

CAREER MANAGEMENT MODEL FOR SELECTED SLOVAK ENTERPRISE

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Abstract

Career as a part of human resource management and life of each employee is ir retrievable part in job skill formation of a man – employee. In the paper a way of employee career management in the enterprise of the state sector in the Slovak Republic is proposed. Career and succession planning enables the enterprise to plan its own goals and activities better. As the job security is nowadays very rare each employee involved in the process of career management has this certainty. If an enterprise uses the process of career management and promotes this fact publicly it becomes very attractive for potential employees. New employees are looking for work in such enterprise which brings a great amount of potential talents into the enterprise. By means of proposed models, the enterprise has possibilities for career planning and setting career goals for individual employees within the context of the enterprise career goals. The work of employee in a large enterprise (analysed object is a large enterprise) provides unique advantages of professional growth and higher chance to find interesting challenges and work opportunities within the same enterprise.

Proposed model of career growth is focused on keeping skilled and quality employees in the enterprise; a talented employee is a competitive advantage and can be beneficial for the enterprise. Process of career management is followed by the evaluation of the entire process to support the right choice.

Key words: career management, career growth, succession planning, human resource management.

Classification JEL: M12 – Personnel Management

1. Introduction

Within the context of job skill formation it is necessary to differentiate between terms “job skill formation of a man” and “job skill formation of an employee”. When the first term expresses job skills formation of a man in the primary sense of the word, it means throughout his entire life regardless of reasons when, where and depending to whom it is carried out, the second term expresses job skill formation of a man in a specific enterprise. It expresses an activity connected with work performed by an employee or with an enterprise where they work, an activity organised, supported and provided by an enterprise within its social work (*Koubek, 2008 a, b*).

Employee career development relates not only to performance improvement of employees in the current job position but also to their preparation for higher position and higher standard of responsibility into the future.

Another area in career development is also the key question in the area of gender equalisation and the balance between personal and professional life, trying to find the balance between both essential missions: to work (to bring to the society, organisation and themselves new values, ideas, benefit, usefulness and pleasure) and to live fully-fledged personal life (to be a good parent, effective member of the society, people person, to have a rest with relatives, etc.), (*Blašková, 2012*).

Increasing competition in all areas is reflected in efforts of the enterprises to be more responsible for the development, career and performance of the employees (*Mayrhofer, Steyrer, Meyer, Strunk, Schffinger, Iellatchich, 2005*). In the system of job skill formation 3 areas are usually recognised:

- a) general education – general and basic knowledge enabling a man to live in a society is formed,
- b) professional education – the area of qualification formation,
- c) development – personality formation; it is career oriented.

2. Career

Career is a part of human resource management. The human resource management tries to improve motivation, work commitment and loyalty by introducing personnel policy and processes to evaluate and reward people for their accomplishments but also for skills they have and master (*Armstrong, 2007, p. 31*). The term career is defined as a part of human life connected with work activities and with contribution to activities and processes of an enterprise or with work for these enterprises (*Tureckiová, 2004, p. 97*). Career can be understood as job sequencing throughout the working life of an employee based on purposeful decisions associated with employee's professional interests and enterprise needs or based on certain accidents and opportunities (*Vetráková et al., 2006, p. 196*). This term is characterised by a variety of aspects, so it cannot be reduced to the set of promotions and successful moving up the corporate ladder. Career is the final way that enables us to understand human behaviour and performance in working as well as in private life (*Kachaňáková, 1999, p. 135*).

Career is always considered a way, a process occurring chronologically. It starts at the time of work or school beginning and it finishes at present and it goes through different stages. To observe person's career, to compare it to other persons and to judge success we need several criteria. The importance of different criteria varies – while one tries to get a better pay and considers salary increase a career; another tries to acquire new experience and personal development (*Bělohávek, 1994, p. 9*).

