Critical Elements of a Successful Succession Planning Strategy in Nonprofit Organizations

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As administration and faculty of Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, I have evaluated the FINAL CAPSTONE PAPER:

Critical Elements of a Successful Succession Planning Strategy in Nonprofit Organizations

by

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and recommend that the degree of Master of Arts be conferred upon the candidate.

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This paper is dedicated to my loving wife Kirsten and my parents Ernie and Eileen Tilbury. Without their support, this journey would not have been possible.

I also dedicate it to my children Emily, Spencer, and Claudia; who are the critical elements in my succession planning strategy.

And to my friend and mentor Dr. Tory Tronrud, Director/Curator of the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society.
Abstract

This literature review research examines 27 articles spanning two decades that offer both general and specific recommendations on the critical elements of successful succession planning process. Although the precise definition of succession planning varies, most articles agree that simply put: succession planning is “doing all you can to ensure you have the right people in the right jobs at the right time” (Hills, 2009, p. 3). Regarding the necessity for a succession planning strategy at all (in either the for-profit or nonprofit sectors), several articles identify the aging Baby Boomer generation and their looming mass exodus from the labor market (Barnett & Davis, 2008). The articles encompass research into the practices of succession planning, with several offering suggestions for implementation of for-profit models in the nonprofit sector. This paper will examine the common elements of a successful succession planning process, as well as the specific adaptation of succession planning to the nonprofit sector. It will conclude with recommendation for further research on the subject, and suggestions for alternative ways of viewing succession planning in small and medium sized nonprofit organizations.
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Chapter One

Introduction

The baby boom generation is appropriately named. Not only does the label describe those born during a period of increased birthrates starting in 1946 and lasting through 1965 (Canadian Encyclopedia). It also accurately describes a ticking time-bomb that will decimate the ranks of senior leadership in the non-profit, for profit, and government sectors. The impending mass-retirement baby boomers in the near future will indeed cause an explosion of opportunities for employees of the Gen X vintage and younger. The problem that exists is that there are not enough potential qualified employees to fill the leadership gap. Bradshaw Lynn (2001) sets the tone by stating that “the continued vitality of an organization is linked to its ability to survive a leadership void”. Several authors build on the tone by offering statistical evidence to highlight the severity of the impending leadership drain on a variety of sectors. Speaking generally about the nonprofit sector, Deitrick and Creagor (2005) from the University of San Diego quoted national and regional studies that found “62 to 78% of nonprofit executive directors will be leaving their positions in the next five years”, and that the “transition will occur as baby boomers begin to retire”. In the United States community college sector the retirement rates crept even higher, with 80% of presidents set to retire between 2002 and 2012 (Reille & Kezar, 2002). Reille and Kezar (2002) go on to state that these retirements will “constitute a significant loss of knowledge, expertise, history, experience, and culture”. Advocating for some form of formal knowledge transfer, Reille and Kezar (2002) state “future leaders need to learn from senior administrators and prepare to replace them upon retirement”. Existing research suggests that those
organizations, regardless of sector, who have actively implemented a succession planning process/strategy, will be better positioned to meet their leadership needs in the near and longer-term. Fredericksen (2010), in an article for State and Local Government Review summed up an important motivation for formal succession planning: “general knowledge and education cannot replace the institutional knowledge and expertise that will be lost as senior employees retire”. Without a formal process, the collective knowledge and wisdom built by the baby boomers over decades of service could be lost to future generations of leaders.

Numerous studies and articles have been conducted and written on the topic of succession planning, each expressing a variety of methodologies and critical elements necessary to implement a successful process. When an organization seeks to implement succession planning as a strategic internal process, it must first identify which methods/elements to utilize and in what order to implement them. In addition, there needs to be a careful examination of the transferability of experiences and methods from the for-profit world to the nonprofit sector. This literature review research will examine the literature for common themes on the critical elements of a successful succession planning strategy, as well as its specific adaptation to the nonprofit sector. In addition, this study will suggest that additional research and publication on the issue of transferring succession planning models between the for-profit and nonprofit sector be conducted. Additionally, there may be a need to examine the key reasons for aversion to succession planning in the nonprofit sector.

Succession planning is the process by which an organization seeks to ensure future success and vitality (Dodd & Simons, 2005), by promoting key individuals who
“understand the organization’s vision, its intended direction, its opportunities and competitive challenges, and the current and projected business climate” (Nowack, 1994, p. 51). Blieschke (2006) put it more eloquently when he stated that: “Jesus recognized there could be no success without a successor.” (p. 1) If Jesus had not undertaken the process of succession planning with the apostles, there would probably be no faith based on his life and teachings today. The methods of succession planning vary from the simplistic to the complex. Nowack (1994) identifies the concept of “replacement planning” where qualified candidates are placed on a list for possible advancement to more senior positions. In this scenario, little is done to actually develop the talent, skills and leadership ability of the employees on the list. Clutterbuck (2005) suggests a much more involved process of “sponsorship”, whereby an individual who has been identified and selected for advancement is assigned to a senior manager who guides the process to ensure the right opportunities for development are available, and that the individual receives constant and constructive feedback.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

Although the literature varied in scope and audience, several critical elements for a successful succession planning process presented themselves across the articles. These elements are best presented under the following headings:

1. Analysis of the current organizational situation
2. Identification and assessment of potential candidates for succession
3. Development of the potential candidates
4. Measurement (of the success of the process)
5. Specific adaptation to the non-profit sector

Analysis of the Current Organizational Situation

The first critical element for success identified by the research was that of conducting an analysis of the current organizational situation. Jansen, van der Velde, and Mul state “management development/succession planning should be attuned to the strategy of the organization.” (p. 107) When analyzing, or taking stock of the current situation, there are several variables or components that the authors advise. Items that would be common to many strategic planning initiatives, such as the “strategic direction, vision and mission” of the company are among those that should be included (Dodd & Simons, 2005, p. 402 and Wolfred, 2008). By evaluating where the organization will be going in the future, the succession planning process will be able to identify where there may be deficiencies in the skills of current and future leaders (Hills, 2009). Grossman (2011) also advocates for a “careful examination of business needs now and in the future”
He suggests asking questions such as “where do we want to be in five years, and what skills and competencies do we need to take us there”. (Grossman, 2011, p. 48)

In addition to examining the organization and its future direction and needs, it is critical to identify which positions will be targeted for the succession planning process (Barnett & Davis, 2008 and Grossman, 2011). Nowack (1994) described this component of the organizational analysis as: “Job Profile/Job Analysis.” (p. 51) Once a position has been targeted for succession, a set of skills necessary to fulfill the functions of that position should be compiled, usually with the assistance of a human resource professional (Dodd & Simons, 2005). Santora (2010) suggests that in addition to functional skills, organizations should examine abilities “that will help them execute their strategic agenda” (p. 24). Whether functional or strategic, by determining the skills needed in leadership, the organization will know what to look for or develop in potential candidates for succession.

