

Careers & Talent Strategy

The New Shape of Work

Why The Only Way
Is No Longer Up

By
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Amrop

Leaders For What's Next

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Why The Only Way Is No Longer Up

Any credible career should follow an uninterrupted, upward trajectory, or so the assumption goes. Many hiring organizations, executive search firms and leadership candidates still exercise this kind of 'up or out' thinking.



Yet a growing number of successful executives are seriously questioning What's Next. The prospect of 'more of the same' is unappealing, and for different reasons. For millennials, the 'career for life' is becoming an irrelevance, and many corporates no longer offer one. Many senior leaders peak at the age of 50 and feel pressured to climb a mountain that no longer interests them – a pressure compounded by the rise of the retirement age in many markets.

Irrespective of their age, fear can close the mind of many executives to alternative opportunities: sacrificing status (and status symbols), kissing goodbye to deferred financial incentive schemes, an erosion of one's very identity. The expectations of the personal and professional entourage can be a further barrier to creativity and freedom.

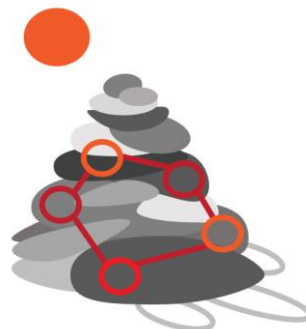
Compounding the difficulty of escaping the vertical paradigm is the 'either/or' career thinking imprinted on the minds of many executives. *Either I must freelance*, the narrative goes, *or join - or found - a start-up*. The alternative is to remain trapped in the *corporate birdcage*, assuming I continue to have a place in it.

But there is hope, and help, in the form of an emerging corporate culture in which a firm expects to benefit from staff who demand to explore their capacity for growth. To provide a fertile space for personal development and

watch it germinate a fulfilled workforce, with higher productivity. Executives, too, are changing their perceptions.

It's possible to see a healthy schizophrenia in the modern career trajectory. Career shapes appear to be gradually morphing, with hybrids increasingly becoming the new norm. Some even take on multiple aspects over time - a *linear* route, steeped in expertise and ambition to reach the top, can branch out into a *lateral* shape: a series of sideways steps within an organization, and with wider experience become *multi-lateral*: a series of shorter term roles, even exercised in tandem. And the digital disruption causing so much industry reinvention is rippling through career design in a way that's exciting the millennial generation in particular.

That's the theory, now for some praxis. If you are an executive seeking a fresh approach to your career, or a talent strategist seeking to revitalize your organizational approach, read on.



4 Cases in Point

From Executive to Enabler

1 Chris Jessop

With his roots in FMCG brand management, Chris Jessop has been a division Managing Director of AXA PPP, an Executive Board Member and divisional CEO of Nuffield Health, and a divisional Managing Director at BUPA. He is Chairman of three companies in the health services sector: OH Assist, Optima Health and Viavi. He acts as a business advisor and sits on the advisory board of London South Bank University Business School. He has shaped and grown a number of PE and business angel-backed business, consistently generating material shareholder returns. Previously recognized as UK Healthcare Entrepreneur of the year.

2 Ángel Cano Fernández

Ángel Cano Fernández served as President and Chief Operating Officer of Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria, S.A. (BBVA) from 2009 to 2015, following global transformation roles in the organization (HR, IT and Operations). Today, he is a key mover in The Crowd Angel, a platform facilitating private early stage investment in online startups. The Crowd Angel has generated 4.3 million euros' investment in 17 Spanish startups since its launch, including Glovo, Delivery and Shopery. Mr. Cano has served as a Director of Turkiye Garanti Bankasi AS since 2011, and of China CITIC Bank Corporation Ltd. from 2010 to 2013.

A sharpening, societally-responsible vision

3 Orr Vinegold

Orr Vinegold began his career in brand management at l'Oréal. At an early age, he was responsible for a multimillion GBP budget and operational brand strategy, overseeing two years of consecutive double digit growth. He subsequently took up a brand management position at Life Health Foods, a start-up dedicated to creating innovative plant-based foods. He next joined Savsé, a challenger smoothie brand, prioritizing the use of natural products without added sugar, as Head of Marketing. In 2017 Orr entered politics, fighting as prospective parliamentary candidate for the Labour Party for the Aberdeen North seat in the General Election, increasing the Labour vote by 4%.

