

# MANAGERS' SELF-DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CAREER GROWTH

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**Abstract.** *Career growth or career planning is a process that a person can go through to improve their professional status. It is the process of making decisions for long term learning, to align personal needs of physical or psychological fulfilment with career advancement opportunities. In the study, the relevance of self-development of career and professional growth of managers was determined by the need to organize events to support career growth. In order for the process of professional development of managers to be of high quality, a methodology is being developed based on the characteristic and relevant knowledge of adult education. Central to this process is proper planning, timing and flow between learning new information, practice and evaluating the improvement process. A manager's career vision is the most important part of a leadership development plan. This will set the general tone for the professional development strategies that the manager must implement. He needs to rethink what he really wants to achieve in his professional life. Internal motivators for managers' self-growth play an important role in this re-evaluation process.*

**Keywords:** *career growth, competencies, managers, motivators, professional development.*

## Introduction

Career development or career development planning refers to the process an individual may undergo to evolve their occupational status. It is the process of making decisions for long term learning, to align personal needs of physical or psychological fulfilment with career advancement opportunities.

In the study, the topicality of managers' self-development career growth and professional development were determined by the need to organize career development support measures. The purpose of the study was to identify and describe the conditions necessary for self-development of managers as well as determine motivators for managers' self-growth.

Improving professional competence in cooperation with industry associations ensures that the skills and knowledge acquired by employees meet the needs of the labour market and promotes labour productivity, flexibility, adaptation to change and rapid technological change, thus increasing career development opportunities

both within and across sectors (Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030). By analysing globalization trends in the world and learning about the key demands of a future society, global education is a lifelong learning approach with a specific learning style and mindset that provides links between local, regional and global dimensions, enabling the acquisition and development of skills and competences. The competencies needed for managers to adapt to changing societal requirements (Hoffman, 2015).

Therefore, the lifelong professional development of heads of institutions is becoming relevant, regardless of their age, gender and previous education. This, in turn, makes it necessary to give a different meaning to the role of education in society as a whole and to its functions, goals and objectives (Arhipova & Kokina, 2020). Managers are the ones who set an example and stimulate others in the lifelong learning process and are facilitators in society. This depends on the ability of managers to keep up with the latest developments and challenges in life and the needs of society and also motivates them to take an active part in acquiring independent learning skills, the need for self-expression, self-disclosure and self-improvement. An effectively built system of motivations gives a correct understanding of the importance of self-growth.

### **Methodology**

The manager with his personality and abilities empowers the employees in the implementation of common goals making them feel confident in their competence and knowledge. The manager helps the staff to constantly improve in order to understand their personal potential. The ability to manage one's own and others' interests, to focus on work, other people, to be objective, to be open to new ideas and new actions, to pay attention to observation and evaluation, to be free from personal problems and to maintain a creative work tone is especially important in the work of a manager. A competent manager needs creative activity skills and developed creative thinking. Personality traits of a creative manager are perseverance, dynamic progress, openness to change, tolerance, willingness to take risks, curiosity, variety of interests, originality, inner strength and emotional discipline.

Socio-economic conditions, scientific and technical progress require managers to learn throughout their lives and, in fact, continuously. Professional development in this context is understood as a consistent process, not just as knowledge acquired over a period of time. A person's need for education can be fulfilled regardless of age, gender, previous education or level of training (Gogan & Duran, 2014). Central to this process is a proper planning, timing and layout between learning

new information, practice and evaluating improvement process. No less important is the precondition that the managers themselves must try out the learning activities that they will use later in the work. Given that the 21st century presents new challenges and many societal processes are changing rapidly, it is impossible to predict what specific professional skills the future will require (Maier, 2017).

As an employer, leadership development is crucial for organisation and is a key aspect of management that all employers must engage in. Without effective leadership development practices in place, organisation may well be facing an uncertain future, as key skills are lost.