Rothwell (2002) advances the use of competency models instead of the more traditional job descriptions found in most human resource approaches. Competency models focus on the individual in the position and how they perform, rather than on the job description which describes the work being done. This approach seeks to determine the differences between top performers and average performers and measure improvement over a given period of time. (Rothwell, 2002) In addition to determining the current situation with regard to competencies, “it is necessary to develop a future competency model that describes the characteristics of individuals who will be aligned with the organizational strategies and objectives for the long-term”. (Rothwell, 2002, p. 35)
Ingraham (2006) poses an important question when analyzing the current situation: “Is the organization best served by growing leaders – developing internal candidates for leadership positions – or by buying them – bringing in new leaders from outside the organization” (p. 376). There are several advantages to each model. Buying leaders brings “new ideas, different leadership experiences, and fresh approaches” (p. 376); while growing leaders involves developing skills and experiences in the employee that will benefit the organization regardless of whether or not they are promoted to a more senior position. (Ingraham, 2006) The insider versus outsider choice was further developed in an article by Santora, Caro, and Sarros (2007) where they offered insight into the non-profit sector: “insiders have a more intimate knowledge of their organization and how it operates, while conventional wisdom suggests that outsiders are viewed as change agents.” (p.27) In a survey conducted for their article, the authors found that nonprofits tilt towards outsiders for senior positions, with the flatter organizational structure of many nonprofits making it unlikely that an internal successor will be developed. (Santora, Caro, & Sarros, 2007) In making the decision to buy or grow leadership, an organization must look at future needs including the skills and competencies it will need to ensure viability and sustainability. Once that analysis is complete the organization will be able to determine which course of action will serve its long-term leadership needs. (Ingraham, 2006)

A specific industry example comes from Pollitt (2009) in a discussion of succession planning at HBC (Hudson’s Bay Company). Pollitt describes the company prior to 2003 as having no connected comprehensive plan for succession planning. “The company did not understand the talent that it had at its disposal and there were no clear
links to other processes such as performance management, recruitment, and workforce planning.” (Pollitt, 2009, p. 6) The company began to develop a profile of the leadership it needed and developed an organizational wide approach to developing talent. This allowed the company to fill all senior positions with internal talent following its 2005 takeover by American businessman Jerry Zucker. (Pollitt, 2009)

**Identification and Assessment of Potential Candidates for Succession**

The second critical element of success revealed by the literature is the identification and assessment of potential candidates for succession. Bieschke (2006) used the analogy of Jesus and the 12 apostles to highlight the importance of identifying key subordinates who will be able to lead and build the organization after the current leader has left his position. He attributes the longevity of the organized Christian faith(s) to the successful implementation of this stage of succession planning. “Choosing a successor at an early stage” (Santora, 2004, p. 21) is the number one item in Santora’s article on the guidelines for succession planning; and Schall (1997) described succession planning as identifying leaders for key positions, but also selecting leadership talent from all levels of management for their future development. This was echoed by McArthur and Favero Phillips (1994) when stating “the first step is to identify a diverse group of future leaders throughout the corporation (p. 13)”. After identification, individuals were evaluated on the basis of four dimensions: “current performance, development needs, possible next moves, and long-term potential for advancement”. (McArthur & Favero Phillips, 1994, p. 13) The process involved current leaders participating in a candid discussion facilitated by a human resource professional. The leaders discussed their direct reports candidly and gave concrete examples of current performance. The human
resource professional ensured that a diverse group of candidates was represented, and peer participants shared their personal observations. This process allowed a significant inventory on each individual’s skills, attributes, and competencies to be built. (McArthur & Favero Phillips, 1994)

Fredericksen (2010) states that: “one employee assessment goal should be to capture the scope of talent in an agency and apply that information to anticipated needs”. (p. 54) The critical element of identifying and assessing potential candidates was set forth in a sequential process by Bradshaw Lynn (2001). She suggested a “deliberate and systematic identification of organizational needs, the discovery of a pool of high potential candidates, and the matching of individual competencies with current and anticipated organizational needs”. (Bradshaw Lynn, 2001, p.116-117) The process of discovering high potential candidates and matching their competencies to organization needs suggest a full replacement strategy as opposed to a simple replacement strategy. A simple replacement strategy would rely on a hierarchy chart to determine the next leaders, whereas a full replacement strategy takes into account all potential leadership talent from various levels of the organization and ranks candidates on their readiness to advance to more senior positions. (Bradshaw Lynn, 2001)

When looking for potential leadership succession talent, Hills (2009) takes a more defined approach with the concept of the “3 C’s of fit”. She describes these as “competence, connection and culture” (Hills, 2009, p.4-5). Competence describes the particular skills that an individual possesses. These skills may include education (both formal and continuing), work experience, and life experience. Connection skills, the second “C”, are those that govern the individual’s relationship with his co-workers and
subordinates. Hills (2009) defines connection attributes as “trustworthiness, depth, empathy, and external attunement” (p. 5). Although these attributes are difficult to measure, a study of 10,000 leaders by BlessingWhite Inc. indicates that they are highly prized in the eyes of employees, even more so than technical competence or management ability. The final “C” is culture, which refers to how well the individual fits into or has internalized the organization’s corporate culture. The organization’s culture is more than its vision and mission statements; it is the values that are engrained in every employee throughout the company, and that are shown through the company’s actions and investment. One example might be an organizational culture that values employee training and development. In this case, opportunities would be provided for those employees who wish to improve their skills through continuing education, and appropriate resources would be invested to support this development activity.

Identification of key positions and individuals who can or will succeed to them is commonplace in the for-profit sector (Jansen, et. al., 2001). In fact, Barnett and Davis (2008) identify it as a best practice, and suggest that organizations often identify more than one potential successor for each of the key leadership positions. In the nonprofit sector, the process is most likely to occur in times of crisis or emergency, rather than as a pre-meditated exercise in the broader framework of strategic planning (Wolfred, 2008).

