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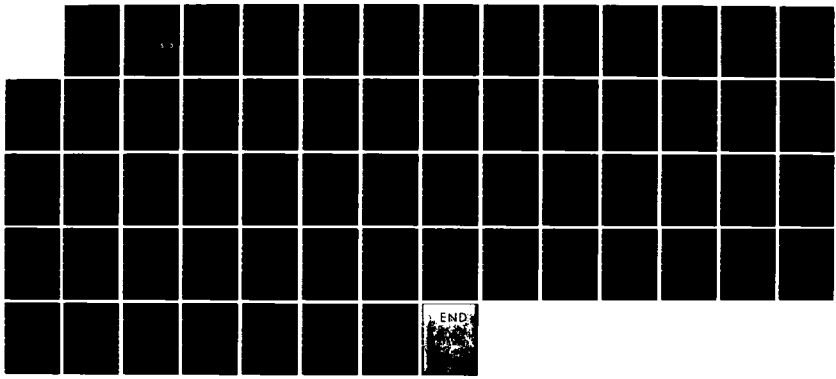
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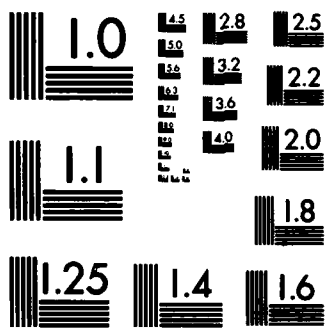
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INDIVIDUALS AND CAREERS*

Edgar H. Schein

Sloan School of Management, MIT, October 1982

Introduction

The word "career" has many different connotations. Sometimes we attribute careers only to people who have a profession, or whose occupational life is well structured and involves steady advancement. I prefer to use the word somewhat more broadly. All people develop some kind of picture of their work life, and their own role in it. It is this "internal career" that I wish to explore.

This concept should be distinguished from other uses of the word career (Van Maanen and Schein, 1977; Driver, 1982). For example, the specific steps prescribed for progress through an occupation or an organization (Dalton, Thompson & Price, 1977) represent an "external career." The doctor has to go through medical school, internship, residency, and speciality board examinations. In some organizations the general manager must go through several business functions, gain experience in supervising people, take on a functional management job, and rotate through the international division before achieving a high-level division

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head position. Some organizations talk of career paths, which define the necessary or at least desirable steps for the individual to take en route to a desired job (Walker, 1980).

The word career also has some negative connotations. It can imply that the individual is too much involved in work, or takes things too seriously ("don't make a career out of it"). One who jockeys for position may be accused of "careerism." Especially in communist societies, "careerism" is viewed as undesirable because it implies too much personal ambition (Schein, 1975).

In occupational psychology attempts have been made to predict career outcomes on the basis of various personal factors (Osipow, 1973). These studies have usually found only small correlations between the independent variable and type of occupation entered or level of success attained, as measured by rank or money earned. A more useful approach may be to examine the internal career from a dynamic evolutionary perspective. In this chapter, after outlining some of the major stages of the career and some of the ways career progress can be measured, I describe in some detail the concept of the career anchor, the self-image that a person develops around his or her career, and which both guides and constrains career decisions. The implications of the career anchor concept for human resource management will be explored from the perspectives of the individual and the enterprise manager.

The Career From the Individual Perspective

Major Stages

From the individual point of view, the career comprises a series of psychologically meaningful units. The length of time associated with each stage will vary immensely according to the occupation and the individual within it. The stages discussed here are an adaptation and elaboration of the major stages first identified by Super (1957) and described in detail in Career Dynamics (Schein, 1978).

Stage 1: Growth, Fantasy, Exploration

The period when an occupation is merely thought about and a career has little meaning beyond occupational stereotypes and vague criteria of success. The person at this stage prepares to enter the necessary educational process for the chosen occupation.

Stage 2: Education and Training

Some occupations require minimal training, others a very elaborate process.

Stage 3: Entry into the World of Work

For most people, regardless of their preparation, this is a time of reality shock and major adjustment problems as they learn about the realities of work and their own reactions to it. Major personal learning begins at this point, leading to the emergence of an occupational self-concept.

Stage 4: Basic Training, Socialization

The length of this period will also vary immensely by occupation, organization, complexity of the work, and so on. Because the organization now begins to make some real demands on the individual, this stage involves significant personal learning.

Stage 5: Gaining Membership

At some point, individuals recognize, through the kinds of assignments they have been given, that they have passed beyond the trainee stage and have been accepted as full contributors. They can now develop meaningful images of themselves as members of the occupation or organization. Motives and values are clarified as they reflect on their own responses to different challenging situations. They begin to have a sense of their talents, strengths, and weaknesses.

Stage 6: Gaining of Tenure, Permanent Membership

Somewhere in the first five to ten years of the career, most organizations and occupations make a "tenure" decision which tells the individual whether he or she can count on a long-run future in the organization. Tenure may be granted either explicitly or symbolically, with the proviso, of course, that tenure exists only so long as a job exists.

Mid-Career Crisis, Reassessment

There is mounting evidence that most people go through some kind of difficult self-reassessment when they are well into their career, asking themselves questions about their initial choice ("Have I entered the right career?"), their level of attainment ("Have I accomplished all I hoped to?" "What have I accomplished and was it worth the sacrifices?"), and their future ("Should I continue or make a change?" "What do I want to do with the rest of my life and how does my work fit into it?") (Jacques, 1965; Levinson et al., 1978; Vaillant, 1978; Osherson, 1980; Gould, 1978).

Stage 7: Maintaining Momentum, Regaining It, or Leveling Off

The insights emerging from reassessment create a basis for deciding how to pursue the remainder of the career. At this stage each person develops a personal solution that will guide his or her next steps.

Stage 8: Disengagement

Eventually, the person slows down, becomes less involved, and begins to prepare for retirement. For some people, preparation takes the form of denial. That is, they deal with the tension of potential retirement by aggressively continuing business as usual, and evading the attempts of others to get them involved in preparation for the next stage.

Stage 9: Retirement

Whether or not the individual has prepared, inevitably there will come a time when the organization or occupation no longer makes a meaningful role available. What happens to occupational self-image as the individual adjusts to the loss of this role is, of course, a major issue to be studied. Some people retire early because the occupation encourages it (e.g. the military or professional sports), or because they want to and have the opportunity to develop a "second career" in another occupation (Osherson, 1980).

These nine stages provide a kind of internal timetable for every person, but it is important to recognize that the stages can be long or short, can repeat themselves if the person moves from one career to another, and are not related in any necessary fashion to age. Within a particular occupation, stages may be closely correlated with age, but a doctor, a

clerk, a manager, a storekeeper, an engineer, and a consultant, may reach a given stage at very different ages.

Career Movement, Progress, or Success

The standards by which an individual measures his or her own success may be quite different from those employed by another person or by society at large. In fact, as we shall see below, the subjective definition of success very much reflects the individual's career anchor or subjective career image. However, all progress can be measured along three basic dimensions of movement within an organization or occupation (Schein, 1971, 1978; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979).

