



RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

SHAPING OUR FUTURE

Who owns careers?

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The topic of careers has become both increasingly important and complex. Contemporary economies have brought about changes in the nature of careers and uncertainty in the structure and longevity of firms and their ability to offer long-term employment. Corporate policy-makers struggle with alternatives to traditional employment structures, while individuals struggle to decide whether and how they ought to become more independent of such structures, pursuing what some have called “post-corporate” or “boundaryless” careers.

Professor Maury Peiperl, during his Responsible Leadership Summit session, highlighted that in a knowledge economy individual career owners, not firms, enact the fundamental units of value creation – contracted projects, pieces of work, network links, relationships. This is also the case because it is through careers that firms, industries and societies are built and because each of us is a career owner. Careers are not firm-owned and managed nor executed according to a priori plans. They are not inclusive of one’s non-work life, though the work and non-work parts may affect one another significantly. And they are not temporary, multiple or serial.

One question discussed at length was the changing nature of work and work arrangements.

“The reality of work has moved, we have far fewer jobs, there is more demand for balance and there are more voluntary work arrangements,” Professor Peiperl said.

But can careers still be planned and to what extent?

“You can’t necessarily predict the organization’s needs, and therefore the types of jobs that will be available... and if you can’t predict all this, it means that career planning is inherently limited.”

Professor Peiperl also addressed whether commitment to the firm is a thing of the past.

“It seems that firm commitment is about ‘while I am here’. It is commitment within a



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timeframe.”

He encouraged emphasis on clarifying the psychological contract.

“The mismatches in the psychological contract are the major cause of problems between employers and employees.”