



December, 2014 Volume 5, Issue 12

Number 55

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a MESSAGE from SYLVIA

SUCCESSION PLANNING at WORK

Do you know what would happen if you, as the chief executive officer, vice president, department manager, or program director could no longer perform your professional duties due to accident, illness, termination, or a decision to jump ship? Who would step into your position? How soon would the transition take place? How smoothly would it occur? Surprisingly, most leaders don't know the answers to such critical questions.

Succession planning is a mindset that every organization must adopt. It must become part of the culture. It must be an ongoing conversation. Don't fall into the trap of making assumptions that may not—or should not—be true. As a leader you have an obligation to ensure leadership continuity in both foreseen and unexpected absences. Unfortunately, my experience over three decades has been that many organizations put succession planning on the back burner until they find the time to “get around to it”. This is not a good idea. It's a recipe for chaos—or, at the very least, unnecessary confusion and pain. I urge you to view succession planning as a priority rather than an option. When you think about this, it's an essential human



SUCCESSION Planning

resources development issue and risk management strategy. Actually, it's just responsible business. Today, mobility is the norm. People come and go. You can't assume that the folks on staff now—including YOU—are going to be there next week or next year. Take a look at the feature article below to learn more about some big bang benefits to being proactive.

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FEATURE ARTICLE

5 BENEFITS OF SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession planning, like anything worthwhile in life, requires work. But when it's done well, it ultimately saves recruitment time and company money. The process provides certain opportunities that you may miss if you choose to skip or table it. Take a look:

1. Assessment of leadership needs

You, your Board, and your entire management team get to determine the knowledge, expertise, talent, skills, and experience needs of your organization over the next three to five years. This exercise can re-energize strategic players and renew individuals' commitment to your mission. Planning for position successors is nearly impossible unless you know precisely what you need.

2. Identification of high potentials

Once you clearly see what you need, you can spot employees who possess the qualities, attributes, credentials, personality, values, behaviors, and skills to fill those needs. These people are your collaborators, influencers, innovators, change agents, risk takers, and mentors. They may not be ready right now, but with proper grooming they can grow into the positions for which they are the best fit.

3. Elimination of fear

When staff become aware that senior leadership is cognizant of the ebb and flow in employment rosters and consciously is taking steps to

ensure cohesiveness, they are less afraid of whatever comes next. In general, folks remain calm. They trust that the issue is being addressed, whether or not they themselves are part of the dialogue. This trust, priceless both short and long term, builds individual and collective confidence.

4. Retention of key organizational knowledge

Each person on your staff, regardless of title or level, has historical and current knowledge and insights about your organization, its culture, its products and services, and its processes. Have you thought about that? And have you ever pondered what you lose in this regard every time someone walks out the door? You actually lose a lot. Succession planning forces you to think about how you can hang onto at least some of that valuable knowledge.

5. Avoidance of extended staff vacancies

Think of a succession plan this way: A solid, viable roadmap in place is like an insurance policy that protects your organization from inconsistent performance, ball dropping, and emotional upheaval. It also guards against overburdening the remaining employees who are already “beyond busy” during the interim period. Your goal is to move competent, capable, motivated successors into their new seats as quickly as possible.

When you plan to deal with inevitable human resources gaps, you prepare for the future. It's as simple as that. No matter where you work, staffing changes are bound to occur. Believe me, the issue is not if but when.

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What Clients Say

As a CEO of a small advocacy-focused nonprofit I was aware of the need for succession planning, at least in theory. Turnover, some of it unplanned, had taken a toll on the organization, my staff, and me. Working with Sylvia assisted me in taking what was 'on paper' (our succession policy modeled from a best practice organization) and integrating it in a meaningful way, not just deciding what happens when someone is leaving. The shift for us was using our succession plans as a tool in hiring, in supervision and in staff development, and in ensuring that it is something that occurs at all levels... not just in that 'Oh no! Someone is

leaving...’ moment. Sylvia’s assistance also helped me to identify who the ‘rising stars’ were. These people were not always identifiable by the position they currently held.

- Terri Hamrick, President and CEO, Survivors, Inc.

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Offers and Opportunities

HOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSION PLAN

After giving this careful thought, Sylvia has decided to make a very special offer to only ONE organization in the country. During a 90 minute phone session she will teach you the specific steps involved in the succession planning process and position you and your company to create a plan that is right for you. If interested in taking advantage of this opportunity, email her at sylvia@launchinglives.biz no later than midnight on December 15, 2014. Typically fees for this type of guidance range from \$500-\$1,000. Sylvia is pleased to provide it to you for \$300. If you need a succession plan and don’t know where to start, you cannot beat this special offer! Your phone session will be scheduled for January.

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RESOURCES

A BOOK WITH ALL THE BASICS

Arnie Dahlke’s *Business Succession Planning for Dummies* (2012) is available in paperback on Amazon.com for \$19.00. This author, educated in psychology, business, and organizational development, covers all of the nuts and bolts related to nonprofit and for-profit succession planning in this easy to read reference book. One of the bonuses included is a list of ten sabotaging mistakes organizations often make when writing, communicating, and implementing their plans.

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TIP

If you are the chief executive of an organization that has not yet engaged in succession planning discussions, broach the subject with your Board Chair/Executive Committee before the end of this calendar year. Earmark meetings in the first quarter of 2015 during which you will begin the planning process. If your company already has a formal succession plan in place, review it and assess its viability based upon real life experience. Communicate your observations to your Board Chair over the couple of weeks. The bottom line is that you DON'T want to go through another new year without a written succession plan. There's too much at stake.

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Where in the World is SYLVIA?

For the last nine months Sylvia has been busy writing her first book—a very personal work that she is excited to share with YOU. Ezine readers will learn more details about this project after the holidays. The publisher expects an Amazon.com launch by March 31, 2015 or sooner. Stay tuned!

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About This Ezine

The purpose of this Ezine is to: 1) Provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to personal and professional growth as well as overall career development; and 2) Invite readers to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

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businesses.” ©2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014

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About SYLVIA

Sylvia Hepler, Owner and President of Launching Lives, LLC, specializes in career development for both corporate and nonprofit executives and managers. Based in South Central PA, she specifically supports clients as they upgrade their current job performance, seek a promotion, or plan/navigate a career transition. What makes her services unique is that Sylvia helps people to cope with change, loss, and grief as they work on developing their careers. Her professional background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, nonprofit community health program start-up, program evaluation, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A certified executive coach through The Rescue Institute in Golden, Colorado and Quantum Endeavors in Chicago, Illinois (plus a participant in extensive continuing education opportunities with several coaches of national notoriety), Sylvia offers individual and group coaching, assessments, teleseminars, workshops, keynote speeches, and retreats. She also has created tangible and downloadable products that augment her coaching and speaking services.

For more information and to connect with Sylvia try:

[Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at **717-761-5457**

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Launching Lives SERVICES

Launching Lives, LLC is a full service career development company for managers and executives located in South Central PA. Utilizing a holistic approach to service provision, Launching Lives focuses on supporting clients as they create the platinum level career they desire by upgrading their job performance, seeking a promotion, or planning/navigating a career transition

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching.

Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: “What can’t I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching may be the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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