2013 Career Development Survey

Research study

prepared for the 2013 Career Development Roundtable

A research initiative co-sponsored by:

Optimis Human Capital Management

SDA Bocconi School of Management
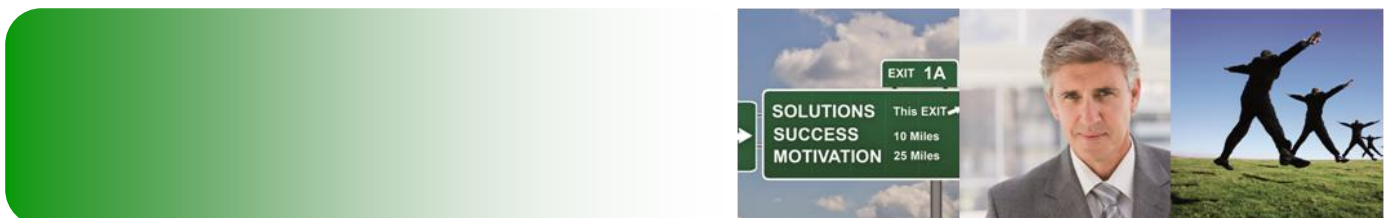
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Purpose of the study

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the *Career Development* challenges and priorities for International Organisations from the perspective of current and former participants in the Career Development Roundtable conferences. The individuals taking part in the survey have demonstrated a keen interest in the topic of career development and are in many cases instrumental in building the career development strategies and programmes of their institutions.

The importance of Career Development is increasingly recognised as a strategic driver for motivating staff and achieving results through aligning skill development with organisational needs. It is also evident that in the current economic climate, organisational constraints and the expectations of staff are posing new and complex challenges for the design and implementation of effective career development strategies by Human Resource functions for the organisations they serve.

Career development is increasingly recognised as a strategic driver for motivating staff and achieving results

Research shows that interesting and challenging work, the opportunity to learn and develop skills, and commitment to a higher purpose are important factors for staff motivation. Through career development practices organisations can achieve a competitive advantage in the attraction and retention of staff, cultivate a sustainable source of staff motivation and greatly enhance organisational performance.

To paraphrase Professor Wayne Cascio, "organisations can achieve a competitive advantage through proper alignment of their HR strategy and people practices with their business strategy."

Methodology

The study was conducted in 2013 using the Optimis online survey platform over the period November 12th to November 22nd. Analysis of the survey responses and preparation of the final research report was undertaken as a joint effort by Optimis and SDA Bocconi School of Management.
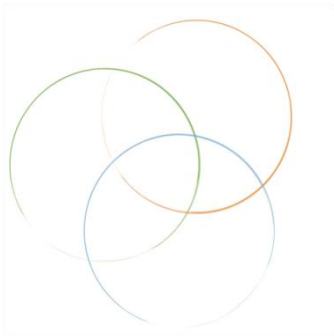
The research questionnaire (Annex C) was designed to capture the Career Development challenges and priorities for International Organisations from the perspective of Career Development Roundtable conference members, past and present. Ample opportunity was provided for commentary related to each of the main areas to enable a thematic analysis of the issues and encourage a healthy debate on the way forward.

High level report of consolidated findings

This report provides an overview of the consolidated findings and is available on the Optimis website www.optimis.ch and through the Career Development Roundtable. It shows comparisons with the similar study conducted in 2012. Demographic data was collected to facilitate comparisons among subgroups of participants and across organisation types, although only a limited number of these comparisons are reported in this paper. Should survey participants or other readers wish to delve deeper into the findings please contact Optimis directly.

We would like to offer a special thanks to the organising committee and support staff of the Career Development Roundtable for making this research possible.

Research study participants

Participants by industry

The survey attracted a total of 100 **respondents**, versus 106 responses collected in 2012, thus confirming the continued interest in this research.

As indicated by *Figure 1* below, a wide range of International Organisations took part in the study. The largest single sector participant group was from the "Development" sector (23% versus 27% in 2012). The second largest group was represented by "Normative institutions," followed by "Humanitarian-aid" and "International Financial Institutions."

The "Other" category is comprised of several types of international organisations including, for example, various institutions in the legal, secretariat and intergovernmental areas. Since the sample of respondents and proportion of organisations represented is quite similar to that of the previous survey, this study will make comparisons of similarities and differences across the 2012 and 2013 research findings.

The 2013 survey attracted 100 respondents from a wide range of international organisations, with a similar proportion of organisation types represented as in the previous 2012 study
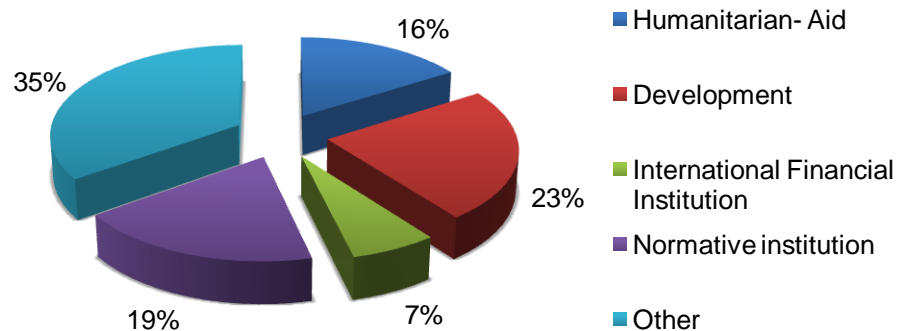

Figure 1: Participants by organisational type

Participants by position

Among survey participants, approximately 41% of the survey population were at the most senior levels – either Directors or Chiefs of unit. An additional 50% are classified as professionals (18% as supervisor, 32% as individual specialist), followed by 8% identified as support staff.

Combining the three top participant levels with supervisory responsibility, we find that 59% (63% in 2012) of the survey population are dealing with the career development needs of staff reporting to them, in addition to their own career development needs. These individuals are especially well placed to consider the challenges of career development from multiple perspectives.

Figure 2: Participants by position

Participants by time spent in their current organisation

Almost half of the respondents have worked for their current employer for 5 years or less. The remaining 51% have more than 5 years service and would have had the opportunity to experience the evolution of career development processes and practices in their organisation over a significant timeframe.