Science, entrepreneurship and big data

4 John Doxaras

An MSc in Theoretical Physics and a BSc in Quantum Complexity/High Energy Physics led John Doxaras to join two of the most important computer science challenges of our era: the LHC experiment in CERN, and data mining tens of millions API calls in the online advertisement and re-targeting industry. John is CEO and founder of Warply - a mobile loyalty and payments start-up. From Athens, he has scaled the organization to 7 countries. Warply offers technology, innovation and profound knowledge to optimize omni-channel customer experiences, offering personalized communication and marketing automation innovation, CRM and loyalty solutions to drive engagement and revenue.

Career Locomotion | Reinventing the Corporate Ladder

Alessandro Gilotti is President of Kuwait Petroleum Italia (Q8), a subsidiary of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation. Gilotti followed a classic corporate career in many ways but over the years has seen his company develop a sophisticated perspective on staff learning.

Q8 launched in Italy in 1986 and swiftly embarked on an expansion program, acquiring Shell's petrol station network in 2014 and becoming the second operator on the Italian oil market. It now brands itself as a place of innovation, seeking to attract a diverse corpus of young graduates. To do that, staff self-reinvention is expected.

As President of a major division of a Kuwait-home-based organization, how has Alessandro seen its culture change to foster intrapreneurship and create an environment where people experiment with different options?

Gilotti tells Amrop that to reach the upper levels of the company you are simply obliged to set out on a creative career journey. Lateral moves in the company are welcome. And, according to Gilotti, the organization is full of people who began a career in one department, tried and left behind roles in others, and now find themselves happy and challenged in another.

"If somebody stays in one job for more than 3 years here, it's considered negative and he or she has, in a way, been forgotten. The lateral moves people make are professional experiences that are enriched with the knowledge of what the rest of the company is doing. We have twelve lawyers and they are exposed to job rotation like everyone else. We have one at the moment who has moved to HR. This is not an unusual case. We feel that going through various experiences enriches the interpretation of the role. There was a secretary who started in our research department who joined HR, and today she is Head of Corporate Training. Now that's a lateral career!"



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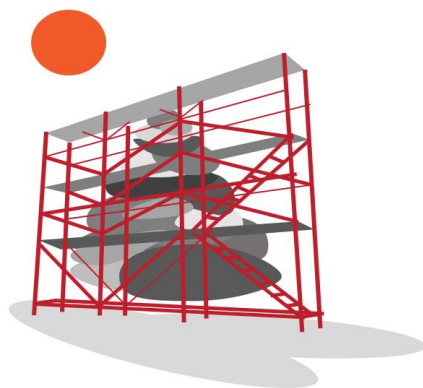


Image Shift | the Executive Search Perspective

Marie Högstedt, Managing Partner of Amrop's Malmö office in Sweden, oversees Amrop's own Culture and Values stream. She finds many candidates are still very vertical in their thoughts and want to become the big boss with a big title. But, she says, the sea change has already begun. "I think we are seeing a swing away from the vertical path towards more lateral types. We used to have a negative term for these people, calling them 'job-hoppers'. We're not doing that any more, we respect them more."

An increased focus on the lateral work pattern is keeping executive search consultants busier than ever. And it is making candidates more mobile.

Winning personalities

Amrop Board Member Fredy Hausammann concurs that there is little resistance these days to *internal*, lateral mobility. Frequently, it is positively embraced, reflecting a world that is becoming used to disruption and massive change tasks.

Difficulties remain, however, for *external* candidates. According to Hausammann, search firms promoting lateral moves for their candidates meet resistance because clients tend to look chiefly at a person's track record. "Conventional recruitment relies on degrees, and experience in a certain field or role. Traditional executives don't feel comfortable having to evaluate potential and taking the risks associated with potential, rather than track record."

In which case, how do executive search consultants argue against the prejudices to lateral mobility they encounter?

"We make the case for a strong human capital strategy with strong key professionals in HRM and a knowledgeable and influential Nominations Committee at board level. That's what we encourage as a prerequisite. We encourage our clients to first and foremost go for strong personalities with the potential to advance the organization. Of course, they must bring a minimum set of skills and experience to the table.

Senior level hirings are, in my book, a little like real estate investments - but instead of *location, location, location* it's *personality, personality, personality*. Many game-changing firms across a spread of industries have followed this rule."



The values of the company you work for in the future have to be a part of you - you are not only the work you do. Work life and private life are coming much closer together and if they don't fit then you're not going to fit in the company."

Organizational Design and Culture | Bringing Shared Values Alive

Underpinning this new wave of personal and organizational mobility are the values shared between employer and staff. Without this overlap, say executive recruitment experts, the relationship is doomed. It is a common imperative deferred-to by successful entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs alike, at large corporates.

