



Chapter 8

Conclusions and recommendations

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTING *OPPORTUNITY CREATION*

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In terms of career and succession planning within a delayed structure, it is important to have something in place for employees. They need to know where they are going and how they will get there. *Opportunity Creation* is a vehicle for providing this. The implementation thereof, however, is critical. It requires changes in attitudes and paradigms since it ignores the traditional roles within career and succession planning.

In creating *Opportunity Creation* as a solution for the problem of career and succession planning within a delayed structure, it became essential to implement it efficiently and successfully. The questions asked to the respondents were aimed at getting ideas on how to implement the program without defeating the objective. The answers of the respondents were analyzed phenomenological in order to obtain a set of guidelines for successfully implementing *Opportunity Creation*.

This chapter will focus on suggestions and processes regarding the implementation of the model within an organization with a delayed structure. As stated in the hypotheses for the purpose of this study (see point 6.4.2.1) the phenomenological analysis will thus be used to create an implementation strategy designed specifically for the *Opportunity Creation* program - a strategy that will ensure commitment of those eventually involved in the program.

8.2 OPPORTUNITIES

8.2.1 The nature of opportunities

Opportunities can be described as chances, openings towards something better than the present and even as facilities. Opportunities can thus be perceived as chances of creating a better career future by using the facilities available.

The following "facilities" may be seen as some of the opportunities within the context of *Opportunity Creation*:

- ◆ Being appointed;
- ◆ Training;
- ◆ Project teams;
- ◆ Vacancies being advertised;
- ◆ Being offered a study bursary;
- ◆ Being transferred;
- ◆ Being part of a re-engineering process;
- ◆ Being promoted; and
- ◆ Accepting new and/or extra responsibilities.

8.2.2 The responsibility for creating opportunities

The creation of opportunities is a two-way process and a shared responsibility of the employee and the organization.

The employee has to create opportunities by nominating himself or herself for courses, project teams, etc. This also involves exploiting opportunities with enthusiasm and using them to the fullest capacity and to the greatest benefit.

The organization has to provide the opportunities and ensure that they are accessible to all employees.

8.3 CREATING AN IDENTITY

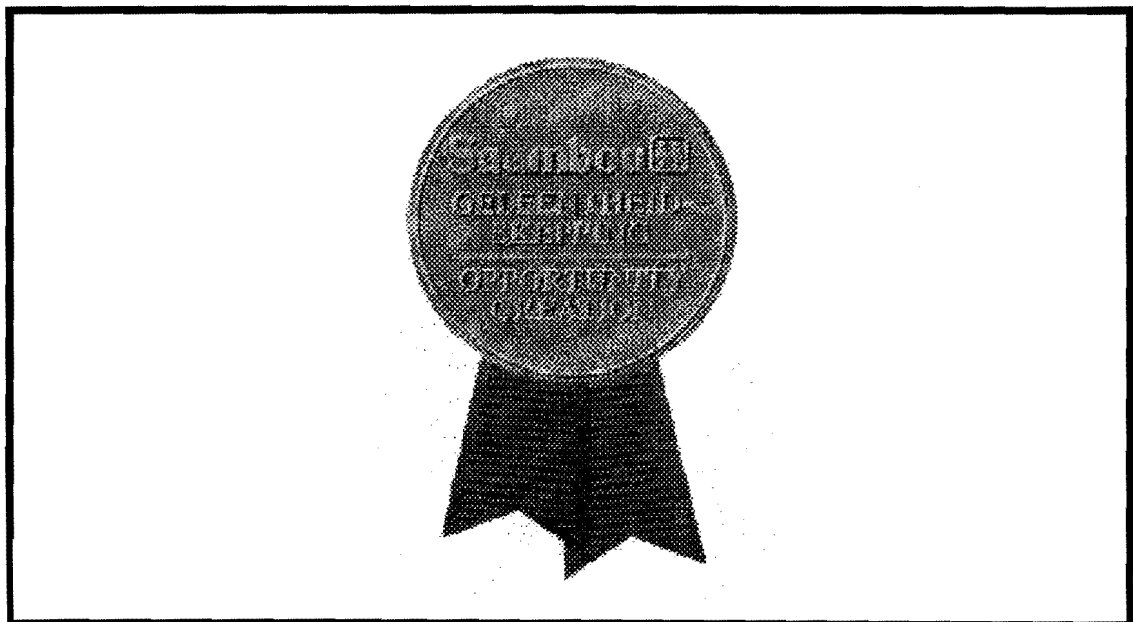
It is important for employees to recognize opportunities within the organization and to realize when something can be linked to their progress in terms of their careers. Therefore an identity for a program such as *Opportunity Creation* is very important.

