementation of career planning system**

1. Identification of employees to be brought under the purview of Career Planning with the help of a potential – performance matrix as given in Figure 4.

**Fig. 4. Potential – performance matrix**

Management Actions needed for employees lying in each of the four quadrants is given in Table 2.

Table 2 : Suggestive Management Action for each quadrant of Potential – Performance Matrix

Category	Management Actions
Q1	To be weeded out
Q2	- To be counseled that despite high potential, his performance is below the mark - Opportunities to be provided to use high potential through career planning
Q3	- High performance can be moderately rewarded but career planning not needed due to low potential - Can be consulted for a job change (if potential is moderate) - Succession Planning is necessary for such employee because he could be a specialist
Q4	- To be suitably rewarded - To be watched – he might have “gypsy” attitude because of his awareness that he has a good market value - To give avenues of growth through career planning - Succession Planning should always be ready for such employees

2.Preparation of Individual Career Plans with the help of CP Model

3. Review mechanism to be included in PMS

4. An ongoing consultative process between HOD & HR (to maintained by HR)

5. Mid-year review between the employee & HOD

6. A system of annual feedback to MD and his review (along with HOD & HR)

7. A system of providing annual feedback and required training inputs to employee

Table 4: Interpretation of The Trend Curves

Quad-rant No.	Factors Visible from Trend Curve	Inference / Analysis	Actions recommended with regard to CP & Succession Planning (SP)
Q1	Percentage of Low Potential Low Performance employees is double in Govt. sector as compared with private sector counterpart.	- Recruitment practices are different in the two sectors. - Govt. sector lives with such employees due to its service conditions / policies.	- No CP / SP needed. - Such employees are to be phased out gradually.
Q2	Percentage of High Potential Low Performance employees is about six times higher in Govt. sector, as compared with private sector counterpart.	- Govt. sector endeavours to hire best talent, similar to private sector, but, once recruited, all the employees are managed with policies and practices which cannot recognise and reward high performers. This results in loss of motivation in High Potential employees and they start giving average or lower performance. - Reward and punishment systems in Govt. sector are rather bureaucratic which denies timely justice for giving reward and punishment. High Performance employees lose their motivation easily.	Their CP is to be done in a manner that, besides vertical career progression, their job profile has to be made more challenging.
Q3	Percentage of Low Potential High Performance employees in private sector is 10% higher as compared with Govt. sector.	Private sector is seriously affected by "attrition" because most of the promising employees are taken away by their competitors. With this in mind, private sector remains favourably inclined to have around 60% of such employees who are doing very good in present assignment but are not capable of shouldering higher responsibilities.	- No CP is needed for such employees. Only variety in job of similar nature can be offered to them. - No SP is needed for such employees because they are not likely to leave the organisation.
Q4	Percentage of High Potential High Performance employees in private sector is 15% higher as compared with Govt. sector.	The reasons are obvious. These employees are star-performers and should be offered challenging assignments regularly.	- CP is to be carefully done for such employees with a view to keep their motivation level high and also to retain them in the organisation to the extent possible - SP is also necessary for this category because such employees can suddenly leave the organisation.

Table: 5 Validation Process

Objective	- To ascertain whether the CP system was workable - To examine whether the CP system was not turning the business apple-cart of the organization up side down - To ascertain whether envisaged benefits were really accruing to the organization - To confirm whether the CP system was enhancing the decision making flexibility of the management
Process	- It was pilot study-cum-validation exercise - Only one location/unit of the private sector organization was selected for validation of CP System. On completion of this exercise successfully, it was repeated in an unit of the public sector. - As first step, the executives were distributed in four categories (quadrants). The data was provided by HR, in consultation with team of HODs. - The executives lying in Q2 & Q4 were given assignment rotation (after one-to-one counseling), considering the fact that they were rated as “high potential” executives by management. Their performance was closely monitored by HODs vis-à-vis their individual annual goals and targets.
Findings of validation	- Performance of executives belonging to Q4 continued to be high (as before) even in the new assignment - Performance of executives belonging to Q2 showed definite improvement trends. Even their level of motivation and sense of belonging to the organization was on the increase, as perceived by their superiors, peers and subordinates - In the public sector it was more difficult to convert the employees belonging to Q1 quadrant to at least Q3 as they had job security.
Constraints faced during validation	- Resistance to change despite mass awareness sessions and individual counseling. - Even the HODs showed resistance to change initially - While assignment rotations were implemented successfully, location change could not be given because the validation process was confined to only one unit/location
Mid-course corrections, if any	- An interim report of the validation was presented to CMD and Directors. They agreed that the CP System was valid and relevant. However, they desired that:- - A concise booklet on CP System be prepared and distributed to all executives across the organization - A list of executives, who had “mobility constraints” for transfer to other locations, should be prepared for use of management. The list could be reviewed every year for any addition/deletion - Executives above 55 years of age should be kept out of CP System because large part of their career was already over
Deliverables to Management	- A comprehensive manual on validated CP system was given to management after incorporating the directives of management. - The CP System has been implemented across the organization