**Development of the Potential Candidates**

The third critical element for success identified by the literature is the development of future leaders. In the element described above (Identification and Assessment), individuals with leadership potential have been selected for key positions within the organization. Once those individuals have been identified they need to be
prepared to take on increasing responsibilities, and a process of professional development needs to be undertaken. Bieschke (2006) described the process as “providing the experiences people need to close the gap between their current skill-sets and the organization’s future needs, preparing them to make a more significant contribution.” (p. 1) Santora (2010) identifies development of candidates as the third step in his four step process, suggesting “leadership development seminars, post-graduate courses, and training programs (p. 24)” as effective methods of developing potential candidates. Giving candidates the opportunity to rotate through different jobs and areas of the organization will give them a more holistic understanding of the overall operations of the company. (Santora, 2010) Groves (2006) states that “highly successful organizations focus on creating a comprehensive set of assessment and development practices that support the entire pipeline of talent across the organization.” (p.240) Hills (2009) suggests leadership development can be accomplished through a mix of “formal education, coaching and experience” (p. 6). Santora (2004) agrees with the experience component, stating that the best way for an individual to learn is by doing and Schall (1997) suggest a process of allowing selected individuals the opportunity to gain “cross-agency exposure” (p. 8). Rothwell (2002) identifies his best practice number six as “establishing a means to narrow the gap (p. 35)” between current skills and experience, and future needs. Suggested is the use of individual development plans which will “help to plan activities that will build individual competencies to meet present challenges and prepare for future ones”. (Rothwell, 2002, p. 35)

Reille and Kezar (2010) in writing for the community college sector, identify three types of leadership development solutions. Identified are: “university based
graduate degrees, short-term leadership programs such as institutes and seminars, and college based in-house leadership development programs, known as Grow Your Own programs”. (Reille & Kezar, 2010, p. 60) Part of the benefits of a Grow Your Own program is the ability for participants to develop leadership and management skills regardless of whether they advance into a more senior position. Reille and Kezar (2010) state that participants “become more involved in campus activities and committees, increase their collaboration across disciplines, develop innovative projects, and improve their problem solving abilities and self-confidence.” (p. 61) In short, they become a more valuable resource to their institution.

Taking the development stage one step further, Clutterbuck (2005) suggest a “sponsorship” program which would assign a more senior level leader/manager from within the organization that will steer the potential leader in their professional development activities. A sponsorship or mentoring program is also advanced by Reeves (2010) in a process he suggests would be similar to that of a craft worker advancing from “apprentice to journeyman to master status”. (p. 62) Developing leadership talent involves acquiring knowledge, followed by practicing skills until one’s abilities are applied without conscious thought; very much like a master tradesman. (Reeves, 2010) The mentor becomes “teacher, coach, and advisor to assist in their protégé’s personal and professional development of skills”. (Reeves, 2010, p. 62) Stephen R. Covey describes the mentor as being responsible for “communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves”. (Reeves, 2010, p. 65)

Lubar Price (2005) gives specific examples of how to groom/develop the next generation of nonprofit leaders in a four step process. The first step is to encourage
professional development activities such as seminars and conferences that will develop an individual’s leadership and management skills. Step two involves a conscious effort to create more interaction between the staff and the board of directors, accomplished by assigning staff members other than the Executive Director to certain committees. The third step involves stretching the leadership experiences of staff by assigning responsibilities that will help them develop and demonstrate their abilities. The fourth step involves the Executive Director setting aside time to be a mentor, recognizing that time is precious in the nonprofit setting. (Lubar Price, 2005)

In addition to standard leadership development activities and mentoring, Groves (2006) suggest a number of additional steps that organization can take to develop potential leadership candidates. Action oriented development activities such stretch assignments and active learning projects help to broaden the experience of potential leadership candidates. Enhancing a candidates’ visibility within the organization will increase their exposure to senior leadership as well as peer and subordinates, thereby adding legitimacy to their leadership potential and developing their network of contacts. Leadership development through teaching that requires senior managers to become actively involved in the development process increases organizational support and helps support a culture that values leadership development from the senior levels on down. (Groves, 2006)

Throughout the process of development, the organization should provide constant feedback to the participants (Barnett & Davis, 2008). This feedback should include an opportunity for the individual to have input in their own professional development activities (Nowack, 1994) and should provide the individual with an honest assessment of
their progress (Barnett & Davis, 2008). McArthur and Favero Phillips (1994) also advocate for the importance of feedback, stating that a lack of feedback to potential leadership candidates was the primary reason for succession planning failure at their client’s Fortune 500 Company.

**Measurement (of the Success of the Process)**

The fourth critical element for success presented across the literature was that of measurement and, more precisely, what are the measurable outcomes of a successful succession planning model. Authors writing for audiences both in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors express the need to have some form of measurement against which the success of succession planning can be evaluated. Barnett and Davis (2008) in writing for the for-profit sector state that a successful succession planning process will lead to “leadership continuity, reduced turnover, retention of key personnel, and directly or indirectly improving business or financial results” (p. 723). Wolfred (2008) suggest that non-profit boards will be concern with whether or not the organization stays true to its original mission under new leadership and Dodd and Simons (2005) believe that organizations with effective succession planning will have “higher employee retention and more qualified internal managers” (p. 402). In addition to monitoring the outcomes of the actual leadership change, Nowack (1994) suggests a plan for measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of the development plans that were put into place during the critical element discussed above (Development of Potential Candidates) using yearly updates to digitized records, and meetings with key managers and mentors. Regardless of the sector, implementing a form of success measurement will highlight the importance
and value of succession planning and offer opportunities to build on success and improve on weaknesses in the process (Barnett & Davis, 2008).

**Specific Adaptation for the Non-Profit Sector**

For organizations in the non-profit sector, implementing a succession plan that incorporates all of the critical elements of success is possible but difficult, as many non-profits are small organizations with limited staff resources that can be developed to take on emerging leadership roles (Adams, 2004). Jansen et.al. (2001) state that succession planning is more extensively used in the for-profit sector because it has been internalized in the business function. The for-profit sector recognizes that in order to ensure the future viability of their business, key individuals must be identified and groom for successive leadership roles (Jansen, et.al., 2001). Statistics reveal that 31% of nonprofits do not have an emergency succession plan (who takes over in the event of an unplanned vacancy in a top leadership position), and 69% lack a general succession plan for their organizations (Wolfred, 2008). Santora and Sarros (2001) suggest that this might be the result of the governance structure in the non-profit sector, with responsibility for succession planning resting with the board of directors, and the board being reluctant to upset current leadership by suggesting a succession planning exercise. Board responsibility can also deter the CEO of a nonprofit from undertaking or suggesting succession planning because they have very little influence over who will eventually replace them. (Santora & Sarros, 2001) Dodd and Simons (2005) indicate that the succession planning process can involve a significant commitment of time and talent that nonprofits have “trouble justifying”.
Several articles and monographs, especially the Executive Transition Series offer variations on succession planning that can be applied to the nonprofit sector. Wolfred (2008) suggests breaking the traditional or multi-stage succession planning model down into what is doable or achievable for the nonprofit and offers three distinct succession planning processes that can be adopted to make the practice more manageable. Emergency succession, departure-defined succession planning, and strategic leader development are the three approaches that are suggested for the nonprofit sector. Emergency succession planning is defined as knowing who will take over in the interim, should a top leadership position suddenly become vacant without advance notice. Departure defined succession planning is built around a leader’s decision to announce his/her departure, within a specific time-frame. Strategic leader development is the most involved process, closely aligned to incorporating the critical elements of success, and seeks to ensure that the organization has sufficient talent from within to carry on the core functions, mission, and vision regardless of staff or board changes. Common to all of Wolfred’s (2008) three variations on nonprofit succession planning are the first three critical elements of success described earlier in the capstone literature review. Missing, but perhaps implied is the element of measurement that is critical to evaluating the succession planning process and making it a continually evolving exercise.
Chapter Three

