

## The ROI of Career Development

By Edwin Trevor-Roberts

There is substantial anecdotal evidence to support the benefits of career development programs to organisations and individuals, but little academic research. A recent article in the Asia-Pacific Journal of Human Resources is one of the few research pieces to demonstrate the positive effects.

Three researchers from Taiwan looked at the impact of career development programs on R&D personnel based in a high-tech industrial park. The key findings are as follows:

1. Career development programs have a positive correlation to the quality of working life, job satisfaction, professional development and productivity.
2. The higher the level of satisfaction that employees have in their jobs, the higher their professional development and productivity.
3. Meaningful and challenging work is the primary variable affecting work motivation.
4. Career development programs that provide career coaching (eg help employees realise their potential, improve job performance, achieve work/life balance etc) have a greater impact on the quality of working life, job satisfaction, professional development and productivity than task-related career development activities.
5. Management need to be committed to policies aimed to encourage employees to engage in professional development in order to enhance their productivity.

An effective Career Development strategy is no longer a 'nice-to-have' initiative. It has become essential to attract future employees and retain existing staff. The coming-of-age of the careers industry as seen in the National Career Development Week and the Careers Industry Council of Australia is testament to this.

### Further Reading

Tser-Yieth Chen, Pao-Long Chang & Ching-Wen Yeh. (2006). The effects of career development programs on R&D personnel in Taiwan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*. 44(3), p318-341.

## About the Author

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