In dictionaries and handbooks career is defined as successful career advancement. In general we can agree that career is certain advancement (for example in life, sport, art, politics, etc.). In garbled version career is understood as something “given” – gaining of job position with help of politics, or simply, moving up corporate ladder with salary increase and new office. Another attitude towards career was presented by some sequences of job positions with fair standards of career advancement as well as descent (*Vetráková et al., 2011, p. 58*). In productive and effective enterprises career is understood as permanent human ability to project, carry out and evaluate the life – work and relax, pleasures and sorrows, success and development, which is based on self-assessment (*Valica, Harbakus, 1996, p. 13*). Career is a part of professional life of each employee and it is perceived differently. When we exclude widespread opinion connecting career with careerism, we perceive career rather as an integral part of employment. Career can be presented as:

- list of actual job positions, schools or courses,
- internal employee's vision about his/her career growth,
- system of positions, system of possibilities for official positions or advancement offered by employer,
- moving up corporate ladder.

In general, career can be divided into:

1. Objective – we can observe it in personnel departments' documents, in CVs, numbers of attended courses and schools, previous jobs, work changes; we do not know about personal goals, their meeting and about various difficulties throughout professional life (*Bělohávek, 1994, p. 11*).

2. Subjective – it regards the importance of particular events for a man, employee attitude, his/her experience and personal growth. In term of permanent changes in organisation and loss of job stability determined by the position on corporate ladder it is wiser to accept the aspect of subjective career which is more flexible and less attacked (*Bělohávek, 1994, p. 12*).

Career aims relate to individual career stages which reflect phases of life and employment cycle. Following four career stages are mentioned most often:

- A. Preparatory stage – the main task is to acquire knowledge, first experience with application. People are oriented towards activities they prefer. They generate basic ideas about further career. This stage takes place during studies and practice. By drastic change of the career direction the basic orientation takes part in functionally new environment (*Hroník, 2006, p. 101*).
- B. Development and involvement stage – young people are changed to full-fledged employees with their own identity. Independence at work as well as in personal life is typical for them. Many of them perform different position in the corporate hierarchy; they achieve accomplishments in their job and new career perspective arises. They gradually achieve the top in their branch (*Kachaňáková, 1999, p. 135*).
- C. Top stage means that employee moved up the corporate ladder and is respected now. He/she acts as a coach, inspires others. He/she achieves the highest performance and is in charge of more difficult tasks (*Hroník, 2006, p. 101*).
- D. Withdrawal stage, the influence and importance of work tasks is decreasing. Right activities of human resources management can reach manpower utilisation and high competence of retired people with respect to their reduced performance. Gradual decreasing of their responsibilities and number of tasks can be replaced by involvement in counselling and advisory activity. Good work and personal relations can be maintained continuously if the life and employment cycles are accepted.

Age limits, when one stage transforms into another, are very individual and they depend on physical predispositions and personality of an individual (talent, health condition, will-power, value orientation) and on the type of work he/she performs (*Suutari, Tornikoski, Mäkel, 2012*).

3. Career planning

The first step to create a career plan is the self-assessment of an employee. The evaluation is done by an employee and it can contribute to make their own future plans clear and to analyse their abilities. The enterprise can look for new talents from in-house or outside sources. We suggest the enterprise to hire mainly in-house employees for career planning. The main advantage of these employees is their loyalty and the fact that the enterprise management knows them very well. Self-supporting mentoring programme of employees can be used, too (*Arnold & Johnson, 1997*). The enterprise must design its own strategies and goals by defining short-term and long-term goals. Making future plans of employee and enterprise clear is followed by creating a talent group. Only the best ones can get into this group. Employee must be aware that it is a privilege to be a member of the talent group, appreciate it and take advantage of it. Setting common career goals is an important step. At this point plans of employee and enterprise should be integrated into related plans. These goals must be real and beneficial for the enterprise (e.g. to improve competitiveness). Career plan should be clear and, if possible, with time limit. It is important, mainly for employees, to know tasks they have to accomplish in coming days.

