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MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SELECTED FIRMS IN KWARA AND NIGER STATES, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper examines the relevance of management development to succession planning. The basic issues in succession planning as well as ways of improving the implementation of succession planning were also discussed. In carrying out this exploratory study, both primary and secondary data were generated for use. The primary sources include a structure interview technique and questionnaires; the secondary source is the extensive review of related literature. The respondents are the management staff of the selected firms randomly selected. Using the Likert five point scale the relative qualification index was determined. That is the extent of Relative Premium placed on Succession Plan, as well as Management Development as assisting in the implementation of Succession Planning. The findings reveal among others that many organizations have succession plans. That, management development assists in the implementation of succession planning. The paper recommends that, management development should be accorded the necessary attention in terms of quality and modernization; succession planning should be regarded as an issue that involves everybody in an organization and also seen as life planning.

Keywords: ***Succession Planning, Management Development, Premium, Firms, Nigeria***

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Managing Directors of organizations tend to focus on certain relevant issues when discussing succession. Some of these issues are that they want to have qualified people ready to fill key positions now and grow the business in the next three to five years, have a sufficient number of qualified candidates ready in five to ten years to fill key positions, and are also interested in what happens if in the future a government legislation affects the operation of their organization.

Many organizations are challenged by ever dynamic work environment which requires that the implementation of succession planning should be accorded adequate attention. Succession planning is about the development of management talent within all capacities, which is the process through which a company plans for and fills senior-level openings (Tillman, et al 1998; Caligiuri, 2006). Effective succession planning is a key issue in manpower development, which according to Beardwel and Holden (1994) is to develop the abilities of employees and meet the present and future requirements of the organization. An important factor here is that management development and succession planning are closely related and cannot be separated.

Objectives of the study are:

i. To examine the relationship between management development and succession planning,
ii. To clearly bring out the basic issues in succession planning,
iii. To see if organizations actually have succession plans, and
iv. To recommend ways of improvement in the implementation of succession planning in the context of Nigeria.

The study is therefore undertaken to determine if management development has effect on succession planning. In carrying out effective management development and succession planning, the consideration of certain basic issues is relevant. Having stated the research objectives, the paper is organized into following sections: literature review, research objectives, research methodology, findings and discussion, and ended with conclusion and recommendations.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The study has to do with management development and succession planning. Based on this, we reviewed the concepts of management development and succession planning as conceived by various scholars.

2.1 MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Development enhances the general potential of the employee. Development, to Griffin and DeNisi(2005), usually refers to teaching managers and professionals the skills needed for both present and future jobs. That is, rather than focusing on specific job-related skills, such as using new software or performing certain specific task and job functions, development is more generally aimed at helping managers better understand and solve problems, make decisions, and capitalize on opportunities. For example, managers need to understand how to manage their time effectively. Thus, some management development programme have a component dealing with time management. Other management development programme may help managers better understand how to motivate employees. Thus, managers do not necessarily return from development programme with a specific new operational method for doing their jobs more effectively. Instead, they may return with new skills that may be of relevance to them in a general sense at some point in the future. They may have a better understanding of how to work more effectively, how to motivate their employees better, and how to make better decisions, and they may possess a more complete understanding of how the overall organization functions and their roles within it. Development is often considered a human resource function in most organizations, but because of its strategic nature and importance, one or more senior executives are usually given specific responsibility to ensure that management development is approached systematically and comprehensively.

Although, management development has been defined in many ways, Werner and DeSimone (2006), feel the following definition captures the essence of management development as it can and should be practiced in organizations: An organization's conscious effort to provide its managers (and potential managers) with opportunities to learn, grow, and change, in hopes of producing over the long term a cadre of managers with the skills necessary to function effectively in that organization.

