LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING: WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE SAY?


- **Targeted Audience:** Business Leaders and Management Teams

- **Primary Purpose:** To highlight the concept of leadership development as a core process that is aligned to every aspect of the organization. Feature several Fortune 500 companies and the success they have had with talent development.

- **Key Points to Consider:**
  
  o Traditionally, Boards of companies and organizations leave it to HR and the CEO to think about and act on succession planning. The reason behind this is typically due to the fact that “they don’t perceive that a lack of leadership development in a company poses the same kind of threat that accounting blunders or missed earnings do. That is a shortsighted view.” Companies who fail to prioritize succession planning end up experiencing a steady attrition in talent or retaining people with outdated skills.

  o Key attribute to successful succession planning: it is not a stand-alone, ad-hoc activity coordinated by HR departments; it is embedded in the very fabric of their business.

  o Tyson Foods: created a task force charged with the task of looking into the talent development plans of the company. Created a blueprint that integrated leadership development with succession planning, made sure that promising leaders would be well versed in all aspects of the company’s business and put the accountability for the succession planning on the shoulders of every direct reporter (supervisor).

  o “At companies that are good at growing leaders, operating managers, not HR executives, are at the front line of planning and development.”

  o An effective talent development program is more than just a portfolio of off-the-shelf components such as competency profiling tools, 360-degree feedback and online training. It is a carefully thought-out system that you have to develop for yourself.
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING: WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE SAY?


- **Targeted Audience:** School and district leaders

- **Primary Purpose:** To provide readers with information on the reasons behind the successes and failures of leadership succession. A focus on the issue of school leadership succession is at the heart of the article, as is the notion of the changing nature of leadership and theoretical constructs to reflect on.

- **Key Points to Consider:**
  
  - Transformational and distributed leadership is critical.
  
  - There is no silver bullet or quick fix when it comes to turning around failing schools or districts.
  
  - Focus on the importance of sustainable leadership, especially on the part of principals.
  
  - Successful succession depends on sound planning, successful employment of outbound and inbound leadership knowledge, limiting the frequency of succession events, and preserving leadership in the face of movements towards management.
  
  - Districts should begin succession planning by requiring that succession issues be incorporated into every school improvement plan. Stronger leadership cultures that make planning, selection and rotation more effective are also needed.
  
  - The popular practice of moving around principals to plug the leaks in failing schools mean that principal turnover is accelerating dramatically.
  
  - Sustainable leadership depends on more than improved succession planning. It “comes down to a battle for the soul of leadership itself.”
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING: WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE SAY?


- **Targeted Audience:** School and district leaders

- **Primary Purpose:** To highlight the results of the Spencer Foundation study of educational change conducted over three decades and to propose seven principles of sustainable leadership that have come about due to the study.

- **Key Points to Consider:**
  
  - One of the key forces influencing change or continuity in the long term is leadership, leadership sustainability, and leadership succession.

  - Definition of sustainable leadership: *Sustainable leadership matters, spreads and lasts. It is a shared responsibility, that does not unduly deplete human or financial resources, and that cares for and avoids exerting negative damage on the surrounding educational and community environment. Sustainable leadership has an activist engagement with the forces that affect it, and builds an educational environment of organizational diversity that promotes cross-fertilization of good ideas and successful practices in communities of shared learning and development.*

  - Seven Principles of Sustainable Leadership:
    
    - Sustainable leadership creates and preserves sustaining learning.
    - Sustainable leadership secures success over time.
    - Sustainable leadership sustains the leadership of others.
    - Sustainable leadership addresses issues of social justice.
    - Sustainable leadership develops rather than depletes human and material resources.
    - Sustainable leadership develops environmental diversity and capacity.
    - Sustainable leadership undertakes activist engagement with the environment.

  - Sustainable leadership must become a commitment of every school leader. *“If change is to matter, spread and last, sustainable leadership must also be a fundamental priority of the systems in which leaders do their work.”*
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING: WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE SAY?


- **Targeted Audience:** Businesses and Management Teams

- **Primary Purpose:** To provide readers with the concept that “succession planning and management should support strategic planning and strategic thinking and should provide an essential starting point for management and employee development programs.” The book also presents the reader with tools, worksheets and planning guides for creating succession planning documents.

- **Key Points to Consider:**
  
  - **Reasons for Succession Planning:**
    
    - Continued survival of the organization depends on having the right people in the right places at the right times to do the right things.
    
    - We are realizing that there are simply fewer people available to advance to the top ranks from within—“great care must be taken to identify promising candidates early and actively cultivate their development.”
    
    - When succession planning is ignored job incumbents tend to identify and groom successors who are like themselves in appearance, background and values. They establish a “bureaucratic kinship system.”
    
    - Succession planning “forms the basis” for communicating career paths to each individual, establishing development and training plans, establishing career paths and individual job moves, communicating upward and laterally concerning the management organization and creating a more comprehensive human resources planning system.

  - Rothwell also describes recent trends influencing succession planning, provides strategies and approaches to consider when developing a succession plan and offers fifteen predictions relative to succession planning and management for leaders to consider. Throughout the book, the author highlights examples of successful companies and their succession planning processes while informing the reader as to effective theories of change, leadership and best practices. Rothwell concludes by discussing the impact of technology on succession planning and provides a series of case studies to draw upon when creating succession planning documents.
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING: WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE SAY?


- **Targeted Audience:** Business Leadership/Management Teams

- **Primary Purpose:** To provide readers with insight into the importance of succession management, to discuss the significance of talent development at all levels of the system and to highlight two organization’s successful efforts.

- **Key Points to Consider:**
  
  - In order for succession management programs to be useful and effective, they must be (1) dynamic, frequently reviewed and monitored (2) transparent (3) comprehensive and integrated with other talent management initiatives (4) aligned with corporate strategy and objectives.

  - Highlights: Capital One and Education Management Corporation (EDMC).

  - Successful succession management in Capital One: Key reason-learning by doing. Frequent lateral movements and talent reviews through formal conversations with all employees are key tenets. Due to frequent transfers and reassignments based on personnel strengths, the succession management is transparent.

  - Successful succession management in EDMC: Company has focused on succession planning and management for seven years and views it as a key to the company’s growth. All managers have succession planning and talent reviews of employees as a top priority and job requirement. Employees who are interested in progression and promotion are encouraged to step forward in order to take part in a professional development program geared towards leadership development. Feedback loops are in place throughout all of EDMC’s schools. Each school is required to participate in two conference calls per year to discuss their succession management processes.

  - Key concluding point: “Succession planning should go further down in organizations. There’s really no excuse not to, and it permits companies to mine employee skills both deeper and across the organization.”