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The final chapter of this capstone research paper documents conclusions drawn from the integration, synthesis and evaluation of the literature presented in Chapter 2. Recommendations for further study are also included.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the literature it was possible to identify four commonly agreed upon critical elements for a successful succession planning process. First, an analysis of the current organizational situation should be conducted, either by the current Executive Director or the Board of Directors, but preferably by both. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this first step should not only take into account the current strengths and weaknesses of the organization, but should look to future organizational needs as well. This analysis will help to determine what attributes the next leader should possess. Second, potential future leaders need to be identified; and an objective assessment of their skills and abilities, as well as a determination of any gaps in their knowledge must be conducted. By engaging in this second critical element, organizations will gain a better understanding of the strength of their internal leadership pool, and be in a position to offer flexible and individual development opportunities to the candidates identified. The second critical element leads in to the third which is the development of potential candidates. This development may take many forms including formal learning opportunities such as leadership seminars and graduate courses or programs. Many of the authors however, including (Reeves, 2010) suggest that the best learning occurs on the job and under the
supervision of a senior manager or the Executive Director themself. Suggestions for on
the job learning included job rotations, action projects, and increased responsibilities; but
an element common to many of the authors was mentoring. The fourth and final critical
element of success was measurement. Organizations should measure success of their
programs against such metrics as employee retention and morale, as well as leadership
continuity and advancement of their strategic direction and objectives. Measurement will
also allow for adjustments in the process should it be determined or viewed as not being
successful.

Although some of the authors advocated for fewer or more elements in the
succession planning process, in an attempt to meet simpler or more complex needs, none
of the authors disputed the need and necessity for a succession planning strategy. Future
research should be conducted to formalize the common ground among the varying
approaches to succession planning in order to offer a better application of the concept
both in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

With regard to the non-profit sector specifically, many of the articles were written
in the form of case studies. While these studies were valuable and their findings could be
transferred or applied across the sector, their scope was limited. Large-scale research
should be conducted with a sample pool of nonprofits who have implemented some form
of succession planning. The barrier to this research, as was noted by Wolfred (2008):
31% of nonprofits lack an emergency succession plan and 69% have not undertaken a
general succession planning process. Given the wide-spread lack of planning within the
sector, increasing the sample sizes may prove difficult, though not impossible.

Additionally, Dodd and Simons (2005) noted that the succession planning process can
involve a significant commitment of time and talent that nonprofits are reluctant to invest. Future research should be conducted within the nonprofit sector to determine the key reasons for the lack of succession planning, and what efforts should be undertaken to increase the practice.

The articles included in this literature review research dealt with succession planning from the standpoint of replacing key employees. Future research should be conducted into the applicability of Rothwell’s (2002) strategy of replacing the work that needs to be done, rather than simply attempting to replace the position or the person. Traditional succession planning calls for identifying and developing candidates to future leadership positions. As noted by Santora on many occasions, the flat organizational structure of most small to medium sized nonprofits leads them to hire from outside because there may not be any qualified pool of candidates internally. As Executive Directors extend their tenure, they begin to take on more and more responsibilities, duties and activities, beyond their job description. When beginning to look at the qualities and skills needed in the next leader, many Boards of Directors may feel that any potential candidate will have to live up to the legend of the current office holder. A daunting task for a new recruit to say the least. Rather than begin the process with a prescription for failure, Boards may want to break the duties and expectations of the current position down to determine what must be accomplished by the new leader. This may lead to a variety of scenarios such as adding additional support positions, assignment of work to other staff members, or the elimination of some work altogether. An exercise such as this one would serve to focus the attention of the Board of Directors on skills and attributes that are absolutely critical in the next leader, and which could be done without. Small to
medium sized nonprofits would benefit from focusing on what must be done for success, rather than attempting to continue doing that which has always been done.

Current leaders (both Executive Directors and Boards) may want to develop a treasure map (Schall, 1994) or treasure chest (Bieschke, 2006) to be left for future leaders. This could be simply accomplished by the creation of detail work plans for current leaders within the organization and build on the work analysis described in the paragraph above. New leaders will benefit from the clear articulation of their responsibilities, and be in a better position to minimize the turbulence that occurs during a leadership transition.

As we heard in Bieschke (2006), even Jesus Christ knew the importance of succession planning when he selected the twelve apostles. There can be a tendency for organizations to seek a new leader in exactly the same mold as the last: someone who can do all, be all, and fulfill all the aspirations of the organization. In short, they are looking for someone who can “walk on water”. It is important to note that Saint Peter, though possessing of many outstanding qualities, was no Son of God. He lacked the ability to walk on water, yet he possessed the rock solid foundation upon which the church was built. He was selected by Jesus, not because he possessed every quality, skill, and attribute of that he did, but because he possessed the right mix of talent and determination necessary to fulfill the vision and mission of establishing the Christian faith. Nonprofits should take note of the success of the Christian faith in their own attempts at leadership continuity and organizational longevity. Your next leader will not be able to walk on water, but they should share the vision and values of your organization, and possess the skills to meet your future needs.
References


