Succession Planning: Reflecting on University Police Departments in Florida

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Abstract

"Ultimately, the mark of a good leader is the ability to perpetuate outstanding leadership". (Trickey-Rokenbrod, 1998). With 'baby-boomers' rapidly approaching retirement age, the 'graying' of the workforce, and the first wave of the Deferred Retirement Option Program retiring in 2003, public and private sector employers must prepare current supervisors and line workers for managerial and supervisory positions. In private industry the practice of recruiting outside the organization to meet supervisory and managerial needs is combined with promoting from within the organization. However, in university law enforcement most managerial and supervisory positions are filled from within the agency. Outlined in this document are various succession planning methods and programs utilized by successful organizations. This research also includes information obtained from the University Police Departments in Florida, describing their efforts to prepare for these organizational and workforce changes.

Significance of Research

One fifth of this country's large companies will lose 40 percent or more of their top-level staff in the next five years (Caudron, 1999). Data compiled during this research indicates that University Police Departments in the State of Florida will realize a loss of approximately 43 percent of their management and supervisory staff, by 2006. Recently reported findings indicate that there will be a 15 percent decline in the number of 35 to 45 year olds over the next 15 years (Caudron, 1999). This illustrates the decline in the number of people available to fill management and supervisory vacancies.

Though some organizations recruit outside to fill management and supervisory vacancies as part of their succession plans, the efficiency of this method is questionable. The Center for Creative Leadership found that 66 percent of senior managers brought in from outside an organization fail within the first 18 months (Caudron, 1999). Most North American agencies want to rely on internal candidates to fill 80 percent or more of their general manager and above vacancies (Byham, 2000). It is apparent that organizations value the concept of developing current employees for future supervisory and management roles.

Succession planning is important to the continued success of any organization. It can be a valuable means of preparing and retaining employees toward continued organizational success or necessary change (Trickey-Rokenbrod, 1998).

Literature Review

Private Sector vs. Public Sector

As expected, most of the literature on succession planning found pertained to private sector organizations. Many large corporations have lead in the appreciation, understanding, and development of formal succession planning methods and models. Associated literature pertaining to the public sector is difficult to find. Even more rare is succession planning literature for law enforcement agencies, especially university law enforcement. One possible reason for this shortage of available literature pertaining to the public sector could be the very nature of leadership in these organizations. As identified in the National Academy of Public Administration's Center for Human Resources Management (CHRM) executive summary, from the 1997 report titled, *Managing Succession & Developing Leadership: Growing the Next Generation of Public Service Leaders*, elected officials and political appointees generally remain in positions for a short period of time. These short tenures call for near-sighted agendas that impact the development of supervisors and managers (CHRM, 1997). As a result, only 28 percent of the governmental respondents to a CHRM 1996 survey "had or planned to have, a succession management program" (CHRM, 1997).

Common Themes

John Beeson, of Beeson Consulting, acknowledges that specific succession practices and plans differ from one organization to another, yet he identifies two emerging themes. The first is that priorities have been placed on retaining top talent, and second, is a desire to allow for succession planning to become more "flexible" and "action-oriented" (Beeson, 2000). Beeson identifies a correlation between succession planning and retention of highly valued talent, and describes how this has caused these efforts to "be pushed down to lower levels within the organization" (Beeson, 2000). To address the desire for succession planning to become more flexible and action-oriented organizations are emphasizing that these plans contain simplicity; focus; open communication; be driven by line managers; require executive involvement; consist of leadership success profiles; utilize rigorous assessment and talent pools; involve individual development planning; create linkages to staffing, diversity, and reward systems; and finally, established measurement of effectiveness of these efforts (Beeson, 2000).

Creating a Succession Plan

In the March 2000 edition of <u>Training and Development</u> a point is made that although some organizations may simply adopt an established succession plan, most would agree that the most successful plans are developed and customized based on the specific analysis of the particular agency's components and needs. Though customization is desired, Shari Caudron, a contributing editor for <u>WORKFORCE</u>, summarized similarities between succession plans of organizations like Motorola, American Express Financial Advisors, Medtronic, and Kraft Foods (Caudron, 1999).

