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**ABSTRACT
DOCTORAL THESIS**

**PROFESSIONAL CAREER MANAGEMENT IN
THE INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION**

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KEY-WORDS

- human potential
- professional formation
- work management
- skill management
- professional skill
- proximity management
- career
- career planning
- career management
- the end of professional life
- flexibility
- teleworking
- telecommuting
- mobility
- mobility barriers
- counselling
- inventory
- critical incident
- threshold effect
- retirement threshold

INTRODUCTION

Based on the specialized literature in the field of human resource management and also on our own research, the present doctoral thesis proposes a holistic approach of the professional career management. Throughout our research efforts, we have succeeded into identifying five research axes: the development of human potential, the basic foundations of the career management, the flexibility, the mobility and the career counselling.

Career management must be dealt with while taking into account three variables: space (organization, irrespective of profile or size), employees (all of them and not only the managers, leaders, responsables) and time (the whole duration of the professional life cycle).

Our thesis, „Professional Career Management in the Internal Administration” has come as a challenge from the French researchers Sylvie Guerrero, Jean Luc Cerdin and Alain Roger who, in their work, „La gestion des carrieres. Enjeux et perspectives”, consider appropriate leaving behind the traditional concept of career management. The French researchers have highlighted the need to bring forth a new concept of career, which is a major field within the human resource management.

The study of the literature dealing with the generous matter of career management, as well as the experience gained in practicing management within the internal administration have helped us orienting our research in five directions, which correspond to the titles of the chapters within the present work.

Furthermore, the issues approached, the descriptions and the comments inserted in the thesis aim at introducing the public into the essence of a large array of concepts, stages and evolutions in the career management.

Whether we have chosen a narrow or a wider approach, we have focused our efforts on tracing an itinerary whose philosophy is to make a comparative analysis in the career management, such as: „human capital – human potential”, „flexibility – mobility”.

The thesis examines and lists a large array of phenomena and processes specific to the professional career management, in order to render their physical and relational configurations.

Under the theoretical aspect, the present thesis tries to present some valuable elements which we intended to grasp.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE CONTENTS OF THE THESIS

The subject matter in study is treated in 225 pages, structured into 5 chapters, which are, in their turn, divided into another 36 sub-chapters. The chapters / sub-chapters are properly detailed, in accordance with the final and intermediary objectives.

The syntheses are illustrated into 43 tables, 34 graphic representations and 8 annexes. Over 100 key-words are listed to these syntheses in each chapter.

In the first chapter, „***Developping the Human Potential***“, in order to choose the correct alternatives of professional career development, we have structured our research into four main pillars: the instruments of human resource management, the human potential on the macro and microeconomic level, the link between work management and skill management and the development of the proximity management potential within the internal administration.

Human resource management must be perceived as a continuous development in which the successive stages have been assimilated and influenced by the IT generations. The instruments of human resource management are not ideologically neutral. Its properties are closely linked to the organization views and the place of origin of the human factor.

The first theme is a presentation of some instruments of human resource management that allow us to notice *the main views on management* (the engineer's view, the psychologist's view, the economist's view). It stands for an elaborated review on the human potential on the macro and microeconomic level.

The theme – *Work Management versus Skill Management* – stands for a detailed research into the management structure and the human resource management area.

In short, skill management, as a distinct field within the human resource management, generates a higher degree of efficiency and effectiveness in the organization.

The following theme underlies the fact that, in order to develop conviction, we need proximity management.

Among the reasons behind the decision to become the proximity manager of a small-scale social system (department, office), one can count, even to a high level, the mission to coordinate a group of people.

In few words, this mission expresses the interest and skill „to take care of others“. The development of proximity management practice is a priority for all organizations, especially to the public ones.

"Career Management. Stakes and Perspectives", the second chapter, represents in the beginning a return to the presentation of some particular concepts, terms and instruments.

In this chapter, the main research themes are: *the career model in the public sector; success factors in one's career; career planning; career development and career limitation*. We consider that the notion of career must be associated to positive terms, such as: progress, development, promotion and advancing.

Similarly, while embracing the idea of general comprehension and global application of a concept, we consider that a generalization of the notion of career is necessary. One can therefore define career as a complex of skills characterized by a personal system of family and organizational values. In order to continue the theme, we sustain that personal opinions regarding the individual and family value system is of utmost importance. The family is an institutional model established by the history of social organization, whose solidarity spirit creates the most appropriate means of protection and support. Therefore, developing the professional career does not constitute an individual problem, on the contrary, it must be perceived as an issue integrated in the context of life and development of a person.

