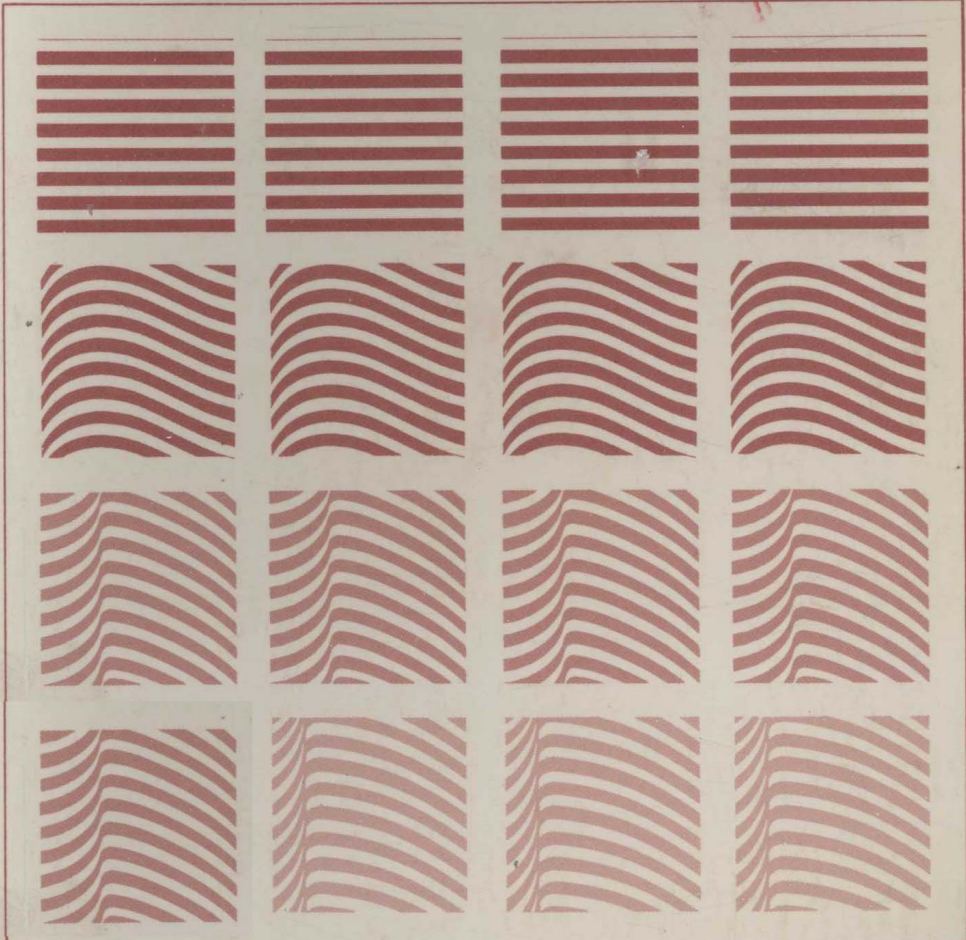


ADDISON-WESLEY SERIES ON  
MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES

*Managing Careers*

**Manuel London**  
**Stephen A. Stumpf**



MANUEL LONDON

American Telephone and Telegraph Company

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New York University

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# Managing Careers



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# Series Foreword

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Widespread attention given to the effective management of human resources came of age in the 1970s. As we enter the 1980s, the importance placed on it continues to grow. Personnel departments, which used to be little more than the keepers of employee files, are now moving to the forefront in corporate visibility.

The difficulties encountered in effective human resource management are without parallel. Surveys of managers and top level executives consistently show "human problems" at the top of most lists. The influx of the behavioral sciences into business school programs is further testimony to the active concern now placed on human resources as a crucial element in organizational effectiveness.

The primary objective of this Addison-Wesley series is to articulate new solutions to chronic human resource problems; for example, the selection and entry of newcomers, performance appraisal, conflict management, employee turnover, and career management. The aim is to communicate with a variety of audiences, including present managers, students as future managers, and fellow professionals in business, government, and academia.

John P. Wanous  
Series Editor

# Preface

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A book, like a good career plan, should begin with a clear goal. Ours is to provide an overview of managing careers from the perspectives of the individual and the organization. *Managing Careers* covers self-assessment; career and life stages; career issues for minorities, women, and dual-career couples; career planning; training and development programs; organizational staffing decisions; and staffing support systems such as human resource planning, job matching, and mentor-protégé relationships.