Almost half of the survey respondents have greater than 5 years of service in their current organisation

Figure 3: Participants by time spent in current organisation

Participants by time spent in current organisation and hierarchy

Relating the time spent in the current organisation with the participants' position in the hierarchy for 2013, it is worth noting that 65% of the Director or Deputy Director professionals have been with their current organisation less than 5 years. These individuals may bring valuable outside perspectives on career development to their new organisations, yet may lack a thorough understanding of the organisational context and challenges ahead of their new employer. This compares with the distribution of heads of units: 55% of them have spent more than 5 years serving their organization. The difference in career patterns could be explained by the different nature of the two roles: the director as a managerial function, the chief of unit as a more technical position.

Figure 4: Participants by time spent in current organization and position

Organisational challenges

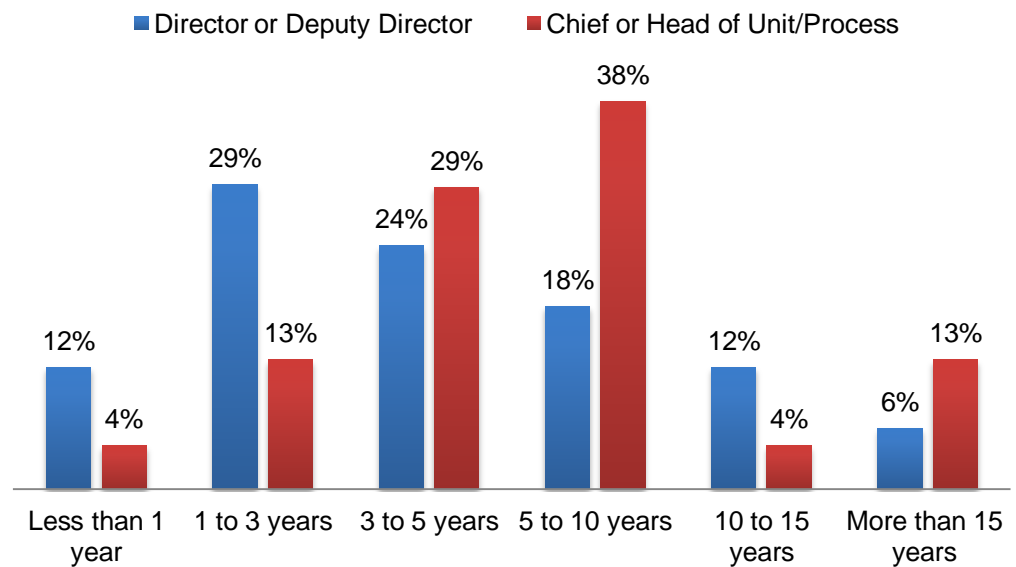Respondents were asked to select from among a list of possible challenges that organisations might face in their efforts to provide career development opportunities to staff. In both years, the two challenges with the lowest frequency of choice were related to staff expectations and motivation, even if the frequency of response in 2013 slightly increased compared to 2012. The main issue identified in 2013 was the perception that organisations offered too few opportunities, whereas lack of funds was the main challenge identified in 2012. This is interesting in light of the continued pressure on funding experienced by many international organisations.

The top organisational challenge identified was "too few perceived opportunities", followed closely by "limited funds"

■ 2012 ■ 2013

Low staff motivation — 10% / 18%
Unrealistic expectations of staff — 30% / 34%
Not a priority for the leadership — 41% / 35%
Lack of capability to implement career development practices — 53% / 46%
Few programs and processes for career development — 45% / 49%
Limited funds — 55% / 51%
Too few perceived opportunities — 45% / 53%

Figure 5a: Organisational challenges

Top three organisational challenges

The top three organisational challenges identified in 2013 were "too few perceived opportunities" (53%) and "limited funds" (51%), followed by lack of "programs and processes for career development" (49%). The fourth challenge was the "lack of capability to implement career development practices" (46%). Taken collectively, these challenges suggest a persistent concern over the available opportunities for career development in international organisations and the means to implement programs that would support career development. Over one-third of the respondents claimed that leadership does not prioritise career development, down from 41% in 2012.

Over one-third claim that the leadership does not prioritise career

The combination of limited funds, lack of ability to implement career development practices, too few programs-processes and too few perceived opportunities is a formidable set of organisational challenges chosen by 45% or more of respondents. Of particular concern are the cases where funds and leadership may be available, but a suitable framework and capability to implement are lacking.

Perception of organisational challenges by gender

There is a significant difference in the perception by gender on two sets of challenges: 1) motivation of staff and 2) priority for the leadership. In both cases women felt that these dimensions were a far bigger challenge compared to men. Motivation is perceived as a challenge by 23% of women, compared to just 6% of their male colleagues; 42% of women thought that career development was "not a priority for leadership" versus only 19% of men. This difference could be explained by the fact that a far higher share of male respondents have leadership roles than women, so they may have a different view of the organisation.
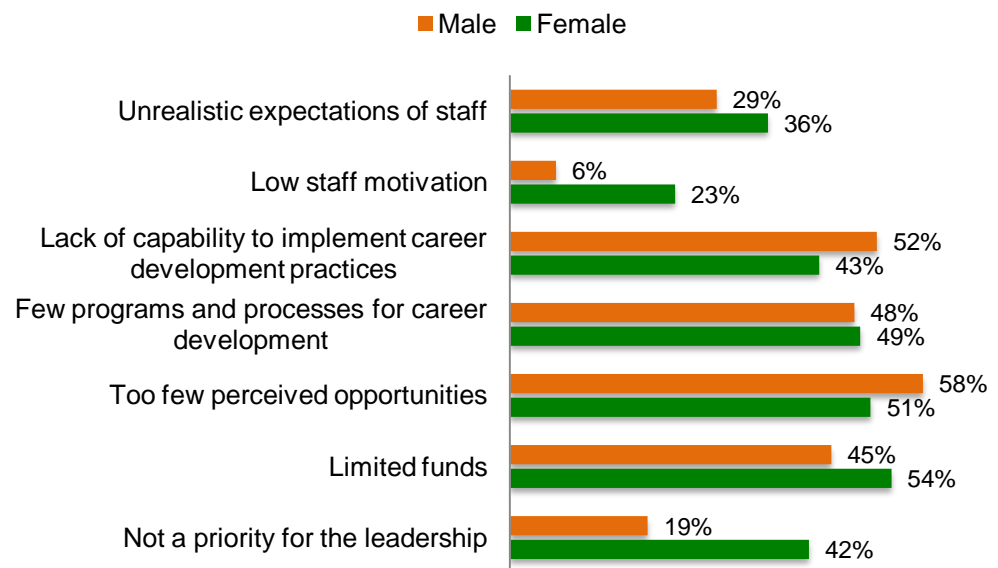

Figure 5b: Organisational challenges – by gender

Where Organisations should focus

The **top three areas of focus** identified for organisations in Career Development both in 2012 and 2013 are to create **fully integrated career development systems**, develop **supervisory skills in career development** and provide **mobility opportunities**.