Annotated Bibliography


The Annie E. Casey Foundation provided funding for this, and other installments in the Executive Transitions Monograph Series. Author Tom Adams has over 30 years of experience serving in senior positions with nonprofit organizations, and has spent eleven years researching and consulting in the area of nonprofit executive transition. In this monograph written for the nonprofit sector, Adams advances the notion that even successful organizations can falter during a period of leadership transition. However, according to the author, if the leadership transition is managed effectively and prepared for in advance, the organization will have a unique opportunity to examine its mission, vision, direction, and current practices in the context of what leader will be needed next. Adams offers some compelling reasons for nonprofit organizations to undertake leadership transition planning, not the least of which is the impending retirement of many Executive Directors from the baby boom generation, as also cited by Deitrick and Creagor (2006) as well as Ingraham (2006). The author’s observation that many small, community based nonprofit organization lack the management depth to effectively deal with unplanned changes in leadership is confirmed in articles by Santora, Caro, and Sarros, (2007) as well as Deitrick and Creagor, (2006). Adams’ mantra for capturing the power of leadership change is: “prepare, pivot & thrive”. (Adams, 2004, p.9) Organizations can prepare by identifying the key duties and responsibilities of the current Executive Directors, and by cross-training top managers to build internal leadership strength. By examining current operations and desired future outcomes, the organization may decide to pivot in a new direction as suggested by Rothwell, (2002). Finally, Adams feels that organizations will thrive if the new leader is closely aligned with the current or new organizational mission and vision (Fredericksen, 2010) and (Santora, 2004). Included in the monograph are several examples of Executive Transition Management in action at small and medium sized nonprofits which highlight the process and desired effects of managing leadership transition.


This refereed article in a series on emerging practices in leadership development is directed primarily at human resource professionals. Authors Robert Barnett, PhD and Sandra Davis, PhD (both consultants in the areas organizational development, change, and executive selection) offer a brief review of best practices for succession management and go on to propose a practical five-step process that encompasses those best practices identified. Although not written specifically for the nonprofit sector, the steps included in this article could be beneficial to any organization. The authors quote several surveys that
conclude many business leaders feel that their organization’s current succession planning activities are failing to provide the right internal candidates, forcing them to bring outsiders in to fill key positions. Barnett and Davis offer a number of reasons for failed succession planning, but conclude that many plans place too much emphasis on replacing one or more particular jobs, and not enough on developing talent broadly in a continuous and organization wide fashion. The five steps of the process articulated by the authors have many commonalities in literature on the subject, particularly in articles by Rothwell (2002) and Bradshaw Lynn (2001). The authors provide tables throughout the article to highlight the review and identification of best practices, including several sources for each best practice identified. A figure is included which highlights the succession planning process graphically, and shows it as a continuous cycle of planning, implementation, and feedback. The article ends with implications for HR professionals and suggestions for future research in the area of succession planning.


Marcus Bieschke, both a consultant and pastor, holds a Doctorate in Strategic Leadership. In this article, aimed broadly at many sectors, Bieschke draws a powerful parallel between current organizational succession planning and the process Jesus Christ went through in identifying, selecting, and training followers who could carry on his work after he was gone. The author quotes a poll of nonprofit organizations which states that 94% have no succession plan in place. Many other articles such as those by Deitrick and Creagor (2006) and Dodd and Simons (2005) quote similar statistics, though none come close to Bieschke’s percentage. Rather than offer a step by step process for succession planning as proposed by Nowack (1994), Santora (2010) and Wolfred (2008), Bieschke identifies five values that organizations should keep in mind while developing their plans. These values have some direct relation to the specific steps identified by other authors. Building and developing internal candidates, as well as ensuring that those candidates share the organization’s culture and values were highlighted in Clutterbuck’s (2005) and Santora’s (2004) articles. Frederickson (2010) advises and Bieschke also believes the succession planning process should be future oriented to ensure the right leader is selected to move the organization forward. Developing a treasure chest of values, visions and key institutional knowledge is similar to the suggestion by Schall (1994) to leave a treasure map for the next leader. Lastly, the author states that future leaders should be mentored by current leaders, learning through observation and then application; a suggestion echoed by Reeves (2010) and Lubar Price (2005). The primary contribution of this article is to place the issue of succession planning in a context easily relatable to those with even a rudimentary knowledge of the Christian faith.

In this research review, Dahlia Bradshaw Lynn from the University of Southern Maine, offers a practical how-to approach for a more robust succession management process in public sector organizations. The author draws a distinction between the execution of succession planning in the private sector and the public sector, stating her belief that the private sector has more latitude in identifying, training, and promoting internal candidates (Jansen, et.al., 2001); while public sector organizations are often bound by employment or contractual arrangements that limit advancement to a seniority based, rather than a skills based process. The four step process advanced by Bradshaw Lynn is paralleled by several other authors of literature on the subject of succession planning including: Rothwell (2002), Grossman (2011), and Santora (2010). The four steps are identified as: “Deliberate and systematic identification of organizational needs”, “Discovery of a pool of high potential candidates”, “Intentional learning experiences to increase Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities in potential leaders”, and “Selection of leaders from the pool of previously identified leaders”. (Bradshaw Lynn, 2001, p.123) The article includes a figure of the succession management process showing it as a circular and continuous cycle, similar to Barnett and Davis (2008). The author includes several examples of current initiatives in the public sectors from both Canada and the United States that help to highlight the desired outcomes of the process.


David Clutterbuck is a senior partner at a United Kingdom firm that provides mentoring program support. In this academic article, the author states that many organizations view succession planning from a military chain of command philosophy of “up or out”, as also identified by Jansen, et.al. (2001). During this process, employees gain skills by advancing upward to positions of greater responsibility. Although this may lead to extremely committed and capable leaders in a particular facet of the organization, Clutterbuck argues this may create silos of leadership with senior managers who lack the breadth of organization experience needed for a holistic view of operations. The author suggests that organizations look at building leadership talent by offering lateral advancement opportunities, identified as a best practice by Groves (2007) as well as by Reille and Kezar, (2010), and states that mentoring should be an important aspect in this exercise (Reeves, 2010). Clutterbuck offers specific suggestions for improving the mentoring process such as making it an open and managed process so that senior leaders can balance the development needs of individual candidates and the future leadership needs of the organization. To accomplish this Clutterbuck suggests development plans that are both imaginative and sustainable as well as giving people experiences outside of their normal responsibilities. These suggestions were echoed in Bradshaw Lynn’s (2001) article.

This article offers a report of the key findings of a research study on executive transition in the San Diego nonprofit sector. Laura Deitrick and Paige Creager of the Center for Applied Nonprofit Research (University of San Diego) draw on the succession planning research of the Annie E. Casey Foundation among others, to highlight the lack of succession planning in nonprofit organizations at the national level. The authors then introduce the finding of their own research, specifically a survey of over 500 executive directors (with a 31% response rate). They found that 68% of executive directors would be leaving their positions in the next five years, and that only 12% of respondents had any succession plan in place (88% had no plan). This finding comes close to Bieschke’s 94% (2006), but is still higher than the 66% average quoted by Wolfred (2008). In specific responses from executive directors, Deitrick and Creager found that 76% of them felt that it would be difficult to replace them when they leave, and 68% felt that pool of available candidates in the San Diego area was limited. Prescriptive measures offered by the authors include having organizations that provide services to the nonprofit sector in San Diego tailor their offerings to include succession and transition planning; and that nonprofits should specifically develop the capacity of their employees between the ages of 35 and 44 years of age. The authors provided two comparison charts to highlight similarities between national findings and local findings in San Diego.