8.3.1 The logo

The logo that was developed can definitely be put to good use. In order to maintain awareness of the program, it can be used in different ways and in different places, such as on letters of promotion, transfers, appointments, etc. The identity of *Opportunity Creation* and its logo go hand in hand and therefore the logo should be used from day one. The logo can assist in keeping *Opportunity Creation* alive and under the attention of all employees.

The logo that has been developed portrays success and achievement, or the opportunity for it. It is important, though, to communicate the specific meaning of the logo in order to address any misinterpretation or possible concerns.

Figure 8.1: The *Opportunity Creation* logo.



8.3.2 The slogan

The slogan used to base *Opportunity Creation* on conveys the crux of the program. It is supposed to relay a message to employees concerning what opportunities mean and what they should do with them. Les Brown's words say it all and should also be used, with the logo, on every communication piece with regard to career-related issues:

***"Never wait for an opportunity,
be prepared for when the opportunity arrives."***

8.4 CREATING AWARENESS

In order to change employees' fixed perceptions and requirements regarding a career planning process, it will be necessary to convince them of the benefits that the program provides for them, as well as the organization. Therefore simply telling everybody about the program will not benefit the implementation of the process. The program should be sold to them via definite selling strategies. The concept of "seeing is believing" is also something to be kept in mind. The sooner results regarding employees already on the program can be shown, the sooner other employees will buy into the program.

The selling process will have to focus on the most important issues regarding *Opportunity Creation*, including other issues about which employees might have questions or concerns. These should actually be identified before the selling process and addressed during the selling process.

8.4.1 Using the benefits as selling points

The most important aspects of the *Opportunity Creation* process that can be used as unique selling points during the sales process include the following:

- i. The program can be seen as a motivating system for employees, helping them set their own clear and specific career goals and work towards achieving those.
- ii. The power is in the individual's hands, seeing that he/she is responsible for making the career work. The employees play the most important role within the program.
- iii. It creates opportunities for growth and experience. The opportunities can be focused on and contribute to the development and growth of individuals.
- iv. Employees are employed in positions that they fit into.
- v. It enhances a pool of knowledgeable and capable employees (higher intellectual capacity within the organization).
- vi. *Opportunity Creation* creates a cultural change in terms of shifting paradigms.
- vii. Because of the fact that careers are emotional issues, the program includes reality testing. No more promises can be made and no more unrealistic expectations can be allowed. The fact that this is included in the process makes it a more credible process.
- viii. Honesty with regard to strengths, potential and development areas addresses all expectations and set them straight. Hereby every employee will know whether he/she has a future with the organization.
- ix. It creates an environment where employees can identify and utilize opportunities. This ensures employees who are happy and able to perform.
- x. Human Resources processes are integrated into one large process, for example Performance Integration/Management, Training and Career planning can be combined within one process.

- xi. Using the program for the purpose of accelerated development can support Employment Equity.
- xii. Training is focused on issues that really need to be developed.
- xiii. Transparency creates an over-all view of the organization, seeing that every employee should have access to information in order to clarify expectations, reality, opportunities, etc.

8.4.2 The process of creating awareness

In order to ensure that every employee within the organization knows and understands the concept of *Opportunity Creation*, it is essential to use every possible means to get that knowledge to the employees. Making *Opportunity Creation* known and understandable to all, ensures insight and buy-in. The approaches will have to be personal and specific as well as national and more general.

Business Broadcasts can be used as a kick-off to introduce *Opportunity Creation* to all employees on a national level. This will merely outline the principles and the process involved in the program and will not necessarily reach every employee.

Individual letters can be sent out to employees whereby the program is explained more fully. These letters can then be discussed during *workshops*, where a *champion* of the program discusses *Opportunity Creation* with the employees attending the workshops. They will have the opportunity to raise their concerns and questions whilst the champion will obtain a good idea of their attitude and acceptance of the program. All uncertainties and misconceptions can then be addressed there and then.

Top Management should also, in a very visible way, show their buy-in into the program. Their commitment is essential to the success of the program. *Success stories* should be utilized as proof to all regarding the benefits the program entails and should be communicated throughout the organization.