In similar work, French (2007) see management and career development programme as representing efforts to increase the organization's present and future ability to meet its goals by providing educational and developmental experiences for managers and all employees above and beyond the immediate technical

requirements of their jobs. However, management development in the words of Armstrong (2009) is concerned with improving the performance of managers in their present roles and preparing them to take on greater responsibilities in the future. It has been described by Mumford and Gold (2004) as "an attempt to improve managerial effectiveness through a learning process". In his own contribution, Mullins (2010), sees management development as concerning with not only improving the effectiveness of individual managers but also with an improvement in management performance as a whole. It must be integrated with the development of the organization and the associated improvement in organizational effectiveness.

Management development in view of Dessler (2011), is any attempt to improve managerial performance by imparting knowledge, changing attitudes, or increasing skills. Dessler (2011) further sees management development as a process consisting of (1) assessing the company's strategic needs (for instance, to fill future executive openings or to boost competitiveness), (2) appraising managers' current performance, and then (3) developing the managers (and future managers).

In a nutshell, management development efforts should be seen as an alignment to the organization's strategic objectives so that the right people will be available at the right time and in the right places to meet the right objectives.

2.2 SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession planning is the process most often done for upper-level management positions. It requires senior managers to identify employees who should be developed to replace them. Information generated during succession planning may not be communicated to the employee. Soderquist (1998) believes that we have an obligation and responsibility to those who work with us and those who work for us to develop them and ensure that people come into the organization, no matter one's level. To Soderquist (1998), some of us might need a wake-up call about succession planning. Most people are asleep and not thinking about tomorrow as related to their business. To him, succession planning today is not an option, it is a necessity. Succession planning must be an integral part of one's strategic plan, in allocating resources. That is where are we going to put our money, what we are going to build for the future? What Soderquist is trying to paint is that not only to plan the usage of our resource, we must also consider how we are going to get there—our target. This then leads us to some questions. How are we going to achieve the results that we would like to achieve? Who is going to get us there?

One needs to decide who in one's organization is going to carry forth the plans of the future. One should note here that, you cannot rely on tactics alone, strategic thinking is vital. Succession management, or management inventory, as succession planning is sometimes referred to, is more than who can be the Chief Executive Officer; it's about the development of management talent within all capacities.

In a similar work, Tillman, McDonough, and Soderquist (1998) state that effective succession planning is closely aligned to strategic planning applying a real strategic approach to understanding what lies ahead and what your major characteristics and qualities and fit your needs. What should be noted here is that an organization that is futuristic in its thinking should see succession planning as a must. Though, each might approach succession planning differently. As earlier on noted, succession planning is an integral part of strategic planning. One cannot think of driving a company into the future without considering who is going to take it there. The true test of progress and the best measures is a legacy translates into shareholders 'value personified in the people who succeed the individual.

Succession planning in the view of Greenyard (2001) is no simple task. Mapping out the future involves more than an organizational chart displaying the corporate hierarchy. It is essential to know which employees have the particular skills and competencies required to assume positions higher on the corporate ladder, what talents will be required in the future, and how best to train employees for management positions or hire from the outside.

It should be noted that changing organizations succeed by having the right people in the right places at the right times. Preparing employees to take on the necessary roles to help your organization requires that you develop their leadership skills. Based on its research into executive development, the center for creative leadership in Greenshard, North Carolina according to Buckner and Slavenski (2000) recommends planning structured activities that enable executives to acquire leadership skills naturally as a part of their professional growth. You would not design a succession planning programme by copying another organization's plan. The key to developing a successful programme is to ask the questions that pertain to the specific issues of your changing organization now and continue to ask these questions as your organization progresses through inevitable transformation. A good succession planning programme is always part of continuous improvement.