6.2 The Results of the Study on Potential – Performance Matrix

The data collected from the Study on Potential – Performance Matrix has been plotted and the Distribution of “Executive” Category Employees in each Quadrant is shown in Figure 5.

Quadrant	Category of Employees
Q1	Low Potential Low Performance
Q2	High Potential Low Performance

Fig.5. Distribution of “Executive” Category Employees in each quadrant

It may be observed that the curves in both the Govt. sector (PSU) and the private sector show qualitatively similar trend though the gradients of increase and decrease in the curves differ. The ratios of change for the private to govt. (public) sector is given in Table 3.

Table 3: Ratios of change for the Private to Govt. (Public) sector

Quadrant	Ratio of Change
Q1 : Q2	0.12

Interpretation of the trend curves is given in Table 4.

7. FINDINGS AND VALIDATION

The model (Figure 4) was validated after it was implemented in a unit of the private sector organization first. The process was as follows –

1. The CP system was first presented to the Board of Directors (BOD) and their consent was obtained. It was made clear that while high performers may welcome the intervention, low performers were likely to view it with suspicion and hostility.
2. It was also explained to the BOD that such interventions needed 2-3 years incubation period before the benefits could start to accrue. Moreover, all the HODs of line functions were required to own up the system, rather than think that it was yet another gimmick of the Management and HR in particular.

3. A session on CP system was taken by the authors for the HR Department to create an ownership among them and to clarify their doubts.

4. Like any other OD intervention, a mass awareness campaign was taken up to educate the executives about their organization losing the cutting edge and the necessity of a system like Career Planning. A FAQ sheet was prepared and distributed among the executives. This role was primarily taken by the HR function of the organization.

5. In the first year, the organization categorized the executives in four quadrants to analyze the magnitude and extent of work on hand. The movement schedules (assignment and locational rotation) were drawn (in consultation with HODs) for executives lying in Q2 & Q4. These executives were individually counseled for their potential & performance and for CP interventions to be followed in their individual cases.

6. Executives in Q1 and Q3 were counseled on their current level of performance and those in Q1 were specifically asked to improve their performance.

7. In the second year, the rotations as per CP recommendations were effected.

8. In the third year, rotations were continued and stock taking was done to analyse the impact of CP interventions in the preceeding year.

9. It was found that post-rotation, the performance level of executives lying in Q2 quadrant started improving while those of Q4 were unaffected, i.e., they continued to show high potential and high performance.

The same process was then repeated in the public sector. While the results were identical in this case too, the executives lying in Q1 with low potential-low performance could not be weeded out due to systems and culture of a PSU.

As the model was implemented in organisations belonging to both private and public sector, we can conclude that it is not sector-specific, has general applicability and therefore externally validated. The entire validation process including the constraints faced and mid-term corrections is presented in Table 5.

8. CONCLUSION

CP sounds catchy, but it is one of the most arduous and sensitive aspect of PMS. Besides “pay for performance”, CP is a strategic tool to enable the employees to perform higher. An organisation with a transparent and performance-oriented CP system has a positive impact on its recruitment, retention and commitment strategies. Career management and career advisory service should be integrated with the strategic direction of an organisation.

PSUs and Private Sector have different paradigms of HRM but basics of CP remain same and similar. PMS for its employees was always a key issue for any organisation, but, the shift in quality of work life has made the employees more understanding and demanding. Employees are aware of their marketability as well as vulnerability to market forces and consequent need to acquire and maintain a portfolio of transferable capabilities. Similarly, to face global competition for knowledge workers and retain scarce managerial talent, organisations need to secure their skills base, and develop people's potential and commitment. Thus, CP provides opportunities to employees to acquire higher knowledge and skills, thereby, adding value to themselves and to their organisation. Sustainable

development can be ensured only if CP is focused and takes care of employees who have demonstrated potential and performance.

