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# Career Plateau of Employees and its Causes

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**ABSTRACT:** Career plateauing occurs when an employees has limited potential for upward movement in their career. Employees, especially those who continue to work in the same organization for a very long time often reach career plateaus. To people working in human resources jobs, they require a special skill of challenge that is difficult to handle without active cooperation from the affected employees. However, more often than not, an employee stuck on a career plateau refuses to recognize that he or she has been trapped by a career barrier and refuse help at its very mention

## I. INTRODUCTION

Career plateau represents a situation in which a person in the course of employment and improved vertical and horizontal movement is restricted

The current study examines the relationship between experience of the employee and the perceived career plateau. Career Plateau is a point where employees find their work to non-challenge. They have fewer opportunities to develop their skills and abilities.

A career plateau is:

- The point where the likelihood of additional hierarchical promotion is very remote;
- The point where there are few internal opportunities for career development ;
- A time duration in which an employee's learning rate does not improve;
- A time of perceived or actual professional stagnation.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this article is to find out the causes of career plateau especially about personal career plateau and Structural Career Plateau.

## III. TYPE OF CAREER PLATEAU

**Personal Career Plateau** Personal Career Plateau occurs when employees though having capacity. Have not greater incentive for career development. They will not be having additional responsibilities.

**Structural Career Plateau:** Structural Career Plateau occurs when that employee reaches the highest level in organization. It is as a result of restrictions in the hierarchical organizational structure. Because if even the employee goes to the higher level in the organization the posts which they can achieve it, was more limited. Employee's skills and knowledge is not necessary to go to the next level, in most cases there are no more positions.

## IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

**kreuter, 2004:**In organizations that have fewer diversity, employees have to stay in the same job and same level. This situation can lead to frustration and reduction of motivation of employees. The feeling of job dissatisfaction leads to stagnation and there arises career plateau.

**Rotondo and Perrewe 2000:** Consequently, career plateaued employees are likely to be detrimental to the operating activities of an organization, and reversing employee career plateau tendencies is likely to be an important issue for companies.

**Lemire, Saba and Gagnon 1999:**The term career plateau refers to the feeling of frustration and psychological feebleness that employees tend to experience following a temporary or permanent halt in the advancement of their careers.

**Appelbaum 1994:**Career plateaus lead to some previously effective employees becoming ineffective performers within the organization and may lead some effective employees to leave the company.



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## V. CAUSES FOR THE CAREER PLATEAU

A career plateau may hit for a wide variety of reasons, such as reaching the highest possible level in company; feeling restricted in role; or no longer feeling challenged or engaged by work.

People sometimes also reach a plateau when they have mastered the job and no longer feel challenged. Or when their reputation has been damaged either through their own actions or by association.

Firms may plateau employees for either organizational or personal reasons. Within these broad terms, there are specific ways of attributions plateaued employees may recognize. First, and foremost, plateaued employees may perceive that they are plateaued because of the organization's negative assessment of their capacities. Employee's may be plateaued because they are looked upon by the organization either as lacking in ability for higher-level jobs or as not desiring higher-level jobs. Managers within organizations may knowingly or unknowingly pigeonhole employees as those who are talented and willing to move up the corporate ladder and those who are not. An organization's assessment of an employee, whether it is exact or not, may be an antecedent situation that the employee believes created their plateaued state.

Another situation in which employees may suggest that the organizations have caused their plateaus is due to the narrowing structure of employment pyramid. The organizational structure allows very few employees to move up to higher management position. Also, downsizing removes many middle-management positions of the pyramid. As firms reduce the employees throughout the organization, the structure becomes flattened, creating even more challenges than had previously existed. Organizations flattened structures are a fact of organizational life for the foreseeable future, fewer higher-level jobs will exist at many organizations. As a result these organizational constraints may effectively plateau employee's.