Cross-Functional Movement: Growth in Abilities and Skills. As we move into our careers, we change in terms of what we are able to do and how well we are able to do it. Such development may be the result of our own efforts or may depend on training opportunities provided by our employer or our profession. This kind of movement corresponds to cross-functional rotation within an organization or formal training that leads to a change in the work an individual does.

For most people, movement along this dimension is one measure of their success. Some recent developments in work redesign include creative compensation schemes that reward the worker according to the number of skills learned in a given job setting (Lawler, 1981).

Movement up. In all occupations and organizations, there is some kind of hierarchy, some system of ranks or titles by which the individual's progress can be judged. In this sense, the successful person is one who reaches or passes the level to which he or she aspires.

Again, others' judgments may differ from the individual's. An entrepreneur who has made \$2 million told me he felt like a failure because his friends all own \$300 million companies. Another person who has leveled off in middle management feels very successful because he has accomplished so much more than his father.

Without knowing the level of aspiration, one cannot judge subjective feelings of success. On the other hand, level of aspiration itself will be influenced by how society defines success, so there is likely to be some correlation between aspirations and external criteria. But the external criteria will be those relevant within a given occupation, not just those of society as a whole. Money may be a very general indicator of success in the United States, but for engineers the number of patents may be more important. Professors may care about the prestige of their university and their fame among colleagues, managers about the size of the budget for which they are responsible. To understand the individual's success criteria and self-assessment, the appropriate reference group is the one in which that individual would place himself or herself.

Movement "In": Attaining Influence and Power. One of the most important criteria of success is the individual's sense of how far he or she has penetrated into the inner core of an organization or occupation. Such penetration is often correlated with hierarchical movement, but may be achieved independently — for example, by a leveled-off employee who commands a strong "insider" position by virtue of seniority and personality, is consulted by high-ranking members of the organization, and thus can

influence policy even from a low-ranked position. Many technical people enjoy this kind of influence in organizations; often secretaries have power and influence far beyond their formal position, resulting from informal contacts built up outside of work over the years (Dalton, 1959).

Because such movement is invisible, it is difficult to judge its impact. Without asking the question directly, for example, one might have no idea that a certain person felt very successful because of his sense of being in the inner circle and having influence. This success criterion occasionally conflicts with movement upward, leading to such anomalies as the person who refuses a promotion because it would mean abandoning a carefully built up network of contacts.

The Development of a Career Anchor

As the career progresses, and especially in stages 4, 5, and 6, every person develops a self-concept that embraces some explicit answers to the questions:

- 1) What are my talents, skills, areas of competence? What are my strengths and what are my weaknesses?
- 2) What are my main motives, drives, goals in life? What am I after?
- 3) What are my values, the main criteria by which I judge what I am doing, whether I am in the right kind of organization or job, how good I feel about what I am doing?

This self-concept builds on whatever insight individuals have acquired from the experiences of their youth and education, but, by

definition, no mature self-concept is possible until they have had enough occupational experience to know what their talents, motives, and values really are. And such learning may take anywhere from one to ten years or more of actual work experience.

If the person has many varied experiences and gets meaningful feedback in each, a self-concept will develop more quickly. If he or she has only a few jobs in the early years of the career or obtains minimal feedback, it may take longer.

Talents, motives, and values become intertwined as we learn to be better at those things that we value and are motivated to do, and at the same time, to value and be motivated by the things we are good at. We also gradually learn to avoid things we do not do well, though without clear feedback we may cling to illusions about ourselves that set us up for repeated failure. If we have a talent but clearly no motivation to pursue it, the talent may gradually atrophy - yet often a new challenge can reveal latent talents that had simply not had an opportunity to appear earlier.

People differ in whether it is their talents, their motives, or their values that initially dominate their self-concept and provide a central career theme. As time goes on, however, our need for congruence makes us seek consistency and integration among the different elements of the self-concept. How is this consistency learned?

When people first enter the world of work they have many ambitions, hopes, fears, and illusions but relatively little good information about themselves, especially about their abilities and talents. Through testing and counseling they can get an idea of their interests,

motives, and values, and of their intellectual and motor skills, but they cannot really determine how good they will be at a certain kind of work or how they will react to it emotionally.

This difficulty is particularly acute in the occupation of "management," because of the difficulty of simulating some of its key skills and abilities. Until one actually feels the responsibility of committing large sums of money, of hiring and firing people, of saying "no" to a valued subordinate, one cannot tell whether one will be able to do it or, even more important, whether one will like doing it.

The early years in an occupation are thus a crucial time of learning — both about the occupation or organization and about oneself in relation to the demands of the job. This process is often painful and full of surprises because of the misconceptions that people typically bring to their early work situations. Many of our dreams about ourselves and our work may have to be abandoned, for "reality shock" is one of the commonest phenomena observed in all occupations in the early years (Hughes, 1958).

As people accumulate work experience, they have an opportunity to make choices, and it is from those choices that they begin to learn what is really important to them. Dominant themes emerge — a critical skill or ability that one really wants to exercise, an important need one has discovered, a crucial value that dominates one's orientation toward life. One may have known about these elements in a vague way, but until they have been tested in actual life experience, one does not know how important they are, and how a given talent, motive, or value relates in a subjective hierarchy to other elements of the total personality.

With the accumulation of work experience and feedback comes clarification and insight that provide a basis for more rational and managed career decisions. Our self-concept begins to function more and more as a guidance system, in the sense of constraining career choices. We begin to have a sense of what is "me" and what is "not me." And this knowledge keeps us on course. In reviewing their career choices, people often talk of being "pulled back" to something if they have strayed, or figuring out what they "really want to do," or "finding themselves."

The career anchor, as defined here, is that element in our self-concept which we will not give up, even if forced to make a difficult choice. People typically manage to fulfill a broad range of needs through their careers, but those needs are not all equally important. If we cannot meet all our needs, it is important to know which ones have highest priority.

External constraints beyond the control of the individual may thwart the career anchor temporarily. For example, economic circumstances or illness in the family could prevent a person from pursuing an occupation consistent with his self-image. If interviewed, he would explain that what he is currently doing is "not really me, not really what I would like to be doing or am capable of doing." How do we know these are not just idle illusions talking? Because many people have actualized their self-concept the moment the external constraint was lifted.

The career anchor is the self-image, and it can remain remarkably stable even if there is no opportunity whatsoever to exercise it, as in the case of the starving artist who is driving a cab. The self-image will change if the person obtains systematic experience and feedback that make it

impossible to maintain an illusion - in the case of the artist, for example, repeated failures to be able to create artistically even to one's own satisfaction. But the self-image may not change if the constraint is seen as merely external and temporary.

Early in his or her career, each person confronts the issue of how to integrate work, family, and personal priorities (Bailyn, 1978; Evans and Bartolome, 1980). Some will decide to deemphasize work, considering it merely instrumental to survival. Their experience is shaped primarily by what we might call a "life anchor." For our present discussion, we will focus on those people for whom work is important enough to warrant thinking in terms of career anchors. But as we will see, for many younger people the concept of "life anchor" makes more sense, and many older people significantly reassess their career commitments.