We can come to the conclusion that the career management, as an integral part of the human resource management, stands for a process of designing and putting into practice the organizational plans and strategies which allow us to reach the proposed objectives based on the satisfaction of the individual goals. It thus results that the career management plans and adapts the evolution of an organization in accordance with the individual needs, potential, performances and wishes of its employees.

The redefinition of the career management in the internal administration cannot be done without the implementation of a rigorous skill management, as well as of new development solution to the transversal organization. This is not an easy task, as, for example, stepping from work management to skill management involves the capacity to surpass a few obstacles.

As for the last stage of the career development cycle, the retirement, we consider that, in the internal administration, it can occur even in one's 50's.

In this case, the human resources in the retirement stage must be closely studied. It is necessary that the organization develop procedures to avoid the limitation for the employees approaching 50 years old.

The last theme of this second chapter is dedicated to the career limitation. The career limitation is considered as a blockage in the evolution of someone's career, a consequence of this phenomenon being the decision to leave the organization.

In the chapter "***The Flexibility of Human Resources***" we have identified four research directions: *the emergence of working time, the effects of reducing the working time, the use of information technology and the work division.*

The flexibility of human resources can be considered, alongside mobility, a basic fundament of the career management. From the organizational point of view, the flexibility emphasizes the organization's and human resources' capacity to easily adapt to changes. The flexibility comes in different manifestations, by means of which it deeply influences the vital benchmarks of people, of the functioning of working groups and organizations. The importance of the flexibility of human resources stems from two major reasons: the protection of organizations in front of constraints generated by environment turmoils and the need to use flexible practices of human resource management.

The fragmentation and rarefaction of continuous employment is an increasing phenomenon, manifested as a consequence of technical progress. In order to fragment and rarefy continuous employment, the most used methods are: the flexibilization of working hours; the flexible organization of daily, weekly and annual work; the diversification of employment forms and the flexible distribution of work during the professional life cycle. The four methods to fragment and rarefy work generate structural and content mutations in the career management, favour the internal mobility and also the external mobility. On the other hand, the flexible character of the working time organization, in particular, as well as flexibility, in general, give the work market the ability to adapt to the internal and international environment. The fragmentation and rarefaction of work highlight the possibility to adjust the human resources and the working time according to conjunctural evolutions.

Nowadays, the main feature of the work market is the tendency to go global. In these circumstances, *increasing work flexibility* becomes imminent. Depending on the degree of availability of the employee, the workplace (a virtual office) takes the form of occasional, semi-mobile teleworking, an aleatory work schedule, working at home and being totally mobile. Increasing work flexibility can be also generated by using the telecommuting, which means both distance working and teleworking.

Obviously, increasing work flexibility can be obtained by eliminating the rigid features determined by the traditional barriers between the individual and the group.

The relation between flexibility and career management is the expression of a duo specific to modern organizations. For an organization to be flexible, it is necessary that its employees make proof of initiative, reactivity and even pro-activity. The promotion of these abilities is dependent on: competence, responsibility, stability and rewarding system.

In chapter four "***The Mobility of Human Resources***" the authors investigate the issues referring to: *the heterogenous reality of mobility, the*

barriers and instruments of mobility, the mobility of human resources with potential and the mobility of civil servants in Romania.

The mobility of human resources is one factor by means of which survival is ensured on an ever-changing market. The loyalty towards an organization is important, but tends to be present on short term. The career mobility is closely related to the way in which the capacity to adapt to the work environment is manifested.

By its nature, the mobility expresses the transversality which derives from moving human resources within a certain social framework. The transversality makes a *heterogenous reality* out of *mobility*. The analysis of human resource management perceives mobility as a method specific to career management. The mobility can be equally submitted to analysis in the light of either skill management, internal recruitment or, last but not least, employee requalification. Therefore, on the level of perceptions and connotations of terms gravitating around the notion of mobility, there are significant differences. The career, defined as the successive professional experiences of a person, is generally considered as a strongly positive concept, which lets us foresee the promotion perspectives, while the mobility is a concept with negative connotations. The types of mobility, the relations formed within mobility and the variety of related practices are all expressions of heterogenous reality.