The personal preference of employees may be offered as a reason for being plateaued. Some employees explicitly make their desires known not to be promoted further, while others send ambiguous signals to the organization on proposed promotions. Employee during the 1970s were strongly committed, ideal "organization man". Hardly any of these employees chose being plateaued. However, few of today's workers personify the "organization man." Employees may choose for personal reasons like family or health, not to seek additional responsibilities. This is true for both men and women, since both may be managing work and family responsibilities. Also, an employees may not feel that the additional stress (or income) associated with the promotion is worth what the person may have to give up to do the job. In short, employees may be plateaued for organizational benefits and organizational constraints or personal-choice reasons.

Whatever the cause, it should be seen as an opportunity to reassess and redefine career goals and explore the next move. If you want to stay in your organization, a lateral move to another department could provide a new challenge. For others, a plateau might motivate to change companies, sectors or even careers.

## VI. EXAMPLES OF CAUSES OF CAREER PLATEAU

Given that two types of plateaus, structural and content, have been identified, along with the reasons one might plateau, a discussion is warranted on the classic plateau attributions an employee might give up their plateau status. For example, an employee may be structurally plateaued for organizational assessment reasons. An employee may not receive future career growth because management believes that the employee slacks the managerial ability or skills needed for higher-level jobs. Or the organization may believe that the employee is not truly committed to the organizational development. Hence, the organization has made an assessment of the employees that precludes that employee from career growth within the firm.



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Due to organizational constraints employees may be structurally plateaued. The lack of positions may be caused by a poor economy, downsizing, recruiting inappropriately and staffing efforts aimed at the same population, or an enlarged management position. In any of these examples, the actions of the organization have resulted in employees who are plateaued structurally, with no opportunity for advanced growth. The employee has been plateaued in this case due to issues outside the employee's (and maybe the organization's) control.

An employee may also be plateaued structurally for personal-choice reasons. It may be that the employee does not desire a higher-level job, stemming from non-work-related matters. In these instances the reason, the employee is structurally plateaued may have everything to do with the personal choices the employees makes (e.g., not wanting/needing the stress associated with higher-level position not taking a promotion because of possible need for family transfer or health reasons). This situation occurs when one makes a conscious decision by taking control of one's career and therefore may be referred to as being plateaued structurally for personal-choice reasons.

Employees may be content plateaued for either organizational or personal reasons. When the organization has not assessed the employee's capabilities, the employee may not receive any further increases in responsibility associated with the current position. The organization may believe that the employee lacks managerial or technical skills, ability, desire, or work ethic to manage more advanced tasks.

Also, the organization may place restrictions on the employee's job such that no further learning may take place. These restrictions may include inflexible job descriptions or unavailable training. The employee may require additional responsibility but does not receive them because of personnel decisions imposed by the organization. This may cause the employee to perceive that there is little growth opportunity in the job and hence creates a perception of content plateauing for organizational constraint reasons.

An employees may decide for personal reasons that declining additional increases in responsibility in the current job is agreeable with other life domains. The additional workload associated with more responsibility doesn't seem worth the extra effort. There may be no additional monetary benefits for the excessive work hours; family responsibilities may suffer; or physical or emotional health may be affected. This being an example of content plateauing for personal-choice reasons.

This summary of the career plateau phenomenon is meant to bring closure to the lack of consensus among researchers about construct definitions. Employees who experience career plateaus may experience one or both of its two types, structural and content. Within these types of plateaus, there are also reasons to which employees may assign their plateaued states. Organizational assessment, organizational constraint, and personal choice are either external or internal decisions that affect the employee's work situation.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Although many pessimistic sentiments have been associated with career plateaus, plateaued employees appreciate a few optimistic experiences. Most important, some research suggests that given the flattened organizational structures common to many organizations, experiencing a career plateau may not be as humiliating or stressful as it once was. In fact, the plateau event may not be a distinctive situation but rather the norm for many employee's career development. From this perspective, plateaus may be more common and acceptable feature in one's career than was previously thought.

Plateaued employees are expected to contribute less of themselves in the job and more in nonwork activities. According to compensatory theory, disappointments in one sphere of life tend in some way to be made up for in another sphere. Therefore, plateaued employees psychologically tend to distance themselves from work by becoming more involved in nonwork issues. Employees become involved in these nonwork activities in order to perform well in another realm and maintain their morale and dignity. Similarly, plateaued employees may assign more time to their families, leisure interests, and community activities.



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