### **The following advice highlights some of the key strategies in leadership development**

Almost everyone who engages in intellectual work understands the need for self-development. However, very few people manage to bring this idea to a concrete result. Most often, either because it is not clear where to start or because the chosen self-improvement methods turn out to be difficult, uninteresting and do not give quick results. In this case, a clear system of motivations is the key to success in this process.

Knowledge of self-development methods allows to start and maintain this managerial activity even if there is a moderate motivation for professional growth. The main principle of this work is to consider all available opportunities as a certain resource for professional development, then to look for possibilities to use these resources in the development of one's abilities and competencies. In general, it will be the basis for self-development. In order to activate professional self-development, a manager cannot do without special techniques and technologies. Consider some of the most accessible to everyone (*Figure 1*).

Assessment of knowledge in modern economics, management, industry technologies, as well as innovations in management including organizational transformation. Knowledge tests, practical exercises and case studies can be used to obtain such assessments. Based on the assessments obtained, it is important to draw the right conclusion about the nature of the changes in professional competence in the recent period.
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Evaluation of one's personal professional qualities, for example: criticism - self-criticism, confidence - self-confidence, dependence - independence. These qualities can also be assessed by means of a special personality test, a questionnaire, an introspection of one's own behaviour in crucial professional situations. It is also important here not only to measure some characteristics, but also to identify where progress is being made (positive dynamics) and where it is not.
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Identifying both the dynamics of positive competence and the reasons for its absence: this will help to clarify and concretize plans for working on oneself in the next stage of career development.
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*Figure 1 Manager's special techniques and technologies*  
(Arhipova & Kokina, 2020)

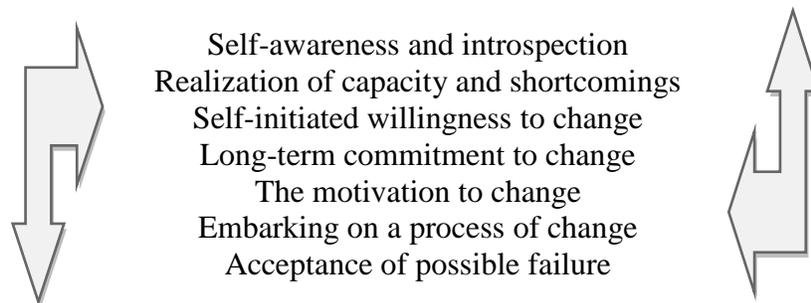
Managers with a high self-assessment of career competence successfully create optimal models for organizing their professional activities that allow them to control and adjust their careers. At the same time, as the level of self-assessment of career competence increases, the manager develops an idealized idea of his/her career opportunities and professional value for others. This reduces intensity of looking for ways to increase the productivity of professional activity comparing to existing professional and regulatory standards.

In order to solve the problem of self-development, it is important that any manager has some resources. The first is self-development. The second resource is access to information. The third resource is the methodological provision of production conditions, i. a set of activities, training technologies and training programs that a manager can use for his or her professional development. These are not all mandatory activities or training courses, but programs offered to interested employees of the organization. A manager selects from the set only what he or she deems useful and appropriate for his or her needs and career development plans (Maxwell, 2017). Everyone has unlimited potential to change, transform and develop their personality. In the pursuit of perfection, people are always moving towards personal life goals and are the constant interaction of behaviour, cognition and the environment. Personality development takes place throughout life (Maslow 1970; Rogers, 1977), so modeling the conditions for spiritual growth and the need for self-realization are relevant.

The reason why people need to constantly learn, according to psychologists, is the human tendency to self-improvement. This tendency may be unconscious. It usually comes to the fore when the need arises to make a decision to achieve one's goal. If it is necessary to learn something new, acquire new skills, a situation arises, which Avery G. and Gayle C. (Avery & Gayle, 2004) call the task of personal development. It arises in the complex as a result of both external conditions (economic, social, political, cultural, etc.) and internal personal tendencies. These inner tendencies are motivators man needs for self-development. They largely determine human behaviour. The human world is open to all possibilities according to Jean Paul Sartre (Sartre, 2007). Sartre's views show that leaders' self-development and improvement are based on their position of self-motivation and active living.