These similarities are: forecast business and leadership needs; create a list of necessary competencies; assess the internal talent and identify gaps; provide developmental opportunities; hold employees accountable for their own development; and make succession planning an integral part of business planning (Caudron, 1999). Caudron (1999) offers these six similarities of succession planning efforts of successful organizations; however, it is important to note from other works that measuring the effectiveness of the plan should be included as a seventh step (Beeson, 2000).

As stated, it is important to forecast or assess future business, organizational, and leadership needs. Randall R. Richards, speaker, board governance facilitator, and author of <u>How to Build and Effective Board</u>, indicates that an organization may begin to identify future leaders by assessing future agency needs before selection occurs (Richards, 1997). Organizations should decide if they desire a 'fresh thinker,' 'generalist,' 'specialist,' 'leadership qualities and experience specific to key areas,' or ' a leader with prestige or significant contacts valuable for opening doors to advancement (Richards, 1997). Motorola's method of assessing organizational needs is a three-phase annual strategic planning process. Motorola assesses a long-range planning effort, conducts a technology review, and conducts an organization and management development review (Caudron, 1999). Once completed, Motorola ensures that the organizational structure, and the current and future leadership needs are aligned (Caudron, 1999).

Stephen L. Guinn, of PSP Human Resource Development, describes creating a list of necessary competencies by developing a competency model that defines specific, observable behaviors that illustrate each identified competency (Guinn, 2000). American Express Financial Services uses three kinds of competencies to create leadership profiles (Caudron, 1999). These three kinds of competencies are leadership competencies such as the ability to lead change, functional competencies that include technical knowledge about concepts such as recruitment and marketing, and personal competencies like resilience and achievement drive (Caudron, 1999). Beeson reports that Dell identified characteristics of its own most successful managers, and factors that cause people to fail within the organization (Beeson, 2000). From this research Dell listed critical management competencies like priority setting, customer focus, problem solving, drive for results, and effective team building (Beeson, 2000).

After identifying the necessary competencies, the organization must assess the current internal talent to identify deficiencies or gaps. American Express uses 360-degree assessments, manager feedback, and they discuss career goals and interests in leadership with their employees (Caudron, 1999). By assessing the internal talent to identify gaps, the organization can either create ways to develop the necessary competencies or look for talent outside the organization (Guinn, 2000).

The Center for Human Resources Management list varied job assignments, education and training, and encouraging self-development in a lifelong commitment to learning as the means, which benchmark organizations provide development opportunities (CHRM, 1997). Beeson describes 'high leverage' development assignments as "positions that provide especially potent development experience" (Beeson, 1998). These positions entail very fluid assignments that are profit-loss oriented, call for the creation of units or programs, or demand work in cross-functional teams. The idea is to move employees to these positions and remove those who are

'blockers' that stall in the high leverage positions, and place these 'blockers' in positions that require continuity (Beeson, 1998). Another approach is to determine that the employee occupying a certain position possesses the necessary competencies for the particular position (Guinn, 2000). This way, you determine who is most effective in specific roles by moving them around, and they gain familiarization and experience in different areas of the organization.

Use of talent pools or acceleration pools are common methods in success planning. These are described as pools of employees that are highly talented and possess the leadership competencies identified by the organization (Byham, 1999). Those candidates can then be placed in 'stretch' positions for accelerated development. Stretch positions are described as those offering the best learning and highest-visibility opportunities (Byham, 2000). Colgate-Palmolive describe stretch assignments as those "that build new skills and abilities by taking the individual out of his 'comfort zone'" (Beeson, 2000).

Once development opportunities are made available, individual employee accountability becomes a key. Guinn states, "Any identification of high-potential employees must ultimately hold them accountable for their own development if they are to progress as future leaders" (Guinn, 2000). Medtronic, a medical technology company, reports that 75 percent of their employees have development plans and are held accountable to them during the employee evaluation process (Caudron, 1999).

