Career Management Recommendation

Name

Instructor

Course

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**Executive summary**

The implementation of a career management program at Consulting Inc, a hypothetical company is aimed at enhancing productivity and reducing the high rate of employee turnover that is currently being experienced by the organization. This report details the need to implement a career management program at the organization to the CEO of Consulting Inc. in particular, the report provides a history of the issue and its symptoms and causes, which include low productivity and high rates of turnover. The report also includes the cost implications of the career management program, and how the benefits achieved due to high productivity and low turnover rates outweigh the costs. The legal implications associated with the implementation are also discussed, and it is recommended that legal experts should be consulted so as to avoid litigation. It is estimated that the majority of the employees and managers will embrace the career management program, but that they will need to be consulted early so as to improve their levels of support. The timing associated with the project is expected to last for six months so as to adequately prepare the organization for the change.

**Recommendation**

Assessment tools should be implemented so that the employees’ strengths, skills, and potential can be ascertained. The organization should establish the use of performance appraisals and skills analysis tools that will provide information regarding every individual’s capacity to effectively perform their duties and responsibilities. The second recommendation regards the development of organizational development processes that will assist employees to determine how their skills and qualifications are aligned with the organization’s goals. Employees need to know how their performance determines the realization of the organization’s objectives. The third recommendation suggests that training and development should be adopted as methods that will enforce goal setting and action planning. According to Ford (2014), based on the strengths, skills, and potential that were highlighted by the assessment tools, every individual should be assisted to determine how they can fortify their strengths and accomplish their potential. Additionally, weak areas identified by the assessment tools should be corrected through the use of correctional strategies. Other than individual attributes, training and development should also impart best practices on the employees based on changing market demands (Ji et al, 2012). This will allow Consultancy Inc to have competitive advantage over its rivals. The fourth recommendation has to do with the alteration of organizational infrastructures in a way that supports talent management. The firm’s policies and processes should include areas such as succession planning, internal recruitment, internal promotions, succession planning, career development, and leadership development.

**Justification**

The introduction of performance appraisals will ensure that employees’ performance is monitored on a regular basis. The appraisals will also make sure that the strengths and weaknesses pertaining to individual employees are identified. Employee performance should be analyzed against pre-determined factors that are uniform throughout the whole organization (Ford, 2014). This ensures that the employees are assessed on similar metrics. Employees may have hidden potential that is unexplored, and if they are assisted to identify their talents, they will enhance the delivery of their roles and responsibilities. Secondly, the skill analysis tools will highlight the extent to which the employees are able to perform pertinent functions. It could also be discovered that employees have hidden skills that may be used to benefit the organization. For instance, an employee working in a support capacity could have advanced IT skills that would be beneficial to the IT department. Instead of sourcing for external applicants, the organization can employ the worker, therefore boosting their career. The employees will gain as they will be empowered to achieve career development and growth, while the Consulting Inc will gain by as the employee retention rates will increase.

The development of organizational development processes will ensure that the analysis of employee competencies is supported by organizational structures. For instance, if the performance appraisal is implemented, all the departments should follow a similar process of establishing and recording employee performance. There should also be a uniform manner in which the results are scored, and based on the scores, the implications should be similar, regardless of the department in which the employee works in (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013). By establishing organizational structures that support the career development processes, the employees will be more motivated to embrace the process due to its fairness and uniformity. On the other hand, the organization will gain by realizing an increment in productivity, a factor that will enable it to achieve its pre-determined goals and objectives.

Training and development should be adopted as methods that will enforce goal setting as the results of training should determine the type and severity of training. Action planning will then be based on the performance of the employee in various areas. A case in point is where an employee scores dismally in skills appraisals, but has high scores in team collaboration. The employee should only receive training that will boost their skills levels. An employee’s individual performance should determine the development activities that they should be enrolled in (Ford, 2014). For instance, an employee who shows great potential in leadership should be enrolled in leadership courses so that their leadership skills can be developed. The development of the employee’s careers will reduce the rate of turnover as employees will be assisted in addressing their weak areas. The organization is expected to achieve an increase in the overall productivity of the workforce.