The employees should feel that they are involved and respected throughout the selling process and they should be trusted with the information in terms of using it to both their own and the organization's benefit.

8.4.3 Employees engaged in the process of creating awareness

It is important to involve those employees that will be in a position of having to sell the *Opportunity Creation* program to their subordinates and/or colleagues and to support and encourage those forming part of the program. Their buy-in is crucial.

The program cannot be seen as Human Resources' responsibility, but rather as a joint responsibility of management and Human Resources. Management will have to assist with the communication and implementation of the program. Human Resources' role in this will involve frequently talking to employees about the program and their progress in it, and line management should ensure that their teams understand the program and develop it to its full consequence. The manager cannot stand in his/her team members' way if they want to progress in terms of their careers.

The Top Management, especially the Managing Director, should be involved in and support the awareness process. If he/she is seen as influential and credible, it will add value and weight to the message. It will also show that the Top Management supports the program, which in turn will enhance the buy-in lower down the hierarchy.

The initial awareness process should involve as many employees as possible. The more employees are involved, the higher the chances for buy-in by the majority will be. It is also necessary to involve every employee because the program aims at involving as many of them as possible and will have an impact on every employee - directly or indirectly.

It will be useful to utilize those line managers seen as influential people as the change agents and opinion formers. They will be able to influence those around

them and create greater buy-in. It is, however, necessary that those selling and telling the program are knowledgeable and that they should passionately believe in *Opportunity Creation*.

8.5 THE ROLE-PLAYERS WITHIN THE PROGRAM

8.5.1 The role players and their roles

It is important that all the role-players within the program should understand their roles and the significance thereof in order to ensure success. Table 8.1 describes the different role-players and their roles within the *Opportunity Creation* program.

Table 8.1: The role-players and their roles.

Role-players	Roles
Top Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Communicating their commitment and support of the program; ◆ Being enthusiastic and involved in the program; ◆ Communicating the strategic importance of the program for the organization; and ◆ Driving the program from the top level.
Opinion formers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Acting as selective communicators; ◆ Using the grapevine within the organization to promote the program; ◆ Being a disciple for the program; and ◆ Being used as a sounding board for suggestions and possible solutions to problems encountered.
The organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Educating its employees on the program via a thorough communication and follow-up strategy; ◆ Providing opportunities for development and progress; and ◆ Providing a supportive culture and supportive systems like training, incentives and role models to enhance the larger system.

Table 8.1 (continued)

Role-players	Roles
Change Agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Telling other employees about the <i>Opportunity Creation</i> program and its benefits; ◆ Selling and convincing employees on the program; ◆ Assisting in ensuring that standards are upheld; ◆ Forming part of the sales team during the implementation phase; and ◆ Being used as a sounding board for suggestions and possible solutions to problems encountered.
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Being involved in selling and implementing the program; ◆ Assisting in maintaining the program; ◆ Assisting line management in using the program; ◆ Driving and facilitating the program, especially with regard to identifying development areas and rectifying actions; ◆ Supporting the change agents and opinion formers; ◆ Facilitating the psychometric feedback; ◆ Assisting in ensuring that standards are upheld; ◆ Assisting line management in recruiting and employing the right people; and ◆ Creating and managing opportunities like training.
Individual employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ensuring that he/she is doing what he/she wants to be doing as it determines where he/she will be going; ◆ Asking line management and Human Resources for assistance and support to involve them in his/her career; ◆ Taking responsibility for their own careers; ◆ Determining where they want to go; ◆ Preparing for opportunities; ◆ Taking opportunities and using them to their benefit; and ◆ Working towards achieving their identified career visions.

Table 8.1 (continued)

Role-players	Roles
Line management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Concentrating on their personnel as the most important resource they have; ◆ Communicating the program to ensure that all the employees understand the process and what it means; ◆ Supporting, guiding and encouraging employees to develop and better themselves; ◆ Motivating employees; ◆ Recruiting and employing the right people; ◆ Managing the opportunities within the organization; and ◆ Realizing and accepting their impact and responsibility regarding employees' lives.

Initially Human Resources will have to take ownership of the program by driving the selling and implementation of *Opportunity Creation*. Later on it will become the responsibility of all the employees, which makes their buy-in to the program even more essential to its success. It boils down to every employee taking ownership of his/her own career vision/goal, development plans and progress within the existing hierarchy of the organization. Self-management and an orientation towards self-development are crucial attitudes concerning the success of *Opportunity Creation*.