Kathleen Dodd and Carolyn Simons, executives at a consulting firm, write specifically for the health care sector in this article focusing on succession planning. Dodd and Simons begin their article by quoting a survey of home health care and hospice providers by The Corridor Group which found that only 10% of the respondents had a formal succession plan in place. This percentage is confirmed across disciplines in articles by Deitrick and Creagar (2006) and Bieschke (2006) to a somewhat greater or lesser extent. The authors state that a lack of qualified internal candidates may force organizations to turn to outsiders, bringing in more business minded executives to fill key leadership roles. These individuals, while qualified, will not be familiar with the particular challenges, opportunities, and nuances of the healthcare sector. This unfamiliarity of external candidates with the internal environment is also highlighted by Santora, Caro, nd Sarros, (2007) and Adams, (2004). Dodd and Simon articulate many benefits to be derived from a succession planning process such as identifying key strengths and weakness of both the organization and internal candidates, higher employee retention rates, and more qualified internal leaders. These benefits were also identified by Reille and Kezar (2010) in their article on community college
Finally, the authors discuss dealing with internal resistance to succession planning (Wolfred, 2008) and suggest that an outside facilitator might be brought in to allow for an unbiased approach.


Elizabeth Fredericksen of Boise State University draws on the work of dozens of authors to present some examples of best practices in succession planning management. This article is addressed specifically toward agencies of state and local government, who the author believes will face even greater succession challenges than the private or nonprofit sectors. Fredericksen states that the high unemployment rate associated with the recent recession, has led many to believe that there is a surplus of qualified employees. However, general knowledge and education cannot replace institutional knowledge and expertise (Clutterbuck, 2005 and Dodd & Simon, 2005) that will be lost as senior employees retire. Given the urgency of the situation, the author encourages government agencies to embrace succession management practices through the identification of leadership talent within their organizations (Santora, 2010), and by using the knowledge gained to meet anticipated future leadership needs (Rothwell, 2002). Fredericksen utilizes several tables to identify how HR practitioners at the state level are dealing with the issues surrounding succession planning. The tables identify which States utilize which practices, allowing the reader to determine those that are more widely utilized.


In this recent article in HR Magazine, Robert Grossman offers a simple and concise step by step process for succession planning. Grossman is a Professor of Management Studies at Marist, a college in New York State and his research interests include management, leadership, and human resources. Many of the steps offered by Grossman in this article are also articulated by other authors. Among the ways to improve succession plans, Grossman suggests a focus on future business needs found in Rothwell, (2002), identifying critical jobs and determine key skills for them as suggested in Reeves, (2010), giving candidates opportunities to gain new experiences as expressed by Pollitt (2009), and encouraging top level buy in by linking compensation to contributions to the succession process (McArthur and Favero Phillips, 1994). Though written for the private sector, this article contains several key steps which can be adapted to the nonprofit sector in particular the steps dealing with the identification of critical jobs and key skills needed for those positions.


Kevin Groves from the College of Business and Economics (California State University) presents several critical elements for successful succession
planning in this 2007 research paper. The research and findings are directed generally toward organization leaders and human resource practitioners. His research consisted of a survey of 30 CEOs and human resource executives across 15 best practice organizations as well as an extensive review of succession planning literature. Groves suggests several elements common to other authors on the subject. Identifying and codifying leadership talent is suggested by Bradshaw Lynn, (2001) and seeks to avoid a replacement approach (Barnett & Davis, 2008) by taking a long-term approach to developing talent. The author cautions against naming an “heir apparent”, and proposes developing multiple successors for multiple positions within the organization (Clutterbuck, 2005). With regard to developing candidates, Groves suggest “action-oriented” activities with the potential to broaden the candidate’s knowledge of the entire company, while offering them contact and interaction with a variety of senior managers (Reille & Kezar, 2010). The author believes that the quality of the development outcomes depend on the types of activities the candidates engage in, and ultimately advises organization to create a “culture of leadership development.” (Rothwell, 2002) Several tables are included to highlight best practices, their descriptions and key references used to determine them. In addition, a figure illustrates how organizations can integrate leadership development and succession planning into a development process that requires active participation from current management and executives.


Hills, a senior vice president with BlessingWhite Inc. (a global consulting firm in the area of leadership development), offers the findings of a 2008 global study of employee engagement in this article. Hills draws a clear distinction between utilizing current employees and acquiring new ones with a particular set of skills from outside the organization to meet succession planning needs. Neither strategy is advanced as preferable, but the author concludes that a mix of both will be needed to optimize the succession planning process, which she describes as “smart talent management” (Hills, 2009, p. 8). Many of the findings regarding in-house talent development are confirmed in other succession planning research and articles, especially Barnett and Davis (2008) and Santora (2004). Several figures and diagrams are included to highlight the findings of the survey; and the large survey pool of 10,000 business leaders globally adds to the value of the findings. Hills offers a new perspective and new research on the topic of succession planning which will be of value to not only senior HR professionals, but to any organization seeking to undertake a succession planning process.


Patricia Ingraham, a distinguished researcher, is the founding dean of the College of Community and Public Affairs at Binghamton University (New York). In this article directed primarily at the public and nonprofit sectors, the author draws on many studies to reinforce the urgent need for organizations to undertake
succession planning. Ingraham identifies that organizations can adopt either a “buying” or “growing” (also explored in Santora, et al. (2007) approach to succession planning, each of which has its own advantages and disadvantages. Growing leaders takes advantage of the talent within your organization and puts in place programs to further develop that talent (Reille & Kezar, 2010). Buying leaders involves going outside of your organization for individuals who may have new approaches and ideas, but who may not be familiar with your operating culture or values (Dodd & Simons, 2005). Any succession planning process should be future focused and based on “leadership competencies” – a set of skills that future leaders and managers should possess (Rothwell, 2002), rather than on job descriptions. Ingraham believes that the challenge will be for public and nonprofit organizations to develop succession management processes that reflect their unique values and culture, in addition to developing the skills and competencies for future leaders.