Many entrepreneurs dream of the time when they will be able to "pass the torch" of their successful businesses on to their children. Unfortunately, Hatten (2006), said many factors, such as jealousy, lack of interest, or ineptitude, can cause the flame to go out. Less than one-third of family businesses, according to Hatten (2006), survive through the generation, and fewer than one in ten makes it through the third generation. The major cause of family business failure is lack of a business succession in plan. However, French (2007), sees succession planning as the process of anticipating future managerial staffing needs and making plans for the development and/or recruitment of managers to meet those needs. This, in view of French (2007), has never been more important in this age of global terrorism following the september11 attacks on New York City and the subsequent bombings in Madrid and London. The plane crash in Europe in 1996, which killed Committee Secretary Brown and eleven business executives, was a pivotal event in the evolution of corporate succession planning. Some of the firms affected found they had no succession plan, while others were prepared to name successors immediately after an appropriate period of mourning. Gerald Roche, chairman of an executive search firm, as reported by New York Times (1996), suggestes that companies should have two succession plans, one based on "normal succession" and the other for disasters such as plane crashes.

Armstrong (2009), in his contribution views management succession planning as the process of assessing and auditing the talent in the organization in order to answer three fundamental questions. First, are there enough potential successors available – a supply of people coming through who can take key roles in the longer term? Second, are they good enough? Third, have they the right skills and competencies for the future? At different stages in their careers, potential successors may be ranked in order, such as, (a) being ready to do the next job now, (b) being ready for a certain higher-grade position in, say, two years time, (c) being ready for job rotation at the same level, and (d) being ready for lateral assignments on temporary relief or project work. Succession planning is based on the information about managers gleaned from supply and demand forecasts, talent audits and performance and potential reviews. *In some large organizations in which demand and supply forecasts can be made accurately, highly formalized succession planning processes exist based on the sort of management succession schedule illustrated in figure 1.* Management succession planning, to Mullins (2010), aims to ensure that a sufficient supply of appropriately qualified and capable men and women is available to meet the future needs of the organization. Such people should be available readily to fill managerial or supervisory vacancies caused through retirement, death, resignation, promotion or transfer of staff, or through the

establishment of new positions. The issue here is that, succession planning should be related to the overall corporate strategy.

Most firms in the view of Dessler (2011), call the process of deciding how to fill executive jobs succession planning. That is the ongoing process of systematically identifying, assessing, and developing organizational leadership to enhance performance. To Dessler (2011), succession planning entails three steps: identifying key needs, creating and assessing candidates, and selecting those who will fill the key positions. Other names for succession planning include replacement planning, workforce planning, progression planning, succession management and succession inventory.

At this juncture, one could then conclude that succession planning is having the right person in the right place at the right time for the right job. It means knowing your people, knowing their strengths, experience and career goals, and knowing where they need development. That is succession planning helps organizations know what to do if a position becomes vacant. In fact succession planning is life planning. If you do not have a succession plan, you will be either forced to sell or close your doors.

MANAGEMENT SUCCESSION SCHEDULE					Department:	Director/manager:		
Existing managers						Potential successors		
Name	Position	Due for replacement	Rating		If promotable to what position and when?	Names: 1st and 2nd choice	Positions	When
			Performance	Potential				

Figure 1: Management Succession Schedule (Armstrong, 2009, p. 587)

2.3 SUCCESSION PLANNINIG VIS-A –VIS MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

In the case of management development, the notion of succession management according to Werner and DeSimone (2006) can be seen as a way for succession planning to better serve organizations in a rapidly changing environment. One of the main properties of succession management is viewing the goal of the process as one of creating a cadre of individuals who have the competencies needed to work as part of a senior management team. Succession planning and management development, both, according to Stern (2005), stem from the employer's strategy, vision, and personal plans. For example, strategies to enter new businesses or expand overseas imply that the employer will need managers who have the skills to manage these new businesses. Development is usually part of the employer's succession planning.

Allied to management development to succession planning should be a programme of planned career progression. This should provide potential managers with—(a) training and experience to equip them to assume a level of responsibility compatible with their ability; and (b) practical guidance, encouragement and support so that they may realize their potential, satisfy their career ambition and wish to remain with the organization

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is basically an exploratory one designed to examine the relevance of management development to succession planning. Both primary and secondary sources were used in obtained information from both management and senior staff of selected organizations. The primary sources include: a structure interview technique and questionnaires; the secondary source is the extensive review of related literature.