Researchers also write about the other side of the trend of professionalization - it considers the role of performer, resource, production, business element, entity that performs certain functions in the education strategy of people. From the point of view of philosophy, such an understanding of a person is undesirable, because a person is divided into components that are subject to the needs of social and economic structures (Cunningham, 2004). The goal in development is no longer a human being, but a social and economic structure. In the end sometimes prosperity

is mentioned from time to time, but the full development of the human being as a goal in itself is practically ignored (*Figure 2*).



*Figure 2 The Need to Optimize an Individual's Potential (Cunningham, 2004)*

In a rapidly changing world of work, and the constant demand for newness, self-development is no longer an option but a necessity. Self-empowerment and the associated self-advancement need to dovetail with the new job requirements of the modern enterprise. In these terms, self-development is the personification of the process of constant change. Consequently, self-development in the work environment is the evolution from a state of being de-skilled to being multi-skilled, and ultimately to constant reskilling or skill renewal (Roy, 2015).

*Having motivation and development plan, managers will achieve the following:*

- greater overall career satisfaction;
- more interesting opportunities and challenges;
- more influential career.

*Despite these definitions, information gaps remain:*

- What should be included in a leadership development plan?
- What are the other benefits of creating such a plan?

**There are 4 main components** that must be always included when designing a leadership development a leadership development plan is an invaluable tool for strategically guiding managers throughout their careers and careers program.

These components are listed below:

*1. Creation of career visions*

A manager's career vision is the most important part of a leadership development plan. This will set the overall tone for the professional development strategies that the manager must implement. He needs to rethink what he really wants to achieve in his professional life. The manager should also carefully consider their past achievements and assess whether they have contributed to their career growth and development. He must honestly assess his strengths and weaknesses as well as his managerial and technical skills.

*2. Setting management development goals with a clear time schedule.*

A clear and very specific timetable for achieving results will ensure that the manager implements his vision a reality. This will lead him to take further concrete steps to achieve their long-term professional development goals. It will also force the manager to take proactive measures to support their career vision.

*3. Inclusion of specific activities that can be measured daily, weekly, or monthly.*

Manager can't expect to achieve his career vision in a very short span of time. This is why he needs to create specific action steps that can be measured from time to time. They must not only be specific, but also measurable and realistic. Results of the action steps must be assessed by the key performance indicators that can be monitored daily, weekly or monthly.

*4. Regular assessment & evaluation of the overall leadership development plan.*

Manager needs to regularly reassess his leadership development plan to keep it relevant. He can't always expect to have the perfect plan. This is the reason why assessment and evaluation is very important. Implementing such strategy can actually produce a feedback mechanism (Adams, 2006). Manager will then be able to adjust the leadership development plan easily in order to address the deficiencies and the problems encountered. He can also change it quickly when there is a change in his career vision. Leadership development plans must be flexible.

The trick, of course, is to pick the right leadership development program for the right moment. For example, young managers should be looking to advance in their roles – which should be reflected in their leadership development plan as the time to become a more impactful leader. Such managers can develop their leadership skills through leadership training programs focusing on developing personal leadership styles (Fayol, 2013). This could include better self-awareness, understanding the dynamics of human behaviour in different situations, and practising leadership with small and large teams. Integrated leadership coaching can also be helpful (Maxwell, 2013).

The self-development of a manager is a process of consciously purposeful development of oneself as a leader, which includes the improvement of one's knowledge, skills, personal and functional qualities, competence in general, ensuring the efficiency of professional activity. This process is the unity of the following components:

- personal development/personal growth;
- intellectual development;
- professional development.

A certain level of knowledge in self-development issues and methods is required, as well as the presence of these external organizational and methodological conditions. It should be noted that there can be no self-development without the desire to perform one's functions effectively and productively. Therefore, the first diagnostic feature of a self-developing manager is his or her attitude towards work (Morris, 2005).

