

# The Evolution of The Dual Career Track Option

written by Rory Lodge | July 29, 2014



When you hear the term 'Dual Career Track' you may think of employees being readied to move into roles in management but the term dual career track can apply too much more. With the rapid evolution of technology and ongoing changes to jobs tied with potential labour shortages the dual career track may apply to more of your employees than you had previously considered.

Job hiring and termination appear to be cycling in much shorter time intervals. In some cases employees are hitting the 'glass ceiling' in role and compensation and there are no 'management' spaces above them. Both individual employees and organizations need to be prepared to constantly adapt and one of the best ways to adapt is to evolve together.

## **The Three Dual Career Track Path Options**

- 1) ***The specialist parallel career path:*** An outstanding employee, who has hit the ceiling in a current role and does not want to move into management or should not be in management, is provided an opportunity to contribute and earn more compensation continuing as an individual contributor in a specialist or expert role. This role would be a peer to managers without being a manager and the employee would report directly to the same supervisors as management.
- 2) ***The leader contributor career path:*** An employee is provided with an opportunity for senior leadership roles without management expectations; roles such as a project leader or director without staff management. The difference between this and the specialist role is the leader contributor has more of a direct leadership role.
- 3) ***The dynamic career path:*** An employee has the opportunity to specialize or add/develop another skill set in an area that can meld with a current position while evolving into something more or different in the future.

## **Getting Started Implementing Dual Career Tracks**

- 1) Examine your organization on an ongoing basis to assess and identify opportunities and needs for career, skills, expertise and leadership growth
- 2) Provide opportunities for career and skills assessment to your employees. With these you can identify competencies in terms of not only job skills but also leadership strengths.
- 3) Inform employees of ongoing skills development needs to allow them and you to identify potential gaps and needs.
- 4) Identify and then select employees who have potential skills matches and an interest in training for a dual career track
- 5) Provide access to mentoring, coaching and training for employees who are on track for a Dual Career path

The upside of dual career tracks is that they can provide opportunities for employees to actualize their own careers while increasing retention of good employees with a history in the organization.

The downside of dual career tracks is that it can place an extra burden on employees and organizations who have to invest time and energy and it can cause some confusion within the organizational structure.

Just as more educational institutions are offering 'dual degrees' and more individuals are recognizing the value of having dynamic career paths organizations can benefit from identifying employees who they want to keep around by offering their employees more opportunities for growth.