Thirdly, the organizational infrastructures should be modified in a way that supports talent management. The management of talent is based on an employee’s capabilities to attain the organization’s goals. Nonetheless, it is also based on the organization’s ability to meet its objectives, which are formulated with its sustainability in mind. Training and development should be conducted regularly so that the expertise of the whole workforce can match up to the industry’s standards. Talwar and Thajkur (2016) explain that the organization exists in an environment that constantly changes, and the extent to which it will assimilate the changes will determine its success in the industry. The consulting industry relies on the provision of information, and the firm that provides current and innovative information gains competitive advantage over other firms. As a result, the organization should conduct regular seminars that train employees on changing trends, industry analysis, and technological advancement so that the delivery of their services can match up with the industry’s best practices. Consultancy INC stands to gain from the talent management as it will be easier to attract and retain top talent.

**Background**

**History of the Issue:**

The organization is a consultancy firm, which provides consultancy services to firms within the manufacturing industry. The formulation of the organization was based on the identification of a void in the market, as many manufacturing firms intended on outsourcing aspects of their operations, without compromising their confidentiality. As a result, Consultancy Inc. was formed to take over aspects related to sales, marketing, advertising, and research. The firm’s clients are situated in various parts of the globe, and as such, Consultancy Inc.’s presence in the international market is visible. The firm employs three main generations of employees comprising of boomers, generation X, and millenials. According to Gursoy, Chi, and Karadag, (2013 ), each generation has different wants and needs, and the career recommendation program should ensure that their needs are sufficiently addressed. Boomers are the older employees, as they were born between the 1940s and 1960s. As a result, their productive years are nearly over and they could be nearing retirement. Generation X is comprised of individuals that were born between the 1960s and 1980s, and they place prominence on the maintenance of a work-life balance. Millenials are flexible and technology savvy, and they like being focused on developing their careers.

**Symptoms vs. Causes:**

The organization has been impacted by a high rate of employee turnover. The best talents have become a prime target of headhunters, a factor that has reduced productivity, rendering the company unable to meet its objectives. Recently, a competitive firm has just been launched, and Consulting Inc’s top employees have left, preferring to get employment positions at the firm. Initially, it was assumed that the competing firm offers better pay packages, but it was confirmed that it provides similar rates to Consulting Inc, and some positions have also been provided with lower wages. This issue highlights that attractive pay is not the only factor that results in employee retention. As determined by Gursoy, Chi, and Karadag (2013), today’s employees are seeking a chance to grow their careers by developing their talents. As a result, a firm that intends on retaining its employees should formulate strategies that lead to career advancements.

The second issue, which is also closely related to high rate of employee turnover, is declining employee morale. The level of employee satisfaction has plummeted in recent years, as indicated by the historical employee satisfaction scores. Some of the reasons cited for the reduction in scores are strenuous working environment and lack of career advancing opportunities. Ji et al (2012) firmly believe that employee morale is related to employee productivity. As a result, in order to enhance employee productivity, the company has to increase employee morale. The number of absenteeism cases has also risen, a factor that suggesting that there could be an underlying employee morale problem.

The third issue, and one that affects the organization’s competitiveness and sustainability, is that of increased complaints from customers. Of late, customer satisfaction scores have waned, and most of the customers complain that the quality of the services offered by Consulting Inc. is low in quality. Some of the customers have formed partnerships with competing firms, a factor that has eroded the firm’s market share, while resulting in reduced profit margins. As a result, if this trend continues, the company foresees a situation where it will be forced out of the market as the employee skills do not match up to industry standards. Training employees in the industry’s best practices is expected to boost their expertise, and consequently, improve the firm’s competitive advantage and market share (Ford, 2014).

**Cost Implications**

The costs associated with the career management program will be initially high, as this is the first time that the organization will be engaging in such an initiative. The high costs will be as a result of the systems that need to be in place for the program to succeed. More particularly, the performance appraisal initiative will require the institution of systems in all the departments. The IT systems will make it easier to record, track, and analyze employee performance. Secondly, additional staff will be required in order to oversee the success of the career management program. The extra staff will be responsible for managing employee performance, organizing training programs, and organizing employee meetings that will be focused on career development. Trainers will also be employed so that they can provide orientation training to new employees, oversee the training of the existing employees based on their identifies strengths, weaknesses, and potential, and enroll in external training programs, after which they will impart their acquired knowledge on the existing employees. The biggest impact on the HR budget will be the training programs. In the event that the current employees require additional training, the organization’s internal trainers can comfortably execute the training. However, in case of advanced training, the organization will have to pay for tuition, accommodation, and other fees related to employee training. Consulting Inc. will occasionally enroll high-potential employees in educational courses provided by external educational institutions, a factor that will have a big impact on its financial performance.