Professional development of managers is a process in which a manager engages in systematic and continuous learning activities with the aim of causing a change in his or her knowledge, values, attitude or skills. Implementing self-directed learning requires high motivation, as well as cognitive skills, a creative approach and a desire for self-development, which is not typical for all people. In the humanist sense, learning is the structuring of personal experience for the purpose of personal self-development and self-realization.

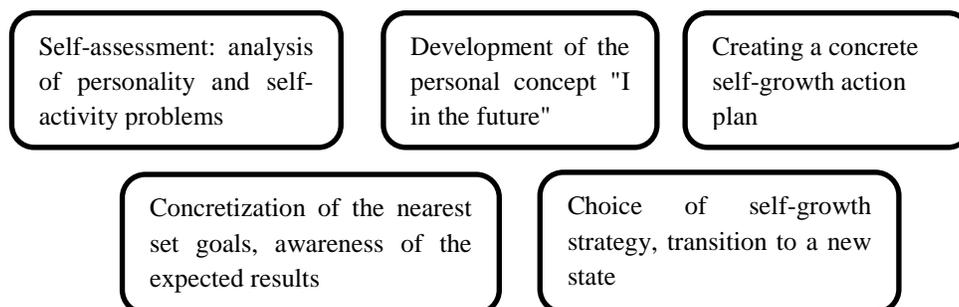
### Results

In order for the professional development process of managers to be of high quality, a methodology based on the characteristic and relevant knowledge of adult learning is being developed. As already mentioned, central to this process is proper planning, timing and layout between learning new information, practice and evaluating improvement process (*Figure 3*).

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- Decision on the need for change
  - Development of a self-development program
  - Work on the implementation of the program
  - Adjustment of the program or work on its implementation
  - Analysis of the program implementation, setting new higher goals
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*Figure 3 The most important algorithms for personality self-growth (Covey, 2013)*

The researchers also write about the main stages of self-development program for managers to which attention should be paid (*Figure 4*).



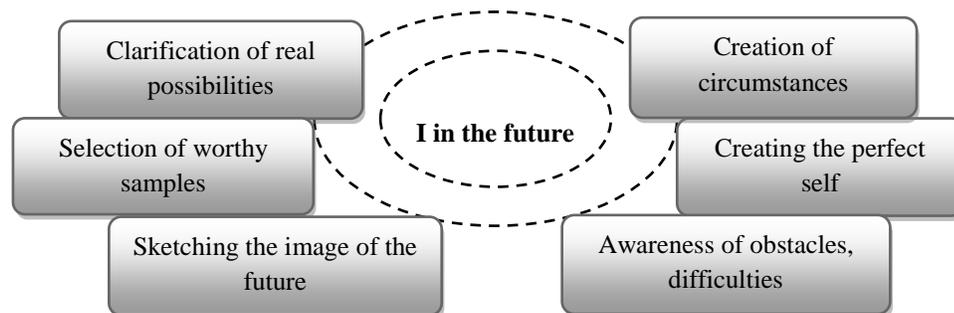
*Figure 4 The main stages of the self-growth program (Covey, 2013)*

To be effective, managers must adjust their behaviour and their strategies to suit the current circumstances. They may have to depend on their intuition, internal motivators, collected data, existing skills, or previous experience to judge how to proceed in a given situation. They must remain flexible and adopt different methods to deal with any eventualities that might arise (*Figure 5*).

Directions of self-growth	The problem of self-growth
Self-creation	What skills and personality traits do I not have today? What needs to be redeveloped?
Self-improvement	What are the necessary skills and personality traits in principle, but need to be further developed?
Self - prevention	What unwanted actions and personal expressions should not be allowed in an attempt to avoid them?
Re-education itself	What ingrained negative activities and personality traits that significantly interfere with work should be eradicated?
Compensation	What positive features can compensate for existing gaps in activities and weaknesses in personality?

