

Effective Succession Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Organizations with effective succession planning efforts have many common characteristics. One of those characteristics is the use of a variety of strategies that help build the continuity of talent needed for future success. These strategies fit into four categories, including:

- **Development and Learning** – strategies that promote the development of competencies, the exposure to more complex and challenging experiences, and the broadening of horizons outside the immediate organization.
- **Feedback** – strategies that facilitate self-examination and assessment and promote continuous growth through ongoing feedback and exposure to role models.
- **Retention** – strategies that enhance workforce motivation, commitment, and performance around mission accomplishment.
- **Recruitment** – strategies that strengthen the ability of the organization to acquire the best-qualified leadership talent.

Specific strategies and tactics are presented below.

Development and Learning Strategies

Development and learning strategies that promote effective succession planning include:

- Job experiences
 - Change in scope of job
 - Job that requires “fix it”
 - Build from scratch assignment
 - Projects and task forces that require new skill or learning
 - Line to staff and vice versa; headquarters to field and vice versa
 - Placement in “high stakes” situation
 - Placement in ambiguous situation
 - Dealing with significant change event

Effective Succession Strategies (continued)

Development and Learning Strategies (continued)

- Action learning team projects
- Rotational, temporary assignments managed by senior leaders
- Full-time job rotations managed by senior leaders
- Formal leadership training
- Formal education courses and programs
- Internal training courses
- Observation of senior leaders
- Shadow assignments
- Exposure to strategic issues in senior-level meetings
- Learning through action and involvement with senior leaders
- "Storytelling" by senior leaders (giving specific examples of their learning)
- Communities of Practice (CoP)
- Self-development
 - Community, volunteer activities
 - Readings and individualized study.

Feedback Strategies

Feedback strategies that promote effective succession planning include:

- 360° (multi-rater) assessments
- Senior coaches
- Mentors outside the person's organization unit
- A performance management system that provides ongoing feedback and appraisal for growth.

Retention Strategies

Retention strategies that promote effective succession planning include:

- Quality of work life programs
 - Telecommuting
 - Alternative work schedules
 - Child and elder care
 - Fitness and wellness programs
- Retention bonuses
- Retention incentives
- Recognition systems
- Creating "best place to work" strategies.

Effective Succession Strategies (continued)

Recruitment Strategies

Recruitment strategies that promote effective succession planning include:

- Recruitment bonuses
- Recruitment incentives
- Relocation bonuses
- Branding
- Special hiring programs like the Presidential Management Fellows Program.