Origin of the Career Anchor Concept

The concept of the career anchor grew out of a study of managerial careers which began in the early 1960s. To understand better how managerial careers evolved, and especially how people learned the values and procedures of their employing organizations, I undertook a longitudinal study of 44 alumni of the Sloan School of Management at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Schein, 1975, 1978). The initial interviews and surveys of values and attitudes were conducted in 1961, 1962, and 1963 while the respondents were second-year students in the two-year master's program. All of them were interviewed at their place of work six months after graduation, and again one year after graduation, this time at MIT.

These interviews revealed a great deal about the problems of making the transition from school to work, the extensive reality shock that most graduates experienced as they faced the human problems of working in organizations, and the kinds of socialization processes that organizations employed. Important learning takes place during this first year - the organization learns about the graduate and, more important, the graduate learns not only about the organization but about himself.

This process of self-learning continued during the early career years, as we learned from a set of questionnaires completed five years after graduation and follow-up interviews conducted when alumni were approximately ten to twelve years into their careers. In these 1973 interviews, I elicited a detailed chronological career history, asking respondents not only to identify key choices and events, but also to speculate why they had occurred and how they felt about each change.

The actual events of the career histories proved to be highly variable. But the reasons that respondents gave for their actions and the pattern of their feelings about events revealed great regularities and themes of which the individual had often been unaware. Such themes reflected a growing sense of self - "this is me, and that is not me" - based upon the learning of the early years. I came to call this concept of self the career anchor.

Types of Career Anchors

Based on this longitudinal study and subsequent career history interviews of several hundred people in various career stages, several

types of career anchors can be identified. Some of the career anchors reflect basic issues in any career. For example, we must all resolve the question of autonomy: to what extent will we sacrifice independence for security and stability, in effect, letting our occupation and/or organization determine our career? A second issue has to do with the individual's definition of his or her basic abilities. Over time, a person may become more and more of a technical or functional specialist in some particular area, or may move increasingly toward administration, working with people, and general management, where a complex combination of motives, talents, and skills is the key to effective performance.

On both of these dimensions, because of the way in which the external career is structured in most organizations, the individual is typically forced to make a clear-cut choice (Maccoby, 1976; Zaleznik et al., 1970). The more one seeks autonomy, the more one has to sacrifice security and stability; the more one seeks general management, the more one has to give up exercising one's technical or functional competence. For example, managers who try to cling to their technical competence are characteristically less effective in their general manager role.

Our original sample included one other distinctive group of people whose overriding needs were to create some new product, service, or organization on their own. We termed their career anchor creativity. The more recent career history studies have revealed that for some people, the focus of their career is service or dedication to a cause. For others the focus seemed to be a kind of pure competitive drive, defining all work situations as self-tests that are won or lost against either an absolute

standard or an actual competitor. We have adopted the label pure challenge as the essence of this anchor.

Affiliation with a powerful organization or identification with an occupation or organization seems to be a central theme for some people, suggesting identity as a possible anchor (DeLong, 1982). Interviews indicate, however, that this group can be viewed as a variant of the security/stability anchor. Finally, more recent studies have identified a type defined by the belief that it should somehow be possible to integrate work, family, and self-concerns into a coherent life style; we call this the life-style anchor.

Before examining the individual career anchors in detail, we should pause to consider their relative frequency. Table 1 shows the results of several studies of alumni, alumnae, and members of certain occupations (Albertini, 1982; Anderson and Sommer, 1980; Applin, 1982; Burnstine, 1982; Crowson, 1982; Fowble, 1982; Grzywacs, 1982; Hall and Thomas, 1979; Heller, 1982; Hopkins, 1976; Huser, 1980; Janes, 1982; Kanto, 1982; Liebesny, 1980; Senior, 1982). The data in each study were gathered by means of detailed biographical interviews. The results show a striking variability. Most of the anchor types occur in each group, but we also see biases that reflect the career path.

Table 1
Summary percentages for selected groups

Group		Secu- rity	Auton- omy	Technical/ Functional	Mana- gerial	Entre- preneur- ial	Serv- ice	Chal- lenge	Life Style	Un- clear
Managers (N 112)	X	12	3	39	41	4	1	0	0	0
Functional (N 58)	X	19	3	52	14	2	5	0	2	3
Alumni (N 84)	X	17	13	34	21	14	0	0	0	0
Alumnae (N 40)	X	10	5	8	32	12	8	0	5	20
Consultants (N 40)	X	2	20	8	15	2	12	20	8	13

The managerial group includes 28 high-level program managers in the aerospace industry who might have been grouped with the functional group but for their level. If they are grouped with the functional group it exaggerates the differences in the table even more.

For example, in the group that has already or is clearly about to reach general management positions, we find, as expected a preponderance of managerial anchors and virtually no autonomy or entrepreneurially anchored people. Perhaps more surprising is that this group also includes a good many people who are anchored in their technical/functional area. We might hypothesize that such people either would be unhappy in their managerial roles or would actually not be performing those roles, despite their job titles. We have seen both types in interviews: some who were successful general managers but never enjoyed the role and were happy to be promoted to a corporate level where they could again practice their speciality, and others who never made the adjustment and therefore did not perform the generalist role effectively. The "functional" group, which includes bank

vice presidents, data processing managers, and financial managers, has a higher percentage of people anchored in their technical/functional speciality and relatively few whose anchors are managerial.

If we look at the more heterogeneous samples of male and female graduates, we notice first of all that the percentage of autonomy and entrepreneurial anchors is higher, as might be expected. Many of these people end up outside of traditional organizations and thus would not be found on typical surveys done in large organizations.

The men and women differ in some important ways. Alumnae are spread over more categories, more of them are hard to categorize into any one anchor group, more of them are managerially anchored, and noticeably fewer of them are technically/functionally anchored. It is not clear whether these differences are due to gender or to changes in social values since the female samples were done more recently than some of the male ones.

The autonomy anchor is relatively prominent among the 40 high-level management consultants studied. More interesting is the clear emergence in this group of a new anchor category, pure challenge. For many of the consultants, the only thing that mattered about a job was whether it posed a significant, preferably insurmountable, challenge. In some respects their attitude resembles the pure competitive orientation found by Derr in his Navy sample (1980). The only real goal of the group he called "warriors" was to prove themselves superior to a respected adversary.

Table 1 merges the results of more than a dozen samples, which are described individually in Table 2. In several cases, a sample consisted entirely of people at a particular rank within a particular organization -

yet still showed quite a diversity of career anchors. For example, a group of 20 fourth-level managers in a unit of the Bell System was found to have 10 managerially anchored, 7 technically/functionally anchored, 2 autonomy-anchored, and 1 security-anchored individuals. A group of 20 field service managers who had entered a single company in 1969 and were interviewed in 1982 was found to have 12 managerial, 2 technical/functional, 5 security, and 1 service-oriented individuals.

To illustrate the implications of this diversity for a given organization's career management system, we should look in more detail at a study of 28 program managers in several large aerospace companies (Hall and Thomas, 1979). Hall and Thomas postulated that the effectiveness and satisfaction of a program manager would vary according to how well his career anchor matched the requirements of the program phase. Their hypotheses are shown graphically in Figure 1 - during the creation phases of a large program, the more entrepreneurially oriented individual should be most effective and satisfied; during the design phase, it should be the technically/functionally-anchored ones; and during the production phase, which often requires long periods of repetitive work, it should be the security/stability-anchored ones. Those with managerial anchors should be equally effective across all stages, but not more effective than the perfectly matched ones. Those with autonomy anchors would not work in program management in the first place, hence are not shown.

