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Using Effective Leadership Strategies in the Workplace

Succession Planning for Effective Change

A SUCCESSION PLANNING MODEL
Suggestions for a fair and equitable succession planning process

1. Communicate Possible Opportunities

- Inform employees of the possible job opportunities that are anticipated over the designated time period (e.g., next three years).

- Communicate what key competencies are needed for those jobs. That is, what level of demonstrated skills and knowledge is management looking for in potential candidates for these jobs?

- Inform employees of the succession planning process that the organization intends to use (e.g., the steps in this model).

2. Identify Who Is Interested

- Open it up. Give employees the opportunity to indicate interest in possible job openings and willingness to participate in succession planning activities.

- Clarify that participation in succession planning is not a guarantee of advancement. However, participation could help one's chances.

3. Assess Competency Readinesses

- Assess individuals' readiness to assume possible job openings for which they have indicated interest.

- That is, compare the employee's present competency level to that required of the anticipated opening. Identify competencies that need development to help ready the employee for that job or occupation.

- It is advisable to use an assessment instrument that actively engages the employee as well as the supervisor in determining the employee's competency levels.

4. Prepare Development Plans

- Together with the employee, prepare an individual development plan that outlines specific activities that the employee engages in to develop needed competencies. Include a timetable with milestones for assessing progress.

- The list of activities and timetable should be reflected in the employee's Employee Development Plan (EDP).

- In addition to individual plans, it may make sense to have a group development plan applicable to core competencies for a particular occupation level that all interested employees should participate in.

- Consultation in preparing training plans and determining appropriate activities should be available through the Personnel/Training & Development department.

5. Provide Development Opportunities

- Help the employee follow through with the development plan by setting up training options and providing realistic time to participate in the training activities indicated in the employee's development plan.

- The employee should also take personal responsibility to take the initiative and seek out activities that will help develop the targeted competencies. This display of initiative and follow through can show that the employee is serious about succession and may, in itself, be a key competency.

- Training options go well beyond the traditional classroom setting and do not have to be costly. Examples of development activities include: mentoring, job shadowing, task force participation, special projects/assignments, Internet and journal research, conferences, time-limited job rotations, video/audio tapes, committee participation, etc.

6. Formalize Eligibility

- For general service/hourly positions, employees typically must get on the appropriate job register to be formally eligible.

- Avenues to increase flexibility to formalize eligibility include:
  - Use "until further notice" recruitment announcements so that employees can submit their application at any time.
  - Use desirable, not minimum, qualifications.
  - Streamline selection procedures – avoid using complicated multiple choice exams/assessments.
  - Use the "in-training" program that allows bringing the employee in at a lower level with automatic advancement to the higher level.
  - Use competency based classification structures.

- For "exempt" positions, hiring procedures are flexible and established by the personnel office/hiring agency.

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