

Many states require that counselors be certified, which means meeting certain minimum requirements, usually a Master's degree in a counseling-related field and one to two years experience. Ask your prospective counselor if he or she is certified by The National Board for Certified Counselors (see discussion at the end of this article), the National Academy of Certified Clinical Mental Health Counselors, or the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification. Some counselors and most psychologists will have a Ph.D. and will also be state licensed. You can call the relevant agency of your state government to find out the requirements for your area.

Because of the variety in types of training, ask what specific education the person has had in the field of career counseling. Perhaps more important, ask about experience, including what settings he or she has worked in and for how long. Ask how the person conducts career counseling; as explained, a certain amount of structure is essential to the process, and a counselor's description of his or her methods should reflect an understanding of the organization necessary to this type of counseling. In this preliminary contact, ask also about the cost of counseling. Counselors should be willing and able to provide all of the above information without hesitation or annoyance.

4. During your first session with a career counselor, look for the following: Do you feel that the person is paying attention to you, really listening and understanding your situation? Does the person use language that you understand? Do you and the counselor seem to have similar goals? Do you feel at ease with the person? Does the person explain in the first session how career counseling is conducted and what your respective roles and activities will be? Do you leave the session feeling encouraged and respected?

5. Do not make a commitment to continue counseling if you have any hesitation. Take time to decide, and perhaps even attend a first session with one or two other counselors before making a final choice.

National Certified Career Counselor

Obtaining this certification is a two-step process. First, the candidate must have a Master's degree in professional counseling or in a related field (social work, psychology, etc.) and become a National Certified Counselor by examination. The person thus qualified must then obtain two years post-Master's experience in career counseling, present professional references, and pass a written examination covering the following topic areas: career development, career information and resources, individual and group assessment, program management and evaluation. The credential must be maintained by re-examination or continuing education every few years. Further information can be obtained from: The National Board for Certified

Counselors, 5999 Stevenson Avenue, Suite 402, Alexandria, VA 22304; (703) 823-9800, ext. 369. This organization provides referrals to specific credentialed career counselors and also a packet of consumer-oriented information about career counselors and their services.

See also Career Choices: Youth; Career Exploration; Choosing an Occupation.

Bibliography

Yost, E.B., & Corbishley, M.A. (1987). *Career counseling: A psychological approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Although this book is written primarily for the professional career counselor, the general reader can obtain a clear overview of the career counseling process and of psychological issues that need to be considered, and thus can develop realistic expectations both of the counselor and of the potential outcome of counseling.

— ELIZABETH B. YOST AND M. ANNE CORBISHLEY

CAREER DEVELOPMENT: DONALD SUPER'S THEORY

Donald Super's theory describes and seeks to explain work-related situations and demands that people encounter as they progress from childhood through retirement. Super called these vocational situations and demands career development tasks. Mastery of a task advances a career toward greater success and satisfaction and prepares the person to meet later developmental tasks. Failure at a task delays or impairs career development and may cause a person to flounder in securing a job, drift aimlessly from job to job, or stagnate in a dead-end job.

Based on studies of life histories, Super ordered career development tasks along a time line that represented the life span from birth to death. He sequenced the tasks in the order in which people typically encounter them. Then, Super divided the life line of career development tasks into five segments that correspond to the life stages of childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood. Super viewed each segment as a career stage during which people experience similar vocational situations, demands, and concerns. He called the five career stages Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Disengagement.

The Relationship of Career Stages to Work

Growth Stage. During elementary and junior high school, children grow in their capacity to work. To get ready for productive work lives, children need to learn positive work attitudes and responsible work habits. They

must also develop self-confidence in their ability to do a job well. To complement confidence in their ability to compete, children also need the courage to cooperate. Career success requires that an individual "get along" as well as "get ahead." In fact, the most common reason for job loss is conflict with coworkers. When young people value work and have self-esteem, they usually start to think about their futures and daydream about working in different occupations.

Exploration Stage. During the decade from 15 to 24 years of age, optimal career development requires that people explore their communities and themselves. They should explore the world of work to learn about occupations and they should explore their interests, abilities, and goals to form vocational aspirations. The best way to explore self and environment is to participate in a wide range of activities. People with more life experiences are better prepared to engage in the three phases of the career choice process in Super's model. During the first phase, an individual broadly explores types of work to crystallize a preference for a particular field of interest. In the second phase, the individual investigates possible occupations within that field to make the general preference more specific. When a specific occupation suits the individual and the individual has viable opportunities to pursue that occupation, the individual specifies it as his or her occupational choice. During the third phase of the career choice process, the individual tentatively implements an occupational choice by preparing for and obtaining a job in that occupation (see **Career Exploration**).

Establishment Stage. During the period from about 25 to 44 years of age, people typically establish their careers. After settling on an appropriate occupation, an individual seeks to secure a permanent place in it. The 20-year period called the establishment stage can be thought of as having three phases. The first phase consists of stabilizing one's occupational position. New workers make their jobs secure by performing their assigned duties well and by adapting gracefully to their company's way of doing things (see **Organizational Culture**). Having stabilized in their position, workers must then consolidate that position in phase two of the establishment stage. To consolidate a position, a worker must be friendly and responsible. Friendly workers get along with coworkers and deal effectively with interpersonal problems at work. Responsible employees show good work habits and attitudes by being productive, dependable, enthusiastic, and responsive to supervision. Workers who have consolidated their positions may have opportunities for advancement to higher level positions in their own organization or another organization. Workers who want to advance should set goals for the future and identify career paths that lead to goal attainment.

