

Abstract

This paper will identify the conditions of a successful Succession Plan and its Implementation. I will also seek to find ways to identify and prepare organizations with a meaningful process to recruit and retain candidates in middle and senior-level management positions that become vacant due to retirement, resignation, promotion, death, or new business opportunities. Recognizing that changes in management are inevitable, a successful Succession Plan should provide continuity in leadership and avoid extended and costly vacancies in key positions.

Introduction/Literature Review

Public organizations ability to survive is based on their capacity to produce sustained and high quality leadership over time. Increasingly, leadership capacity building is receiving renewed attention as governmental and other public sector agencies face mounting pressures to ensure organizational sustainability, flexibility, and responsiveness in the face of increasing uncertainty and limitations. Increasing turbulence in the public sector environment, characterized by organizational restructuring, funding uncertainties, and increasing program complexities, has substantial effects on the ways public sector organizations respond to leadership replacement (Caudron, 1999)..

Succession planning is defined as “a dynamic, ongoing process of systematically identifying, assessing, and developing leadership talent; and assessing, developing and recognizing key contributors to meet future organizational strategic and operational needs” (Kimball, 2005: as cited in Nink, Boyer & Fogg, 2006, p. 34). Additionally, “succession planning is a proactive attempt to ensure that leadership in an organization will be continuous by identifying how these positions will be filled as both planned and unplanned departures occur” (Schmalzried & Fallon, 2007, p. 169). To achieve outstanding results using succession planning, an organization must develop an effective and highly focused strategy that centers on organizational excellence and career development. A succession plan that focuses on career development will engage employees by investing in both their short and long term career goals. Focusing on our employees by providing continuous development is a powerful tool for encouraging and enhancing long term service commitments. This, in turn, will develop future managers and leaders, thus providing a pool of potential candidates qualified to fill key positions capable of ensuring a smooth transition when vacancies may occur without causing possible interruptions in service. The succession of a leader is a central event in the life of any organization (Hunte-Cox, 2004). Succession planning focuses on three main areas.

1. It addresses the needs of the organization as senior leadership ages and retires.
2. Helps an organization prepare for an unexpected event such as the sudden illness or death of a person in a key leadership role in the organization.
3. Ensures that an organization has the right personnel in place to function at peak efficiency both now and in the future.

To effect change, one must see the need for change, plan for the change, implement the change, and then evaluate the success or failure of the change (Michelson 2006). Succession planning does not require extensive budget, equipment, staffing, or resources. However, it does require a change of thinking, according to Michelson. During this research it appears succession planning has been largely ignored in public service agencies although it could have a major impact on identifying key leadership potential in the organization and helping the organization now. As Mr. Collins writes in *Good to Great*, “the goal is to put the right people on the bus, get the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats” (Michelson, 2006). How does this relate to organizational change? If an organization does not have solid leadership, with the knowledge, skills, and the ability to plan, organize, and direct others, the organization will not recognize the need for change and implement it. Solid leadership actions specific to successfully leading sworn personnel in law enforcement agencies were defined by participants at the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP’s) leadership conference in 1999. The recommendations were as follows:

<u>Traits</u>	<u>Skills</u>
Adaptable to situations	Clever (intelligent)
Alert to social environment	Conceptually skilled
Ambitious and achievement oriented	Creative
Assertive	Diplomatic and tactful
Cooperative	Excellent communicator
Decisive	Knowledgeable
Dependable	Organized
Dominant (desire to influence others)	Persuasive
Energetic (high activity level)	Socially skilled

Identifying these traits and skills present in future leaders of an organization is an important part of succession planning. Succession planning is an ongoing, dynamic process that ultimately helps an organization to align its service goals and its staffing needs. According to Blunt (2000), growing the next generation of public sector leaders may be “the single most critical responsibility of senior public service leaders today”.

For many law enforcement agencies, to include my own, retirement comes in groups as officers who graduated from the academy retire together. The result is often a significant loss of institutional knowledge and a misalignment of the organization’s operations with its strategic direction. This mass exodus of officer’s and loss of key personnel constitute a challenge for succession planning efforts in law enforcement agencies (Putney, 2008). If the number of leaders leaving supervisory and

management positions is as great an issue as it appears, then it is necessary to consider just how to assess whether the next generation is ready to lead.

Through various processes and with union cooperation, early retirement incentives were offered to long-term employees. Many took advantage of the offer, too good to pass up, and was given the option to retire and begin a second career. Drop programs allow employees to collect both their regular pay and retirement pay during the last five years of their employment for continuing to work after retirement eligibility. However, financial analysts miscalculated the impact of this expense (Michelson, 2006).