Paul Jansen and Mandy Van Der Velde (both academics from Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam) co-wrote this article with Wim Mul, a human resources executive who has held senior positions with a variety of firms. The article reports on a survey of 92 Dutch companies and their policies and practices with regards to management development (a term closely aligned with succession management/planning). The authors advance the notion that for management development to be successful it must be aligned with the strategic direction of the organization (Frederickson, 2010), must have organizational buy-in (McArthur & Favero Phillips, 1994), and should offer development opportunities such as training and coaching (Reeves, 2010). The survey by the authors showed that management development was more focused and intense in the private sector, where having the right, qualified leaders in place had a direct impact on the bottom-line. However, many Dutch nonprofits also engaged in a thoughtful and deliberate management development process. Two tables summarize the findings of the survey and provide definitions of management development processes.


This article is the third in a series on leadership transition as part of an executive transition initiative by the Donors Forum of Wisconsin. Project Manager Mindy Lubar Price expresses the view of succession planning as “building bench strength” (Lubar Price, 2005, p.1) or developing a pipeline of leaders who are strong and capable (Santora, 2010). Similar to Deitrick and Creagor (2006), Price states that just going through the process will increase the organizations ability to work through leadership transitions and it should be linked to the organization’s overall strategic planning as suggested by Bradshaw Lynn, (2001). Rather than a step by step plan, the author offers tips and
suggestions for engaging in and improving the process of succession planning. At the very least Lubar Price suggests there should be an emergency succession plan (Wolfred, 2008). Any process should involve the board of directors (Santora, 2004) or it will have limited chance of succeeding. Finally, Price suggests communicating the existence of the plan to external stakeholders and funders (Santora, 2010) as it will increase confidence and indicate a level of organizational stability. Price ends the article with four suggestions to aid the planning process which include: providing opportunities for staff to develop their skills, creating opportunities for staff and board interaction, assign increasing responsibilities so staff can demonstrate their leadership skills, and encouraging the Executive Director to mentor staff (Bieschke, 2006).


Connie McArthur, a consultant in Executive Development and Janet Favero Phillips, an Organizational Psychologist highlight the work and effort that went into creating a succession planning strategy for a Fortune 500 company, only to have it fail due to a lack of performance feedback. The executive team with which they worked, was committed to identifying future leaders, evaluating their skills and deficiencies, and coming up with development plans for those future leaders, as suggested by Barnett & Davis, (2008). However, no feedback was given to those candidates selected for development, and as a result they had no idea if they were progressing in their training plan and if they were still in line for advancement. The importance of feedback to the successful implementation of succession planning has been acknowledged by several other authors (Nowack, 1994 and Groves, 2007). The tongue-in-cheek title of this article alludes to the children’s game Pin the Tail on the Donkey. The authors led senior executives at the Fortune 500 company through the game. At first they allowed no feedback and the executives failed miserable in their attempts to correctly place the tail. As more feedback from other executives in the room was allowed, the executive playing the game was able to successful Pin the Tail on the Donkey. After the exercise, the executives renewed their commitment to succession planning, and had a new appreciation of the importance of feedback.


Kenneth Nowack a licensed psychologist and Chief Learning Officer at Organizational Performance Dimensions, offers a seven step process to unlocking the secrets of succession in this article aimed at human resource professionals. The author compares what he terms the traditional methods of replacement tables and succession planning, and advances a more integrated approach that he terms succession development. Among the seven steps are elements common to several other authors. Santora (2010) also suggests identifying leaders and Barnett and Davis (2008) advise assessment of potential leaders and development their
potential, filling in gaps in their knowledge base. Nowack (1994) suggests, as do McArthur and Favero (1994) that the prospective candidates should be involved in the process and be provided with constant feedback. The author includes a full page sample Succession Development Worksheet to assist in selecting and developing candidates for leadership development, and also offers a half-page summary of how to administer a succession development program at a glance.


David Pollitt, editor of the Human Resource Management International Digest, summarizes an earlier offering on the succession planning activities at Hudson’s Bay Company in this article directed at the for-profit sector. The author believes that businesses small and large will discover several useful lessons through the activities at Canada’s oldest corporation both before and after its takeover by South Carolina billionaire Jerry Zucker. As Pollitt explains, the success of the process at HBC was a robust and detailed analysis of current leadership talent and a structured means to build that talent, reflected in Barnett & Davis’ article (2008). HBC used leadership profiles to determine three categories of talent with specific activities for each that would develop their skills and abilities to the greatest potential (Bradshaw Lynn, 2001). The author states that the success of the process could be seen in having all senior positions filled internally after the takeover. They had grown (Reille & Kezar, 2010) their leadership potential to the point that the new owner did not have to bring in external leaders. This also allowed for continuity of the culture and values of the organization.


T. Zane Reeves, Regents’ Professor Emeritus of Public Administration at the University of New Mexico builds the case for mentoring programs as part of succession planning in this article aimed primarily at the government sector. Reeves states that the succession planning process begins with the identification of employees with the capabilities to be the next organizational leaders (Hills, 2009). He advances the concept of using KSA’s (knowledge, skills, and abilities) in the identification process (Grossman, 2011) and believes that more emphasis must be placed on skills and abilities which must be learned through on the job training and experience. In order to successfully develop those skills and abilities that have been determined necessary to meet future business needs, Zane advocates for mentoring the organizations future leaders. The mentor should act as teacher, coach, and advisor, taking personal responsibilities for the candidate’s personal and professional development of skills (Clutterbuck, 2005).


This article is a study of leadership development programs at community...
colleges in the United States. The authors are both academics from California: Audrey Reille is the director of the Center of Excellence at Mt. San Antonio College and Adrianna Kezar is an associate professor in the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California. Reille’s 2009 dissertation of the same title formed the basis for the article. The authors examined “grow your own” leadership programs at America’s community colleges through a national interview study. According to the study, 80% of community college presidents would be retiring by 2012, resulting in a significant loss of institutional knowledge and culture. Grow your own programs are very similar to leadership development programs involved in mainstream succession planning such as those suggested by Nowack, (1994) and Ingraham, (2006). In addition to identifying the benefits to the colleges that sponsor such programs, the authors highlight the key components of leadership development: mentoring, work experience like action projects articulated by Groves (2007), job rotation, special assignments, and job shadowing. Among the final observations, Reille and Kezar state that the ability to customize the elements, as well as take into account the distinct operating environments of the individual institutions, was a major benefit. One table was included that highlighted the emphasis placed on each of 15 leadership competencies and compared the emphasis given by community colleges and premier colleges.