The respondents are the management staff randomly selected from organizations in Kwara and Niger States. Using the Likert five point scale, the relative qualification index was determined. Two hundred and sixty (260) copies of questionnaires were administered, 203 copies were however returned.

Likert five point scale was also used in determining the Relative Qualification (RQ_i) Index of their responses. That is the extent of Relative Premium placed on Succession Plan, as well as Management Development as assisting in the implementation of Succession Planning.

The relative index of the responses was given. The relative qualification index (RQI) was determined using the following formula:

$$\text{Relative Qualification Index} = \frac{\text{Attained Summation of } P_iU_i}{\text{Attained Summation}}$$

$$\frac{\sum_{n=i}^{n} P_iU_i}{n \times (4+3+2+1+0)}$$

P = Subjective importance of the variable
U = Number of respondents
n = Number of different years respondents have been with their organizations

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Tables 1, 2 and 3 give the summary of returns from the respondents from each of the industrial sectors covered in the study.

Tables 1: Numbers of Selected Organization/Respondents

S/No.	Years spent in the organization	Small Firms		Medium Firms		Large Firms		Total
		Kwara	Niger	Kwara	Niger	Kwara	Niger	
1	<5	3	2	3	4	3	3	18
2	6-10	5	3	6	8	7	11	40
3	11-15	6	5	10	8	9	7	45
4	16-20	6	7	9	11	10	7	50
5	>20	8	5	11	9	11	6	50
Total		**28**	**22**	**39**	**40**	**40**	**34**	**203**

Source: Field Survey 2011

As demonstrated in table 1 above, 50, 79, and 74 respondents are from small, medium, and large firms respectively. The number of years spent in the organizations by the respondents, ranges from less than five years to above twenty years. The point here, is that the respondents spread across in terms of experience.

Table 2: Availability of Succession Plan in the Organization

S/No.	Years spent in the organization	Small Firms				Medium Firms				Large Firms				
		4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1	0
		0				0								
1	<5	3	2	0	0	3	4	0	0	4	2	0	0	0
		0				0								
2	6-10	3	5	0	0	11	3	0	0	15	3	0	0	0
		0				0								
3	11-15	8	3	0	0	12	6	0	0	14	2	0	0	0
		0				0								
4	16-20	11	2	0	0	17	3	0	0	16	1	0	0	0
		0				0								
5	>20	12	1	0	0	19	1	0	0	17	0	0	0	0
		0				0								
Total														

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Extent of Premium :

4 = Very strongly agreed 3 = strongly agreed 2 = averagely agreed 1 = rarely agreed 0 = Disagreed

Table 3: Relative Index of Premium placed on Succession Plan by Organization

S/No.	Years spent in the organization	Small Firms	Medium Firms	Large Firms	All Firms
1	<5	0.36	0.48	0.44	0.43
2	6-10	0.54	1.06	1.38	0.99
3	11-15	0.82	1.32	1.24	1.13
4	16-20	1.00	1.54	1.34	1.29
5	>20	1.02	1.58	1.36	1.32

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Table 3 gives the Relative Index of Premium placed on Succession Plan by Organization. Respondents with more than 20 years experience in the three categories of the organization rank first (relative index of 1.32), in confirming that their organizations have succession plan. The next in the ranking (relative index of 1.29) is the respondents with between 16-20 years experience in their organizations. The category, that follow in the ranking are respondents with between 11- 15 years (relative index of 1.13). An important issue here is that all categories confirm that there exist in their organizations succession plan. In that, we neither record negative nor zero score.