*Figure 5 Directions of self-growth of managers' personalities (Roy, 2015)*

Human behaviour is determined by motives that ensure not the adaptation to the environment, but the growth of the human self, the human tendency to organize one's inner world and achieve the integrity of the personality, to understand the meaning of existence. If the tendency to self-realize manifests itself at the moment when a person has an external need to develop, the combination of these two motives results in the need to learn. Thus, under the influence of objective and subjective factors, the desire to learn is an integral need of human life (*Figure 6*).



*Figure 6 Rules for creating a personal concept "I am into the future" (Covey, 2013)*

Young managers will be interested in Maxwell's "magnifying glass" principle of leadership self-development (*Figure 7*).

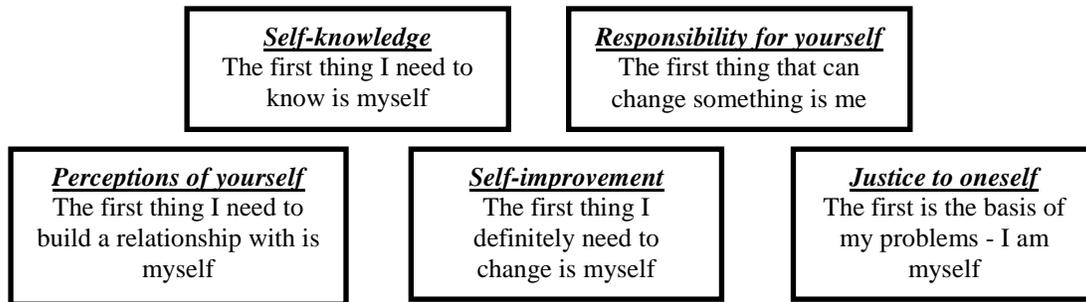


Figure 7 Maxwell's "magnifying glass" principle of leadership self-development (Maxwell, 2017)

Because the purpose of the study was to identify and describe the conditions necessary for the self-development of managers as well as determine motivators for managers' self-growth, in the course of the study, a questionnaire was developed to find out which internal motivators are the most important. Managers of state-owned enterprises and the private sector participated in the survey to obtain the results. 17 internal motivators were offered for analysis in the questionnaire.

Table 1 Internal motivators for managers' self-growth (Arhipova & Kokina)

Motivators	Number of respondents out of 124
Awareness of the lack of results achieved and the desire to improve them	99
Sense of "competence" crisis	118
High level of professional claims	108
Needs for self-expression, self-disclosure, self-improvement	124
The need to participate in the most important thing	112
The need to connect with more creative, interesting, successful, recognized people	93
The need to engage in effective teamwork	124
The need for innovation, originality	124
Needs for power, leadership	98
Need for research, better understanding of the regularities that improve productivity	112
Willingness to test new knowledge, knowledge in practice	99
General creative development of the personality	124
Confidence about oneself, one's abilities, competencies	118
The need for risk to overcome difficulties in dealing with external conditions	118
Desire to get team opinions, not to lag behind other successful leaders	99
To increase prestige, the desire to improve the image of a managed organization	124
Desire to improve material provision	105

The questionnaire was completed by 124 managers. Responses processed and results shown in the table and a chart (*Table 1 and Figure 8*).