After being involved in career plan employee's career development starts (Figure 1). Development is aimed at potential changes in demands resulting from job position and career development. Employee performance evaluation and career progression analysis follow the final stage of career development. By means of the evaluation we want to find out whether employee acquired skills he/she needs. The final stage of career planning is an employee's career progression. Employee can start another job, stay in the current job position or start another position within the enterprise.

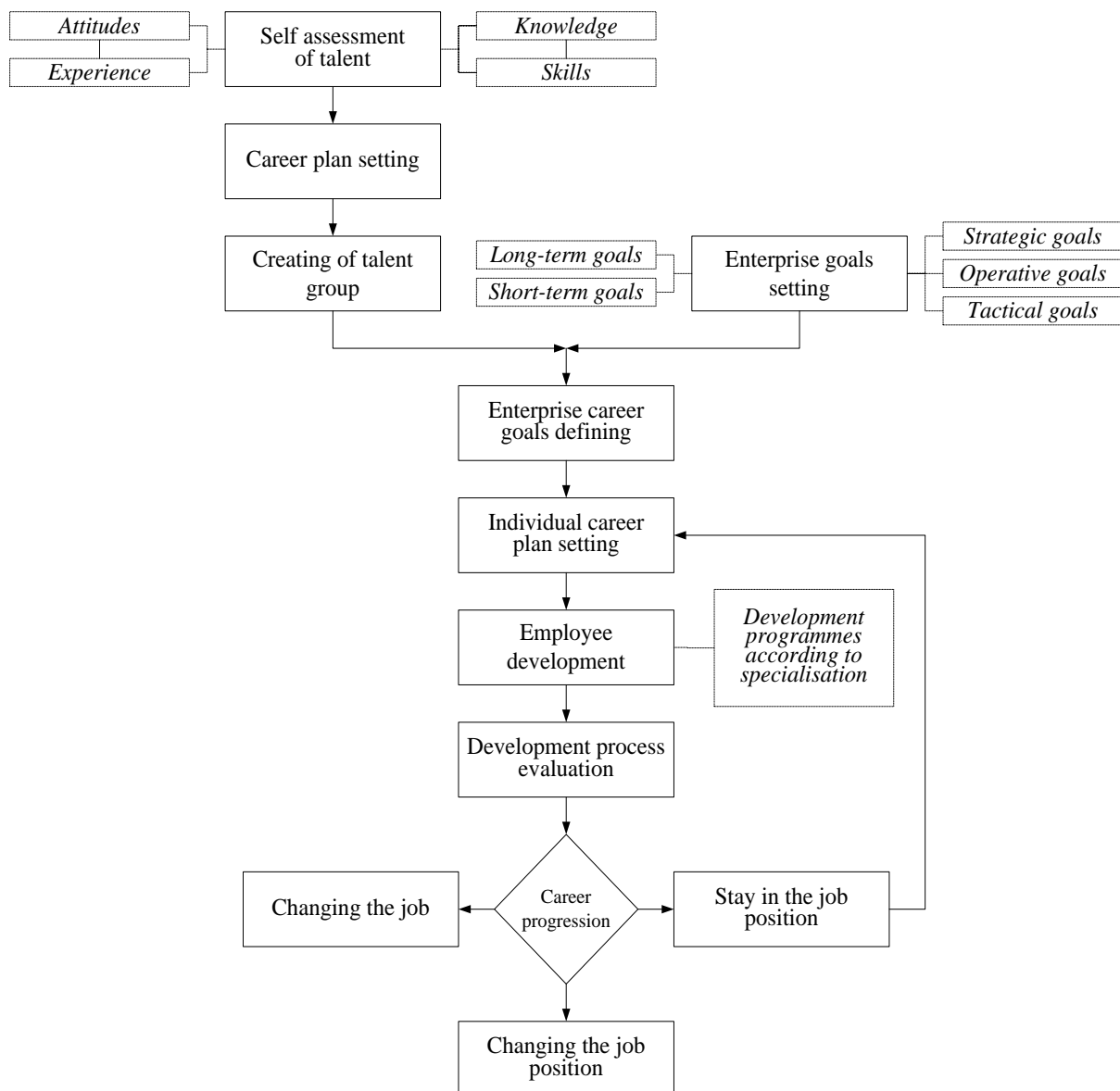


Figure 1. Career management model – succession planning

Source: own processing

2.1. Individual career goals setting

Within setting of individual career goals employee and his supervisor identify development areas to improve. Development areas should be consistent with enterprise needs and interests. If performance of an employee is not satisfactory we suggest reviewing the job

position of the employee. His poor performance can result from dissatisfaction with his job position. The enterprise can offer him another job position. In case it is impossible, the enterprise should motivate an employee to perform his job adequately (to motivate and to appreciate his effort). Figure 2 illustrates situation when given job