

THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF THE GEODETIC SERVICE OFFICERS

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The relevance of the topic of this paper is reflected in the understanding of the necessity of career change. There is a universal understanding that the main characteristic of officers' career is vertical promotion. Officers' career, which includes a frequent change of jobs and assignments that are not related only to vertical career promotion, is insufficiently studied or researched. Both transfers and deployments of the Geodetic Service Officers (GSO) in the Serbian Armed Forces, which have finally shown career matrix, have been studied in this paper. The importance of the research refers not only to officers' career, but it can be implemented for understanding career development, in general, through career matrix.

Kej words: career, career planning, Geodetic Service, career matrix, career stages

Introduction

A great part of the world is largely in the phase of transition from classical technology to information and communications technology, national economy to the world one, centralized system to decentralized one, hierarchies to network, institutional assistance to self-assistance, etc. In this regard, the greatest challenge in career is to accept changes that are happening in society, which are also reflected in military organizations. The more changes in military organization or its parts are

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subject to major technological changes, the more the adjustment of an individual is conditioned by career adjustment.

The geodetic activity has undergone enormous changes in recent decades. The mission and tasks have been directed from basic geodesy and classic cartography to geoinformatics, geomatics, geographic information systems and databases, which has made the importance of career development of employees through training, permanent education and scientific and professional development one of the key resources.

The concept of career and the importance of its development

Career is mainly related to an individual, but it cannot be accomplished out of an organization. Generally speaking, career can be defined "as jobs that an employee has done".¹ In this regard, a job is a "short-term time perspective defined by an organization in order to meet organizational needs, while career is a long-term (life) time perspective defined by an individual that combines individual and organizational interests and needs".²

A change in career development comes as a consequence of the speed of organizational change, its consolidation, merger, etc., and in the light of market globalization and the growing presence of great multinational corporations and closing down or adapting smaller organizations to such general trends. However, traditional organizations and traditional careers are still very common. Large systems such as multinational corporations today and, of course, military organizations, acquire such characteristics that it is possible to achieve and plan long-term careers in them, which would not be possible even to imagine in smaller organizations.

From the previous considerations, it can be noticed that career can be defined "as the development of an individual in learning and working during life".³ Similarly, career can be viewed as a series of jobs of an individual. Previously, career meant only vertical advancement - upwards, but it is now used in general sense to describe the working roles of employees.⁴

The primary goal of career development is to meet the current and future needs of an organization and individuals at work. In modern organizations, it is extremely difficult to separate career development from general training and development. Career success, viewed through the eyes of an individual, can be defined as career satisfaction through the achievement of personal goals related to work, and within

¹ Dessler, G.: *A Framework for Human Resource Management*, Data Status, Beograd, 2007, p. 200.

² Lojić, R., *Upravljanje ljudskim resursima u sistemu odbrane karijere*, Medija centar "Odbrana", Beograd, 2011, p. 261.

³ Lojić, R., *Upravljanje ljudskim resursima u sistemu odbrane karijere*, Medija centar "Odbrana", Beograd, 2011, p. 263.

⁴ Torrington, D., Hall, L., Taylor, S.: *Human Resource Management*, Data Status, Beograd, 2004, p. 443.

the contribution to an organization.⁵ Therefore, the new career concept is called flexible career, and it implies career that often changes based on changes in personal interests, capabilities, values and changes in a work environment.⁶ This means that career develops in the direction of accomplishing goals, both of an organization and its interests and individuals, that is, employees and their personal goals and interests that are variable in life cycle, as a result of changing environment, family, ageing, achieving some goals, changes in life priorities, as well as failures that are an integral part of the lives of individuals or organizations, etc. Career goal should be psychological success, i.e. a sense of pride due to the accomplished life goals, which are not limited only to success at work.⁷ At the same time, this means that a good biography is not the one with an impressive list of titles that speaks of advancement, but one that is rich and contains many business activities that are not only related to work.⁸