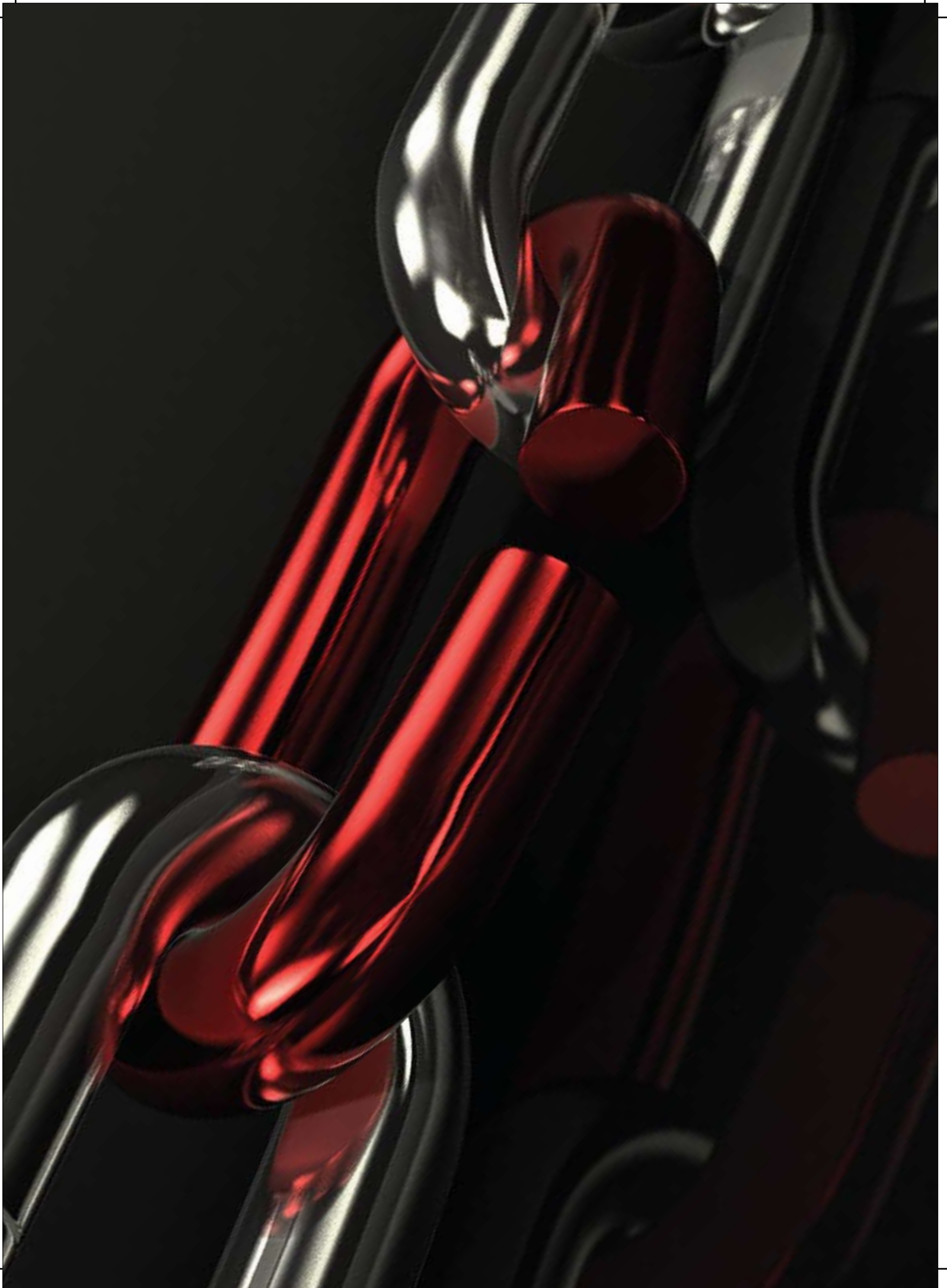
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