The benefits of training will undoubtedly outweigh the costs. Consider a scenario where an employee has been enrolled in a $5,000 course that enhances leadership capabilities. If the employee imparts the acquired knowledge to be used to the benefit of the organization, the organization will gain by streamlined processes and reduced costs related to inefficiency. In the long run, the organization would have gained much more than it would have lost by training the employee. Secondly, the organization currently faces the issue of high rates of turnover due to low morale. Enlisting the help of internal trainers will ensure that the employees’ capabilities in accomplishing their duties and responsibilities will be heightened Jehanzeb and Bashir (2013). This will give them a sense of satisfaction as they will be able to efficiently execute their tasks. Additionally, the additional training will boost the employees’ careers, and their skill levels will be enhanced. The organization will gain by increased productivity, which will ultimately translate to better financial performance. Thirdly, the organization uses large amounts of money to recruit employees after job positions have been left vacant. The implementation of the career training program will reduce employee rates of turnover, and the organization will be able to save the costs associated with hiring new employees.

**Legal Implications**

There is one major legal risks associated with the career management program. The performance appraisal process could be designed in a manner that offers undue advantages to various classifications of people while denying other employees the chance of a fair appraisal process. As determined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, employers should not discriminate against employees on the basis of inherent characteristics (Player, 2013). Employees who have received low ratings may sue the organization for discrimination, especially if their ratings have prevented them from accessing organizational benefits such as job promotions. In order to avoid the risk of litigation, a legal practitioner should be consulted in order to ensure that the appraisal as well as the training and development processes is not discriminatory against certain classes of employees.

**Relationship implications**

It is expected that the employees will embrace the career management recommendation, as they stand a chance of developing their careers. However, it is also expected that there will be employees who will be wary of the performance appraisal process. However, they should be assured that the process will be fair. It is also expected that managers and supervisors will implement the new processes and practices as they will receive prior training and buy-in that will enhance their participation in the program. The outside public will support the recommendation as it will lead to the development of employees, who are also societal members. As determined by Talwar and Thakur (2016), a career management program enhances the rates of employees interested in the organization while increasing the rate of employee retention, and it is also expected that Consulting Inc’s retention and employee attraction rates will go up.

**Other company practices**

Most organizations have adopted career management programs as initiatives that enhance productivity and employee performance. Bennett and Franklin (2015) conducted a survey in which the impact of the career management program on an small medium enterprise (SME) was assessed. It was observed that the organization realized an increase in productivity after the implementation of the program. The survey results show an overwhelming support for the establishment of the career management program. However, the result also highlight the initial resistance that such a program would be exposed to, from internal members of the organization.

**Timing**

The issue should be resolved with immediate effect, and it is recommended that the whole process should take a period of six months. The first month will entail a needs analysis process, where data will be collected regarding aspects of the organization that will require alterations. This will ensure that the systems and processes that will be put in place will be aligned with the organization’s current situation. The second month will entail employee buy-in into the initiative. According to Ford (2014), employees should be involved in the early stages of change implementation so that they can be ready to accept the changes. At this time, training will be conducted so that the manager, supervisors, and employees are familiar with the new changes. The following two months will entail the adoption of policies and systems, and the implementation of a new organizational culture. In the sixth month, the career management program should be adopted, and monitoring should be done so as to address any emerging issues.

**Evaluation of alternatives**

1. **Adoption of an external party to spearhead the changes within the organization.**

**Advantages**

1. Less mistakes and errors
2. Organizational members would concentrate on their primary responsibilities

**Disadvantages**

1. The external firm may be regarded by the employees as intruders
2. Employees would be unwilling to embrace the change.
3. **The gradual implementation of the career management program at different phases**

**Advantages**

1. It would allow the management to effective plan
2. Employees would be more receptive to gradual changes

**Disadvantages**

1.The change may lose momentum

2. It would take too long for the organization to realize the benefits of the change management program

**C. The instantaneous implementation of the program by the management**

**Advantages**

1. The organization will receive immediate benefits of the program

2. The management will enhance employee buy-in into the program

**Disadvantages**

1. The implementation of the program will be time consuming

2. The organization will incur a financial burden as the project will be done at a go

The elements that are essential to the alternative include employee buy-in and the time associated with the implementation of the entire program. As a result, the third alternative was selected as it achieved the 2 important criteria.