Of course, the importance of shared values is not a new discovery. The concept of organizational culture, with shared values as a core facet, began to take root in the 1980s and is now firmly engrained in management thinking.

Less obvious is achieving a state in which values are truly lived - anchored in the attitudes and actions of employees. Dan Denison, Professor of Organization and Management at leading business school IMD, has cited the four core values appearing in the annual report of a leading corporation: Communication; Respect; Integrity and Intelligence, "engraved in stone in the corporate headquarters."

However, he warns: "those are *Enron's* corporate values. Just because they stated the corporate values didn't mean that they lived them, and that had severe consequences for the corporation, for its people, and for its customers. The lesson from that is, that not only do we have to aspire to a set of values and principles that are at the core of our organization, but we also have to make sure that we walk the talk and put these ideas into action."



If values need to be lived, then co-creation gives them a better chance of survival. Marie Högstedt outlines Amrop's core values as: Agility; Caring; Excellence; Ethics; Curiosity; and Inclusion. These were arrived at in consultation with the whole Amrop group and represent the partnership culture, as well as a way of promoting itself to clients, candidates and prospective staff.

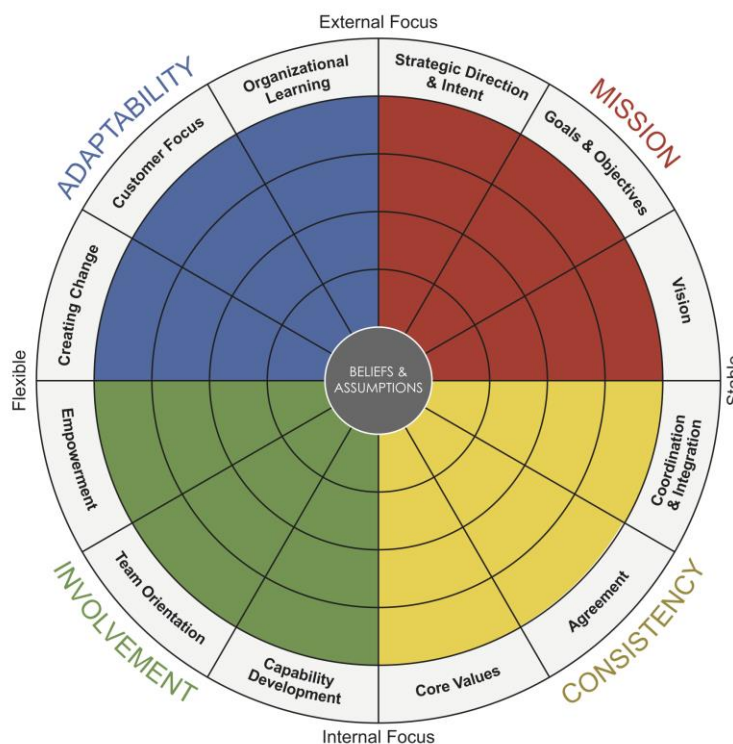
"I think certain people are drawn to working with us at Amrop because they share these values. The values of the company you work for in the future have to be a part of you - you are not only the work you do. Work life and private life are coming much closer together and if they don't fit then you're not going to fit in the company. Ikea is like this, for example, a very value-driven company."



Planning for the unusual

In 'Leading Culture Change in Global Organizations: Aligning Culture and Strategy' (2012) Dan Denison and co-authors present a model that captures four basic traits of organization culture: *Mission*, *Adaptability*, *Involvement* and *Consistency* - and sets out the dynamic tensions between them. At the heart of the model lie 'beliefs and assumptions'. 'Core Values' are a part of the *Consistency* trait, as demonstrated in Dan Denison's model, below.

This raises an interesting question for the talent strategists of forward thinking organizations: how if at all can lateral and multi-lateral career paths be engineered in the organization's cultural architecture and values?



Self-shaper

Lars Häggström is a former Executive VP at Stora Enso (a world leader in renewable packaging, biomaterials, wood and paper), and now a lecturer at IMD Business School. His career has followed a *linear-to-lateral* path, reaching the level of CHRO and then moving several times into the same role to ever larger companies. During the hard slog of the linear, promotion-fuelled track, Häggström discovered the values that he needed his employer to demonstrate in order to motivate him.

"When I joined Stora Enso I gave them a list of demands, none of which were about money. They all came down to what makes me happy and able to perform. I think the DIY talent strategist who knows this list is much less influenced by what other people think, or by what a search consultant considers good or bad. If you know that a higher purpose is essential to you, or that freedom to act is essential to you, or if caring for me as an individual has to be there - knowing these things about yourself is then the primary driver in where you choose to work."