Relating the suggested focus areas or priorities to the main challenges identified in the previous section, we can see that the emphasis is to put in place an integrated system of processes and programs that support career development. This assumes that in fact leadership has made career development a priority for scarce funds and that the organisation has the skills to build and implement a framework for career development.

In a resource-constrained environment, the type of approach chosen should be one that makes effective use of resources and is easy to maintain. A critical success factor to achieve that is to ensure that supervisors have the skills to integrate career development practices into their staff management activities. For many organisations, public and private sector alike, this would suggest a cultural change and a strong leadership commitment.

Mobility opportunities ranked third (5th in 2012) among the focus areas perceived by respondents. Comments indicate that mobility is perceived to be important to gain additional skills and experiences valuable to the organisation and the staff member. At present, the UN secretariat has moved ahead with the implementation of a new UN mobility policy as a high priority, and mobility is a current focus of a number of international organisations which may explain the stronger emphasis in 2013.

A number of challenges exist regarding geographic mobility, with early and late career stage staff generally favouring mobility possibly due to fewer family obligations at those times. In addition, all duty stations are not created equal with some perceived as very desirable while others are much less so. For instance, "hardship" duty stations generally represent shorter assignments due to the challenges of local conditions.

The top area of focus recommended for organisations was the creation of a fully integrated career development system, with 66% of the sample population choosing this item

Legend: ■ 2013 ■ 2012

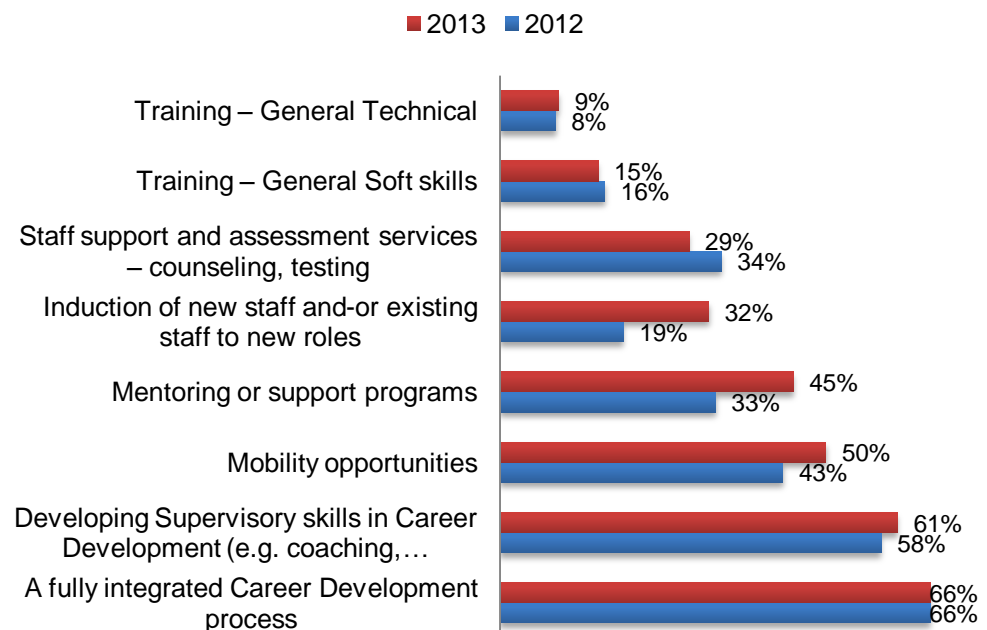| Focus area	2013	2012
Training – General Technical	9%	8%
Training – General Soft skills	15%	16%
Staff support and assessment services – counseling, testing	29%	34%
Induction of new staff and-or existing staff to new roles	32%	19%
Mentoring or support programs	45%	33%
Mobility opportunities	50%	43%
Developing Supervisory skills in Career Development (e.g. coaching,…	61%	58%
A fully integrated Career Development process	66%	66%

Figure 6: Organisation focus areas

Of particular interest is the consistently reported lack of emphasis on training in both "soft" and "technical" skills, suggesting that these areas are well covered as supporting factors for career development, with the possible exception of supervisory skills and practices that relate to career development.

Organisational priority by sex

A breakout of responses by sex to the ***organisational priority focus question*** yields the following patterns:

Both sexes chose the same top three priorities in absolute terms, with females placing significantly more emphasis on the need for supervisory skills to support career development and on mentoring programs

Legend: ■ Male ■ Female

Priority	Male	Female
Mobility opportunities	52%	49%
A fully integrated Career Development process	74%	62%
Staff support and assessment services – counseling, testing	35%	26%
Mentoring or support programs	23%	55%
Developing Supervisory skills in Career Development (e.g. coaching, development…	45%	68%
Training – General Soft skills	6%	19%
Training – General Technical	6%	10%
Induction of new staff and-or existing staff to new roles	29%	33%

Figure 7: Organisational focus by sex

Both sexes chose the same top three priorities in absolute terms. However, males placed more emphasis on mobility opportunities and a fully integrated career process, while females rated supervisory skill development and mentoring programs significantly higher than their male counterparts.

A closer look at the training area shows that females were more likely to focus on training as a priority than men, especially "soft" skill training. This pattern is completely consistent with the 2012 findings.

Most important action

Participants were asked to indicate the single most important action that their organization should take to support the career development of staff, with 81 out of 100 persons provided an open answer.