Making succession planning an integral part of the overall business plan reaches from the top executive down through each level and section of the organization. This is particularly true for line managers that are vital to the role of developing the organization for the future, through competency and talent assessment (Caudron, 1999).

Beeson indicates that companies such as Eli Lilly and Corning use percentage of managerial positions filled by designated high-potential individuals and the retention rate for the designated high-potential individuals as ways to measure the effectiveness of their succession planning efforts (Beeson, 2000). Attitude surveys and exit interviews of designated high-potential individuals can be useful as measurement tools (Beeson, 2000).

Hypothesis

It is this researcher's hypothesis that each University Police Department in the State of Florida is involved in some practices or methods of succession planning; though few, if any have created articulated step-by-step plans.

Method

The purpose of this research is to learn what succession planning efforts are being used by University Police Departments in the State of Florida. Each of the twelve individual University Police 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 department indicated a preference of receiving the survey instrument by electronic mail; therefore this was the means of distribution. It should be noted that the respondents interchanged their responses to survey questions numbers

five and seven. This called for the combining of these responses during the data analysis. 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

Respondent Information

The twelve individual University Police Departments in Florida are:
    Florida A & M University Police Department – Tallahassee
    Florida Atlantic University Police Department – Boca Raton
    Florida Gulf Coast University Police and Safety – Ft. Myers
    Florida International University Department of Public Safety – Miami*
    Florida State University Police Department – Tallahassee
    New College of Florida Police Department – Sarasota
    University of Central Florida Police Department – Orlando*
    University of Florida Police Department – Gainesville
    University of North Police & Public Safety – Jacksonville
    University of South Florida Police Department – Tampa
    University of South Florida Police Department – St. Petersburg
* Did not respond

This survey received an 83 percent response rate, with 10 of the 12 agencies participating. The total number of sworn law enforcement positions reported was 348. Agencies ranged in size from 12 to 87, with an average of 34.8 positions per agency. The total number sworn supervisory/management positions reported was 114. The number of supervisors/managers ranged in size from 3 to 28, with an average of 11.4 per agency. The total number of non-sworn positions for respondents was 195. The total number of non-sworn supervisory/managerial positions reported was 15. The number of non-sworn persons holding supervisory/managerial positions ranged from zero to four, with an average of 1.5 per agency. Precisely half of the respondents reported that non-sworn personnel are included in the methods of succession planning. The other 50 percent indicated that non-sworn personnel are not included.

When asked to provide the number of employees that are projected to retire, or otherwise leave the agency between 2001 and 2006, by the total in each level of rank (i.e., officer, corporal, sergeant, etc.), the total of all the agencies responding was 57. The lowest figure was one agency reporting that they projected one to retire between 2001 and 2006. It should be noted that this respondent reported one to retire, without indicating the level of rank of that one person. This has an insignificant effect on the data when categorizing the total for each level of rank. The total for each level of rank are as follows: 5 police chiefs, 2 majors, 4 captains, 11 lieutenants, 21 sergeants, zero corporals, 6 officers, 6 investigators, 1 dispatcher/police communications operator, and 1 senior security guard. The total number of supervisory/management staff, including investigators (rank of sergeant) projected to retire by 2006 was 49. Those projected to retire or otherwise leave the agency during this period ranged from an agency reporting 1, to the highest agency reporting as many as 13. The average was 4.9 per agency.

Succession Planning Practices/Methods Being Utilized

None 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. Therefore, it became necessary to combine the results of questions number five and seven of the survey to learn of the type of practices being used. Table 1 below displays the practices used by the agencies, with the most commonly reported practices listed near the top. All reported practices are included, regardless of the number of agencies indicating utilization of the practice.