Career management

Career development is important and related to an individual, but it is also important for an organization. Employees' knowledge, combined with skills and capabilities, is one of the key resources of a modern organization. An individual, employer, managers, an organization, the family - all of them have a role in planning, developing and managing career of a person. This means that career development is influenced by several factors, such as personal characteristics (type of personality, education, values, interests, needs, capabilities and skills), close and immediate social environment (family, friends, colleagues, immediate managers and others) and an organization with possibilities it can offer, and in accordance with its interests and needs. To understand officers' career, one should not neglect general social relations, economic-political and security challenges, risks and threats, which can greatly affect career development.

Career management is a process in which the management of an organization monitors, evaluates, deploys, directs and develops employees and their potential in a planned and organized manner in order to provide the required number of qualified people and optimal use of their knowledge, skills and capabilities to accomplish organizational and individual interests and goals.⁹ This view of career management emphasizes the influence of an organization and its management on career management.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Noe, R. A., Hollenbeck, J. R., Gerhart, B., Wright, P. M.: *Menadžment ljudskih resursa potencijala*, MATE, Zagreb, 2005, p. 319.

⁷ Lojić, R.: *Planiranje i razvoj karijere*, Vojno delo 2/2009, Medija centar "Obrana", Beograd, 2009, p. 173.

⁸ Adamson, S., Doherty, N., Viney, C.: *The meanings of career revisited: Implications for theory and practice*, British Journal of Management, 1998, p. 256.

⁹ Lojić, R., Kulić, Ž.: *Menadžment ljudskih resursa*, VIZ, Beograd, 2009, p. 281.

Since career is related to an individual and if we view it as his property, then he bears responsibility for managing it. However, it is difficult for an individual to define the ultimate goal of career or to realistically evaluate its achievements, which is especially true for beginners and younger people. The individual development of officers' career including the Geodetic Service Officers is characterized by appointment to higher duties followed by promotion to higher ranks.

In the practice of military organization, the possibility of advancement is related to a great number of individuals. Since advancement is a part of officers' career development, individual career planning is not only important, but also expected. Therefore, it is necessary to have clear criteria for professional military service that should provide predictable military career. The possibility of advancement enables career development, which means successful promotion in the field of work, i.e. promotion from a lower to a higher rank or assignment to a higher duty. Career development does not only mean advancement according to position, but also directed development, training and education, constantly gaining work experience within (military) organization. An individual who would like to successfully manage his career should harmonize his own interests and potential with the options of career development and determine goals and strategy of its development on this basis.

Career goal is specific to each individual and has two dimensions: subjective and objective. The subjective dimension is manifested by change in attitudes, interests, motivation and goals, and the objective dimension by change in jobs, positions and job vacancies during working life.¹⁰ In essence, career goals change and usually do not show linear focus. In addition, individuals move from an area of interest to other, from a job to other one and, ultimately, from a type of career to other.

In this sense, organizational support through career management is a series of activities that enable individuals of any age, at any time in their lives, to identify their capabilities, competencies and interests, to make decisions regarding their education, training and profession and to manage flows of their lives in the field of learning, work and other areas in which they can acquire and use capabilities and competencies.¹¹ The execution of the overall strategy and plans of an organization has a significant role in career development, and career planning has to be treated as an integral part of planning. This means that organizations can help an individual in: considering career – by providing resources and assistance in reviewing and providing organizational information; setting career goals – by giving a clear perspective of career opportunities that are achievable in a business organization and offering more opportunities to accomplish career priorities; career

¹⁰ Lojčić, R.: *Planiranje i razvoj karijere*, Vojno delo 2/2009, Medija centar "Obrana", Beograd, 2009, p. 174.