position was not right for the employee either owing to wrong skills assessment or faulty classification of job by the enterprise. Such decision can cause lowered or inadequate job performance. It is likely that also talented employees will not achieve satisfactory performance; they will be dismissed and subsequently employed by a competitive enterprise.

Providing that insufficient working performance results from the reluctance of the employee or bad working attitude it is possible to improve this situation with the right motivation. However, if the right motivation does not change employee's attitude towards work, it is recommended to dismiss.

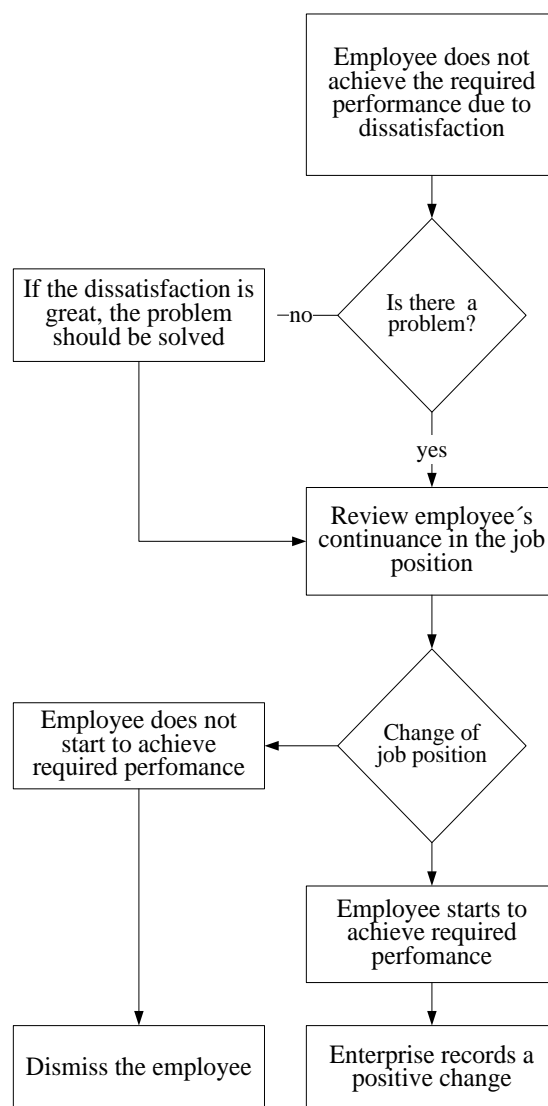


Figure 2. Results of inappropriate official position of employee

Source: own processing

2.2. Enterprise career plan settings

Formulation of a set of enterprise goals is one of the most important decision processes requiring maximum awareness and tolerance of all subjects taking part in the decision process (Figure 3). Each subject contributes to the formulation of the set of enterprise goals with their own interests, motives or requirements. The formulation of enterprise goals is affected by many factors, including employees; therefore their qualification, skills and amount should be taken into account already when formulating the goals.