Line management should not be last in line when it comes to ownership. This is a program for identifying and developing successors for management - to proceed with the job and the hard work that has already been put into the organization. By utilizing it management will benefit the most in the long run.

Belief in the program is important in order to be able to drive it to its fullest capacity. Therefore Top Management should also be seen as owners of the program by becoming the Corporate Sponsors. *Opportunity Creation* should be made part of the organizational culture and opportunities should be made the crux of the "organizational way of life".

8.5.2 Mentoring within *Opportunity Creation*

Every employee on the program will need a mentor to assist, advise and motivate him/her in terms of career vision, development plans and progress or lack of progress towards those goals. If the organization is not centralized in one place, the current line managers will have to be used in these roles.

The mentors need to have:

- ◆ Wide experience of management in different circumstances;
- ◆ The knowledge to effectively utilize problem-solving methods and discipline;
- ◆ The ability to use effective administrative practices to organize and control their own and others' work;
- ◆ An understanding of the organizational policies, procedures and systems;
- ◆ A deep insight into the organization, culture, values and norms;
- ◆ Information on what is going on;
- ◆ The ability to provide and organize opportunities for learning and performance;
- ◆ A detailed understanding of the competencies required by the organization;
- ◆ The ability to promote and encourage two-way communication and participation in interactions;
- ◆ The ability and willingness to teach others what they know about corporate life;
- ◆ The ability to allow others opportunity and latitude and encourage them to find their own way; and
- ◆ The ability to generate, examine and evaluate a broad range of options and alternatives to problems.

8.6 PREREQUISITES FOR *OPPORTUNITY CREATION*

To ensure that the program has a chance at being a success and that it will work within the organization, there are many aspects that can be seen as prerequisites for the working of the program. These aspects must be in place even before the program is implemented; otherwise it will slow down the implementation and create uncertainty and a lack of faith amongst the users of the program. It is crucial to work at having all of the required aspects

in place. Table 8.2 uses the *Opportunity Creation* process to identify the required systems and/or processes. The *Opportunity Creation* Personal Interview Schedule (Appendix A) forms the backbone of the whole process and is therefore needed in every step of the process.

Table 8.2: The prerequisites for the program's success.

Step in process		Prerequisites
A	Gathering background information	(The individual will have to provide all this information.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Administrative process in terms of record-keeping and gathering information needed during process; ◆ Determined and allocated roles in terms of who will be doing what within the process.
B	Determining short to medium term future vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ List of all possible positions within the organization;
C	Reality testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Job descriptions or profiles on all available positions (including all required competencies - technical/professional; people, process and personal; leadership/strategic);
D	Determining potential for self-knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Psychometric test battery consisting of personality as well as competency evaluation; ◆ Psychometric results of every individual in the organization; ◆ Performance appraisal system that works and is used properly; ◆ Records of individual performance covering the previous three years; and ◆ Qualified Psychologists to discuss the results.
E	Deficiency analysis	
F	Identifying strong points and development areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Job descriptions or profiles regarding all available positions (including all required competencies - technical/professional; people, process and personal; leadership/strategic);

Table 8.2 (continued)

Step in process		Prerequisites
G	Drawing up plans of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Information on all internal training programs and the outputs they focus on; ◆ Information on available and applicable external courses; and ◆ Reading material available to be utilized as development actions.
H	Addition to the readiness pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Computerized source of information; ◆ Clear understanding of system and procedure and how the data will be used; ◆ Incentives or rewards for progress;
I	Monitoring/Follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Guidelines in terms of when follow-ups should take place;

On top of these requirements set out in Table 8.2 the following aspects are also of prime importance, although they cannot be directly linked to one specific step in the process:

- ◆ Every employee should be aware of the program and its benefits, therefore everyone should have access to the information;
- ◆ Top Management and line managers should buy-in to the program;
- ◆ The expectations should be dealt with during the sales process;
- ◆ Record keeping on employees will have to be accurate and complete;
- ◆ A champion to drive the process and program should be identified - someone with credibility who carries weight amongst employees;
- ◆ The policy of the *Opportunity Creation* program should be sold and communicated;
- ◆ The program should form an integral part of all the Human Resources-related systems;
- ◆ Orientation of especially newcomers and line managers should be given priority so that newcomers will know what to expect in terms of career planning and progress; and
- ◆ Availability of information at all times and therefore the utilization of technological systems, like the Intranet and e-mail.