As it was an open question, the results were classified thematically based on a content analysis of key words. This resulted in the identification of four themes that were then analysed by cross tabulation with other sample variables such as tenure and position.

The four themes are as follows[1]:

In response to the open question on the the "single most important action that organisations should take ...." the leading theme was the development of a career development framework

- **Framework** refers the definition of the career path and the development programmes/processes by the organisation and opportunities of mobility;

- **Commitment** is about leadership involvement, supervisor commitment and organizational culture;

- **Tools** are the elements that staff and managers can use to support career development processes and activities like communication campaigns, program information and other supports to allow a smooth implementation of the career development approach, initiatives like mentoring/coaching, training;

- **Resources** are the financial and personnel resources devoted to HR.

When asked to identify the most important action that organisations should take to support staff career development, 51% (41% in 2012) of respondents gave answers that could be classified under the "framework" theme.
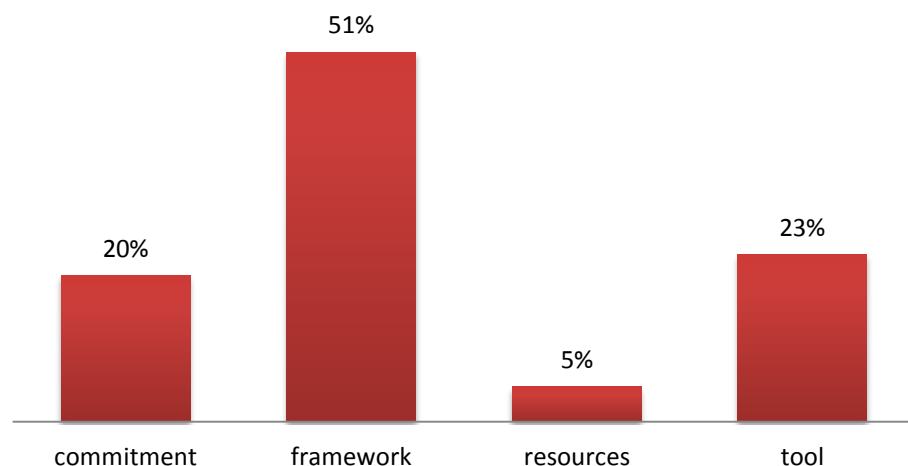

Figure 8: Most important action grouped by theme (2013)

The commitment of leadership and supervisors is down from 23% in 2012 to 12% in 2013. A deeper analysis of the "tool" category shows that 70% of the responses refer to coaching/mentoring initiatives and training activities.

According to the time spent in an organization, the thematic area of focus may vary. The most prominent across all categories is, of course, the career framework dimension. In general, respondents believe it is important to understand the organisational approach to career development. This provides reference points by which staff can attend to their own development and progression. This focus also supports the concept *that career development is ultimately an individual staff member's responsibility, yet the organisation needs to prepare an enabling environment that facilitates choices aligning individual and organisational needs.*
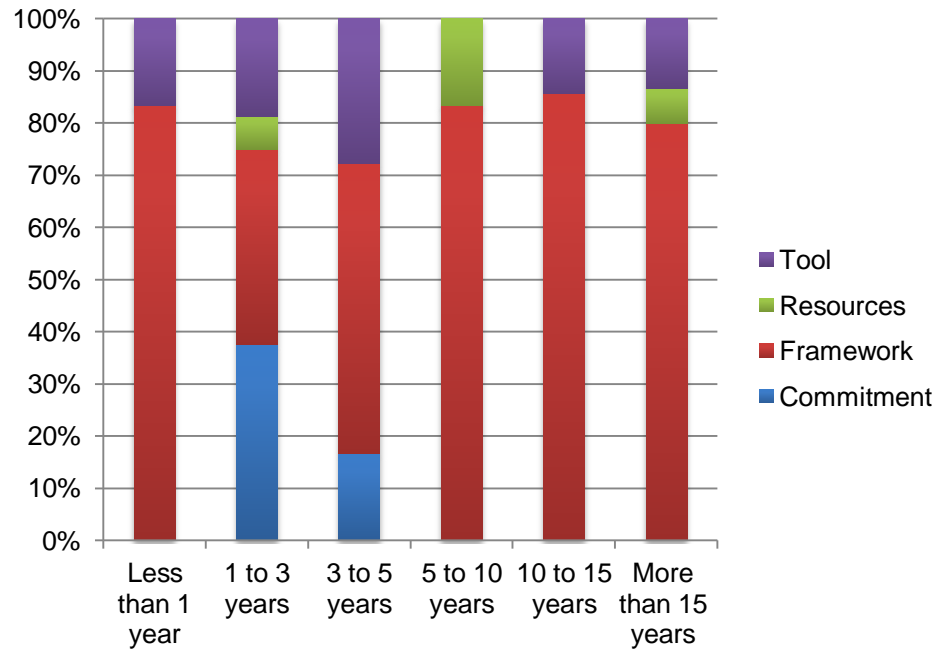

Figure 9: Most important action grouped by theme according to tenure

Career development assessment

In 2013, respondents were asked to rate their current organisation against 19 statements (versus only 16 statements in 2012) using a 5-point scale to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement. The results have been organised by grouping all scores of agreement (green), all scores of disagreement (red) and the neutral scores of partially agree-disagree (yellow). The aggregate patterns are displayed in the chart below from the lowest levels of agreement to the highest levels.