During the setting of goals it is desirable for the enterprise to consult them with key employees. These employees have a feeling of importance and incorporation into the planning process leading to an increase in their loyalty and fellowship with the enterprise. Consequently, during the formulation of common career goals of employee and enterprise, these connect to one unit. For the employee it is essential to set their goals clearly, realistic and according to their own potential. In this period it is important for the selected employee to achieve everything what the enterprise plans. The enterprise can help the employee and adapt the plan, to a certain extent, to their potential. Possible discrepancies should be discussed with the employee and both sides should try and correct them.

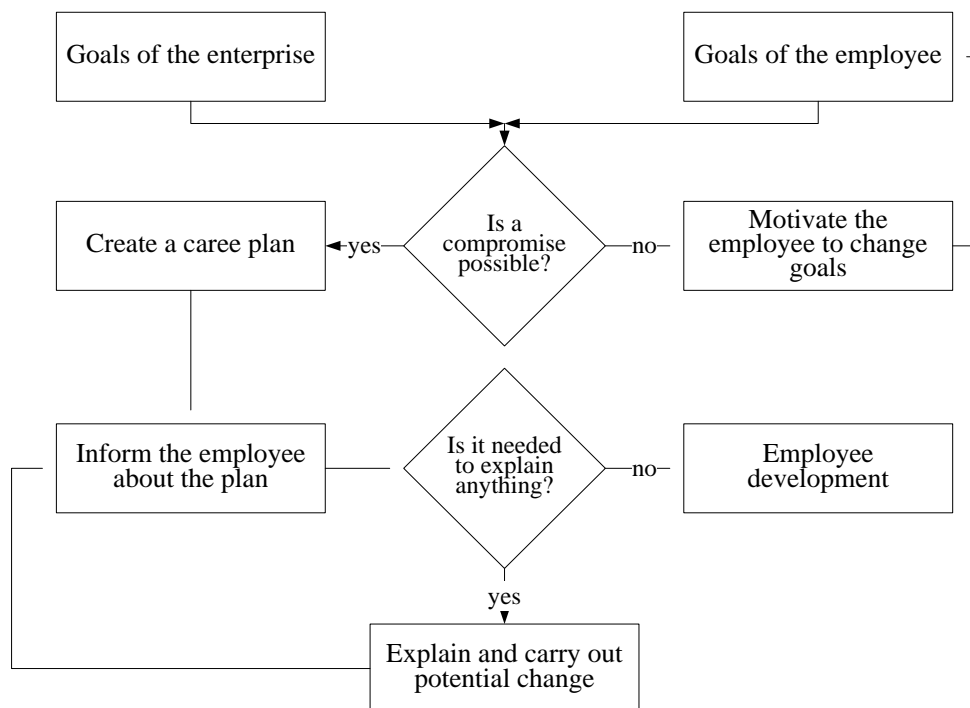


Figure 3. Formulation of common career plans

Source: own processing

When the enterprise and employee unified their goals it is necessary to create a career plan for the particular employee. This plan will contain all activities with exact time limit, which the employee has to complete. According to the timetable the employee is able to plan all personal activities. After the creation of the career plan the employee can continue with own development.

2.3. Employee development

The process of employee development is aimed at the detection of deficiencies and their following elimination using suitable methods. Exact specification of deficiency is an important step because it is the basis for the successful development. Within the known deficiencies wrong attitudes, lack of competences, experience, skills and talent deficiency are known. It is supposed that employee involved in the process of career planning will not suffer from talent deficiency because talent is the basic presumption for being involved in such process. Further step is the selection of method for elimination of deficiency (Figure 4).