¹¹ Vlada RS, *Strategija karijernog vođenja i savetovanja u Republici Srbiji*, Beograd, 2010.

strategy and action planning – by providing support and information on what works in an organization and what can realistically be expected; providing career-related feedback – by providing realistic evaluations of current performance and potential.¹²

The organizational support for the career development of the Geodetic Service Officers is provided by the organizational units in which they are located. In addition, human resources management units have an important role in supporting career development of individuals including the Geodetic Service Officers, which provide information on career development opportunities and options for professional personnel in relation to the needs of military organization. It is particularly important that during studies and when taking on the first duties, the student (cadet) of the Military Academy (MA) gets information about possible career development directions and necessary preconditions that can provide job changes, acquisition of competencies and career advancement.

In addition, it is the organization's responsibility when appointing officers to the first duties to properly assess whether the requirements of a particular job match their skills or interests. This is particularly important for newly graduated students because the first job can be crucial for building self-confidence and a more realistic idea of what they can do. It is important that a job is challenging, and the mentor is experienced. This prevents the shock of colliding with reality, which occurs when high expectations and enthusiasm of a new employee face the reality of a boring job that does not provide challenges¹³. Among military university graduates, it is particularly important to pay attention to facing new challenges that inevitably arise due to high expectations they are exposed to, starting from media attention during promotion to the first officer ranks, to the first salary and facing independent living out of military organization, etc. After studies at the Military Academy and many sacrifices, not only those related to school and student obligations, but also the conditions of studies (barracks, boarding school, military conditions, etc.), encounter with reality and military profession is particularly sensitive for young officers.

The role of an organization, especially the military one, is to take steps that would positively contribute to and support career. In this process, *career-based assessment* is particularly important, where managers (i.e. superior officers) should be trained not only to evaluate employee, but also to align their strengths and weaknesses with possible career development and work required for this direction of development¹⁴. Moving horizontally or periodic rotation can help employee gain a more realistic idea of their strengths and weaknesses, that is,

¹² Torrington, D., Hall, L., Taylor, S.: *Human Resource Management*, Data Status, Beograd, 2004, p. 453.

¹³ Dessler, G.: *A Framework for Human Resource Management*, Data Status, Beograd, 2007, p. 201.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 202.

their capabilities and affinities. All of this together improves the overall competencies and leads to the establishment of one's own recognizable professional capabilities, which can later affect the possibilities of choosing a career-related job. The organization's support in creating recognizable professional capabilities of its employees is extremely important, especially in an organization that bases its development on knowledge and research, such as the Geodetic Service and its most important and greatest executive body – the Military Geographical Institute - General Stevan Bošković.

The changes in career of the Geodetic Service Officers

The career of the Geodetic Service Officers is mainly related to job vacancies in the Military Geographical Institute, the Infrastructure Directorate, the Military Academy, operational level commands, etc. In addition, the Geodetic Service Officers have made their careers in other general job vacancies in the defence system, as well as within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (in the Border Service) and the Sector for Emergency Management of the Ministry of the Interior. As a rule, all Geodetic Service Officers have initial duties in the Military Geographical Institute. Their career begins when they start their first job. Which direction it will go depends on many factors, but no career, no matter how similar to other one, can have the same path.

A career trajectory

A career trajectory that an individual can take is represented by a series of job roles and positions defined by the content of a job or required capabilities.¹⁵ Following a career trajectory in an organization can provide answers to the question of what realistic goals are and career outcomes in it. A career trajectory is most often viewed through a traditional career trajectory and a network or matrix career trajectory.

Traditional trajectories are usually presented as vertical career ladders, which emphasize advancement within an organizational unit with the upward direction.¹⁶ Figure 1 shows an example of a traditional career trajectory that is conditioned by formal or informal constraints. These can be restrictions in terms of age, qualifications, time spent in an organization, etc., which conditions the following appointments, i.e. assuming positions. Such barriers set limits on career advancement at the very start.

¹⁵ Torrington, D., Hall, L., Taylor, S.: *Human Resource Management*, Data Status, Beograd, 2004, p. 453.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 453.