In a few short years the financial posture of state and local governments changed. The surplus revenues from the 1990s are quickly disappearing in the 2000s. Local agencies are no longer receiving the financial support they have come to expect from both federally funded programs and local government and as a result are now facing a severe budget crisis. Trying to find the resources to recruit, train, and retain qualified leadership candidates is a greater challenge more than ever. As a result of early retirement incentives and the loss of continued revenue sources many agencies are replacing experienced veteran leaders with younger candidates who have not had the length of service in the field and have little or no experience in leadership positions.

Consequently, the need arises for more concentrated efforts to identify leadership traits, to create a clear career development path, and to prepare those replacements as future leaders in the organization. Even in the face of these challenges, succession planning is necessary to maintain a high level of safety and security to the community by Police and Correctional agencies.

There are internal barriers to leadership development in the public sector (Center for Creative Leadership, 1996; NAPA, 1997)

- 1 organizational culture,
- 2 low priority,
- 3 insufficient resources,
- 4 inadequate rewards for initiative,
- 5 limited mobility,
- 6 lack of role models

As Schall (1997) also indicates there are impediments to taking public sector succession efforts seriously, including issues of scope, confusion over replacement versus positioning, and a lack of planning techniques in the face of political and other constraints.

Another challenge is inherent in the paramilitary structure prevalent in many state and local law enforcement agencies. The vertical chain-of-command structure lends itself to isolated functions (Putney, 2008). A newly promoted individual replacing a retiree faces a steep learning curve in a paramilitary organization where information such as budgeting or policy making is often secured at certain levels and in various functional areas.

Law enforcement agencies must take a proactive approach to these challenges by designing leadership development programs that provide continuous and cross-functional development. A well designed program helps ensure that qualified staff are prepared to take over for those leaving the organization. The program should target

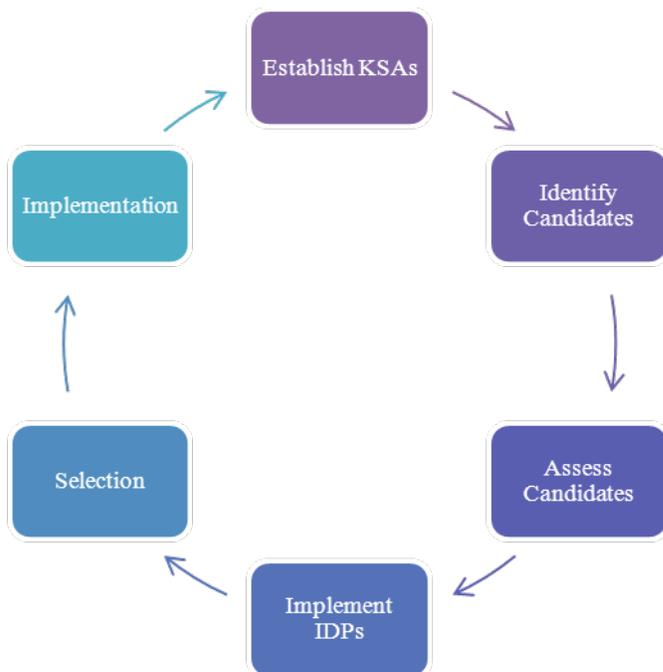
multiple levels of the organization, focusing on organizational operations, strategic direction, leadership, and professional development, resulting in well-trained qualified candidates for succession.

Finally, there are often gaps between the promise of succession planning and the reality of its outcomes (Lynn, 2001, p. 129). Plans, even if well conceived, often go awry. The potential for highly political outcomes and the possible appointment of external candidates not in the talent pool create frustration and undermine the overall success of such plans. In addition, the lack of explicit, ongoing executive level support for succession planning sends an important message throughout the organization; programs that become staff-driven have limited credibility (Lynn, 2001, p. 129). The success of the succession planning process ultimately rests with commitment from top management.

Whatever the approach to be used, the basic steps of succession planning are almost always similar. There are six basic steps of succession planning:

1. Establish knowledge, skills, and abilities needed at each leadership level
2. Identify a pool of qualified candidates for various leadership roles
3. Assess candidates for respective leadership positions
4. Implement individual development plans
5. Select leadership replacements as positions become available
6. Implement leadership transition

The figure below illustrates the succession management process:



This cyclical process is designed to ensure organizational continuity through timely, adaptive, and ongoing change in the development and deployment of leadership talent.

This paper has demonstrated that leadership succession is an enormous organizational responsibility and unless effective succession planning is urgently integrated into organizational culture, most organizations will find themselves on the verge of a leadership transition crisis in the near future. Especially in the field of law enforcement, the critical challenge of developing leadership capital cannot be ignored. In an environment of early retirements, reorganizations, and lean hierarchies, often with a depleted pool of mid-level supervisors, there are many obstacles facing agencies in regard to developing and selecting future leaders.