William J. Rothwell is a professor of human resource development at The Pennsylvania State University and an author of several books on succession planning. In this 2002 article, Rothwell addresses 11 best practices that will “put success into your succession planning”. In the preamble, the author states his believe that the real goal of succession planning is to “get the work accomplished and not to fill positions” (Rothwell, 2002, p.32). When succession planning is viewed through this lens it entails a detailed analysis of the organization current position as well as future business needs (Grossman, 2011 and Reeves, 2010). Rothwell offers two charts to aid the process of succession planning. The first offers alternative ways to accomplish the work of a newly vacant position, including outsourcing the work, eliminating the work, or shifting the work to other positions or departments. The authors asks organizations to focus on how to get the work done, not just replacing the position. In the second chart the author offers organizations a template against which to measure the success of their succession planning. Completion of this chart will indicate areas for improvement in the process.


Joseph Santora, Ed.D. is the managing director of a nonprofit consulting firm, and author or contributor to numerous articles on leadership succession in the nonprofit sector. In this brief article aimed at the nonprofit sector, Santora states that the CEO and the board of directors must work together to come up with
a plan for leadership succession. This sentiment was echoed in Grossman’s (2011) article when he suggested involving the entire board of directors in a strategic level discussion about the desired qualities of the next organizational leader. Among the five guidelines the author identifies to assist the process, is giving the potential leadership candidates the opportunity to “learn to lead by leading”. Groves (2007) also suggests increased responsibilities, job rotation, and opportunities for candidates to gain a holistic view of the organization. Santora believes that the current CEO should be a mentor, role model, and coach for those candidates being groomed for future leadership (Lubar Price, 2005). Finally, the author identifies characteristics to look for in leadership candidates, such as how closely they align with the mission and values of the organization, (Adams, 2004).


Joseph Santora, Ed.D. is the managing director of a nonprofit consulting firm, and author or contributor to numerous articles on leadership succession in the nonprofit sector. In this brief article published in Nonprofit World, Santora aims his comments at nonprofit Boards of Directors, who he feels are not well prepared to deal with the issues surrounding succession planning. Deitrick and Creagar’s (2006) survey indicated that 63% of Boards had little or minimal participation in the succession planning process. The model Santora proposes is based on the acronym AIDE, and the elements are commonly found in the work of other authors, particularly Grossman (2011), Reille and Kezar (2010) and Ingraham (2006). A is for assess, in which the Board should take a look at the current situation and also what primary skills the new leader will need to achieve the strategic objectives of the organization. Identify potential internal and external leaders is the next step in the process. Develop the candidates that are selected is the third step. Santora suggest doing this through seminars, graduate courses, job rotations, etc. Finally, Execute the plan as soon as the current leader leaves in order to promote stability and maintain organizational morale.


Joseph Santora co-authors this article with James Sarros of Monash University in Australia based on a survey of succession planning practices at community-based organizations in the Northeastern United States. The primary findings of the survey conveyed through the article were that many nonprofits do not have formal succession plans (Wolfred, 2008 and Bleischke, 2006), that Boards and not CEOs tend to select successors, and that although many nonprofits give employees the opportunity to develop their leadership skills they do not promote from within in the majority of cases. The article quotes extensively from current literature, including Adams (2004) and Wolfred (2008). Several recommendations for further research are included at the end of the article including a survey of what happens to those insiders who were trained for leadership, but passed over for promotion; and a study of whether external
candidates were able to bring about the internal changes expected by the Boards that hired them.


In this case study of succession planning at a nonprofit organization with a charismatic founding leader, Santora and Sarros offer a unique look at the problems and opportunities facing similar nonprofits. As in Santora’s article from (2010), the authors present the process undertaken by a founder considering departure as an acronym. In this case they utilize DARE to highlight the four stage model used by the founder to eventually select a handpicked successor. The stages briefly are: Denial (that the founder could ever be replaced), Awakening (to the reality that they were not going to live forever, but the work needs to), Reflection (on what type of skills would be necessary for a new leader to carry on his vision), and finally Execution (handpicking of successors). The reflection stage of DARE is echoed in many authors including Dodd and Simons (2005) and Adams (2004). The primary contribution of this article to the field of study is its focus strictly on nonprofits lead by a founder and the development of a process that could be applied by other organizations in similar situations.


Joseph Sarros and James Santora partnered with Mary Ellen Caro, associate provost and dean (School of Business & Management at Thomas Edison State College New Jersey) for this article. All three academics, with research expertise in organizational leadership, seek to answer the question of whether an organization should select an internal or external candidate as their next leader. The key strength of an internal leadership candidate is the indepth organizational knowledge they possess and the key strength of an external candidate is their ability to be viewed as a change agent, highlighted also by Ingraham, (2006). The author’s research concludes that nonprofits tend to skew toward hiring external candidates as a result of their flatter organizational structures, and this reflects the findings of research by Dietrick and Creagor (2006). The authors end by suggesting areas of future research including whether the selected candidates live up to the expectations which led to their hiring.


Ellen Schall is a lawyer by training, once served as commissioner of the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice, and at the time of this article was a professor of Health Policy and Management at New York University. Schall
provides a unique look at succession planning within civic government, where many of the top appointments are politically based. The author provides strategies for public sector leaders who are committed to the concept of succession planning, but may have difficulty implementing a traditional model. The author highlights examples from the private sectors that may be useful parallels, and also discusses systemic barriers within the sector. Among the suggestions from Schall is designing a “treasurer map”, similar to Bliescke’s (2006) “treasure chest”, so that the next leaders can easily find successes from the past. She also suggests coaching, mentoring and sponsoring current staff at lower levels, to ensure that organizational and programmatic visions are carried on after the top leader leaves, as also articulated by Clutterbuck (2005) and Reille and Kezar (2010).


This Executive Transitions Series monograph, funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, offers detailed information on the succession management processes specifically applied to the nonprofit sector. The author, Tim Wolfred, is a veteran leader in the nonprofit sector and author of two studies on nonprofit leadership. The monograph is broken down into three sections. The first offers detailed explanations of three approaches to succession planning in nonprofits. The second looks closely at difficult issues that nonprofits may face when planning for succession. And the third section offers tools and resources that may be useful for nonprofits to utilize as they build their succession plans. The primary utility of this monograph is its comprehensive nature and the fact that it is written specifically for the nonprofit sector. It offers many practical steps that any nonprofit could benefit from implementing. Wolfred offers a Succession Readiness Checklist (similar to the one found in Rothwell (2002) as a handy pull-out page in the monograph, and peppers the monograph with short case studies from a variety of different organizations to highlight the points being presented. Lastly, the author provides a page of self-reflection questions for current Executive Director to consider, whether they are planning to leave their position or not.