The career management is often described as a desire to orient and direct mobility. In these conditions, one can consider that *identifying the barriers and the instruments of the mobility management* occupies an important place in the career management. The mobility barriers refer to the way an organization functions. Since every field of the social policy of an organization is thought and developed independently, the mobility barriers reveal aspects crucially related to human resource management. The main barriers in human resource management are: the difficulty encountered in exerting the management, the employee perception, the emergence of interest conflicts and the difficulty to integrate new-comers. Studying a heterogenous reality involves using the adequate instruments. The mobility management instruments are those referring to the stimulation of individual and organizational initiative. The instruments specific to the stimulation of individual initiative aim at motivating the employees to become more mobile. In this category can be included: workplace offers, profession maps, professional forums and orienting cells. The instruments specific to the organizational initiative come to support the decision act and stimulate the mobility management. In this category, one can count: career committees, replacement organigrams, orientation and evolution efforts, reconversion cells and resignation-related interviews.

From the point of view of *the mobility of human resources with potential*, the organizations are interested in the existence of internal mobility and show preoccupation for the limitation of external mobility. In this context, the main problem of an organization is to find the answer to the question: „Which is, at present, the performance potential of human resources?”. A

matrix-type analysis (human resources available – performance and development potential) will allow the organization to notice that it has in its human resource portfolio four categories of employees: employees with undetermined potential, highly performant employees, employees with predictable performances and employees with performance-related problems. A further analysis of the mobility of human resources with potential is needed in order to establish the relation between the degree of motivation and actual satisfaction – performance. The organizations are challenged to retort to the help of career counselling services (internal and external) in order to determine the above-mentioned mobility.

The fifth and final chapter, "***Career Counselling in the Internal Administration***" makes a synthesis of the process of career counselling. The chapter presents two important research directions: *the procedural framework of counselling and the practice of counselling in the internal administration*.

Career counselling must be based on the use of metaphors. During the career counselling process, the metaphor must not be associated to the figurative aspect of language and communication. In the career counselling process, the metaphor has at least two major effects: on the way we conceptualize the process and on the way it actually unfolds. On the level of the conceptualization of the career counselling process, „the battle of metaphors“ has led to the elimination of the classical metaphor of harmonization (Holland, 1997).

The basic elements of a coherent career counselling system needs a „career building“ (a metaphoric expression taken from Super, 1990). This means, in minimal terms, a career counselling procedure, auxiliary instruments (tests and inventories), studying the relational environment of critical incidents and evaluating the professional situation

The career counselling procedure must describe the steps (stages, phases) which form the career process. Career counselling is a social service which initiates a holistic approach of an individual during the cycle of development of his/her career or professional life. The reality of the career counselling shows that the employees ask and accept a wider approach of the problems and do not limit themselves to choosing an occupation. This fact determines the counsellors to admit that the employees consider the roles they play in their professional life as a continuous unit in which they involve themselves completely. Out of this reason, the counsellors must understand that the social service involved in the career counselling process must be based on a coherent procedure which stimulates the employees to engage in a intra and interpersonal communication, to not hesitate to make a self-evaluation and to accept the evaluation. The success in being a career counsellor depends on the quality of interactions during all the stages of the counselling process: preparation, observation, data processing and structuring, data interpretation, the elaboration of the action plan and the counselling per se.

Investigating the relational model and the critical incidents allows the counsellors to get informed, on the one hand, on the closeness or distance between managers and subordinates and, on the other hand, to detect the behavioral gap during the process of communication on the management level. Investigating the relational model represents an important source for finding out the dominant in a human relationship. For example, if the dominant is „politeness“, then the human relationship might indicate respect and consideration but also, it can signify the existence of a professional relationship in which the superior imposes „a distance“ to the subordinate and does not want to get closer. For the counsellor, it is useful to see if the employee is satisfied or not. The two situations impose different orientations for the employee in choosing the direction of development of his/her career. If the employee is satisfied, he/she will opt for an internal mobility, while in the other situation, he/she will choose the external mobility. Another reason for which the employees choose external mobility stems from the frustrations and discontents following the manifestation of critical incidents.

The last part of the doctoral thesis is represented by the conclusions.

Nowadays, in the global society, the organizations, as social systems, suffer major and rapid transformations due to the pressures imposed by the external environment, by the quantity of information and by the scientific breakthrough. For the civil servants in the public organizations, the direction taken by the dynamics of the knowledge society highlights a clear objective: the development of the human potential must be incorporated individually, on a group and organization level at the same time.

The permanent adaptation of the organization to the requirements imposed by the forces of change and the creation of new types of behaviours of its members are objectives that must be fulfilled by means of an effective human resource management, adapted to present and future needs.