8.6.1 Training as a prerequisite

Before the *Opportunity Creation* program can be implemented, it is important to ensure that all the necessary training practices and courses are in place. This will ensure that individuals are able to obtain the skills and competencies they need for the realization of their future career vision/goal. It is also important that every employee on the program will have immediate access to training in order to address the identified development areas.

The requirements in terms of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) should be taken into account when training is planned. All in-house courses should be accredited to ensure that the courses are really of worth to the individual - not only within the organization but also whenever the individual should leave the organization.

The importance of technical training cannot be over-emphasized - technical skills and abilities are much needed if the organization wants to develop skilled and "ready" people.

Training becomes the individual's responsibility - internally and externally. Therefore individuals/employees should be provided with information on all training that takes place within the organization so that they are in a position to nominate themselves. A menu-type communication medium may be used to inform employees of all training sessions for the next year. Attendance should be based on the development plans drawn up for every employee on the program - focused on addressing needed knowledge and skills.

Training should be based on development areas and ought to be focused, formalized and processed. The minimum requirements in terms of training and competencies per position should be used as guidelines and can even be incorporated into the Performance Management system as an objective on which employees can be measured. Self-development and self-improvement are crucial and can be ranked high in order to reward employees for the development actions that they undertook and utilized after receiving training.

Employees should also be allowed to attend other divisions' training in order to be multi-skilled if their career vision requires this.

8.7 PLACEMENT ON THE PROGRAM

This is a very debatable point with two points of view:

- i. Everyone should be placed on the program and a top-down approach should be followed.
- ii. Only the current managers and those individuals with high potential should be placed on the program.

8.7.1 Placing everybody

This entails that EVERY employee, with or without the potential of getting further than he/she already is, is placed on the program. In this context the top-down approach will entail that the organization starts with Top Management and work down to every level in order to take every employee on the program and assist each of them.

This in itself will be an enormous task and will require a lot of resources in terms of manpower.

This approach is not recommended.

8.7.2 Placing everybody with potential

The role of line managers in *Opportunity Creation* should not be underestimated. If they do not understand and support the process, it will be a waste of time, money

and effort. They have to lead and support the members of their teams. They will have to experience the process to be able to efficiently support their team members, and should therefore be placed on the program right at the start. They should be the change agents and opinion formers of the program and they can only promote what they know and have experienced. Therefore they should be placed on the program in order to assist in selling it to their teams as well as address any questions their teams might still have after the initial selling. From a long-term perspective it is also necessary to have managers that know the process and understand the benefits and reasons for implementing *Opportunity Creation*.

The Managing Director and the Top Management should undergo the program first of all. This will relay a message to the rest of the organization that this is something that is supported by the Top level.

Everybody should be given the opportunity to be part of the program, but those with potential should be used as examples of the benefits the program has to offer. The success stories will assist in the further selling of the program. The individuals with potential have the ability to demonstrate and develop their present, emerging and future competencies in order to be successful in present and future roles. Normally they are the people directly in line for promotion to management level. Therefore their commitment is important and if their profiles do not fit that of a manager, it will do the organization no good to put them on the program. This will actually force the organization to evaluate its second "line of command" in depth in terms of potential, capabilities and strengths.

It is also important to realize that there are employees who really do not want to go any further than they already are. Any organization needs people like that for continuity and keeping the technical knowledge at a high level. This does not necessarily mean that they are bad performers.

The employees with potential could be included in the program by means of running it on a voluntary basis, or by means of nominations from management according to certain criteria. Employees should be given the chance to see and realize for themselves whether they have potential and/or whether their career goals are

realistic or not. A natural process of elimination can then narrow the number of people on the program down to the key people with real potential.

8.8 PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING

The information that can be obtained from psychometric tests is much needed within the whole concept of self-knowledge and self-development fundamental to *Opportunity Creation*. Any information regarding an individual on the program should be used in order to shape a holistic approach to his/her career planning. In this case, psychometrics are used to understand the personality traits of the individual - an important piece of information necessary to establish correct utilization in the organization and to identify the correct career vision.

Giving someone honest feedback on his/her test results creates knowledge about his/her own being, the strengths and development areas. Individuals should be coached to see it in this light and not be threatened by it. It should never be a psychological analysis, but only feedback on their personality traits and what it means in terms of their development and progress.

Personality tests can be combined with assessing the competencies of every individual, by using a 360° evaluation - asking the individual's manager, peers and subordinates for feedback and information on him/her. This will create a more complete picture of the individual's being than when he/she tries to create a picture of the self.

