

experience. This staff member is considered more well rounded and better able to work within the total organization. Experience as a specialist gives the person familiarity with technical issues that arise. Experience as a generalist gives the employee a breadth of knowledge about many matters in the staffing function. Corporate experience provides a policy and planning perspective, whereas division experience provides greater insight on day-to-day operational matters.

Hierarchical mobility paths make it very easy, from an administrative vantage point, to identify where to look for applicants in the organization. For promotion, one looks at the next level down in the organizational hierarchy, and for transfer, one looks over. Although such a system is straightforward to administer, it is not very flexible and may inhibit matching the best person to the job. For example, the best person for the job may be two levels down and in another division from the vacant job. It is very difficult to locate such a person under a hierarchical mobility path.

Alternative Mobility Paths. Examples of alternative mobility paths are shown in Exhibit 6.2. The emphasis here is on movement in the organization in any direction—up, down, and side to side. Employee movement is emphasized to ensure that each employee is continuously learning and that he or she can make the greatest contribution to the organization. This is in direct contrast to the hierarchical promotion ladder, where the goal is for each person to achieve a position with ever-higher status. Many organizations have shifted to alternative mobility paths for two reasons: (1) there is a need to be flexible given global and technological changes, and (2) slower organizational growth has made it necessary to find alternative ways to utilize employees' talents. Parallel tracks allow for employees to specialize in technical work or management work and advance within either. Historically, technical specialists had to shift away from technical work to managerial work if they wanted to receive higher-status job titles and pay. In other words, a technical specialist was a dead-end job. Under a parallel track system, however, job titles and salaries of technical specialists are elevated to be commensurate with their managerial counterparts.

With a lateral track system, there may be no upward mobility at all. The individual's greatest contribution to the organization may be to stay at a certain level for an extended period of time while serving in a variety of capacities, as shown in Exhibit 6.2.

A lattice mobility path has upward, lateral, and even downward movement. For example, a recruiter may be promoted to a recruitment supervisor position, but to continue to contribute to the organization, the person may need to take a lateral step to become knowledgeable about all the technical details in compensation. After mastering these details, the person may then become a supervisor again, this time in the compensation area rather than in recruitment. From a previous organization, the person may have experience in training and be ready to move to training manager without training experience internal to the organization. Finally,