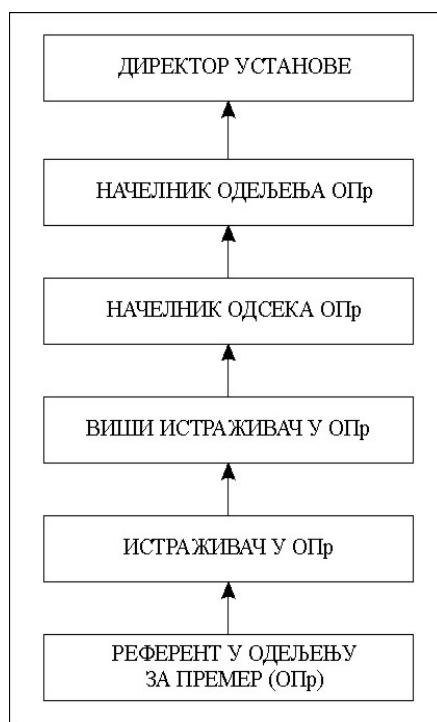


Figure 1 – A traditional career trajectory

In military organizations including the Serbian Armed Forces, there are many barriers that limit and condition career advancement in order to precisely define the criteria for professional military service, i.e. career planning. The lack of traditional career trajectories with restrictions related to age, professional or postgraduate studies, etc., is that they are “reserved for those with an *ideal* career development profile”.¹⁷ This excludes individuals who have had career breaks or stagnation for any reason, as well as those with great experience, but without formal qualifications. Such inflexibility has choked cross-functional transfers, that is, transfers among organizational units and emphasizes progress through management rather than the development of technical expertise.¹⁸

A *network or matrix career trajectory* means a trajectory designed in the form of networks or matrices with options at each level, so that vertical, horizontal, diagonal, and even downward transfers are possible. These networks are connected to networks from other parts of an organization or other organizations, allowing cross-

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 454.

¹⁸ Ibid.

functional transfers. Ideally, positions are described in terms of relationships, by identifying skills, knowledge and attitudes required in such a position, rather than by requiring certain qualifications or expected age restrictions.¹⁹



Figure 2 – A career matrix of the Geodetic Service Officers – example 1

Employees can change careers in different ways: by vertical movement (along the organizational hierarchy), horizontal movement (different positions at the same organizational level) and radial movement (approaching or moving away from the internal circle of power in an organization).²⁰ Combining these career movements of an individual creates a network or matrix career trajectory.

Military organization should enable greater implementation of a network career trajectory, which in practice does not mean excluding many characteristics of a traditional career trajectory. In this regard, trajectories or networked careers should maintain the real needs of an organization rather than an idealized picture of desirable development in career planning.

There are four main types of managers: top managers, mid-level managers, first-line managers and team leaders.²¹ For the needs of this paper, the study of the career trajectory of the Geodetic Service professional personnel has been done. The paper will explain the career of five Geodetic Service Officers through a matrix of their career (Figures 2–6) from initial duties, through team leaders and first-line managers to mid-level managers.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Lojić, R., *Upravljanje ljudskim resursima u sistemu odbrane karijere*, Medija centar “Obrana”, Beograd, 2011, p. 267.

²¹ Williams, C.: *Principles of Management - MGMT*, Data Status, Beograd, 2010, p. 6.



Figure 3 – A career matrix of the Geodetic Service Officers – example 2

The figures also show professional or postgraduate studies, then comparative engagement in teaching activities at the Military Academy of the Defence University in Belgrade and within important advisory bodies in the Republic of Serbia that are significant for the overall professional skills. It is easy to notice that all the trajectories of the presented careers have, to a greater or lesser extent, the characteristics of networked or matrix career. This means that the analysis of the Serbian Armed Forces personnel seeks to find promising personnel for appointments at the most important duties within branch or service, which is largely achieved by creating a career matrix for promising personnel.