Forget the menu

You can't expect a company talent strategist to bring you a menu of opportunities like you're in a restaurant, Häggström warns. "But what they can do is create a lot of transparency, in consultation with the CEO, about what kind of talent the company needs. Then an employee five levels down can see what opportunities there are and can go to her line manager and say "Look, I'm passionate about this, I want to work on something with a greater purpose over here". It creates a bit of a mess for the line manager but I think that's what a talent strategist has to do, otherwise you get a blocked and closed organization. I don't think the millennials will accept less, in that they will come, realize, and then leave. And I don't think older people want to accept it either, but they're prepared to. So they're still there physically but their heart and passion isn't, so you get more disengagement."



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Right from the Start-Up | How a Decacorn Leader Inspired a Young Entrepreneur

If the culture of Smarp, a digital knowledge platform, is anything to go by, Häggström is right. Roope Heinilä, its young CEO, is enjoying a successful lateral career but from the seat of a start-up. He started Smarp 6 years ago and has grown it exponentially: now doubling revenues each year, it has offices in 4 countries. His ambition is for it to be the first place where employees go to find and share knowledge and he presents the firm as a David to the LinkedIn Goliath.

In his early career Heinilä worked for Ilkka Paananen (now CEO of Supercell, the only decacorn (€10+billion) start-up in Europe). He learned from his boss that investing in your staff means allowing them to fail and, in a similar vein to Stora Enso, being transparent about what the company needs.

Heinilä says he gets his staff to feel invested in the Smarp project by engendering *a fear of missing out rather than a fear of failure*. "And taking on much more responsibility than was in your original job description when we hired you. What the younger generation seems to value particularly is continual learning - having the ability to take on things they haven't done before, are interested in, and will not be effective at when they start, but will hopefully become effective at later."



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As a company, you need to say: 'We have loads of challenges that are your opportunities. We're selling stuff now that won't be bought by anyone in a few years. God knows what we're going to replace it with. We're a bunch of middle aged white men, we know we've got to become more diverse to get anywhere. Do you want to add to that diversity?' We found at Stora Enso this transparency was turning the right people on."



Clear waters

First of course, you're required to master what you've been hired to do. But, Heinilä maintains, once someone has mastered that skill, it's time to find a new phase in the employee's life cycle. "As soon as someone is effective they're not as motivated to do it any more. And instead you have to find something new for them do and learn about. So by investing in your employees and their learning you end up with a stronger team."

'Learning on the job' used to mean being instructed in the ways of a business. Now it increasingly means adding new skills and knowledge that the company lacks, building yourself and the company's skill set at the same time. Lars Häggström believes these twin positives are rooted in company transparency about its needs and weaknesses.

"Transparency is at the centre of attracting the right people to your organization. Companies that present themselves as perfect, beautiful smiling faces with a perfect balance of diversity, are not authentic. And if it is perfect there, well why would I want to join that? I don't want to join something that's already perfect, I want to build something. As a company, you need to say: 'We have loads of challenges that are your opportunities. We're selling stuff now that won't be bought by anyone in a few years. God knows what we're going to replace it with. We're a bunch of middle aged white men, we know we've got to become more diverse to get anywhere. Do you want to add to that diversity?' We found at Stora Enso this transparency was turning the right people on."

For senior executives like Lars Häggström, the light has become brighter throughout his career. "As I've got older I've become more conscious of what makes me happy and I've increasingly allowed that to inform my career movement."



20 New Mantras of Career Design

Designing your career

- 1 Make your sense of purpose, your ethical principles, values, and what makes you happy and able to perform, your overarching goals.
- 2 Build your own sustainability into your career equation.
- 3 Ensure you know - and share - the values of any organization you work for or with. Check to what extent those values are lived by the organization.
- 4 Know your key talents (and limits), and dare to explore.
- 5 Give yourself permission to think differently in your career approach – lateral, multi-lateral as well as vertical.
- 6 Check to what extent the needs and expectations of other people in your close entourage may be influencing your choices – consciously or unconsciously.
- 7 Be your own 'DIY talent strategist' – don't wait for that corporate menu.
- 8 Be a sensemaker for yourself and for other stakeholders: build your career narrative and personal brand, finding the red thread. An external, objective eye can help, in the form of a coach or other trusted advisor.
- 9 Take your time to find the matching role – or roles. Expect your vision to sharpen over time.
- 10 Reflect and develop, reflect and develop, and repeat ad infinitum.