Interviews partially confirmed the authors' hypotheses. Table 3 shows the phases in which managers preferred to work and felt most effective.

Table 2

Frequency of Occurrence of Different Career Anchors in Different Groups

GROUP STUDIED	ANCHOR CATEGORY (Percentages)								
	Security	Autonomy	Technical/ Functional	Managerial	Entre- preneur- ial	Serv- ice	Chal- lenge	Life Style	un- clear
1961,62,63 Sloan School Alumni Panel (N 44)	9	16	43	18	14	0	0	0	0
Alumni of Sloan Fellows Program (5-10 years out, N 40)	25	10	25	25	15	0	0	0	0
MIT Senior Executive Program 1976 (N 20)	0	0	70	30	0	0	0	0	0
Sloan School Alumnae (5 or more years out, 1980, 1981; N 40)	10	5	8	32	12	8	0	5	20
High potential women, middle managers 5-20 yrs. out, (N 20)	0	35	0	35	15	5	0	0	10
Upper middle managers in one Bell System co. (N 20)	5	10	35	50	0	0	0	0	0
Senior managers in five large companies (N 24)	0	0	42	58	0	0	0	0	0
Field service managers who started in 1969 (N 20)	25	0	10	60	0	5	0	0	0
Aerospace Program managers in five large companies (N 28)	29	4	39	14	14	0	0	0	0
Data Processing Professionals in one large company (N 23)	13	0	48	26	4	0	0	0	9
Sloan School Graduates in finance jobs, 4 yrs. out (N 15)	7	0	67	0	0	20	0	7	0
Female Bank Vice Presidents in one large bank, 5 yrs. out (N 20) ^a	20	0	35	20	0	5	0	0	0
Senior Management Consultants one firm (N 20)	5	30	0	25	0	10	30	0	0
Strategy and Management Consultants, several companies (N 20)	0	10	15	5	5	15	10	15	25
Physicians who had left traditional medicine to go into management (N 14)	0	36	21	0	29	14	0	0	0

^a This group included a number of minority members who had come in under affirmative action programs.

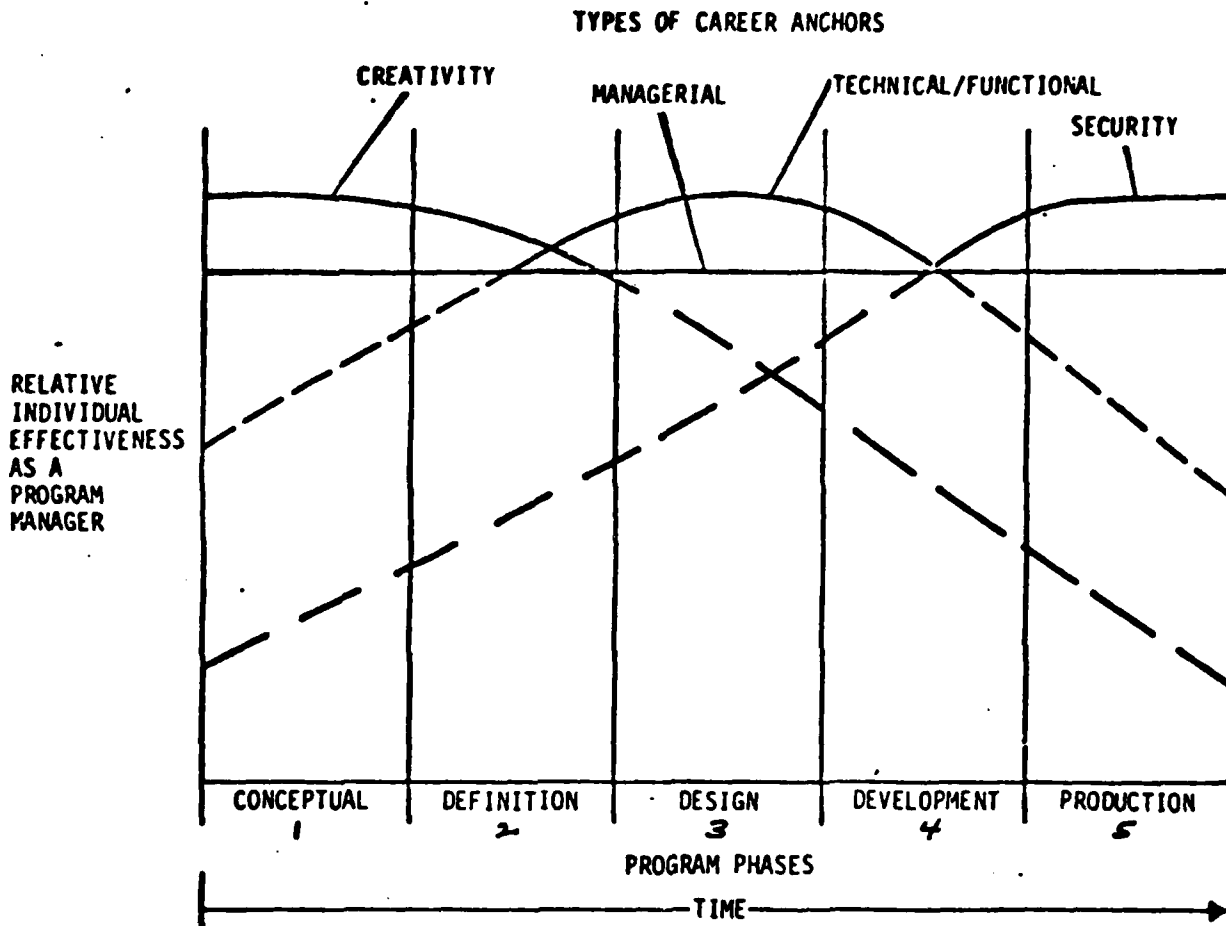


Figure I-2. Program Manager/Career Anchor Model

Hall, G.W. Jr., and F.J. Thomas. The Impact of Career Anchors on the Organizational Development of Program Managers in the Aerospace Industry. MIT Sloan School of Management thesis, Sloan School, 1979.

Table 3

Percentage of Program Managers with Different Career Anchors Who Are Working in Different Program Phases, Had Prior Experience in Different Phases, and Feelings of Effectiveness in Different Phases.

Career Anchor	P H A S E				
	Conc.	Defin.	Design	Devel.	Prod.
1. Currently					
Entrepreneurial (N 4)	25	50	25	0	0
Technical/Functional (N 11)	0	27	73	55	0*
Security (N 8)	0	0	0	62	87
Manager (N 4)	25	50	75	75	0
2. Prior Experience					
Entrepreneurial (N 4)	100	100	100	100	0
Technical/Functional (N 11)	100	100	100	100	9
Security (N 8)	25	62	88	100	100
Manager (N 4)	100	100	100	100	100
3. Felt Most Effective In					
Entrepreneurial (N 4)	100	100	0	0	0
Technical/Functional (N 11)	0	36	100	64	0
Security (N 8)	0	0	0	62	100
Manager (N 4)	100	100	100	100	50

*Numbers in a given row do not add up to 100 percent because managers were allowed to mention more than one phase in which they had worked, were working, and/or felt most effective. One manager with an autonomy anchor is not listed in the table.