The net result is an assessment of the performance of the respondent's current organisation on some key criteria for effective career development. The bar on the right hand side of the chart shows the Increase (green) or decrease (red) of the favourable scores in 2013 compared to the favourable scores in 2012. *It is important to note that there is a decrease in favourable scores for all 16 items measured in 2013, compared to 2012.*

Statement	Favourable	Neutral	Unfavourable	Diff FAV comp. to 2012
Career development is supported through a clear and…	2	30	68	-74%
Supervisors are adequately trained to support the…	3	23	74	-48%
There is a good process in place to understand and…	6	39	55	-30%
Staff understand what the key skills and capabilities…	9	33	58	-44%
The performance appraisal process places sufficient…	10	22	68	-43%
Staff understand the career development philosophy…	11	28	61	-31%
Provision of additional support and tools to help…	11	36	53	-56%
Staff understand what their own role is in their career…	15	36	49	-36%
Staff perceive that there is a fair and transparent…	17	39	44	19%
Challenging projects and assignments are available to…	20	44	36	-39%
My organisation has a mobility policy	22	30	48	-30%
I believe there are great opportunities for me to…	22	36	42	#N/A
High quality training on technical skills is available to…	24	43	33	-33%
The leadership in my organisation strongly supports…	28	37	35	%
High quality training on soft skills is available to…	28	39	33	-28%
There is an effective induction process in place that…	30	33	37	-22%
I would leave my organisation in the next 12 months…	36	27	37	#N/A
My organisation usually promotes qualified internal…	38	31	31	-23%
I would recommend my organisation to my friends…	47	32	20	#N/A

Figure 10: Career development assessment results

Career development assessment responses by tenure

The most interesting differences in the career development assessment ratings by tenure in the organisations are between the one year or less tenure group and the overall population. The main differences that emerge from this analysis are summarised in the following table.

The leadership in my organisation strongly supports career development of staff	50% of those with less than 1 year and more, versus only 15% of those from 1 to 3 years
There is an effective induction process in place that orients new staff to their role and the expectations of the organisation	Only 17% of those with less than 1 year tenure agree, compared to 30% overall.
Staff understand the career development philosophy of the organisation / *Staff understand what their own role is in their career development*	0% of those with less than 1 year tenure agree, compared to 11% overall.
Career development is supported through a clear and well-executed policy	84% of those from 1 year to 3 years tenure do not agree, compared to 68% overall who do not agree.
Challenging projects and assignments are available to staff who want to take advantage of the opportunity to build new skills	74% of those with less than 1 year tenure agree, compared to 20% overall.
My organisation has a mobility policy that is an important part of the development journey for certain staff populations	70% of those with less than 1 year tenure agree, compared to 22% overall.
There is a good process in place to understand and address the key drivers of staff motivation, including those related to career development	53% of those with less than 1 year tenure agree, compared to 6% overall.
I believe there are great opportunities for me to develop in my organisation:	75% of those with less than 1 year are neutral, compared to 36% neutral overall.
I would leave my organisation in the next 12 months if I found a better opportunity	50% of those with less than 1 year tenure agree, compared with 36% overall. (22% of those with more than 15 years agree.)

A significant positive correlation (0.46 or higher on 0 to 1 scale exists among the following four dimensions:

1. Additional support is provided;
2. A process to understand and address key drivers of staff motivation is in place;
3. The supervisor has the right skills;
4. The policy is well executed.

This could mean that when people are convinced that they have been provided with adequate support and information they are more confident towards the organization and its career development process, and vice versa.

The top 4 statements of agreement among respondents have agreement rates that range from 30% to 47%. The topics covered by these questions relate to the promotion of qualified internal people, the existence of an effective induction process, the willingness to recommend the organisation to a friend seeking employment and, more worryingly, the willingness to leave the organisation in 12 months if a better opportunity is found.

The finding on the internal promotion practice is interesting given the low tenure of Directors versus other levels in the organisation. In addition, the statement on staff perceiving a fair and transparent process for filling open positions was rated at only 17%, less than half of the statement on promoting qualified people. This suggests that respondents believe that qualified people are promoted, yet the mechanisms by which the new job holders are chosen are not clear. This is consistent with the findings in 2012.

Turning our attention towards the bottom 4 scores on the agreement criteria, we find that *less than one in ten* believe the following:

- Career development is supported through a well executed policy
- Supervisors are adequately trained to support the career development of staff
- A process exists to address and understand the key drivers of staff motivation
- Staff understand the key capabilities and skills required in the next 5 years

In addition, poor scores are found regarding staff understanding the career development philosophy of the organisation and what skills are required. When this is coupled with only 10% (17%, 2012) claiming the performance appraisal process puts insufficient emphasis on career development it is clear that the majority of organisations are not meeting staff needs in this area. Once again, there is a pattern that suggests organisations neglect the more strategic activities, such as creating integrated career development frameworks and policies.

Personal challenges

Respondents were given the opportunity to identify the biggest challenge that they currently face in their career development. As before, their answers have been classified thematically resulting in 9 distinct categories.

Consistent with previous sections, the emphasis on the lack of an understandable framework and supporting processes was viewed a particularly challenging and mentioned by 21% of the respondents. However, the biggest challenge according to 36% of respondents lies in the lack of opportunities. The third biggest personal challenge appears to be the reconciliation of work and family expressed by 8% of respondents, all of whom were women, signaling that this is an area that merits further consideration. Several of the responses in this area are related to the difficulties of balancing geographical mobility with family commitments.
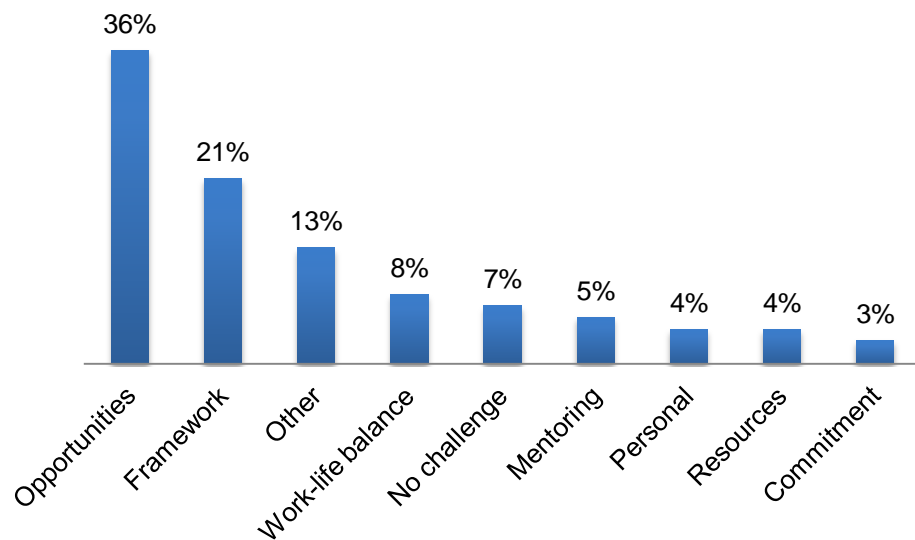

Figure 11: Thematic analysis of personal challenges to career development

Personal challenges by tenure

Cross tabulating the data with tenure, we can see that perceptions change according to the time spent in an organization.

