



Why Should Leaders Help Employees to Develop the Right Career Strategy?

In general, the majority of people around you want you to be successful. Your parents, your friends, your family, your partner, your employer, your boss, your team members – all the people with whom you interact on a daily basis and with whom you have a relationship – all want you to succeed in whatever endeavour you attempt. But that's in "general"! More specifically, consider these points:

- Your parents would never want you to fail. That's a given.
- Your "good" friends would never want you to fail. That's acquired behaviour.
- Your partner would never want you to fail. That's how it is supposed to be.
- And no employer would ever hire someone with the hope that the individual would fail! That's just not logical.

Yet, many employers continue to spend a tremendous amount of resources to hire great and talented individuals and then leave them to their own devices as they navigate throughout their career.

That non-management "hands off" style absolutely does not make any sense either.

The Costly Paradox

Many organisations today pay for health insurance, fitness centre membership, meals at work, tuition reimbursement, dependent care, car allowances, travel allowances, pensions, and other benefits. But when it comes to truly helping employees to learn more about themselves and their capabilities, leadership proclaims it is the business of employees themselves to figure that out. In essence, this belief is the same way as saying "as long as you do your job, we don't care about what you want beyond the framework of your job."

Do employers really mean that? We don't think so. We simply think employers do not think deeply enough to enable them to tackle the root cause of misalignment, disengagement, and poor performance in their organisations.



But consider this idea: If you started to help your employees figure out what they really want and how they can achieve what they want, not only do you create a bond between you but also release pressure on your organisation. In effect, you are allowing a win-win scenario to exist.

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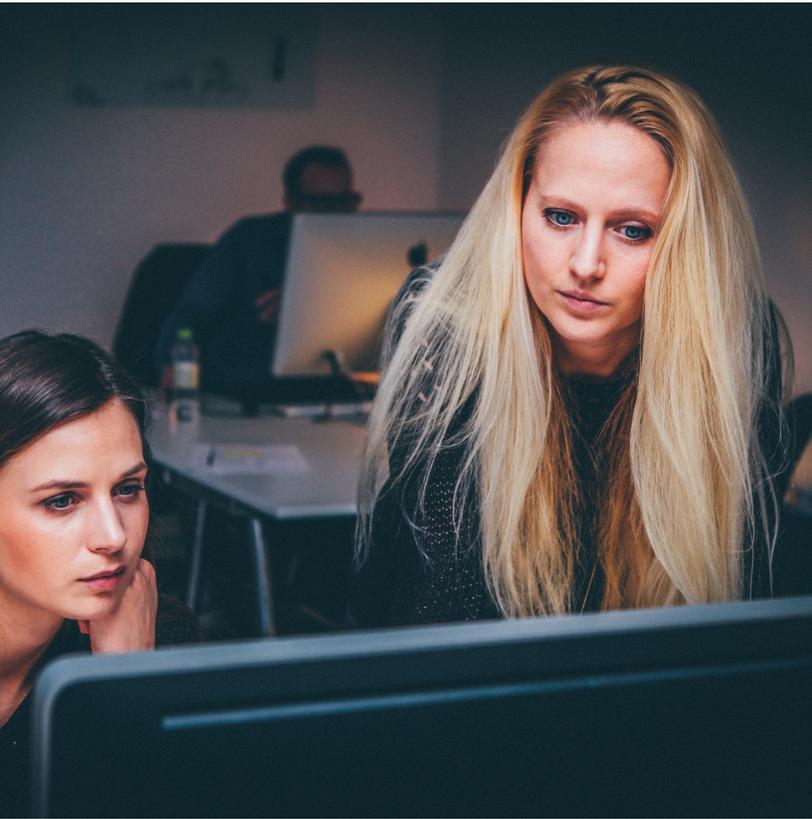
We have spoken to more than 300 organisations during a 16-month period and asked them what they think about true alignment. The result of these interviews indicate that the majority of employers expect their employees to be in charge of, or accountable for, their personal and career development in the same way that they expect them to take care of their own health. Yet, at the same time, employers continue to pay huge amounts of money, as well as spend valuable time, in engaging, developing, rewarding, and retaining the wrong people – hoping that they will do a good job.

We believe that if you, as leaders, want to aspire to true organisational alignment, you need to help your employees develop the right career strategy – and that strategy should also align with what your organisation is trying to achieve.

The following six actions will place your organisation on the road to true alignment, while simultaneously enriching the talent within the workforce and helping them succeed – to the advantage of all stakeholders.

- 1. Define the Right Strategy.** Defining a strategy is no easy task, but worse than that is defining a strategy for the wrong idea. The right idea will help you facilitate defining the right strategy in the most effective and efficient way.
- 2. Establish the Right Leadership.** Without the right leadership in place, there is no point in expecting outperformance. Average leaders manage average-performing businesses.
- 3. Develop the Right Careers.** The single most important thing regarding your organisation is to design it in a way so that there is a constant flow of opportunities for all employees. A sustainable organisation is designed based on all stakeholders' needs.
- 4. Deploy the Right Rewards Programme.** Reward is the fuel of an outperforming organisation. You simply cannot outperform if your rewards programme does not follow your growth ambitions.

”True alignment and outperformance do not emerge from mere hoping or wishing.”



5. Embrace Transparent Management Practices. Walking the talk is reserved only for leadership teams who are not afraid of making transparent decisions. The more transparent you make your organization, the more competitive it will become.

6. Don't Stop Listening to Your Stakeholders. Knowing how to listen to all stakeholders requires amazing focus, patience, and attention. However, organisations that know how to do it are 10 times more innovative than their competitors.

Uncovering the Truth

Following logical and practical steps is not enough. There are bound to be some misfits in the organisation, in spite of leadership's efforts. If you determine that certain employees do not fit your organisational culture, perhaps your partnership is not meant to be. In fact, uncovering this point is beneficial for both parties in the long run.

True alignment and outperformance do not emerge from mere hoping or wishing. Such results are only attainable when employees are completely in sync with what their employers are trying to achieve.



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