Designing your organization

- 1 Prepare for external candidates seeking a lateral or multi-lateral career.
- 2 Think 'building site' – relish creative mess and disruption.
- 3 Build talent strategy on cutting-edge HRM expertise - and a strong Nominations Committee.
- 4 Ensure your talent strategists embrace the lateral and multi-lateral.
- 5 To be a game-changer, view senior-level hires like real estate investments: for 'location' read 'personality', with potential just as important as track record.
- 6 Co-create values, ensuring the closest possible fit between those of the organization and its key talent.
- 7 *Mission, Adaptability, Involvement and Consistency*: consider these 4 culture traits and how to integrate atypical career paths in your architecture and values.
- 8 Be transparent about the talent your organization really needs, so high potentials can identify new opportunities.
- 9 Cultivate a fear of missing out rather than a fear of failure.
- 10 Prepare for Leaders For What's Next – turned on by dynamic imperfection and by organizations who frankly admit they don't know it all.

Resources and Further Reading

[What is Organizational Culture?](#) Why Culture Matters For Your Organization (2010), Denison Consulting

Denison, D., (2012) *Leading Culture Change in Global Organizations*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco

[The Great Executive Rebrand](#), How Top Executives are Rediscovering Their Core, (2016) Amrop

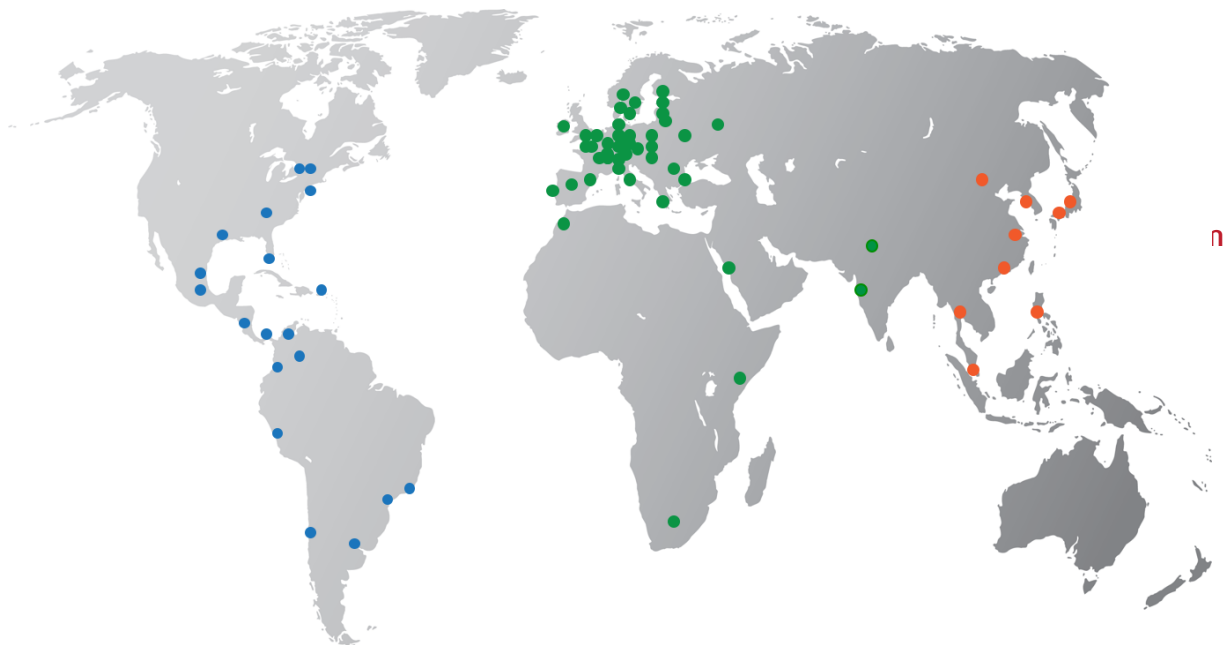
[Board Seeks New CEO](#), How to Transform a CV Into a Compelling Boardroom Presentation (2013) Amrop

Also see Amrop's [Personal Governance](#) Series by Fredy Hausammann

About Amrop

With over 70 offices in more than 50 countries, Amrop provides services in Executive Search, Leadership Assessment and Board Consulting. It is the largest partnership of its kind.

Amrop advises the world's most dynamic organizations on finding and positioning Leaders For What's Next: top talent, adept at working across borders in markets around the world.





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Culture change model, courtesy of Dan Denison.