Newcomers struggle most with the lack of an integrated framework and the opportunities that they perceive. This suggests a significant opportunity for supervisors to provide further support to their new hires, even in the absence of an integrated framework.

Interestingly, work-life balance is the primary concern of the more than 15 year tenure staff group, with opportunities following closely for this group.
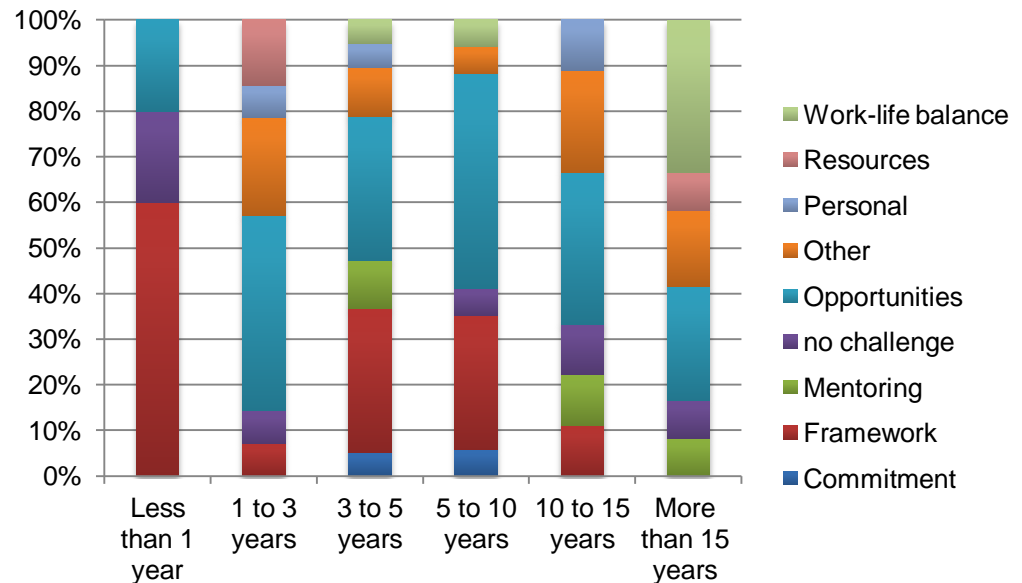

Figure 12: Personal challenges according to tenure

Conclusions and future outlook

This research project raised a number of areas ripe for action. It is clear that many organisations do not place sufficient emphasis on career development and that leadership often fails to make it a priority. As a result, career development strategies and frameworks are weak or nonexistent, leading to a general confusion by staff and managers alike on what should be done to support career development. In light of the increasing financial pressures felt by many organisations to demonstrate results to donors, it is urgent that attention be placed on raising staff motivation and productivity.

The opportunity cost to organisations is the neglect of a main driver of staff commitment, motivation and skill development that can be aligned with organisational goals. In effect, both the staff member and the organisation win when career development is approached strategically.

Consistent with the 2012 findings, the main theme of lack of a cohesive strategy-policy framework is joined by a concern that supervisors are not adequately prepared to support the career development of their staff. As well, staff are not quite sure what their own role is in their career development. This is interesting in light of the perception that other training in "soft" and "technical" skills was perceived as a relative strength for the organisations represented in the survey.

An outcome of the lack of attention to career development in the broader sense is that it becomes overly associated with promotion. This is counterproductive because the pool of possible promotions is increasingly limited by the decreasing number of posts at higher levels. This situation is not expected to change in light of recent funding challenges and heightened competition among international organisations.

A few staff in this survey have pointed out that they are frustrated by the lack of opportunity for lateral moves in their organisations, either within or across functions. This represents a missed opportunity to challenge staff to learn new transferable skills that are valuable to the organisation and motivating to staff.

In this final section, the focus is on four broad areas with some suggestions offered by Optimis and Bocconi for meeting the challenges in each area. The list is not meant to be exhaustive but to rather to provide food for thought and to stimulate reflection on what your organisations could do to better address the opportunities of a strategic career development approach.

The four areas are:

1. Gaining leadership commitment
2. Creating a career development strategy
3. Implementing career development policies, processes and tools
4. Training supervisors

For each of the above topics, there is space allocated for the reader to reflect on how this applies to their organisation and what could be done.

As one respondent wisely suggested "*start small, but start somewhere.*" It is really important make a beginning and to manage staff expectations to foster motivation. Big strategies that are not followed by clear and proper execution are ultimately counterproductive.

1. **Gaining leadership commitment**

In this research study, "too few perceived opportunities" was the top organisational challenge identified, followed closely by limited funds. It is reasonable to argue that the leadership is responsible for prioritizing the available funds and is at the heart of building a sustainable solution.

The challenge then becomes one of helping leaders recognize the importance of career development as a critical driver of ***organisational effectiveness*** and ***staff motivation***. Faced with competing priorities in a resource-constrained environment it is easier for the leadership to focus on the initiatives that can be more easily understood and quantified. Accordingly, a shift in "mind-set" is needed.

Effectively, a culture change is required to make significant progress in addressing career development strategically and the leadership can and should play an important role in defining the new vision. ***HR professionals can make a difference by marshaling the evidence to make the case for career development as a high priority, as a driver for the evolution of the capabilities that the organisation needs to be successful at present and in the future.*** The following approaches may be helpful to build the case for career development:

- Review the research on motivation and engagement as it relates to career development and present the "evidence" to senior management
- Engage in ongoing discussions with senior management about career development and staff motivation, creating a focus on the topic and a shift in understanding and "mind-set"
- Measure "staff engagement" for the organisation using any of a number of methodologies – engagement surveys and focus groups are common approaches to identify the drivers of staff motivation, which inevitably highlight the key elements of career development
- Implement a process to follow up on the aggregate survey results
- Have leaders commit to following up on priority actions developed from the results of the staff engagement process, including career development and other related areas

The reality is that leadership commitment is a ***key success factor*** for changing the management culture and successfully implementing new strategies and practices in career development.

