

Case for Career Management

If you're not talking with your high value talent about their *careers*, you can bet somebody else probably is. Your top performers are the very ones that are most marketable to the outside. They are poised to be prime targets for headhunters and there will be plenty of organizations ready and willing to lure them away when the time is right.

Not so long ago, the annual performance review could double as a career development discussion. Performance and career development were linked: if employees' performed well, their careers grew through a series of promotions and salary increases.

This model no longer works. Employees today are looking for more than simply an assessment of their work. Sure, you want to maximize their *performance*, but they are more interested in maximizing their *careers* -- and these goals are not one and the same. One is focused on the past and the other squarely focused on the future.

Years of restructuring, reengineering and rightsizing have caused people to take a more active role in managing their work futures. Managers, individual contributors and support staff alike face career decisions on a daily basis: should I stay or leave? Change careers? Pursue new projects? And in a work environment where technical skills frequently supersede people skills, the answers are not quickly forthcoming.

That's why a focus on career management is so important today. *To help protect human assets, organizations today must provide the tools and resources employees need to manage their careers, to align individual visions of career success with strategic business goals and objectives. It's not just a "nice" thing to do -- it's a business imperative.*

Not convinced that people are taking an active role in managing their careers more than ever before? Take a look at the statistics from the business networking site LinkedIn.

LinkedIn Is Now The #2 Social Network In The US

The site officially launched on May 5, 2003. At the end of the first month in operation, LinkedIn had a total of 4,500 members in the network.

As of June 30, 2011, professionals are signing up to join LinkedIn at a rate that is faster than two new members per second.

As of June 30, 2011, LinkedIn counts executives from all 2011 Fortune 500 companies as members; its corporate hiring solutions are used by 75 of the Fortune 100 companies

More than 2 million companies have LinkedIn Company Pages

As of August 4, 2011, LinkedIn operates the world's largest professional network on the Internet with more than 120 million members in over 200 countries and territories.

When your top performers entertain a job offer from another company, they're often fraught with anxiety and uncertainty about the decision. They need a supportive climate to help them decide the best future course. But all too often, while the other company is wooing them with future possibilities -- money, advancement and challenge -- their own company remains silent.

It's this uncertainty about the future that often drives people away. Sometimes they just need a good reason to stay, but without a healthy organizational climate for discussing career issues, they're not likely to find one!