Succession planning is a complex task that must be viewed as an ongoing strategic process. For the perpetuation of future success agencies must devote considerable time and resources to mapping out a comprehensive plan for identifying and making the best use of available human resources. It is incumbent upon these same agencies to take succession planning beyond organizational charts and use it as a comprehensive change-management tool that helps the organization identify gaps in talent and fill them more effectively.

Leaders in law enforcement today should already be preplanning for the future. The success of the succession management process, facilitating a seamless transition of leadership, ultimately rests with a commitment from the command staff and the Chief.

Method

The purpose of this research is to learn what succession planning efforts are being used by Correctional Agencies in the State of Florida. Each of the two individual Correctional Departments in Florida was contacted in advance of the distribution of the survey instrument, to explain the research intentions and identify a point of contact. Each agency indicated a preference of receiving the survey instrument by electronic mail; therefore this was the means of distribution. This point is further described in the 'results' section of this report. A copy of the survey instrument is included at the end of this report, as an Appendix

Results

Respondents Information

Orange County Corrections Department in Orlando, Florida
Miami Dade Corrections department in Miami, Florida

The total number sworn supervisory/management positions reported was 338 with 113 (58%) eligible to retire in 2012. The total number sworn supervisory/management positions reported was 423 with 183 (**43%**) eligible to retire in 2012. The total number sworn supervisory/management positions reported was 423 with 130 (**31%**) eligible to retire in 2014. The total number sworn supervisory/management positions reported was 446 with 123 (**28%**) eligible to retire in 2015. The total number sworn supervisory/management positions reported was 478 with 130 (**27%**) eligible to retire in 2015. I was also provided with civilian employees eligible to retire; however they were not included in the results information. At the time of this survey, Miami Dade did not have a succession plan in place.

	Total Sworn(civilians)	Top Managers	Mid Managers	First Line Supervisors	Line Staff
2011	312(49)	12(5)	65(7)	54(23)	181(14)
2012	400(62)	13(8)	79(8)	65(28)	243(18)
2013	496(73)	15(8)	96(8)	72(37)	313(20)
2014	524(88)	15(9)	101(13)	76(43)	332(23)
2015	587(109)	15(10)	110(15)	83(53)	379(31)

Who Is Eligible to Retire? Note: it is up to you to decide what ranks or job descriptions are in each category.				
	# Top Managers	# Mid-Managers	# First Line Supervisors	# Line Staff
2012	0	98 (19)	85 (25)	112
2013	0	4	7	51
2014	0	1	2	20
2015	0	2	6	1

The total number sworn supervisory/management positions reported was 183 with 43 (24%) eligible to retire in 2012. I was also provided with civilian employees eligible to retire; however, they were not included in the results information. At the time of this survey, Orange County Corrections did not have a succession plan in place.

Neither of the responding agencies indicated they were utilizing an actual systematic, step-by-step succession plan, though all mentioned use of practices or methods that are found in succession planning. The table outlined below displays the practices used by the agencies, with the most commonly reported practices listed near the top. All reported practices are included, regardless which of the agencies indicated utilization of the practice.

Line supervision, mid-management, and other supervisory/management courses

- University sponsored management/leadership courses (Sam Houston State)
- Encouraging the pursuit of formal education such as bachelor's and master's degrees
- Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute's Senior Leadership Program
- In-service situational leadership training
- Other leadership courses
- Service as a Field Training Officer
- Writing skills
- Instructor Techniques course
- Supervisory development courses
- Focusing efforts on development of internal candidates
- Personal mentoring

In closing, Succession Planning is not an easy for any organization; however, it's critical due to retirements, deaths and vacancies that may occur over the next five years. It begins by determining the organizations vision and the objectives for the job that supports the vision. In order for a succession plan to succeed, it will take the leader of the organization to be fully supportive and engaged in the identification, selection and development of future leaders. Great leaders---the truly successful ones all have one thing in common. They know that acquiring and keeping good people is a leader's most important task. Systems become dated. Buildings deteriorate. Machinery wears. But employees can grow, develop and become more effective if they have a leader who understands their potential value. If you really want to be a successful leader, you must develop the leaders around you, establish a team, and find a way to get your vision seen, implemented and contributed by others. Few leaders surround themselves with other leaders, but the ones who do bring great value to their organization.

Lieutenant Jerome Fowler has been serving the Orange County Corrections Department since 1989. He is currently the Lieutenant/Watch Commander in the Security Operations Division. He has overall responsibility for 4 Sergeants, 3 Corporals, and 4 correctional facilities with supervisory responsibilities of over 40 staff members. Lt. Fowler ensures the safe and humane treatment of approximately 4,000 inmates.

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