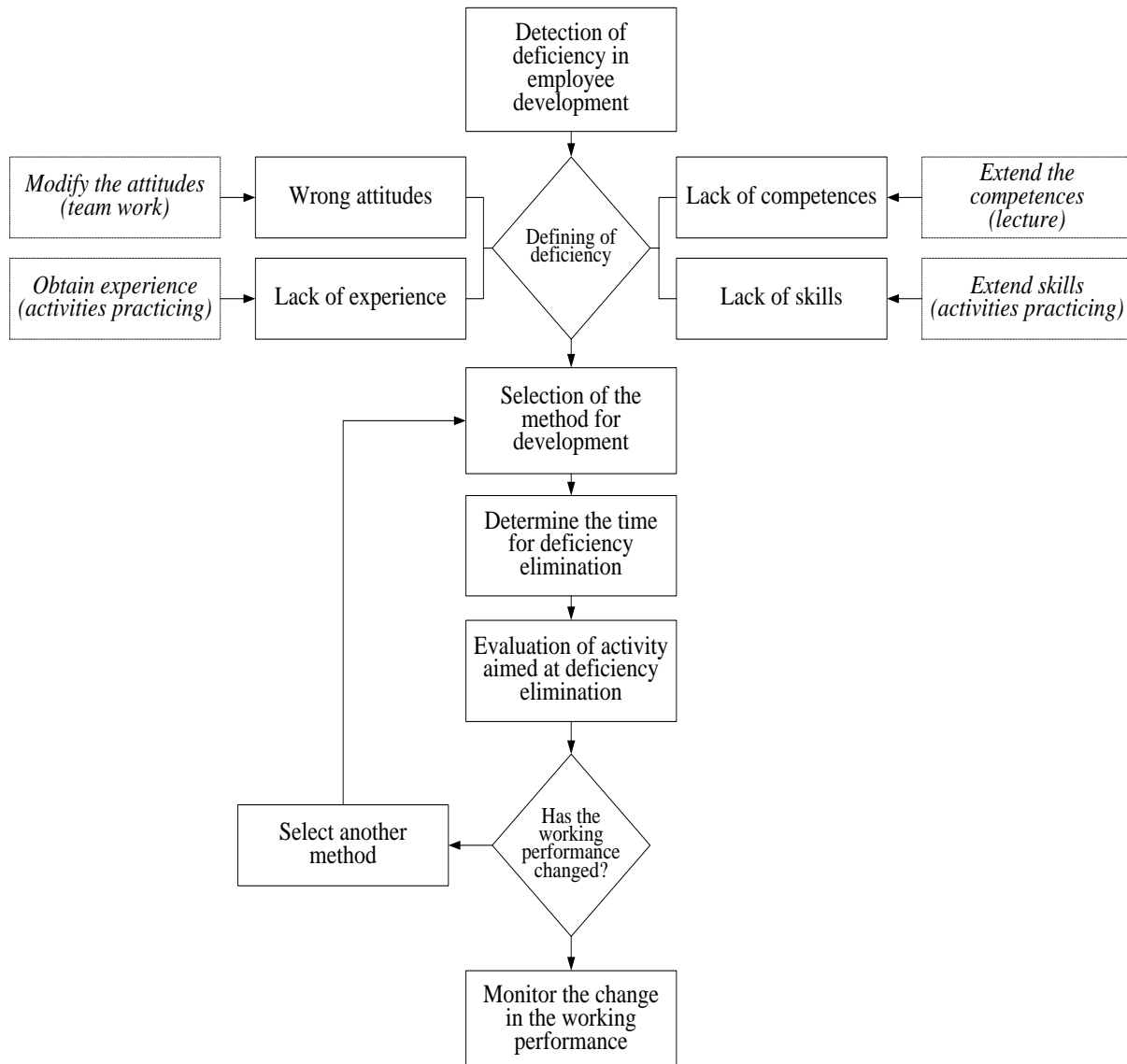


Figure 4. Employee development – selection of the method for deficiency elimination

Source: own processing

The information about the time limit for deficiency elimination is important for the enterprise as well as for the employee. The enterprise will use the information for planning of further activities connected to the particular employee. The employee needs such information

for planning of personal timetable. It is proposed to complete the development process by evaluation providing the answer whether the employee had obtained required knowledge.

