The New Era for Employee Development

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Ask three people in your institution to define "employee development," and you will probably receive three different responses. For example:

- **A direct report** may focus on upward mobility (e.g., "What can I do to get a promotion?").

- **Another manager** may speak to employees' motivation, productivity, and engagement (e.g., "What can I do to keep my best workers from leaving?").

- **A senior-level executive** may address issues such as what it takes to retain and grow top talent to help lead the institution in the future (e.g., "What do we need to do to ensure we have the people with the best skills in the right place in the future?").

Regardless of your vantage point, employee development can be defined as a process that aims at helping manage employees' growth. Ideally, this process is integrated with an organization's performance management program, but remains distinct from routine performance evaluations.

Over the past few decades, the approach to employee development has shifted. Organizations have adopted more expansive models of what development looks like. Compare the old versus new approaches in the table below:

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<th>Old Approach</th>
<th>New Approach</th>
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<td>Only poor performers need development.</td>
<td>Everyone in an organization can be developed, especially high performers.</td>
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<td>Development is the responsibility of the human resources group.</td>
<td>Employee development is every manager's responsibility.</td>
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<td>Career development focuses on moving capable employees up a predictable “corporate ladder.”</td>
<td>Career development focuses on moving employees through new challenges to strengthen their professional abilities.</td>
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Development means "training" such as internal or external seminars and workshops. Development includes informal, on-the-job ways of learning, such as: stretch assignments, job rotations, self-paced e-learning, action learning, manager coaching and feedback mentoring.

To develop your employees effectively, you must have certain skills, such as the ability to seek out opportunities, set goals, and provide feedback. Equally important, however, is your commitment to cultivating the potential of your employees.

As you strive to develop your employees, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. You must respond to your institution's unique organizational environment and to your individual employees' values, skills, and interests.

To help career education institutions with their employee development efforts, MaxKnowledge offers an online course - **ML129 Developing Employees** - sponsored by Harvard Business Publishing. This course features material from Harvard ManageMentor® and provides practical strategies for management personnel on how to encourage employees to learn and grow, while maximizing the return on the time they invest in employee development. The learning objectives of this course are:

- Understand why employee development is critical to institutional success.
- Recognize your role in developing employees.
- Evaluate your employees' individual developmental needs.
- Motivate top employees, grow solid contributors, and act decisively on underperformers.
- Conduct successful career development discussions.

**ML129 Developing Employees** is a self-paced, 4-hour course available on all online training sites powered by MaxKnowledge.

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*Dr. Moghadam is the founder and CEO of MaxKnowledge, the leading employee training company for the career college sector of higher education. He has over 25 years of experience in career education, serving in many capacities including professor, director of education, academic dean, director of student affairs, campus director, college president and owner. Moghadam earned his PhD in Engineering from the University of Cambridge at the age of 22. He is a recognized leader in career education and has been selected as a Top Innovator by the Career College Central magazine. Moghadam can be reached at amirm@maxknowledge.com.*