

Working out the quality of work life

A career development perspective with insights for human resource management

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Ask anyone a basic question: "Do you like your work life?" The answer could be much more multifaceted than meets the eye.

Research on the quality of work life suggests that there are different relationships between the satisfaction with work life and, for instance, employees' engagement in, and commitment to, their work (Rice *et al.*, 1985).

Employees perceive quality when fundamental expectations about the workplace and their job are adequately met. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, these expectations could range from the more immediate physical needs such as workplace facilities, to security needs such as compensation and benefits, to affiliation needs such as social-networking and collaboration opportunities, to esteem needs such as autonomy and decision making, to actualization needs such as strategic planning and involvement (Sirgy *et al.*, 2001).

What can managers do to help to improve their employees' quality of work life and how could this improvement be realized in the form of career development for employees? This article is based on a US study of data collected between 2007-2009 from 140 working people who had decided to improve their career prospects and, thereby, their quality of work life, through professional education (Li and Yeo, 2011).

The following eight factors were found to influence the quality of work life, with implications for career development and human resource management (HRM).

1. Organizational culture

Employees believe they have a high quality of work life when there is a clear sense of