Though there is some overlap, managers tended to report greater effectiveness and satisfaction in the phase most congruent with their anchor. Senior management in these companies recognized the need to match individual style and skill with job requirements, though they did not have the same kinds of labels for different types of program managers. What this line of research suggests is that mismatches between career anchors and job requirements not only lead to individual dissatisfaction but to poor job performance.

Managerial Implications of Career Anchor Varieties

We have seen that career occupants differ in their talents, needs, and values. Now we should look at each of the career anchor types in some detail. What are these various kinds of people looking for in their careers, and what does this mean to the employing organization? How should each type be managed, motivated, and rewarded?

Security/Stability/Organizational Identity as a Career Anchor

Some people feel a strong need to organize their careers in such a way that they will feel safe and secure, future events will be predictable, and they can relax in the knowledge that they have "made it." Everyone needs some degree of security and stability, and financial security can be particularly important at certain stages of life when one is raising and educating a family, for example, or approaching retirement. But for some people security, stability, and identification with a larger organizational unit become an overriding concern, which guides and constrains all major career decisions.

We have identified at least two kinds of people whose careers are anchored in security concerns. One kind becomes strongly identified with a given organization, welcomes the "golden handcuffs," and turns over all responsibility for career management to the employer. In exchange for tenure, these people will loyally do as they are told, letting the employer determine how much they travel, where they live, how often they switch assignments, and so on.

Another kind of security-oriented person links himself or herself to a particular geographic area, putting down roots in the community, investing in a house and a stable life style. People of this type may sacrifice their standard of living to some degree, moving from one company to another if necessary to remain in one area.

Managerial Issues: 1) Type of work. The security-anchored person prefers stable, predictable work and is more concerned about the context of the work than the nature of the work itself (Katz and Van Maanen, 1976; Hackman and Oldham, 1980). Job enrichment, job challenge, and other intrinsic motivational tools would matter less than extrinsic factors such as improved pay, working conditions, and benefits. Nevertheless, highly talented members of this group may move to fairly high-ranking managerial or functional jobs within organizations. For example, in the group of aerospace managers studied by Hall and Thomas, it was the security-anchored ones who were seen by themselves and their companies as best suited for the manufacturing phase of large programs.

Less talented, security-oriented people may level off in middle-level managerial or functional jobs, and gradually become less involved in

their work. If they get the security they are seeking, they will be content with the level they have attained. For some, that level will fulfill their ambition, especially if they have exceeded the socioeconomic level of their own parents; they feel quite successful even though they know others would not agree. They may feel guilty for not having more ambition, but we should not assume that everyone continues to want to rise in the organization. If they have unused talents, they may prefer to express them through activities unrelated to work.

2) Pay and benefits. The person anchored in security/stability prefers to be paid in steady predictable increments based on length of service. Such a person would prefer benefit packages that emphasize insurance and retirement programs.

3) Promotion system. This kind of person prefers a seniority-based promotion system, and would probably welcome a published grade or rank system that spells out how long one must serve in any given grade before promotion. Obviously, he or she would welcome a formal tenure system such as exists in schools and universities.

4) Type of recognition. The security-oriented person wants to be recognized for his or her loyalty and steady performance, preferably with reassurances of further stability and continued employment. Above all, this person needs to believe that loyalty makes a real contribution to the organization's performance.

Most personnel systems are geared to the kind of person described here although guarantees of tenure are rare. As we will see, other career

anchor types encounter more difficulty with the personnel policies of the typical company.

Autonomy/Independence as a Career Anchor

Some people discover early in their working lives that they cannot stand to be bound by other people's rules, by procedures, by working hours, dress codes, and other norms that arise in almost any organization. Whatever they are working on, such people have an overriding need to do things their own way, at their own pace, and against their own standards. They find organizational life restrictive, irrational, and/or intrusive into their own private lives, and therefore prefer to pursue more independent careers on their own terms.

If they are genuinely interested in business or management, they may go into consulting or teaching. Or they end up in those areas of work where autonomy is relatively possible even in large organizations -- research and development, field sales offices, plant management (if the plant is geographically remote), data processing, market research, financial analysis, management of geographically remote units or divisions, and so on.

Just as all need some stability, everyone requires a certain amount of autonomy, which may vary with stage of life. And everyone must resolve the dependence/independence dilemma in life, or remain in perpetual conflict over the issue. The autonomy-anchored person is one whose need for independence is so strong that he begins to organize his entire career around it. If such a person has a job that permits autonomy, he will decline the offer of a much better job that would impinge on his independence.

Sometimes these extreme autonomy needs are associated with high levels of education; the individual's professional training has made him totally self-reliant and responsible. Sometimes such feelings are developed very early in life by child-rearing methods that emphasize self-reliance and independence of judgment. Whatever the origins, autonomy-anchored people are found in organizations, and they are often valued contributors.

Managerial Issues: 1) Type of work. The autonomy-anchored person prefers clearly delineated, time-bounded kinds of work within his or her area of expertise. Thus contract or project work, either part-time or full time, or even temporary work would be acceptable and often desirable. In addition, this type of person likes work that clearly defines goals, but leaves the means of accomplishment to the individual. The autonomy-anchored person cannot stand close supervision, but might be happy to agree to organizationally imposed goals or targets. Once those goals are set, he or she wants to be left alone.

2) Pay and benefits. The autonomy-anchored person is terrified of the "golden handcuffs." He or she would prefer merit pay for performance, immediate payoffs, bonuses, and other forms of compensation with no strings attached. On the benefits side, this group would prefer the portable benefits and the cafeteria style that would permit them to select the options most suitable for their life situation at a given point in time.

3) Promotion system. This type of person would want a promotion that reflects past accomplishments, and gives him even more freedom than he had before. In other words, promotion means getting more autonomy. Greater rank or responsibility could actually be threatening, since that might

entail loss of autonomy. The autonomous salesman knows very well that the sales manager may have less freedom, so he turns down the promotion.

4) Type of recognition. The autonomy-oriented person would respond best to forms of recognition that are "portable." Thus medals, testimonials, letters of commendation, prizes, awards, and other such rewards would probably mean more than promotion, title change, or even financial bonuses.

Most organizational reward systems are not at all geared to dealing with autonomy-anchored people. Hence, we should not be surprised when they leave in disgust, complaining about organizational "mickey mouse," and "red tape." If their talents are not needed, no harm is done. But if some of the key people on whom the organization depends happen to have autonomy anchors, it will become more important to redesign personnel systems to make organizational life more palatable to this group.

Technical/Functional Competence as a Career Anchor

Some people discover as their careers unfold that they have both a strong talent and high motivation for a particular kind of work. What turns them on is the exercise of their talent and the satisfaction of knowing that they are expert. This can happen in any kind of work - an engineer discovers he or she is very good at design, a salesman discovers real selling talent and desire, a marketer gets better at and enjoys developing product promotions, a manufacturing manager finds greater and greater pleasure in running complex plants, a financial analyst gets increasing

satisfaction out of solving complex financial modeling problems, a computer programmer becomes very skilled at writing certain kinds of software, and so on.