Table 1. PRACTICES USED IN UNIVERSITY POLICE SUCCESSION PLANNING

PRACTICES
- Line supervision, mid-management, and other supervisory/management courses   - University sponsored management/leadership courses   - On-the-job training such as special duty assignments, acting shift commander, and all line officers rotating the task of preparing and conducting shift briefing/roll call   - Encouraging the pursuit of formal education such as bachelor's and master's degrees   - Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute's Senior Leadership Program   - Character/Ethics in leadership training   - State promotional test and process   - In-service situational leadership training   - Other leadership courses   - Service as a Field Training Officer   - The Federal Bureau of Investigations National Academy   - Budget courses   - Computer Skills courses   - Writing skills   - Instructor Techniques course   - Cross training in all areas   - Executive development courses   - The hiring of line officers with extensive law enforcement experience   - National search for police chief position vacancies   - Focusing efforts on development of internal candidates   - Personal mentoring   - University procedures and policy courses   - Discussion with university administration

Means of Identifying Participants

The respondents were asked to indicate the means they are using to identify agency members that participate in succession planning practices methods. Table 2 below displays the means used by the agencies, with the most commonly reported means listed near the top. All reported means are included, regardless of the number of agencies indicating utilization of the means.

Table 2. MEANS FOR IDENTIFYING PARTICIPANTS

MEANS FOR IDENTIFICATION
• Performance reviews
• Time and dedication to the department
• Self-initiated projects
• Formal Education attained
• Supervisory experience
• Interest in supervision/management
• Referrals by existing command staff
• Committee service
• Advanced in-service training record
• Character training record
• Due to the size of the agency all sworn members participate
• Directed by the Chief
• Encourage all employees to participate, then track progress

Successes Experienced

Respondents reported several successful experiences with the practices they are using in planning for succession. One example is an agency reported that the training and development being used allowed pushing duties down to lower levels in the organization, which provided additional time, at higher levels to explore different agency-wide concepts and opportunities. A department reported that the supervision and leadership training or roles helped them identify further necessary training. Another agency indicated as a success that the use of acting supervisory and management roles allowed some the exposure to those positions, which helped them decide they did not wish to pursue supervision. One agency indicated their selection of officers with prior law enforcement supervisory experience reduced the amount of training necessary to prepare them for later supervision. Increased morale through a high rate of internal promotion was one reported success of agency training and development efforts.

Difficulties or Obstacles

Agencies listed as difficulties or obstacles to succession planning practices time; staff levels; fiscal constraints impacting training and development; long-time command staff being "…set in their ways," and not progressive; lack of upward mobility within

small agencies; retention and turnover; reluctance to pursue higher formal education; and the collective bargaining agreements prohibiting the development of "1-to-1 mentoring programs." Some agencies reported no difficulties.

Discussion

The 10 responding agencies indicated they project a loss totaling 42.9 percent of their supervisory/management staff, by the year 2006. This projection is higher than many estimates for private industry, which are calculated at 40 percent. The rank with the highest projected raw figures is that of sergeant (21), followed by the rank of lieutenant (11). Though the raw data is lower, the respondents indicate that 5 police chiefs will leave by 2006. This computes to a 50 percent loss of police chiefs among the responding university police departments.

The hypothesis was confirmed in that most agencies have adopted succession planning practices, though none described formal step-by-step plans. This may contribute to the wide array of listed succession planning practices reported, in that no established, uniform succession plan has been established. One notable point, which may be unique to the fact that university police departments were surveyed, is the frequency of reported use of university sponsored courses. This resource, readily available to these agencies was reported with nearly as much frequency as line supervision, mid-management, and similar traditional leadership development courses.

Another rather interesting practice was the use of the development practice of causing all members of patrol, including line officers to conduct 'roll call' briefings with the individual squads. This allows a line officer the opportunity to prepare and present shift specific briefings and assignments under the observation of the shift supervisor. The use of situational leadership training may be a creative way to expose potential supervisor or manager candidates to decision-making and judgment, in a secure training environment. An unforeseen positive benefit of having a smaller agency is the opportunity to allow all members of the command to participate in succession planning practices.