It is important to keep in mind that although these tests are used for development purposes, they should still be culturally fair tests in terms of legislation.

8.9 INTERVIEWING INDIVIDUALS

The counseling interviews should be done in a relaxed, supportive atmosphere. Employees should not see this as a threatening exercise, but from a perspective of development and support. The interview is led by the individual's manager and the *Opportunity Creation* Personal Interview Schedule (see Appendix A) is used as the prescriber of the process. The facilitator can be a Human Resources specialist or the Psychologist giving feedback on the psychometric test results.

8.10 DOCUMENTING THE PROCESS

Document fully the results of all:

- ◆ Assessments;
- ◆ Learning-on-the-job assignments;
- ◆ Feedback sessions;
- ◆ Performance Management sessions;
- ◆ Mentoring sessions;
- ◆ Coaching sessions;
- ◆ Learning and development contracting (development plans); and
- ◆ *Opportunity Creation* interviews.

These documents should be kept together in order to have a full picture of the individual's career and progress by just looking at his/her file.

8.11 THE READINESS POOL

Employees placed on the program should know:

- ◆ What they must do to be placed in the readiness pool;
- ◆ When they are placed in the readiness pool; and
- ◆ When a vacancy/opportunity arises, whether they were considered or not and why.

The quality of the people will ensure whether the readiness pool will have its rightful place and whether it will deliver the caliber of candidates needed.

To be taken up in the readiness pool discriminates between those employees who have developed themselves in order to be ready to fill a certain position, and those that have not. It can be used for succession planning and multi-skilling, to keep those already in the pool focused on further development until a suitable vacancy arises. These employees should know when they are added to the pool, as well as how they are being dealt with after having been taken up. They will have to be encouraged until suitable placements can be found. Positions cannot be created in order to accommodate them. The best option is to confront them with real problems relating to the work place or to the position identified as his/her career vision. They should then go and find answers and possible solutions to those problems. This will give them another opportunity of further development. The moment they are placed in their identified goal positions, they will be capable of doing most of the tasks as they have had the necessary exposure whilst in the readiness pool.

Another possibility is to take those in the readiness pool and utilize them to stand in for someone else in the specific goal position. The individual will then also experience the true realities of the job and it gives the organization the opportunity to evaluate his/her performance in that specific job - reality is tested!

Once added to the pool, the motivation of the individual should be kept at a high level. Honesty regarding opportunities and chances are crucial. If the readiness pool starts to feature with regard to succession planning, it will be important to keep it alive and efficient in order to establish faith in the program.

8.12 COMMUNICATING OPPORTUNITIES

In order to ensure the integrity and credibility of the program, it is important to ensure that the information is accessible at all times and used in the correct way - for the purpose for which it was designed.

Employees taking responsibility for their careers and wanting to work really hard at it, will be lost to the organization if they are expected to utilize the available opportunities whilst they don't even know about their existence. Therefore communication is essential for making *Opportunity Creation* work - especially two-way communication. The employee should let the organization know where he/she wants to go to and how he/she intends getting there. The organization should provide information on the realities attached to any position, as well as the opportunities arising to fulfill those goals.

Training can be communicated annually in terms of the training that will take place within the next year. This information should be updated on a regular basis and open places on sessions should be communicated so that individuals needing the training can attend.

Vacancies can be communicated through circulars (internal advertisements) throughout the organization. It is extremely important that this information reach every employee as soon as possible. Technical support in the computer field can be utilized for this, for example an intranet within the organization - communicating and updating on a daily basis all the vacancies within the organization and giving every employee constant access to this information at all times. Certain specific requirements should be clarified in the advertisements in order to prevent misinterpretation from hampering the objective of the program and the advertisements.

The role of internal advertisements is not only that of making employees aware of career opportunities within, but also to keep them abreast of people moving internally and externally. If not used correctly it will be seen as a joke and will harm *Opportunity Creation*. The usage in accordance with the readiness pool should be clarified beforehand so that employees will know that when an internal advertisement is sent out, that position has not yet been filled and that a suitable candidate has not yet been identified.

Another opportunity involves being transferred within the organization to another division and getting to do something completely different. *Inter-division transfers* should be allowed. The qualifying factor here will be the individual's identified career goal - if it means going over to another division at some stage, then he/she should be allowed to be trained in that applicable division and eventually be transferred to that division. This will limit frustration and improve productivity. If employees start achieving their career goals it

will not only be to the benefit of the individual, but also to the benefit of the organization - the right person with the right knowledge, skills and attitude is placed in the right job!