As these people move along in their careers they discover that other areas of work are less satisfying, and they feel increasingly pulled back to the area of expertise they enjoy. They begin to build their sense of identity around the content of their work, the technical or functional skill in which they excel — their craft (Maccoby, 1976).

Every occupation has its craftsmen — the doctor who wants to be the world's best neurosurgeon, the professor who becomes a world authority in some esoteric research area, the consultant who specializes in certain types of clients, the lawyer who becomes a tax expert, the functional manager who prides himself on running the best functional department of its kind in the industry, and so on. They commit themselves to a life of specialization and begin to devalue the generalist concerns of the administrator and manager, though they are willing to be functional managers if it enables them to pursue their craft.

Most careers start out being technical/functional in their orientation, and the early phase of most careers is involved with the development of a speciality (Dalton, Thompson and Price, 1977; Super, 1957; Schein, 1978; Driver, 1982). But not everyone is turned on by his or her speciality. For some people the job is a means to organizational membership or security rather than an end in itself. For others it is simply a stepping-stone to higher rungs on the organizational ladder, an entrée into general management. For still others, it is an opportunity to learn some skills

that will be needed to launch into independent or entrepreneurial activities. So while most people start out specializing, only some find this focus so intrinsically rewarding that it becomes their career anchor.

Managerial Issues: 1) Type of work. Above all, the group wants work to be challenging. If the work does not test the individual's ability, it quickly becomes boring and demeaning, and he will seek some other assignment. Since his self-esteem hinges on exercising his talent, he needs tasks that permit such exercise. In contrast to the security-oriented person, who is primarily concerned about the context of his work, this type of person focuses on the intrinsic content of the work.

Technical/functional people who have committed themselves to an organization (as opposed to autonomous professionals) are willing and anxious to share in goal setting (Pelz and Andrews, 1966; Schein, 1978; Bailyn, 1982), but once goals have been agreed upon, they demand maximum autonomy in execution. They generally also want "unlimited" facilities, budgets, and resources of all kinds, to enable them to perform their job properly. There is thus often a conflict between general managers, who are trying to limit the cost of specialized functions, and specialists who need a certain level of investment to enable them to do their jobs.

The person anchored in this way will tolerate administrative or managerial work so long as he or she believes that it is a requirement for getting the job done, but such work is viewed as painful and necessary, not intrinsically fun or desirable. Promotion into a more generalist job is emotionally unwelcome, because it will force the person out of the speciality with which he or she identifies.

2) Pay and benefits. Technical/functional people want to be paid according to their skill level, often defined by education and work experience. A person who has a Ph.D. wants higher pay than someone who has an M.A., no matter what their actual accomplishments may have been. This group is oriented to "external equity" in that they will compare their pay level to what others with the same qualifications are earning in other organizations. Even if they are the highest-paid people in their own organizations, they will feel that they are not being treated fairly if they are underpaid relative to their peers in other organizations.

Technical/functional people are more concerned about their absolute pay level than about special incentives such as bonuses or stock options, except as the latter are forms of recognition. They probably prefer cafeteria-style, portable benefits because they view themselves as highly mobile and want to be able to take as much with them as possible. Like the autonomy group, they are frightened of the golden handcuffs because they might get stuck in unchallenging work.

3) Promotion system. These people clearly prefer to have a professional promotional ladder that parallels the typical managerial ladder, and promotional systems that make "advancement" equivalent to moving into administration or management. While this pattern has been recognized in some R&D and engineering organizations, it is just as applicable to all the other functional specialties that exist in organizations - finance, marketing, manufacturing, sales, etc., yet few organizations have created viable multiple career systems that are genuinely responsive to the needs of the technically/functionally anchored person.

Promotion need not be in terms of rank. If pay meets the criteria of external equity, this kind of person would be responsive to an increase in the scope of his or her job, greater access to senior management and the policy-making functions, a larger budget or more technical support or subordinates, and so on (Bailyn, 1982).

4. Type of recognition. The specialist values most the recognition of his or her professional peers, and cares relatively less for uninformed rewards from members of management. In other words, a pat on the back from a boss who does not really understand what was accomplished is worth a lot less than acknowledgement from a professional peer or subordinate who knows exactly what was accomplished and how difficult it may have been.

Forms of recognition that would be valued by the technical/functional person would include opportunities for self-development in the speciality - educational programs, organizationally sponsored sabbaticals, encouragement to attend professional meetings, budgets for buying books, and equipment, and so on. Beyond that, this person values the formal recognition of being identified to colleagues and other organizational members as a specialist. Thus awards, publicity, and other public acknowledgements might be more important than an extra percentage point in the raise (provided the basic pay level is considered equitable).

Organizational careers tend to be designed by general managers, who put a high value on learning several functions, being a generalist, internal equity in pay, organizational loyalty, and getting along with

all kinds of people — considerations which may be irrelevant to the technically/functionally anchored. He or she is thus particularly vulnerable to organizational mismanagement. If these people are a valued resource in the organization, some redesign of the career development system will be called for.

Managerial Competence as a Career Anchor

Some people discover as their careers progress that they really want to become general managers. Management per se interests them; they have the range of competence required to be a general manager, and they have the ambition to rise to a level at which they will be responsible for major policy decisions and their own efforts will make the difference between success and failure.

This group views specialization as a trap, though they recognize the need to get to know several functional areas well, and they accept that one must be expert in one's business or industry to function well as a general manager (Kotter, 1982). Key values and motives for this group of people are advancement up the corporate ladder to ever-increasing levels of responsibility, opportunities for leadership, contribution to the success of the total organization, and high income (Bailyn, 1980).

When they first enter an organization, most people have aspirations to "get ahead" in some generalized sense, and many of them talk explicitly of ambitions to "rise to the top." Few, however, have a realistic picture of what is actually required in the way of talents, motives, and values. With experience it becomes clearer to them, especially those who have

committed themselves to general management as a career anchor, that they will not reach the top unless they have a high level of motivation and a mixture of talents and skills in three basic areas: analytical, interpersonal, and emotional competence (Schein, 1978).

A) Analytical Competence: The ability to identify, analyze, and solve problems under conditions of incomplete information and uncertainty. All of the general managers we have talked with commented that it is important for someone in their position to be able to decipher what is going on, to cut through a mass of possibly irrelevant detail to get to the heart of the matter, to judge the reliability and validity of information when clear verification is not possible, and ultimately to pose the problem or question in such a way that it can be worked on. What is involved here is not so much decision making itself, as managing the decision-making process. And it is the management of this process which requires the next set of skills.

B) Interpersonal and Intergroup Competence: The ability to influence, supervise, lead, manipulate, and control people at all levels of the organization toward organizational goal achievement. The manager's task is not ordinarily to tell people what to do, since the correct line of action may not be clear in any case. Rather, he or she must be able to elicit information from others, communicate clearly the goals to be achieved, get them to behave in a synergistic manner, motivate them to contribute what they know to the problem-solving process, facilitate the decision-making process and decision implementation, monitor progress and elicit corrective action if people are going off target. Because much of this work goes on in and between groups, group skills are very relevant to general managers.