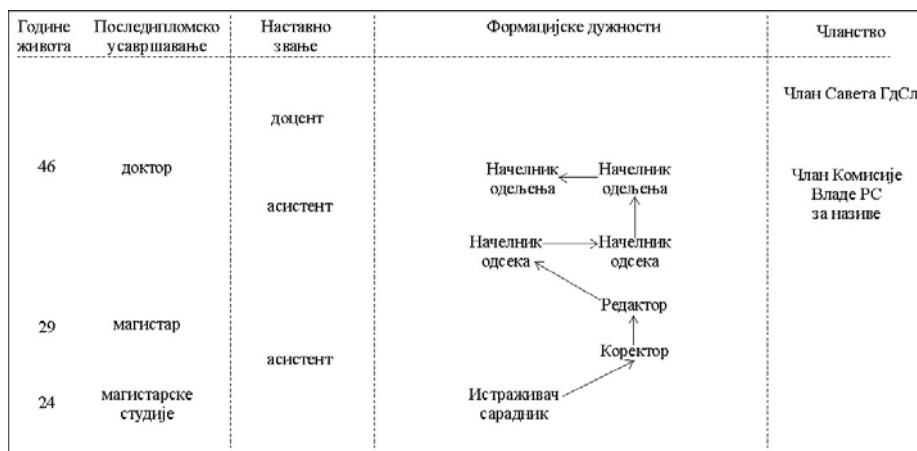


Figure 4 – A career matrix of the Geodetic Service Officers – example 3

However, it can be noticed that the officer in example 4 (Figure 5) has been prematurely predestined as promising staff, which has directly influenced *the idealization of career development profile*. This has led to a very small shift horizontally or to changes in organizational units of the officer in example 4. This does not mean that he does not have the necessary competencies for example appointments within top management, but someone who observes references only on the basis of duties he performed according to career matrix can conclude that other examples have more experience and knowledge.

| Године живота | Последипломско усавршавање | Наставно звање | Формативне дужности | Чланство |
|---------------|----------------------------|----------------|--|------------------|
| 40 | доктор | доцент | Начелник одељена ↑ Начелник одеса | Члан Савета ГдСл |
| 34 | магистар | асистент | ↑ Виши истраживач | |
| 30 | магистарске студије | асистент | ↑ Самостални истраживач ← Истраживач сарадник → Референт | |

Figure 5 – A career matrix of the Geodetic Service Officers – example 4

In this particular case, it is the officer who was the best, or among the best, at all levels of education, so that the consideration of managerial or other capabilities should be assessed on the basis of other parameters, such as, among other things, official grades, grades during studies, general impression, motivation, etc. From this example, it can be concluded that in order to acquire necessary competencies and experiences, it is very important to take into account not only vertical, but also horizontal appointments.

| Године живота | Последипломско усавршавање | Наставно звање | Формативне дужности | Чланство |
|---------------|----------------------------|----------------|--|------------------|
| 38 | доктор | доцент | Начелник одељена ← Референт у управи | Члан Савета ГдСл |
| 33 | магистар | асистент | ← Начелник одеса | |
| 29 | магистарске студије | асистент | ← Истраживач ← Референт → Референт → Референт | |

Figure 6 – A career matrix of the Geodetic Service Officers – example 5

Examples 1 to 5 (Figure 2-6) show that all officers have experience in scientific and teaching duties that they have performed besides their regular duties. Moreover, most of them have participated or participate in various advisory bodies within the service or at national level. Thus, it can be concluded that these Geodetic Service Officers have acquired necessary competencies for the jobs they perform or will perform.

The career development stages of the Geodetic Service Officers

It is necessary that organizations and management bodies know career stages for the support and assistance they should provide to harmonize individual and organizational needs. In addition, knowing career stages is important for its understanding, and not for creating its normative model, e.g. career model of the Geodetic Service Officers.

