



**Introduction:**

Succession planning can be defined as the process of identifying critical job functions and skills, (current and future), selecting and developing talent in a supportive organizational culture in order to maintain the continuity of business operations. A succession plan is an insurance policy for sustainability. Often succession planning focuses on critical management roles, but for the purposes of the MSD, we will include **all** job functions. The current challenging job market has a direct impact on our service performance to all constituents, current and future. Methods for recruiting and retaining top talent has changed over the past few years due to the impact of COVID on how we do our work as well as the impact on the existing talent pool in the labor force. Our goal is to have a talented and properly trained employee pool to ensure continuity of the organization’s ongoing operations.

**Discussion:**

A rapidly aging workforce and a growing need to upskill people make succession planning increasingly important. <sup>1</sup> It is estimated that almost 1 in 5 workers are aged 55+. The World Economic Forum concluded that one in every two employees will need to be reskilled at some time over their careers. <sup>2</sup>

Some of the best practices in succession planning include having a long-term perspective, ensuring structured development of internal candidates through talent management and measuring realistic outcomes. Academy to Innovate HR provides the following model:



<sup>1</sup> Human Resources Today, Neelie Verlinden “Top 12 Succession Planning tools and Software”

<sup>2</sup> World Economic Forum, “2018 Future Jobs Report”



A culture of leadership means that there is a commitment by upper management to actively participate in identifying and developing talent and high potential employees.

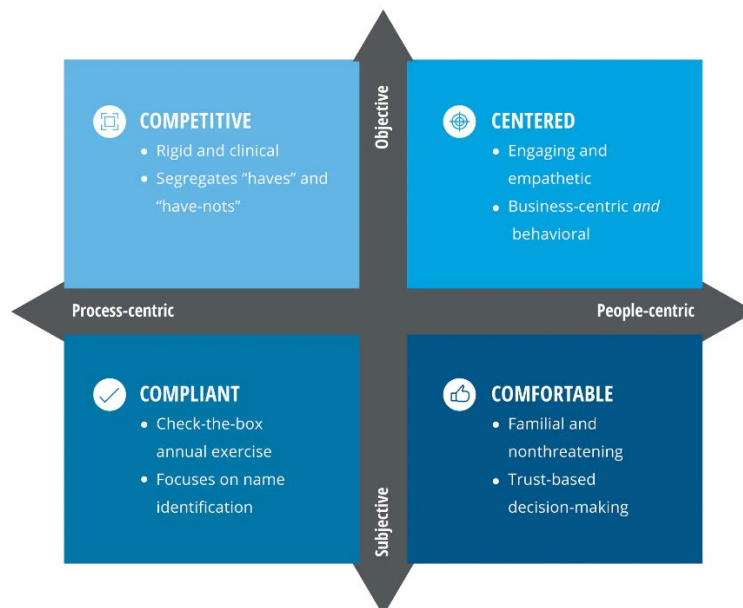
The potential gains by doing a succession plan are:<sup>3</sup>

1. A more-diverse portfolio of leaders,
2. Higher-quality decisions around promotions,
3. Enhanced career development opportunities,
4. A stronger organizational culture,
5. A “future-proofed workforce” that is better prepared,
6. Lower turnover, and
7. Greater organizational stability and resilience.

Critical roles are the positions that could be vacant for months, or if filled by a bad hire, would cause serious issues for the company. These roles can be identified through a defined job architecture, clearly defined job or function description. Some indicators are span of control, scope of function or job, impact of the function or job on the organization, and the impact of a bad hire on the organization.

Deloitte describes four approaches to succession planning:

FIGURE 1  
 Four approaches to succession planning



Source: Deloitte analysis.

Deloitte Insights | [deloitte.com/insights](https://deloitte.com/insights)

<sup>3</sup> Deloitte, Kris Rutch, Meghan Doherty, Kelly Monahan “The holy grail of effective leadership succession planning”



The approach we will utilize to create the succession plan is the approach in the top right-hand quadrant which is CENTERED. Centered focuses on a process where leadership are engaged and empathetic, business-centric *and* behavioral based in their style. Deloitte states that “A ‘centered’ approach is designed to put the people involved – both the leaders managing the process and the successors who are being considered – at the center, supported by processes that help decision-makers maintain objectivity” and “to create a succession program that leaders want to participate in, which can only happen when all participants appreciate its value and feel that it is fair”.<sup>4</sup> Their recommendation is that leaders need to take an active role in the development of successors by identifying steps to get successors ready and providing learning opportunities to develop the skills necessary to take on the role of leadership. They identified three learning elements to provide an effective environment:

1. **Experience.** Giving successors opportunities to learn through intentionally provided day-to-day experiences.
2. **Exposure.** Establishing opportunities to learn from others both inside and outside the organization and in a broader ecosystem across industries and functions.
3. **Education.** Developing successors’ expertise through formal instruction focused on building capabilities.

A succession planning model usually follows these steps:

1. Identify key positions,
2. Build skill/success profile of key functions for the positions,
3. Gap analysis of competencies,
4. Identify talent and development opportunities,
5. Creation of individual development plans,
6. Ongoing skills inventory,
7. Succession decision, and
8. Review and adapt.

### Approach:

Preparing for the future also includes potential future dynamics and the impact on the organization on the long term. We will be using the “Centered” approach as described by Deloitte. Our approach will actively involve the top leadership of the MSD as the succession planning team, who are:

- The General Manager
- Associate General Manager
- Director of Finance
- Director of Planning and Development Services,
- Manager of Technology,
- Manager of Human Resources and Payroll, and

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<sup>4</sup> Deloitte, Kris Rouch, Meghan Doherty, Kelly Monahan “*The holy grail of effective leadership succession planning*”



- The Office Coordinator.

We will be following the succession planning model identified above.

1. We will begin with the positions on the organizational chart and will have each candidate review their existing job description and update with scope of duties, required certifications, educational, skills and experience.
2. We will gather the incumbent's qualifications including any licenses or certifications they possess, and
3. prepare a "gap" analysis of either the lack of expertise and certifications or the additional experience or certifications that an incumbent may possess.
4. Department head or supervisor will meet with the incumbent to learn about their professional and long-term goals with the MSD.
5. The department head will evaluate a leadership and skills development plan with Human Resources to bring up the incumbent to minimum standards of the job, if applicable.
6. The succession planning team will evaluate incumbent's leadership potential and opportunities for advancement.
7. The management team will identify "steps" within job categories that will enable employees to work towards higher pay for achieving certifications and experience.
8. The team will create a training program for the candidates identified through this process.
9. Progress will be part of quarterly performance reviews.
10. Each year, the process will be started over again.

As part of this initial process, we determined that the existing HRIS lacked the ability to formalize the succession plan. We will explore existing software or develop an Excel database to track the plan and progress made towards goals. Also, the process of formalizing the emergency response plan has identified additional training that will be included in the job descriptions of critical functions, including but not limited to: code enforcement, plans examiners, and building inspectors. We are currently conducting a SWOT analysis that will engage all levels of our staff to identify weaknesses and growth opportunities.