Further step will be to find out whether a change in the working performance occurred. If a change is recorded it is recommended to monitor the range of changes; in the case of a new deficiency this should be eliminated. If no change is recorded it is necessary to select another way of deficiency elimination and repeat the development process. It is recommended to repeat the development process (education) maximum two times; otherwise the costs will be too high. If an employee is talented he/she is able to eliminate the deficiency during a single repetition.

2.4. Employee's development process and employee's career growth evaluation

The main aim of the development process evaluation is to find out whether the employee obtained required knowledge and whether he/she is able to apply this knowledge in practice. First of all, it is important to realise that determination of exact criteria for the evaluation of a successful development process is very complex. There is no exact and uniform method of evaluating the educational process and its effectiveness. It is recommended to focus the evaluation of development programme on following areas:

- It is studied whether adequate tools were used during the education process, i.e. methods of training, technical equipment, timetable as well as the contents of the training.
- Responses, attitudes and opinions of employees being trained are studied.
- The extent of acquisition of knowledge or skills being developed usually by means of testing of trained persons immediately after the education process is studied.
- It is studied to what extent the trained employees apply the obtained knowledge in practice and how their working behaviour has changed (however not all changes must be showed immediately).

The completion of the development process is followed by the evaluation of obtained knowledge. Many companies forget about this step and neither analysed enterprise carried out this evaluation.

Figure 5 illustrates the course of the evaluation in two stages (with a certain time lapse). In the first stage the obtained knowledge is evaluated. Evaluation is carried out immediately after the completion of the educational activity. A test, prepared by the lector (training employee) or by the person providing the education, is used. After passing the test the employee is integrated into the working process. After probation (app. six months) it is proposed to repeat the evaluation and to compare the results with the evaluation carried out before the educational process. Note that some changes will not be shown immediately after the completion of the course; however it is supposed that most changes will be shown after six months. If there are no changes in the working performance it is inevitable to find out the causes. It is possible that the employee does not have required skills, therefore it is recommended to dismiss such employee. The same working performance without positive changes can be caused also by a failure in the development process. Therefore it is possible to repeat the development process of employee. Providing that there were changes present, it is recommended to compare the changes with the expected improvement. The education result depends also on the motivation provided by the enterprise, corporate climate and enterprise's approach towards education.

After meeting of all selected criteria and completing all prescribed activities the employee is ready to take the post which he/she was trained for. The career growth however

does not always take place immediately. Employees engaged in talent management represent a “back-up” to replace another employee who is going to leave.

If the employee cannot begin to work at the post he/she was prepared for immediately, they can remain on the previous job position. However, this step is not recommended due to ineffectiveness and possible loss of newly obtained knowledge and skills.