In our view, the individual's role in career management is: (1) to examine his or her skills, interests, and potential, (2) to identify realistic career objectives, and (3) to obtain the necessary training and development to prepare for target positions and effectively compete for career opportunities. The organization's role in career management is: (1) to fill positions with the most qualified personnel, (2) to provide challenging job opportunities, and (3) to assist individuals in career planning and development. Individual career management is facilitated by self-assessment, and organizational career management is facilitated by a system of integrated human resource functions.

*Managing Careers* is for students and young managers who are concerned about career progression. The book is also for human resource practitioners who are, or will be, responsible for

organizational career management systems. Experienced managers will also find the book valuable as they make decisions about their careers and those of their subordinates.

An important feature of this book is its summary of recent research and theory on careers, providing readers with a firm grounding in the literature as well as ample references—for those who want more information. We use cases, examples, and exercises to portray realistically the complexity of career issues and provide readers with common experiences for discussion. We also offer guidelines to help individuals formulate and implement their career plans, and to help organizations design and operate career programs.

The book may be used as a supplement in courses on personnel administration, human resource planning, industrial/organizational psychology, and organizational behavior. It may be especially valuable in career decision-making courses often taught in business schools. A recent survey by Francine Hall (1982) asked instructors of career courses to list the topics they covered. Appendix A suggests how *Managing Careers* may be used to cover these topics. This appendix should be helpful to instructors in designing courses and to students in understanding course goals.

Our treatment of careers is intentionally focused toward individuals attempting to manage their own careers and the careers of others. As such, it will have limitations for some readers. Some may view our guidelines as prescriptions for an ideal world. This is the nature of guidelines, and we hope they will serve to direct individuals and organizations in applying behavioral science knowledge. Other readers may feel there are too many research findings. Our goal is to present sound ideas supported by rigorous research in a concrete, practical manner. Others may feel constrained by our focus on management jobs in large business organizations. We believe, however, that many of the concepts apply to other types of employees, such as scientists and other professionals employed by large organizations; and to organizations without profit-centered goals, such as government agencies, the military, hospitals, and universities. Fi-

nally, some may feel that career management programs are important during prosperous times but become luxuries at other times. Our view is that career management is always crucial, although it may take different forms in response to changes in organizational and individual needs.

Since we contributed equally to this volume, the order of authorship is alphabetical. Although we are responsible for the book's content, we are indebted to many people for their cooperation, encouragement, and guidance. Many colleagues influenced our thinking during the last four years. Special thanks are due to Doug Bray, Dave Hoyle, Joel Moses, and Bill Regan at AT&T for practical viewpoints on the philosophy and application of career management. The book would never have been completed without Doug Bray's support. We are also thankful to the administration and staff of New York University's Schools of Business for their support in the preparation of *Managing Careers*, and to the NYU students for their cooperation in much of the research and case studies cited.

Several colleagues graciously agreed to comment on drafts of chapters. Francine Hall, Janina Latack, Marilyn Morgan, and Pat Pinto have our thanks for their constructive ideas. Douglas T. Hall, Allen Kraut, Walter Storey, and John Wanous reviewed the entire manuscript. We are grateful for their many helpful suggestions.

*Managing Careers* is dedicated to our wives and children, Marilyn, David, Jared, Maria, and Eugene, whose presence, patience, and encouragement create a comfortable environment for managing our careers.

*Belle Mead, N.J.*  
*New York, N.Y.*

**M.L.**  
**S.A.S.**

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# Section I

## Introduction



# Career Management: Individual and Organizational Perspectives

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## 1

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For most of us, career success is variable; sometimes we feel successful, other times we do not. Few of us have detailed career goals and no one has complete control over career opportunities and outcomes. With changing economic conditions and increased competition among people and organizations, career uncertainty is the rule, not the exception. The ability to seek and select career opportunities requires careful planning and preparation. Our intention is to provide some guidance for both individuals and organizations in managing careers.

Managing careers is a joint process involving individuals and their organizations. By understanding and delineating individual and organizational responsibilities, individuals are better able to manage their careers effectively and organizations are better able to manage their human resources profitably. To accomplish this, individuals should learn and apply techniques of self-assessment, career and life planning, and self-development. Organizations should provide career support systems, such as career planning and development programs, and they should guide supervisors who make staffing decisions. These ideas are developed throughout the book.