Reflection and Application
If relevant, how might you address this area in your organisation?
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2. Creating a Career Development strategy

The importance of an integrated career development framework was a main finding of this research, with two-thirds of respondents indicating that this was the most important area that their organisation should focus on. This integrated framework connects career development with the HR strategy and the organisational strategy, creating a powerful alignment and context for focusing on the right elements to enhance organisational effectiveness. In practical terms, this means that the main areas of the HR strategy, like recruitment, performance management, job architecture, competency frameworks and training programs are linked in a larger HR system to career development.

This presupposes that an HR strategy exists and is aligned with the organisational strategy. If this is not the case then the first order of business is to craft the HR strategy. The following approaches may be helpful in building the strategy:

- Understand the organisational strategy and current context
- Engage the HR professionals responsible for the main HR processes in the discussion early to explore the linkages among the areas and a prototype of the career development framework
- Use this as the basis for engaging stakeholders across the organisation to further refine the career development framework that would best serve the staff and the organisation
- Choose specific projects and priorities to implement in the near term, recognizing that not everything has to be done at once
- Try to devolve strategy implementation and oversight to the line management as much as possible. It is important that career development activities become part of everyday management practice within the context of the strategy, policies and processes. The tools are developed to link career development with performance management, for instance, providing a coherent and logical approach. By involving management in this way you will ultimately reduce costs.

The creation of a career development strategy and framework is an important prior step to the development of policies, processes and supporting tools for implementation. The career development process and tool development can be considered the final phase of strategy development. In effect, the policies, processes and tools are key deliverables of the career development strategy. These deliverables should be as light and simple as possible. Managers and staff alike are at times put off by the complexity of these programs.

Some practical suggestions for possible inclusion in the policy, processes and tools are as follows:

- Improve transparency and communication of internal opportunities of development
- Define/formalize a dual career ladder, including managerial and technical tracks to allow technical experts to be rewarded for continuing in their specialty
- Foster different types of lateral moves: within function, across functions and geographic
- Develop tools in order to allow a more accurate matching between position and profile
- Involve experienced people in an informal mentoring role working with newer hires. Leverage their experience as a way to increase their motivation and develop young talent.
- Use project and special assignments as means to develop staff skills and create a "triple win" – the organisation is able to focus existing resources on important projects, the supervisor in charge of the project has more available resources to meet the goals and the staff potentially has a rich on-the-job learning experience

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Reflection and Application
If relevant, how might you address this area in your organisation?
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3. Implementing career development policies, processes and supporting tools

Implementation of a new approach or initiative can be very challenging, often even more so than the development of the strategy, policies, processes and tools. Effective implementation requires excellent change management, project management and communication skills so it is important to have the right expertise in place to lead the implementation projects. In addition, these types of projects can be an important development experience for others involved.

Here are a few ideas that may help to create a smoother implementation process:

- Create a project plan and governance structure for the project. The project plan will allow you to create a shared understanding among members of the project and the governance structure keeps your stakeholders involved.
- Consider piloting the new processes and tools prior to launching them in the organisation. A limited pilot can be used to build commitment to the new process and also to further refine it, surfacing issues that were not anticipated.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate … keep stakeholders informed of what you are doing. Don't forget that stakeholders include all staff so general communications to all will be needed.

Reflection and Application

If relevant, how might you address this area in your organisation?

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4. Training supervisors

The success of a new initiative is usually measured by how well the new processes are implemented and the value that they deliver. An important part of the implementation equation is that supervisors are committed and capable to engage in career development support for their staff.

An interesting finding in this research project was the emphasis on developing supervisory skills in career development, which was again in 2013 the second highest organisational priority chosen by 61% (58%, 2012) of the survey participants. Participants also scored their organisations the lowest on the "training of supervisors in career development …" with only 3% (6%, 2012) believing that their supervisors were adequately trained and 74% (68%, 2012) indicating that their supervisors *were not* adequately trained in this area.

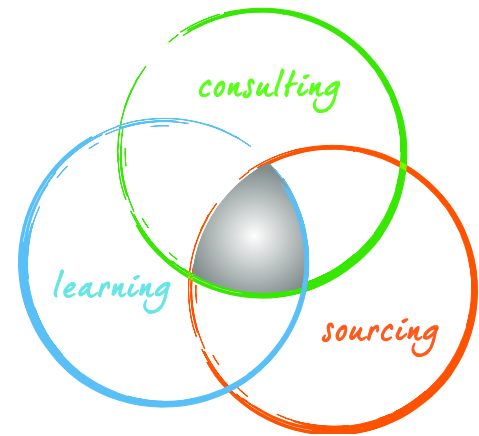Some suggestions for bringing the supervisors skills up to par in career development are as follows:

- Socialise the supervisors to the new system as part of the project implementation. They should be made aware of the strategy and the full set of policies, processes and tools in this area and of their responsibilities. Engage them in the development of the new system as much as possible.
- Integrate the career development training content into the existing supervisor skills programs to reinforce the linkages with other areas and the behaviors for successful career development support
- Hold supervisors accountable through their own performance objectives for managing career development as an integral part of their management role

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Reflection and Application
If relevant, how might you address this area in your organisation?

Annex A: About Optimis

Optimis is an international consultancy group based in Switzerland. We support private and public sector organisations in the achieving greater **organisational effectiveness** by reviewing, developing and optimizing their Organisational and Human Resource Management strategies, structures, processes and systems. We are a group of senior professionals committed to measuring the benefits of our client's investment and operating as a strategic advisor to help achieve optimal returns, financial as well as organisational. Our service areas are split into three main sectors:

Optimis Strategy Consulting

Below are several areas where Optimis offers strategic consulting services:

- **Organisational Diagnostics and Research**

  We are committed to understanding the organisational context, challenges and issues of our clients through organisational surveys, organisational analysis, research and functional audits. We provide our diagnostic services on three levels: organisational, functional-team and individual

- **Developing Strategy Initiatives**

  We support our clients in defining and developing appropriate organisational and HR strategies, structures, policies, processes and systems to address organisational issues

- **Implementing Programs and Projects**

  As a partner, we support the implementation of solutions through rigorous change management and learning activities to ensure successful execution

Optimis Learning

Optimis provides **customised learning programmes** designed to meet the organisation's needs and to build management and leadership capabilities. Optimis delivers enterprise wide learning solutions for your leadership and management teams. We use experiential applied learning techniques and seasoned facilitators to draw out the potential of individuals, groups and entire organisations. Our learning architects assist in the design of custom programmes that are linked to our clients' priorities and the specific capabilities required achieving their goals. Through a mix of learning and coaching, we help them create an environment where engagement, performance and learning are fully integrated into the day-to-day activities and are everyone's priority.