The whole backbone of the *Opportunity Creation* program is that employees should be able to use the opportunities that come their way. Division should not just look to themselves but should use all possible skills and knowledge available within the organization to do the job. Resources, in terms of human potential and skills, ought to be utilized where the high growth areas are and the organization must therefore be able to move these resources to where they are needed the most.

People added to the *readiness pool* should also be made a fuss of in terms of communicating their being added to the pool for specific positions. This will also create an awareness of people progressing and actually achieving something by using *Opportunity Creation*.

8.13 IMPLEMENTING AND FOLLOWING UP

Opportunity Creation should be implemented at a steady and continuous pace. The natural time principle should be upheld in order to lessen resistance. The faster change takes place, the more resistance will occur. For successful implementation it is therefore important to realize what rate will be acceptable to the employees.

Introducing and implementing the program should be done with a "big bang" - people should take notice and be made aware in such a way that they do not forget it easily. The tempo of actually starting out on the program should allow enough time for convincing employees of the benefits of the program.

The process of implementation is crucial in terms of the timing and time frame within which it is done. To push implementation before everything is in place will be a waste of time and energy. Rather determine what needs to be done before formal implementation as well as the natural time involved in getting that in place and plan implementation accordingly.

The drivers of the program in the organization must list all the problems that could be encountered during the selling and implementation processes. These problems should be discussed in detail and possible solutions should be identified before implementation can take place. This could include problems such as:

- ◆ Remuneration strategies and practices;
- ◆ Support for studies (financial);
- ◆ Job evaluation;
- ◆ The role of the union in the program (if applicable);
- ◆ A too big readiness pool;
- ◆ Retention of well-trained employees on the program;
- ◆ Unrealistic expectations;
- ◆ Support systems;
- ◆ Up-to-date psychometric instruments;
- ◆ Criteria for selection regarding joining the program as well as being added to the readiness pool;
- ◆ Orientation programs; and
- ◆ Dependency on status and power.

In terms of following up on the process after implementation and with the individuals' career visions set for the next two years, it will be essential to frequently follow-up on progress and maybe even change the visions. The follow-up interviews and progress evaluations should be done frequently and should become part of a natural process within the organization, where every employee knows a certain month is for instance, "*Opportunity Creation* review month". This will set unofficial target dates for development, progress and reality testing.

Seeing that mentoring is recommended, mentors will obviously be in contact with candidates on a frequent basis. This will ensure that follow-ups do not end up as an annual, forced event. This is necessary to ensure frequent support and advice to employees on the program. It is important, though, not to be prescriptive regarding when follow-ups should take place. Line management should feel free to do it as often as they want to. Frequency is also necessary to be able to add someone to the readiness pool as soon as possible after they have achieved their "readiness".

The integration with other Human Resources processes will enable line management to combine *Opportunity Creation* with Performance Management and also combine the interviews and follow-ups. Newcomers must be given the opportunity to join the program as soon as possible after his/her date of commencement of service.

8.14 KNOW AND DEAL WITH RESISTANCE

Resistance forms part of every change process and are a human reaction to being taken from the known to the unknown. Implementing *Opportunity Creation* within an organization requires a change of mindset, a change of culture and a change of attitudes towards careers and the responsibility for careers. If all possible resistance can be identified before selling and implementation, line management will have less difficulty in dealing with their team members' resistance.

8.14.1 What to expect

The bulk of the resistance will possibly come from the current managers who will feel that they are losing status when they have to train their people on all the skills and abilities they themselves had to learn the hard way. They play an important role within the program and their buy-in and commitment are essential. They will have to fully understand the program, its benefits and procedures in order to be able to sell and explain it to their subordinates.

The resistance may also entail the following:

- ◆ A lot of extra work needs to be done;
- ◆ It is a time-consuming process to train, support and coach people;
- ◆ There are limited vacancies (career opportunities) within the organization;
- ◆ Affirmative action will ensure that *Opportunity Creation* is only a vehicle for the previously disadvantaged groups covered by the Employment Equity Act;
- ◆ Employees will have to use private time to develop themselves, especially in terms of obtaining formal qualifications;

- ◆ Careers can never fully become the individual's responsibility, the organization has to provide everything;
- ◆ Disbelief in the program as a result of no proof to the contrary;
- ◆ People in the readiness pool may wait for long periods of time before being placed or promoted; and
- ◆ A concern about Top Management's commitment to the program and it only being another Human Resources exercise.