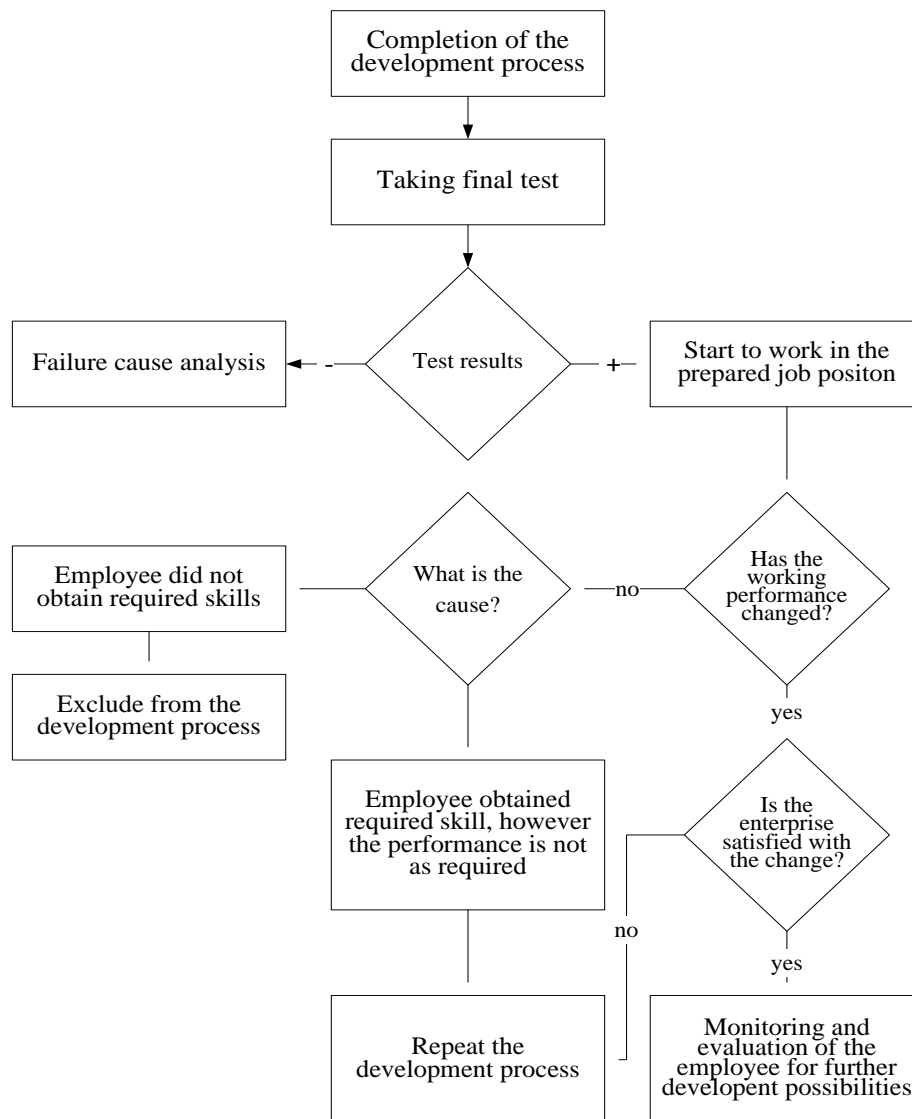


Figure 5. Evaluation of the process of employee development

Source: own processing

3. Contribution of the model of employee career growth

Proposed model of career growth relying mainly on own employees and their growth brings following positives in enterprise conditions:

- Considering the enterprise organisational structure, its size and number of departments the selection of employees for career growth from own ranges is advantageous because the enterprise does not have to spend time on adaptation and orientation of employees what saves costs.

- Employees are able to understand working responsibilities, workload of the new position and position within the whole enterprise much faster.
- Previous period of working in the enterprise can be seen as an advantage lying in acquisition of necessary working habits and required skills for effective carrying out of the new working position.
- Employees selected from own ranges, mainly in times of economic recession connected with workforce downsizing, realise that the enterprise appreciates their work what consequently increases their loyalty and efforts to be beneficial for the enterprise.
- The work of employee in a large enterprise (analysed object is a large enterprise) provides unique advantages of professional growth and higher chance to find interesting challenges and work opportunities within the same enterprise.
- Proposed model of career growth is focused on keeping skilled and quality employees in the enterprise; a talented employee is a competitive advantage and can be beneficial for the enterprise.

4. Conclusion

The process of career management is long and high financial costs are required. However, if it is performed well, the enterprise wins an employee who will be loyal and will provide required and quality performance.

Surveys show that more and more enterprises in Slovakia begin to use the process of career management to increase their competitiveness, to improve their workforce structure and consequently to increase their economic result. Career and succession planning enables the enterprise to plan its own goals and activities better. As the job security is nowadays very rare each employee involved in the process of career management has this certainty. If an enterprise uses the process of career management and promotes this fact publicly it becomes very attractive for potential employees. New employees are looking for work in such enterprise which brings a great amount of potential talents into the enterprise.

Enterprises of today already know that their success is influenced mainly by their employees. Therefore they should employ only the best ones. However there are plenty of people in the world and it is very complicated to find the right one. This topic is being dealt within the talent management.

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