

## HOW EMPLOYERS CAN ENCOURAGE THEIR TEAMS TO EMBRACE THE CAREER SPIRAL STAIRCASE

“Climbing the career ladder” is a phrase that most of us are familiar with, however in today’s world of work, focussing on the vertical step up on the rung may be a little old fashioned as career paths and progression do not always have to be associated with an upwards step. The phrase “*career spiral staircase*” is perhaps more suited to careers today. Employees are still keen to progress but they want flexibility and options to go up and down as well as making horizontal moves as they reach different stages in their careers. Creating the optimum conditions to facilitate this for employees is an essential part of employee engagement and retention for all employers.



Bev White

Author:

‘How employers can encourage their teams to embrace the career spiral staircase’

The February ACF Europe Newsletter will feature an article by Steve Thompson-Martyn (Managing Director at Career Directed Solutions, UK)

### Plan your approach

From an employer’s perspective and accountability stance, there is the need to plan and prepare for a multi- generational workforce. This requires a differentiated approach to career planning, communicating, motivating, and developing. According to research from Penna, 46% of managers said they didn’t need to adapt their communication style for different generations and yet 39% of employees said adapting style was important, and that if managers had done so then they would have been more responsive. Paying attention to this current disconnect is important if organisations are going to raise engagement, retain people and increase productivity.

The research also highlights the need for praise and recognition. 34% of 55-65 year olds wanted their career potential to be recognised and praised and yet managers thought that this was more of a characteristic required by 18-24 year olds. It also found that 24% of managers are more likely to set challenges for 18-24 year olds with only 17% doing this for 55-65 year olds.

If we are to develop and motivate all generations that make up today’s workforce and the workforce of the future, we must address these misunderstandings, and not make assumptions about what motivates people or what they want from their career. To close our ears is to deny the talents of employees to flourish.

It’s clear that employees expect to be able to go up and down the career spiral staircase, but as an employer, when will you know, what does it actually mean and how can they can tap into the processes and opportunities to turn their desires into reality? Any of these conditions can occur at any time in an employee’s career and the research referenced above shows us that it is not safe to make broad assumptions about what people want and value based on age or seniority.

How many exit reports do you find yourself reading that say ‘I left because there were no opportunities to slow down for a bit, go part-time, learn new things, go for the next step?’

### Communication and understanding is key

The key to understanding what employees need is to have strong communicators in leadership and management positions, who listen to the needs of each individual on their team. Understanding the type of life they want to lead, and what their priorities and motivations are at **all** stages of their career is the critical place to start. People show up at work as whole people. They may be juggling childcare, eldercare, have plans to study or travel, or even a desire and develop new skills so that when a role becomes available they are ready. Having regular career conversations allows managers to get a view of the bigger picture with each member of their team.

Armed with this insight and understanding about your employees, it’s what you do with it that really matters. Employees want to know and believe that their manager will do their very best to support their goals, however they also need to understand how these align with broader business goals and objectives.

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## Embracing the career spiral staircase: Tools and processes

Helping employees to develop their thinking and capabilities and sharing their thoughts with their managers can be achieved through career development tools and processes. Wherever possible, employees, regardless of career or life stage, should be made aware of any challenges or opportunities by their managers. This can come in the form of projects or job rotations for example. This is every bit as important at the start of a career as it is at a much later stage in a career too.

The career spiral staircase is one that employees from all generations will need to navigate. Employees may find themselves choosing when to progress, jump off for a while or even descend to take pressure off whilst pursuing other life goals. To retain key talent organisations will need to be agile, ensuring that their systems, processes and most importantly their leadership teams are well equipped to motivate and engage employees at every important step on the career spiral staircase.

### Bev White

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#### THEME OF THE CONFERENCE

*'Lifelong career transitioning and taking ownership of your career'*

#### DATES

Thursday night 21 May (dinner) and Friday 22 May 2015

#### VENUE

Double Tree by Hilton, Amsterdam Central Station

#### HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

A limited number of rooms is held at the Double Tree by Hilton  
Room rates: € 209,00 for a single room and  
€ 229,00 for a double room (incl. breakfast)

#### REGISTRATION

The 2015 ACF Europe Amsterdam Conference is open to both ACF Europe members and non-members.

The registration fee is € 240,00 for members and € 290,00 for non-members (excl. VAT if applicable)

The fee includes dinner on 21 May and lunch on 22 May.

Please register by filling in the attached form.



## WEBINAR ACF EUROPE SURVEY FINDINGS 13 MARCH 2015

Thank you for participating in the recent ACF Europe Survey. We are happy to share and discuss the findings with our members during a webinar on

**Friday 13 March 2015  
at 11:00 CET (10 am UK).**

You will find an invitation to attend the webinar in your mailbox shortly.



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