Young managers on their way up the ladder talk vividly about the importance of early experiences in supervising others. Would they be any good at it? Almost equally important, would they like it? Most people do not know what their people skills are unless they have played leadership roles in school, which is probably why management recruiters are so anxious to know about extracurricular activities when they assess a candidate. Any evidence of track record in this area is of great value to both the individual and the organization.

Those who discover either that they are not talented in supervision or that they do not really like that kind of work, gravitate toward other pursuits and build their career anchor around technical/functional competence, autonomy, or even entrepreneurial activity. It is crucial for organizations to create career systems that enable such people to move out of supervisory roles if they are not suited to them, preferably without too much penalty. All too often the best engineer or salesman is promoted to be supervisor, fails in the role but is then stuck in it, leading the organization to admit ruefully, "we not only lost a good engineer, but we gained a bad supervisor."

C) Emotional Competence: The capacity to be stimulated, rather than exhausted or debilitated, by emotional and interpersonal issues and crises, the capacity to bear high levels of responsibility without becoming paralyzed; and the ability to exercise power and make difficult decisions without guilt or shame.

All of the general managers we have interviewed commented that learning how to make the tough decisions had been a painful process. Almost all of them said they had not anticipated what it would be like or how

they would react. Only as they gained confidence in their ability to handle their own feelings did they feel sure they could really succeed at being general managers. As examples they cited such problems as laying off a valued older employee; deciding between two programs, each of which is backed up by valued subordinates; committing large sums of money to a project, knowing that the fate of many people rides on success or failure; asking subordinates to undertake a difficult assignment they do not want to do, inspiring a demoralized organization, fighting for a project at a higher level, and delegating to subordinates and leaving them alone enough to learn how to do things.

The most difficult aspect of the general manager's job is to keep functioning day after day without giving up, getting an ulcer, or having a nervous breakdown. The essence of the general manager's job is to absorb the emotional strains of uncertainty, interpersonal conflict, and responsibility. It is this aspect of the job that often repels the technically/functionally anchored individual, but excites and motivates the managerially anchored individual. This is what makes the job meaningful and rewarding.

General managers differ from the other groups primarily in that they have significant competence in all three areas. They cannot function without some analytical, some interpersonal, and some emotional competence, though no one area has to be developed to a very high level. It is the combination of skills that is essential, while in the technical or functional person it is the high development of one skill element that is crucial.

Managerial Issues: 1) Type of Work. Managerially anchored people want high levels of responsibility; challenging, varied, and integrative work; leadership opportunities; and opportunities to contribute to the success of their organization. They will measure the attractiveness of a work assignment in terms of its importance to the success of the organization, and they will identify strongly with the organization and its success or failure as a measure of how well they have done. In a sense, they are real "organization people" whose identity rests on having an effective organization to manage.

2) Pay and benefits. Managerially anchored people measure themselves by their income level and expect to be very highly paid. In contrast to the technically/functionally anchored people, they are oriented more toward internal than external equity. In other words, they want to be paid substantially more than the level below them, and will be satisfied if that condition is met even though someone at their level in another company is making much more. They also want short-run rewards such as bonuses for achieving organizational targets and, because they identify with the organization, they would be very responsive to such things as stock options.

With regard to benefits, managerially anchored people share with security-oriented people a willingness if not a positive desire to accept "golden handcuffs," particularly in the form of good retirement benefits, because so much of their career is tied up with a given company. Their particular skills may not be portable in mid-life or later, and recent research by Kotter (1982) suggests that their particular effectiveness rests in the combination of a generalist orientation and an intimate knowledge of a particular industry or company. Thus, the mobile manager who claims

to be able to manage anything, and would therefore want highly portable benefits, may not represent the typical effective general manager.

3) Promotion system: Managerially anchored people insist on promotion based on merit, measured performance, or "results." Even though it is acknowledged that personality, style, seniority, politics, and other factors play a role in who gets promoted, the official ideology to which general managers subscribe emphasizes the ability to get results as the only important criterion.

4) Type of recognition: The most important form of recognition is promotion to a position of higher responsibility, and managerially anchored people measure such positions by a combination of rank, title, salary, number of subordinates, size of the budget they are responsible for, and less tangible factors defined by their superiors (i.e., the "importance" of a given project or department or division to the "future of the company"). They expect promotions frequently. If they remain too long in a given job, it is assumed that they are not performing adequately. Every organization seems to have such a timetable and managers measure their success partly by whether they are moving along at the "right" pace (Lawrence, 1983). Thus movement itself becomes an important form of recognition unless it is clearly lateral or downward.

Organizations sometimes develop implicit career paths that become known informally to the more ambitious general managers. It may be commonly understood, for example, that one should move from finance to marketing, then take over a staff function in an overseas company, then move to

headquarters, and eventually take over a division. If promotions do not follow the path, these people will worry that they are "off the fast track" and are losing their "potential." So movement to the "right" job is another important form of recognition.

This group of people is highly responsive to monetary recognition in the form of raises, bonuses, and stock options; they enjoy titles, status symbols such as large offices, cars, special privileges, and, perhaps most important, the approval of their superiors. Whereas the technically/functionally anchored person only values approval from someone who really understands his or her work, the general manager values approval specifically from his superiors because they control his most important incentive -- the promotion to the next higher level.

In summary, the person who is anchored in managerial competence has a very different orientation from others in the typical organization, even though they all begin in very similar kinds of jobs. In our interviews we found that such an orientation developed as soon as the person had enough data to determine whether he or she had the analytical, interpersonal, and emotional skills to be a general manager. Some people had this insight early and, if the organization did not respond to their need to rise quickly, they went to another organization that would permit them to reach a responsible level rapidly.

Entrepreneurial Creativity as a Career Anchor

Among the several hundred people we have interviewed so far, we have found only 23 entrepreneurs, but this group is clearly very different from all the other anchor groups. These people discovered early in life

that they had an overriding need to create a new business of their own by developing a new product or service, by building a new organization through financial manipulation, or by taking over an existing business and reshaping it in their own image. We are not talking about the inventor or the creative artist here, though some of them may become entrepreneurs. Nor should this group be confused with the creative researcher, market analyst, or advertising executive. The entrepreneur's creative urge is specifically toward creating a new organization, product, or service that can be identified closely with his or her building efforts, that will survive on its own, and that will permit the making of a fortune by which the success of the enterprise can be measured.

Many people dream about founding their own business and express those dreams at various stages of their career. In some cases these dreams express needs for autonomy - to get out on one's own. The people we identified as entrepreneurially anchored began early to pursue these dreams relentlessly. Often, they had started small money-making enterprises while still in high school. They found they had both talent and an extraordinarily high level of motivation to prove to the world that they could do it. Often, an older member of their own family had already established himself as a successful entrepreneur. These people did not stay with traditional organizations very long, or they kept organizational jobs only as a sideline while their real energy went into the building of their own enterprise.