Some agencies indicated concern for collective bargaining agreement prohibitions against concepts such as 'one-on-one' mentoring. These agencies may wish to consider talent pools that create a number of ready-now candidates for supervisory or management vacancies. In the smaller agencies, the practice of allowing all members to participate in leadership development, as a method of succession planning, may also serve to alleviate these collective bargaining constraints.

With the prevalent practice of University Police Departments promoting from within the agency to fill supervisory and management needs, it would be beneficial to establish formal step-by-step succession plans. With a loss of approximately 43 percent of the supervisory/management staff in Florida's University Police Departments by 2006, these agencies should consider creating systematic plans to ensure continuity in command, or change where necessary. Though some agencies consider succession planning for top executives, others indicate a need for such practices at all levels. Jack Stack, president and CEO of Springfield ReManufacturing Corp., states, "To me, succession planning means finding replacements for every executive, manager, supervisor, and professional at every level of the organization" (Stack, 1998). Dianne Trickey-Rokenbrod furthers, "Ultimately, the mark of a good leader is the ability to perpetuate outstanding leadership" (Trickey-Rokenbrod, 1998).

Recommendations for Further Research

This research was focused on the efforts of University Police Departments in Florida. For comparison, it may prove beneficial to obtain data from other state, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies on their succession planning efforts. This may be valuable toward gathering information that would be useful to law enforcement agencies, seeking to establish succession plans in furtherance of creating continuity of quality leadership.

Major J.D. Withrow began his career in 1986 with the University of South Florida Police Department in Tampa. He continued to rise to the rank of Lieutenant over 11 years of patrol service. J.D. served as the Director of Police Services at the USF Sarasota/Manatee Campus at the rank of Captain before returning to USF Tampa in 2001. J.D. is currently the Assistant Chief at USF, Tampa. J.D. has a bachelor's degree in Criminology and a master's degree in Adult Education from USF.

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SUCCESSION PLANNING SURVEY

Agency Name: _____
Contact person for related matters: _____
Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Definitions:

Executive Development: Planned learning efforts that help build the essential competencies of executive level positions. Executive development may be found within *succession planning*.

Succession Planning: The ongoing process of systematically establishing methods or steps in assuring the identification and development of qualified personnel, for future management and supervisory responsibilities. Often included are measures to forecast agency leadership needs, identify necessary competencies, assess internal talent and gaps, provide developmental opportunities, and create a means of monitoring the accountability of the established developmental opportunities.

Instructions:

Please complete the following survey with specific responses pertaining to ***succession planning*** initiatives practiced by your agency. Feel free to attach additional pages to further explain on your responses. Please return the completed survey on or before ***September 20, 2001***.

Questions:

1. How many sworn positions are in your agency?

2. Of those sworn positions, how many are in a supervisory or managerial function?

3. How many non-sworn positions are in your agency?

4. Identify the number of, and rank of those agency members projected to retire, or otherwise leave your agency from January or 2001 to January of 2006.

(CONTINUE TO NEXT PAGE FOR QUESTIONS 5 THROUGH 11, AND FURTHER INFORMATION)

5. Please identify what succession planning efforts your agency is employing.

6. Describe how your agency is identifying members that will participate in succession planning efforts.

7. List the specific program or course titles, types of assignments, formal education, and/or mentoring relationships your agency is utilizing in your succession planning.

8. Describe specific successes experienced with your succession planning efforts.

9. Describe specific difficulties or obstacles your agency has encountered in succession planning efforts.

10. Of those non-sworn positions, how many are in a supervisory or managerial function?

11. Are non-sworn personnel included or involved in your agency's succession planning?

Thank you for participating in this survey (***Please return by on or before September 20, 2001***).

If you would like to learn of the results, please send a self-addressed envelope to:

> Captain JD Withrow - USFPD
> 4202 East Fowler Avenue - UPB 002
> Tampa, Fl 33620

Succession Planning Survey2001/jdw