**Implementation**

For the success of the program to be realized, the management has to provide its support to the career management program. Support from the management will be in form of financial resources as the program will be quite costly, bearing in mind that it is being performed at a go. Secondly, the management will have to engage in deliberations regarding the program, and as a result, they will have to commit their time to ensure the success of the program. In a career management program, the management is required to participate in pertinent decisions pertaining to the program (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013). For instance, the decision on the best vendor to supply IT systems, the training institutions that the employees will be enrolled in, the institution of the organization’s new culture, among other emerging issues that will present themselves over the course of implementing the career management program. The implementation timetable will last for a period of six months, as the first month will entail planning, the second month will entail training, the third and fourth, and fifth months will involve the commencement of the program, while the six month will entail monitoring the program and making any necessary alterations.

**Appendix**

Case Study on Career Management program

This article presents a case study describing how the CareerCycles career management framework (Zikic, Franklin, 2010; Franklin, Yanar, Feller, in press) was adapted and used to plan and execute a leadership engagement program for the leadership team of a small and medium enterprise (SME) manufacturing firm in North America with its head office offshore. We present the client's desired outcomes; describe the CareerCycles holistic, narrative framework, and evidence-based method of practice, tools and experiential game from One Life Tools that were adapted to address the client needs; the lessons learned that affected how later parts of the program were modified; and the outcomes observed and measured during the six-month leadership engagement program.

Overview of the CareerCycles Framework

The CareerCycles framework takes a narrative approach, with its conceptual model, suite of tools and holistic definition of career comprehensively connecting the many human and systemic variables shaping an individual client's experience. (Franklin, Feller, Yanar, 2014) Within the CareerCycles framework, career is defined as: The full expression of who you are and how you want to be in the world, which keeps on expanding as it naturally goes through cycles of stability and change. This definition moves individuals away from career as a job and introduces a more holistic view. (Franklin, 2014, p. 451)

The CareerCycles framework consists of two processes, Career & Life Clarification and Intentional Exploration, a method of practice guided by 40+ interventions and related training, (www. careercycles.com) and a suite of related online and gamification tools from One Life Tools (www.onelifetools.com). In particular, the narrative Career & Life Clarification process involves debriefing an individual's stories and experiences to construct a comprehensive Worklife Sketch. The framework which helps individual become empowered and proactive in their career and life choices, is shown as Figure 1 in the previous issue of this Journal (Franklin, Feller, Yanar, 2014).

Using the Framework in Client Organizations

Working with individual clients, CareerCycles Associates hear stories of disappointment, frustration, and longing to do work that is appropriate to their education, skills, experience and desired future. Using the CareerCycles method of practice, Associates, and other professionals who are trained in the method, engage individual clients to better manage their worklives.

Associates also know the other side of the story-managers needing to get the work done, optimize productivity, improve quality, and achieve specific targets. Managers may feel thwarted or at a loss to effect needed motivation or outcomes, and at the same time feel disappointment, frustration and longing to achieve their own worklife success.

The Issue/Opportunity

The senior management team of a SME manufacturing firm, operating a plant on a 24/7 basis, hired CareerCycles to support its leadership team as an intentional organizational culture change took hold under the leadership of a new CEO based overseas. This involved making a shift away from a strict hierarchical command-and-control to one of collaboration and alignment, as it gained independence and authority to make decisions locally. Senior management recognized a need for outside, objective support to assist the local leadership team to effect and sustain the culture change by developing trust and fostering alignment with the firm's business goals.

To make the culture change collectively, senior management recognized the imperative of individuals making an overt commitment to the organization's business goals. An important dimension of the leadership engagement program was providing several opportunities for leaders to enhance their self-awareness of what was important to them. The goal was to facilitate individuals' awareness of how worklives could be brought into alignment with the organization's culture and business goals leading to individual and collective behavior change

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