Many authors have defined career stages primarily according to age limits for each stage. According to Schein (1978), there are nine stages of career cycle, while Super (1980), Hall and Nougaim (1968), as well as Greenhouse and Callanan (1994) suggest five stages.²² Officers' career is somewhat shorter due to the fact that their length of insurance is calculated with increased duration and usually ends around the age of 55. For the considerations in this paper, the classification into career stages that have arisen on the basis of human resources research in the defence system is important, thus four career stages will be briefly considered, according to Lojić:²³

1) *The stage of research and career establishment* that refers to the period between the age of 18 and 25 and begins with the entry of an individual into an organization and getting the first job.

2) *The stage of career advancement* begins between the age of 30 and 35 and lasts until the age of 40 or 45. At this stage, organizations usually give the greatest support to employees who have high goals and who they believe can be involved in fast-moving programmes.

3) *The stage of career maintenance* usually starts between the age of 40 and 45 and lasts until the age of 50 or 55. Most employees in this period are committed to the organization, have a good professional status and stable career they would like to maintain.

4) *The late career stage* lasts from the age of 50 or 55 until retirement. It is the time for employees to face with the fact that they have achieved their maximum in their career.

It is important to note that the Geodetic Service Officers have chosen their profession by enrolling the Military Academy and choosing the study programme that is now called Military Geodetic Engineering. Thus, they have chosen their job and their profession, no matter how much they were aware of their choice.

²² Torrington, D., Hall, L., Taylor, S.: *Human Resource Management*, Data Status, Beograd, 2004, p. 444.

²³ Lojić, R., *Upravljanje ljudskim resursima u sistemu odbrane karijere*, Medija centar "Odbrana", Beograd, 2011, pp. 267-270.

In the case of the Geodetic Service Officers' development, in particular the officers who work in the Military Geographical Institute, career predictability and planning its development includes professional development and education from the first level of postgraduate studies to doctorate. It is a special challenge that offers the possibility of advancement and appointment to higher positions, depending on the accomplished level of postgraduate or career development. When considering career stages of the Geodetic Service Officers, it has been taken into account that it is related to scientific activity. Taking into account all the specifics, the career of the Geodetic Service Officers, depending on its type, generally includes the following stages:

1) *The stage of starting career on the first duty* includes the period from appointment to the initial position in which an individual is trained for a job, gets used to the initial position and the environment in which he comes (usually in the Military Geographical Institute), learns about his capabilities and, to some extent, explores his interests within the Geodetic Service specialties such as geodetic (geodetic, photogrammetric, geophysical, metrological, survey) or cartographic (geoinformatics, reproduction, thematic maps). Within this stage, the necessary knowledge, skills and required experience within the military geodetic profession are acquired. This stage should last 2 to 3 years from admission to professional military service, depending on interests of an individual and the acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills, which includes the period from the graduation from the Military Academy, i.e. from the age of 23 to 25.

2) *The stage of career establishment* includes the period after 2-3 years during career beginning, that is, during the first stage and, given the long process of the development of scientific research staff, it is necessary to initiate postgraduate studies (master, specialization, PhD, etc.) for a number of the Geodetic Service Officers. This stage covers the period between the age of 25 and 30. After the first and second evaluation period, depending on the average marks from undergraduate studies, human resources bodies should initiate the planning of postgraduate studies of a certain perspective number of officers.

3) *The stage of career advancement* includes the period when officers have already gained certain experience, as well as security and self-confidence in a job they perform and have selected and started postgraduate studies. This stage lasts from the beginning of some form of postgraduate or professional development, but, above all, for individuals who have already proven their capabilities and improved their competence, either in professional or scientific field. However, no matter how important the acquisition of formal education is, even more important is expertise, knowledge of all work processes and competence for the duty performed, which cannot always be accompanied by some form of postgraduate or professional development, but is a result of dedicated work in the profession and acquisition of competencies through practice. This stage should, in principle, last from 10 to 15 years, which means that it should start between the age of 30 and 35 and last until the age of 45. Human resources bodies should always consult responsible officers on whether individuals can continue their career in a home organization after completing some form of postgraduate studies (e.g. the Military Geographical Institute) or whether they need to change their environment by

appointment to other duties within their service or other general duties in the Serbian Armed Forces in order to accomplish their professional goals.