Optimis Sourcing

We support your strategic change initiatives with expert **selection and assessment services** to ensure you have the right talent to implement your organisational strategy. In addition, we provide **interim management** placement to support our clients in accessing difficult to find profiles

Annex B: About SDA Bocconi School of Management

Founded in 1971 by Bocconi University, the SDA Bocconi School of Management was a pioneer in management education in Italy and today enjoys international recognition as a leading management school.

SDA Bocconi is a not for profit institution that sees its economic balance as a means to achieve long-term cultural independence. Our mission is to educate men and women ready to act anywhere in the world, using their knowledge and imagination to serve business and society. For over forty years, SDA Bocconi has been working alongside businesses, public and not for profit organizations, banks and financial institutions, to contribute to the development of society.

SDA Bocconi dedicates energy and resources to creating value. Our research, teaching and collaborations with the scientific, business and institutional communities are proof of our commitment. It is exemplified by our values-based international approach, critical spirit, pragmatism, curiosity, innovation practices and idea exchanges. Knowledge and imagination are the shared pride and heritage of the faculty, its students, and thousands of alumni around the world

SDA Bocconi is internationally recognized by the most prestigious international accreditation bodies which include: AACSB (The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business); EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) and AMBA (Association of MBAs).

SDA Bocconi has one of the most highly regarded Public Management and Policy Departments in Europe, dealing specifically with research, executive education and life-long programmes for civil servants. There is a dedicated faculty that works with the following programs:

- **Master Programs:** 3 Specialized Masters and 3 Executive Masters
- **Open Programs:**
  - **Healthcare**:   30 programs;
  - **Public Administration**:   20 programs;
  - **Non Profit:**   6 programs;
- **Custom Programs:**

  Uniquely designed custom programs that equip institutions to successfully achieve their strategic goals, to execute policies and programs and to drive change; Custom programs may combine different formats: business diagnosis can be run to shape the program; business cases, surveys, focus groups and other tools can be applied to support vision and stimulate problem solving.

Our Networks and Communities approach is an effective and innovative way to involve Alumni and Public Organisations in a continuous learning process and experience exchange. This programme is managed by the Public Management and Policy Department and focuses on key topics or professional families, such as Accountants, Directors General of Health Care Organisations, Public Procurement Officers, and HR Managers at regional and local level.

Annex C: Research questionnaire

Demographic

1. Which category best describes your current professional level?

- o   Director or Deputy Director
- o   Chief or Head of Unit/Process
- o   Professional – Supervisor
- o   Professional - Individual contributor/specialist
- o   Support staff – Administrative
- o   Other:

2. How long have you been working in your current organisation?

- o   Less than 1 year
- o   1 to 3 years
- o   3 to 5 years
- o   5 to 10 years
- o   10 to 15 years
- o   More than 15 years

3. What is your gender?

- o   Female
- o   Male

4. Which category best describes the type of organisation you work with currently?

- o   Humanitarian- Aid
- o   Development
- o   International Financial Institution
- o   Normative institution
- o   Other:

Challenges and Priorities

5. **The biggest challenges that face my organisation today in their efforts to provide career development opportunities to staff are: (check all that apply)**

   - Not a priority for the leadership
   - Limited funds
   - Too few perceived opportunities
   - Few programs and processes for career development
   - Lack of capability to implement career development practices
   - Low staff motivation
   - Unrealistic expectations of staff
   - Other

6. **The two or three most important areas that I would like to see my organisation focus on in the next few years to improve career development support and opportunities for staff are:**

   - Induction of new staff and-or existing staff to new roles
   - Training – General Technical
   - Training – General Soft skills
   - Developing Supervisory skills in Career Development (e.g. coaching, development planning)
   - Mentoring or support programs
   - Staff support and assessment services – counseling, testing
   - A fully integrated Career Development process
   - Mobility opportunities
   - Other?

Open response

7. **What is the single most important action that I think my organization could take to support the Career Development of staff?**

Career Development

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding career development at your organization using the following 5 point scale:

Strongly Agree   Agree   Partially agree/partially disagree   Disagree   Strongly Disagree   NA

Q1. The leadership in my organisation strongly supports career development of staff:

Q2. There is an effective induction process in place that orients new staff to their role and the expectations of the organisation:

Q3. Staff understand what the key skills and capabilities are that the organization requires in the next 5 years:

Q4. Staff understand the career development philosophy of the organisation:

Q5. Staff understand what their own role is in their career development:

Q6. Career development is supported through a clear and well-executed policy:

Q7. Supervisors are adequately trained to support the career development policy with their staff:

Q8. The performance appraisal process in my organisation places sufficient emphasis on career development:

Q9. High quality training on technical skills is available to support the development of staff skills required to perform the technical aspects of the work:

Q10. High quality training on soft skills is available to support the development of staff skills required to perform the non-technical aspects of the work:

Q11. Challenging projects and assignments are available to staff who want to take advantage of the opportunity to build new skills:

Q12. My organisation provides additional support and tools to staff to help them in their career development efforts (testing, counseling, mentoring, etc.):

Q13. My organisation has a mobility policy that is an important part of the development journey for certain staff populations:

Q14. Staff perceive that there is a fair and transparent process for filling open positions:

Q15. My organisation usually promotes qualified internal people before hiring from outside:

Q16. There is a good process in place to understand and address the key drivers of staff motivation, including those related to career development:

Q17. I believe there are great opportunities for me to develop in my organization:

Q18. I would recommend my organization to my friends who are looking for employment:

Q19. I would leave my organization in the next 12 months if I found a better opportunity:

Open response

Q20. What additional career development support would you like to receive from your organisation?

Q21. What is the biggest challenge that you currently face in developing your career?

How will you take it to the next level?

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