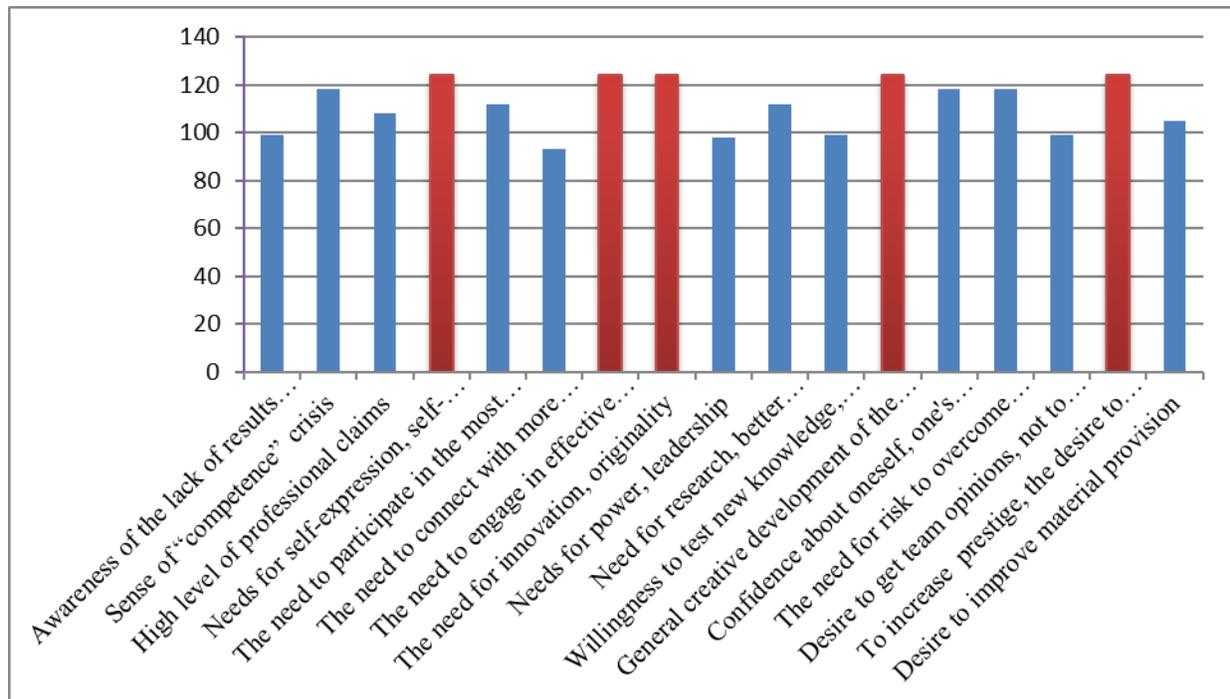


Figure 8 *Internal motivators for managers' self-growth* (Arhipova & Kokina)

After data analysis, we see that the most important internal motivators for managers' self-growth are:

- needs for self-expression, self-disclosure, self-improvement
- the need to engage in effective teamwork
- the need for innovation, originality
- general creative development of the personality
- to increase prestige, the desire to improve the image of a managed organization.

## Conclusions

The education and professional development of heads of institutions need support at both local and national level, as the level of education of the whole society depends on it. To be effective, managers must adjust their behaviour and their strategies to suit the current circumstances. They must remain flexible and adopt different methods to deal with any eventualities that might arise. Strong

leadership is vital to the survival of any organization, and people with leadership potential tend to succeed and hold high positions.

Self-expansion and the self-development associated with it must meet the new requirements for the work of a modern enterprise. Self-development is an evolution from a state of no skills to multi-qualifications and, ultimately, to continuous professional development.

A manager's career vision is the most important part of a leadership development plan. This will set the overall tone for the professional development strategies that the manager must implement. He needs to rethink what he really wants to achieve in his professional life. Manager needs to regularly reassess his leadership development plan to keep it relevant. He can't always expect to have the perfect plan. This is the reason why assessment and evaluation is very important.

Leadership development programs are a critical element of a comprehensive leadership development plan. By integrating leadership development training into managers' plan, they'll be ready to make the most out of opportunities for consistent career progress, and be confident as they step into new roles or face new challenges. Professional development of managers is a process in which a manager engages in systematic and continuous learning activities with the aim of causing a change in his or her knowledge, values, attitudes or skills. Implementing self-directed learning requires high motivation, as well as cognitive skills, a creative approach and a desire for self-development, which is not typical for all people.

An effectively built system of motivations gives a correct understanding of the importance of self-development. Internal motivators for managers' self-growth play an important role in the re-evaluation process. Knowledge of self-development methods allows to start and maintain this managerial activity even if there is a moderate motivation for professional growth.

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