4) *Career maintenance and late career* could be divided into two stages, but since officers' career lasts until, most often, the age of 55, there are no specifics that would separate them. It should be taken into account that the scientific and professional outcomes of the military geodetic commitment are out of military organization, so officers usually continue their professional career in civil organizations after retirement. Some of them continue to work in expert geodetic organizations, and others in scientific and teaching activities at faculties or vocational schools. This means that career continues after the end of military career and that the most important characteristics related to late career practically do not exist. Motivation does not decrease greatly, and retirement is an opportunity to continue your career in a changed environment. Thus, this stage involves the period after professional development or postgraduate studies when individuals gain experience in the profession, prove their competence and are ready for the transfer of knowledge and experience. In the military geodetic profession, this means that the Geodetic Service Officers have gone through a development path from the lowest to the highest positions in their professional, that is, scientific career (e.g. from a desk officer, corrector, editor to a quality controller or, on the other hand, from a desk officer to researcher or research associate, etc). This stage lasts, in principle, between the age of 45 and 55.

Conclusion

It has been emphasized several times in the paper that officers' career including the Geodetic Service Officers is related to military organization. Regardless of the fact that the times have passed when an individual left the care for his career to the organization, it still has its role because officers' career is conducted by changing jobs, either vertically or horizontally. Within military organization, officers gain awareness of personal potential arising from direct personal work experience and feedback from superiors (through monitoring work, giving guidelines, evaluation, etc.), and also from colleagues and other indicators of work performance or success at work. The career of each individual develops according to his interest and motivation. However, career development based on the analysis and definition of personal potential through defining the options of its development, makes it more successful and harmonized with the wishes or ambitions of an individual.

The career development of officers is influenced by many factors of an objective and subjective character, and for the Geodetic Service Officers it is particularly important to constantly develop, monitor the development of GIS and communications and information technology, which is accomplished through permanent education and training. The research of the Geodetic Service Officers' career has pointed out that it is important for every organization that there is movement of individuals, which gives them necessary

competencies for appropriate jobs and positions. Moreover, the possibility of moving individuals to different positions is important for individuals, who can thus build their career and distinctive professional capabilities. It is characteristic that the career development of the Geodetic Service Officers is accompanied by the development of scientific and teaching competence, which takes place in parallel. The promising Geodetic Service staff also develops its professional skills through cooperation with civil institutions and participation in various Governmental bodies and commissions, such as the Council for National Spatial Data Infrastructure of the Government of the Republic of Serbia or the Commission for Names of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. In this regard, it can be concluded that within positions for the Geodetic Service Officers there are enough jobs that can provide flexible career through vertical, horizontal and radial transfers, in order to acquire personal competencies and develop career of each individual who has the motivation and wish to advance to the highest duties within the service.

All considerations of the Geodetic Service Officers' career can be implemented to career of an individual within any organization. Career development is important for each individual, and also for an organization.

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Развој каријере официра Геодетске службе

Актуелност ове теме огледа се у чињеници да појединци треба да разумеју неопходност промене каријере и креирања индивидуалних портфолија. Опште је мишљење да је основна карактеристика каријере официра напредовање по вертикали. Недовољно је проучена или истражена каријера официра, која подразумева често мењање послова и формацијских постављења која нису везана само за кретања у каријери по вертикали. Премештаји и постављења официра геодетске службе (ГдСл) у Војсци Србије који се разматрају у оквиру овог рада, у погледу остваривања каријере, представљају матрицу каријере. Значај истраживања се огледа не само у каријери официра, већ се може применити за разумевање и стицање увида у развој каријере, уопште, кроз матрицу каријере.

Кључне речи: *каријера, планирање каријере, геодетска служба, матрица каријере, фазе каријере*