Managerial Issues: 1) Type of work: Entrepreneurially anchored people are obsessed with the need to create, and they get easily bored. If they are in their own enterprise they may keep inventing new products or

services, or they may lose interest in the business, sell it, and start a new one. But they are restless and require constant new challenge.

2) Pay and benefits. For this group of people, ownership is the most important issue. Often they do not pay themselves very well, but they retain control of the organization's stock. If they develop new products, they want to own their own patents. They want wealth, not primarily for its own sake but as a way of proving to the world what they have accomplished. Benefits are probably not a very meaningful issue to them one way or the other.

3) Promotion system. This type of person would want a system that permits him to be wherever he wants to be at any given point during his career. He would want the power and the freedom to move into whatever roles would meet his own needs. And he would probably pick those roles that best permitted him to exercise his creativity.

4) Type of recognition. I have already mentioned the building of a fortune and a sizable enterprise as two of the most important ways that this group gets its sense of recognition. In addition, it should be noted that the entrepreneur is rather self-centered, seeking high personal visibility and public recognition, often symbolized by putting his or her own name on the product or the company.

* * *

The people in the three remaining anchor categories — service, pure challenge, and life style — represent a small but potentially growing pool to be considered. They will not be analyzed in as much detail because we do not yet have enough information about them.

Sense of Service, Dedication to a Cause as a Career Anchor

So far we have encountered 14 people whose careers are organized around their sense of service. Two of these people are physicians who became entrepreneurial and left traditional medicine, three are in financial analysis jobs, five are consultants, and the rest are in varied other positions.

These people all chose their careers and made subsequent career decisions primarily on the basis of working toward some important values, some cause that they considered paramount - improving the world in some fashion. We think of people like this in the "helping professions," such as nursing, teaching, or the ministry, but clearly such central concerns are also characteristic of some people in business management and in organizational careers.

Managerial Issues. The small number of cases that fall into this anchor category does not permit very clear generalizations about what is important to this group, but some of their characteristics can be stated. Clearly, they value work that permits them to be instrumental in realizing their essential values. The prototype of this kind of person was a professor of agriculture who left a tenured university position to accept a job as manager of environmental planning for a large mining company. He stated that he would continue to work for this company as long as he was allowed to do some of the key environmental planning and continued to have clout and get things done.

One would presume that people anchored in this fashion would want "fair" pay for their contribution and portable benefits, since they would not have any a priori organizational loyalty, but that money per se would

not be central to them. More important would be a promotional system that recognized their contribution and moved them into positions where they would have more influence and the freedom to operate relatively autonomously.

They would want recognition and support both from their professional peers and from their superiors, and would want to feel that their values were shared by higher levels of management. If they did not get such support, they would probably operate in more autonomous professional roles -- like the consultants in our sample who had this anchor.

Pure Challenge as a Career Anchor

Some people anchor their career in a sense that they can "lick anything or anybody." Some seek jobs in which they face perpetually tougher challenges or more difficult problems, but in contrast to the technically/functionally anchored group, they seem not to care what kind of problem is involved. Some of the high-level strategy/management consultants seemed to fit this pattern, in that they relished more and more difficult kinds of strategic assignments (Applin, 1982; Burnstine, 1982).

Derr (1980) found a number of naval aviators whose sole purpose in life and career seemed to be to prepare themselves for the ultimate confrontation with an enemy. In that confrontation, these "warriors" prove to themselves and to the world their own superiority in competitive combat. Though the military version of this anchor might seem somewhat overdramatized, we have met others who define life very much in competitive terms. One can speculate that a good many salesmen, professional athletes, and even managers define their careers essentially as a daily combat or competition in which "winning" is everything.

Managerial Issues: The managerial issues involved in motivating and developing such people are intrinsically complex. On the one hand, they are already highly motivated to develop themselves and probably very loyal to an organization that gives them adequate opportunities for self-tests. But they can also be very single-minded and can certainly make life difficult for others around them who do not have comparable aspirations. The movie "The Great Santini" is an excellent depiction of the difficulties created by a "warrior," both for his bosses and for his family. The career has meaning only if the competitive skill can be exercised; if there is no opportunity the person can become demoralized and hence a problem to himself and others.

Life Style as a Career Anchor

At first glance this concept seems like a contradiction in terms. People who organize their existence around "life style" are, in effect, saying that their career is less important to them and therefore that they do not have a career anchor. They are included in this discussion, however, because a growing number of graduates who are highly motivated toward meaningful careers are insisting that the careers be meshed with total life style. It is not enough to balance personal and professional life (Evans and Bartolome, 1980) as many have traditionally done; it is more a matter of finding a way to integrate the needs of the individual, the family, and the career.

Since such an integration is itself an evolving characteristic, this kind of person wants flexibility more than anything else. But unlike the autonomy-oriented person, he or she is quite willing to work for an

organization provided the right options are available at the right time. Such options would include traveling or moving some of the time when family issues permit it, part-time work if life concerns require it, sabbaticals, paternity and maternity leaves, day care options (which are becoming especially relevant for the growing population of single parents), flexible working hours, and so on. Those with a life style anchor are looking more for an organizational attitude than for a specific program, an attitude that reflects respect for personal and family concerns and that makes genuine renegotiation of the psychological contract possible (Schein, 1978).

This anchor was first observed in women graduates of the Sloan school but is increasingly found in male graduates, especially those who have gone into management and strategy consulting (Applin, 1982; Burnstine, 1982). It probably reflects a number of social trends in our society and is an inevitable effect of the dual-career family. It is not at all clear at this point what organizational responses are appropriate, except to become more flexible. What this group requires most from managers is understanding.

Conclusion: Matching Individual and Organizational Needs

This paper has focused on the individual, internal side of the career. We have looked at the characteristic stages of career development, considered some ways of thinking about career movement and success, and used the concept of career anchors to illuminate the self-images that people develop as their careers evolve. It remains to focus on the ultimate dilemma of how to match individual and organizational needs.

Because individual career needs vary so widely, self-insight is critically important. Constructive career management is impossible unless

the individual knows his or her own needs and biases. Such comprehension is essential both to communicate clearly with the organization, and to make intelligent choices. It is unrealistic to expect our bosses and our organizations to understand us at the level of individuality that is relevant to career choices. Ultimately, we must manage our own careers. Abdicating that responsibility to others is a gamble unlikely to yield a successful outcome.

How then can organizations and their managers help the individual?

They can do three things:

- 1) Create more flexible career paths, incentive systems, and reward systems to meet a wider range of individual needs, even within a particular job category.
- 2) Stimulate more self-insight and self-management, starting with themselves, i.e., analyze their own career anchors, manage their own careers more actively, and only then ask their subordinates to do the same.
- 3) Be clearer about what the organization needs from the individual. If career seekers and job incumbents can be given a more accurate picture of the work to be done in a given job and of career patterns overall, they will be better able to set a constructive course for themselves. Implied in this is also clearer performance appraisal and career relevant feedback.

If I know myself well, but cannot get good information about what I will have to do in a given job, I cannot make an intelligent choice. For the organization to help me and help itself set the right talent in the

right place, it must be clearer about what it needs from me (Schein, 1978). The matching process can be improved, only if both the organization and the individual understand themselves well, communicate clearly, and respond flexibly to each other. This is the challenge for the future.

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