Maintenance Stage. During the period from about 45 to 65 years of age, many people maintain positions that they have achieved while some people re-establish themselves in new positions. This is, therefore, one of several transitions often found in careers. Before deciding to maintain or re-establish, people typically spend several years considering their future direction and goals. They may ask themselves, "Do I want to do this for the next 25 years?" Some people say no to this question. Rather than maintain a position, they explore and establish themselves in a new position or occupation. Many people say yes to this question and then maintain their positions by holding on to what they have attained, updating their knowledge and skills, or innovating new ways of doing old work tasks. Occasionally workers who are maintaining a position modify their routines by shifting the focus of their jobs or expanding their job responsibilities.

Disengagement Stage. At about the age of 60, people begin to decelerate. People slow down their careers by reducing their work load, contemplating early retirement, planning for retirement living, training a successor, and turning some tasks over to other people. Eventually, when they do retire, people face the developmental tasks of organizing a new lifestyle and structuring free time.

Application

The previous section described the career development tasks that should concern you if you want long-term satisfaction and success at work. This section explains how you can deal with these tasks. First, identify your career stage from the descriptions given above. Second, read the following action list for your career stage. Third, gather information on the action items listed for your career stage by reading relevant entries in this *Encyclopedia*. Fourth, use this information to make a plan that specifies exactly how and when you will perform each career action in your stage. Fifth, review and revise your plan to make sure that each step is achievable (you can do it), believable (you want to do it), controllable (you do not have to rely on others for help to do it), concrete (you can objectively prove that you did it), and dated (deadline for completion). And finally, carry out your plan.

Growth Stage Career Action List: perform regular household chores, get part-time jobs, achieve potential in schoolwork, participate in extracurricular activities, visit interesting places, join group activities, demonstrate adaptability by making the best of bad situations, think about the future, and imagine yourself in different occupations.

Exploration Stage Career Action List: participate in a wide range of activities, get to know yourself better, learn about types of work and specific occupations, narrow

preferences to a few fields of interest and identify a group of occupations in each field, explore the occupational groups, choose an occupation that fits your abilities and interests, learn what preparation your preferred occupation requires, prepare to enter that occupation, and obtain a job in that occupation.

Establishment Stage Career Action List: settle down in a regular job, learn how things get done in your company, find better ways to do your job tasks, keep a positive attitude, be a dependable and productive worker, get along with coworkers, learn how people in your organization achieve stability or get promoted, and think about what you would like to be doing in ten years and what to do to make that possible.

Maintenance Stage Career Action List: weigh pros and cons of changing your occupation at mid-career, hold your own in competition with younger workers, learn about new opportunities, find ways to remain enthusiastic, keep abreast of new developments in your field, enroll in continuing education for job or personal growth, seek expanded responsibilities or shift focus of your work, and devise new ways of doing things.

Disengagement Stage Career Action List: reduce pace or load of work, devise easier ways to do your work, try new hobbies, participate in community activities, plan retirement income, talk to retired friends for tips on retiring, develop a circle of friends outside of work, and do things you have always wanted to do.

See also Career Choices: Youth; Career Exploration; Career Identity; Career Roles; Organizational Culture.

Bibliography

- Blocher, D. H. (1989). *Career actualization and life planning*. Denver: Love Publishing. Workbook for adults concerned about career development issues.
- Campbell, R. E., & Cellini, J. V. (1980). Adult career development. *Counseling and Human Development*, 12: 1-14. Available from Love Publishing, 1777 South Bellaire Street, Denver, CO 80222. Discusses theories of adult career development, common career challenges, and career counseling for adults.
- Super, D. E. (1957). *The psychology of careers*. New York: Harper and Row. Classic statement of Super's theory of career development.
- Super, D. E., & Bohn, M. J., Jr. (1970). *Occupational psychology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

—MARK L. SAVICKAS

CAREER DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

Career development is not just the concern of the individual any more. Increasingly, organizations are coming to see career development as a responsibility they share with the employee (Hall & Associates, 1986). They are implementing this concern through career development systems, which are programs and procedures to assist the employee in maximizing the utilization of his or her career potential.

Definitions

A *career development system* is "an organized, formalized, planned effort to achieve a balance between the individual's career needs and the organization's workforce requirements" (Leibowitz, Farren, & Kaye, 1986, p. 4). The key word here is "balance"—organizations with effective career systems tend to have progressive, enlightened senior managements who recognize that the best way for the organization to maximize its effectiveness is to provide for the best utilization and growth of its employees. Two key aspects of the career development process were identified years ago by the late Walter Storey, who did pioneering career work at General Electric. The first element is *career planning*, which is the work of the individual employee who is attempting to chart a satisfying and productive direction for his or her career. Career planning consists of (a) becoming aware of self, opportunities, constraints, choices, and consequences, (b) identifying career-related goals, and (c) programming work, education, and related developmental experiences to provide the direction, timing, and sequence of steps to attain a specific career goal (Storey, 1976).

The second component is *career management*, which is an ongoing process of preparing, implementing, and monitoring career plans undertaken by the employee alone or in connection with the organization's career systems (Storey, 1976). Thus, the individual's utilization of career development systems can be viewed as the simultaneous enactment of career planning and career management. Elsewhere (Hall & Associates, 1986), this writer has shown how career planning and career management represent end points of a spectrum of career development activities (see Figure 1). At the extreme individual career planning end of the spectrum might be activities such as self-directed work books or tape cassettes. At this end of the spectrum the individual has high control and receives a lot of information, but he or she has little impact on the organization's activities.