

# Employee Development Strategy for Succession Planning

## Some *Do's and Don'ts* of Developing Your Company's Future Leadership

Savvy company leaders recognize that it is the talent of their team that drives the success



of their company. One of the most important assets in your company is your “human capital.” Doesn't it make sense then that the best possible resource for creating a succession plan in your company ties directly into your employee development strategy? After all, who could be a more viable candidate to take over key roles in your company than someone you've internally groomed and developed into that position?

In previous articles, we have discussed [employee development plans](#) and here we will explore further how you can streamline that strategy into an “executive level” leadership development succession plan that will allow you to prepare and develop employees for future leadership roles in your company's growth.

Here are a few tips on *what you will definitely want to DO* as part of your leadership development or succession planning strategy:

- **Evaluate the Key Roles for your Leadership Development or Succession Plan** -- Start by identifying the key leadership positions as well as the duties, skills and abilities required to serve in those positions. Connect the dots to how the role fits into your overall corporate culture and determine likely candidates with that information in hand.
- **Create “Career Maps” for Key Leadership and Executive Positions** – Determine the logical path of succession or advancement that could create the ideal flow that drives a current employee into a future successful leadership position. Set guidelines and milestones to track progress.
- **Encourage (and even financially support) Key Employees in their Continuing Education and Training** – Consider making a real investment in your employees (and your company's) future by supporting key leadership candidates to continue their education.

This support can come through actual financial incentives, or can be as simple as providing flexible scheduling to accommodate their educational endeavors. In-house leadership and other specialized training programs can (and should) also be developed for promising candidates.

- **Develop Rewards and Incentives Systems** – One strategy for determining key candidates for future leadership roles is to create rewards and incentives that encourage employees to qualify at a certain level to be considered for your leadership training and development programs. This can be a creative, fun and even create some healthy competition amongst leadership candidates.

Here are a few things *you definitely DON'T want to do* in your succession planning and development strategies:

- **Don't Be Driven by Crisis or Come from a "Reaction" Response** – The time to start planning your succession strategies is long before you anticipate having to make that change and the last thing you want is to be performing in a "management by crisis" mode. You won't likely be able to develop a new employee into a leader overnight. So, start your talent search and development processes early. It is better to have too many options than too few.
- **Don't Assume Today's Succession Plan is Still Right for Tomorrow** – From time-to-time, you will want to reevaluate and update your plan, including the key roles and positions, and check in to determine what is working and not working. Your current plan and program should take into consideration your company's current state of evolution.
- **Don't Do It Alone...Seek Out independent Advice or Consulting** – Sometimes the best possible internal plan involves an external professional, such as a strategic consultant or advisor. A fresh set of eyes and someone who doesn't limit their thinking to "what we've always done" can be a great asset to your company as you build your succession plan to develop your company's future leaders.

Consider these ideas as you move forward with your company's succession plans and employee development strategies, always keeping in mind that now is the time to plan for the future.