It is important to keep in mind the profile, culture, abilities, training levels and history of employees in order to know what type of resistance to expect and how to go about addressing that effectively.

8.14.2 Dealing with resistance

Because of the enormous change in traditional career planning brought about by *Opportunity Creation*, it will be necessary to implement it in a subtle, diplomatic way by selling the concept and its benefits to all involved parties, and by applying time, diplomacy and persuasive skills.

People have a natural tendency to fear unknown ground - even in their every day working environment. Communicating the reasons for the program, as well as the process and its influence on every employee's situation, is therefore important. Knowledge can counter fear and regular updates and refreshers can be used to keep the communication channels alive and open. Transparency and fairness are essential in order to eliminate resistance. The best way to counter false perceptions is to use honest and open communication. The strategy on selling the program will have to focus on addressing all the fears that people in the delayed structures may have. The benefits of being "in charge" of your own career must be sold to individuals.

The possibility of connecting progress to some sort of incentive will have to be investigated, as long as it addresses employees' career anchors, i.e. money or acknowledgement.

Providing information with enthusiasm and eagerness is very important to countering resistance. The people selling the program will have to believe in the program so much that they are able to influence others to believe in it too.

Resistance may also be broken down by means of:

- ◆ Sensitizing employees;
- ◆ Driving the program hard and effectively;
- ◆ Keeping promises made;
- ◆ Building trust between employees and management;
- ◆ Establishing it as the only alternative to career progress within the organization;
- ◆ Changing employees' mindsets;
- ◆ Empowering employees by giving them more responsibility when they are able to handle it;
- ◆ Relating the success stories to everybody; and
- ◆ Supporting those on the program frequently.

To break or minimize resistance, it all boils down to much needed support, communication and the perceiving of successes.

8.15 REQUIRED ATTITUDES

In order for *Opportunity Creation* to work, it is essential that certain attitudes are created and established amongst the employees in the organization. First of all, the traditional external locus of control must be changed to an internal locus of control. The organization (external) is no longer responsible for creating and identifying action and no longer to be blamed for individuals not achieving their career goals. The individual will have to develop an internal focus where he/she accepts that only he/she can identify and create actions and only he/she can be blamed for anything that happens (or not) with regard to a career. A second necessary attitude is that of being an entrepreneur in terms of a career. Entrepreneurs need the following to be successful:

- ◆ Drive;
- ◆ Self-belief;

- ◆ Vision;
- ◆ Independence;
- ◆ A risk-taking attitude;
- ◆ Self-discipline; and
- ◆ Creativity and initiative.

Seeing that most of the employees within the organization are traditionally "corporate people" rather than "entrepreneurs", these skills need to be taught and *Opportunity Creation* can be seen as the glue to develop the corporate person into an entrepreneur.

8.16 SUMMARY

Analyzing the perceptions on career planning and how it should be done gives a broad picture of what is needed in the organization in terms of career and succession planning. It also assists in successfully implementing a new program, seeing that the employees' ideas and recommendations can be used to the benefit of the implementation of a new program. Implementing a new career planning process in any organization is not easy, but if the right processes and systems are in place before the program is implemented, the buy-in from all relevant role-players will be much easier.

Employees should be involved in determining the processes and procedures in order to make it their career and succession-planning program.

In order to successfully implement and maintain the *Opportunity Creation* program within the organization, all possible problems, resistance and questions (as identified through the phenomenological analysis of employees' input) should be addressed during the selling process. The buy-in right at the Top is very important and these managers should experience the program themselves in order to be able to communicate on it and support it with enthusiasm and credibility. For employees to believe in it, all the success stories must be communicated. Continuity and enthusiastic drive are vital for the success of the program and therefore the role-players should be selected and trained with caution and expertise in mind.

The program will create a new dimension in the lives of employees, seeing that they are very much involved in what happens to them in terms of their careers. And if they do their bit, their careers will definitely show it. It will ease employees' minds on the delayed structure and allow them to focus on their jobs and do it to the best of their ability.

The results given in this chapter will address the successful implementation of Opportunity Creation and address the hypotheses set out in chapter 6, stating that:

A phenomenological analysis of a career planning system within a delayed organizational structure will result in the facilitation of an implementation strategy designed specifically for the Opportunity Creation program, which will ensure commitment of those eventually involved in the program.