In this chapter, we begin by defining several terms pertaining to careers as viewed by the individual and the organization. We discuss individual factors affecting career progression and the concept of individual career management. We next examine or-

ganizational factors affecting career progression and the concept of organizational career management. The chapter concludes with an overview of the book.

### Defining Terms

**Career.** A career is the sequence of work-related positions occupied throughout a person's life. A career encompasses those stages and transitions over time that reflect one's needs, motives, and aspirations as well as societal and organizational expectations and constraints. The individual's perspective includes understanding and evaluating his or her career experiences. The organization's perspective includes policies, procedures, and decisions associated with work-roles, organizational levels, compensation, and personnel movement. Matching or synchronizing the individual and organizational perspectives often necessitates work-role adjustments, development, and change.

**Career management.** Career management involves the interactive processes of developing a concept of self relative to one's work-roles, and being an effective employee. Individuals manage their careers through decisions to seek and accept or reject various work-role opportunities. Organizations manage careers by selectively making such opportunities available to specific individuals.

**Career planning.** Career planning is the process of generating action steps for individuals to progress along alternative pathways in work systems. For career planning to be effective, it must unite organizational human resource planning with individuals' needs, capabilities, and aspirations. This requires the active participation of both the individual and the organization.

**Career development.** The activities individuals participate in to improve themselves relative to their current or planned work-roles are viewed as career development. The activities that organizations sponsor to help ensure that they will meet or exceed their future human resource requirements are also labeled career

development. While developmental experiences, such as training, job assignments, and job rotations, help meet the organization's needs, individuals need to seek these activities to facilitate their career progression.

*Career progression.* Career progression encompasses the work-role changes that provide the individual with, on balance, positive psychological or work-related outcomes. We define career progression broadly to include work-role changes that involve more than advancement to higher organizational levels and higher pay scales. Career progression includes any work-role changes resulting in one or more of the following: greater job, career, and life satisfaction; feelings of psychological success and self-worth; feelings of competence, mastery, and achievement; and attainment of organizational rewards such as money, power, prestige, and status.

Changing economic and social conditions require a broad view of career progression. In contrast to the 1960s and 70s, the next twenty years are likely to be marked by slower organizational growth, a larger percentage of mid-career employees (due to the post-World War II baby boom), and lower attrition of senior employees (due to limits on social security benefits and the end of mandatory retirement). Consequently, even talented individuals are likely to be frustrated by fewer advancement opportunities.

This suggests that individuals and organizations may have to alter their conception of career progression from movement up an organizational hierarchy to work-role changes leading to individual growth and organizational effectiveness. While all work-role changes are not career progression, career progression includes promotions, assignment changes, and lateral moves or transfers, if they lead to positive individual outcomes. Changes in the structure and responsibilities of a person's existing job that the individual perceives as positive are also aspects of career progression, and such changes may be a major source of career development in the future. Since each work-role change can affect many career, personal, and family-related outcomes, whether or not a change is positive for an individual depends on



how it is perceived, the context of the change, and what transpires over time (Super, 1980).

While the meaning of career progression should not be limited to advancement, it would be unrealistic to believe that talented individuals will no longer seek higher-level positions. Moreover, it would be equally unrealistic to believe that organizations will not continue to emphasize the early identification, development, and promotion of high potential people. Career management processes associated with upward movement must be emphasized if we are to be concerned with individual and organizational effectiveness.

In summary, career management, planning, and development should be viewed from both the perspectives of the individual and the organization. Career progression, which generally denotes upward movement, should be interpreted more broadly to encompass all career moves that generate positive outcomes for the individual. Nevertheless, upward mobility is an important part of career progression for both individuals and organizations.

### INDIVIDUAL FACTORS AFFECTING CAREER PROGRESSION

Many factors affect the value a person places on various work-roles. For example, one's expectations regarding the job itself often affect the satisfaction experienced on a job (Wanous, 1980). One's interests, self-identity, and personal orientation affect one's job preferences (Strong, 1943; Super, 1957; Holland, 1973; Hall, 1976). One's socioeconomic background and experiences affect the opportunities that are valued as well as those that are available (Blau et al., 1956).

The career issues most salient to the individual at various times also depend on a person's career and life stage (Levinson, 1969; Super et al., 1957; Super, 1980). Individuals in their early career years are active, exploring career possibilities and trying various work-roles. By their mid-twenties, they are most concerned with establishing themselves in their selected area. Once established, advancement becomes the prime concern. As individuals reach mid-career, their concerns often reflect their changing life situation with greater emphasis on maintenance and