Table 4: Management Development assists in the implementation of Succession Planning

S/No.	Years spent in the organization	Small Firms	Medium Firms	Large Firms
		4 3 2 1 0	4 3 2 1 0	4 3 2 1 0
1	<5	3 2 0 0 0	3 4 0 0 0	4 2 0 0 0
2	6-10	5 3 0 0 0	12 2 0 0 0	17 1 0 0 0
3	11-15	10 1 0 0 0	14 4 0 0 0	14 2 0 0 0
4	16-20	12 1 0 0 0	19 1 0 0 0	16 1 0 0 0
5	>20	13 0 0 0 0	20 0 0 0 0	17 0 0 0 0

Source: Field Survey, 2011

Table 5: Relative Index of Premium placed on Management Development as assisting in the implementation of Succession Planning.

S/No.	Years spent in the organization	Small Firms	Medium Firms	Large Firms	All Firms
1	<5	0.36	0.48	0.44	0.43
2	6-10	0.58	1.08	1.02	0.89
3	11-15	0.86	1.36	1.24	1.15
4	16-20	1.02	1.58	1.34	1.31
5	>20	1.04	1.60	1.36	1.33

Source: Field Survey 2011

Table 5 gives the summary of Relative Index of Premium placed on Management Development as assisting in the implementation of Succession Planning. The ranking is similar to that in table 3. The only difference is score. Respondents with more than 20 years experience in the three categories of the organization rank first (relative index of 1.33), in confirming that their organizations have succession plan. The next in the ranking is the respondents with between 16 and 20 years experience in their organization (relative index of 1.31). The category, that follows in the ranking are respondents ranging from 11- 15 years (relative index of 1.15). An important issue here is that all categories confirm that Management Development assists in the implementation of Succession Planning. In that, we neither record negative nor zero score.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study reveal that many organizations have succession plans. It is confirmed that the organizations have documents that could be regarded as succession plan. Although most of them did not use the name, 'succession plans'. Other names used for succession planning are workforce planning, progression planning, succession management, and succession inventory.

The interaction with majority of the respondents shows that many organizations are prepared for tomorrow. They do not want to be overtaken by surprise. This is reflected in the way the acquisition of new knowledge, ideas, and skills are being encouraged.

Majority of the respondents believe that management development assists in the implementation of succession planning.

It was seen that forward looking companies are positioning themselves to emerge victorious from the slow economy by correctly identifying young talents and developing future leaders. From the research it was gathered that most human resource managers of leading companies build succession planning systems that routinely evaluate top performing employees to cultivate tomorrow's most effective leaders.

The research shows that succession planning systems build leadership pipelines through formal structure and integration with all functional areas. Interaction with the respondents during the study shows how employees of a leading financial institution follow a four-stage development planning, ongoing dialogue with superiors and performance.

Some of the firms spot future leaders in the organization by examining each employee's personal values, achievement record and interest in advancement. This approach, which highlights personal values over competencies, allows the firm to develop talents, and experienced employees eager to take on increased responsibilities in their organizations.

Follow-up interviews/interaction with some the selected respondents in Adamawa and Kwara States, outlines multiple strategies for identifying potential leaders, matching executives with the right positions, and aligning succession plans with an organization's culture and growth goals.

It was gathered that in order to emerge victorious in today's volatile market, forward-looking organization should educate and train employees on a continuous basis. This emphasizes relevance of management development to succession planning.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This paper examine management development vis-a-vis succession planning. The key feature of management development is development of employees and management staff pool for effective and efficient use in the future. This goes a long way in assisting the implementation of successful planning. Succession planning builds leadership pipelines through formal structure and integration with all functional areas. Succession planning is a process of developing talents to meet the needs of the organization now and in the future.

The research reveals that many organizations have succession plans because they all believe in preparing for tomorrow. They do not want to be overtaken by surprise.

It was also gathered that in order to emerge victorious in today's volatile market, forward-looking organizations should educate and train employees on a continuous basis. This emphasizes relevance of management development to succession planning.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It should be noted that the business environment is dynamic so also the continuous improvement on ways of tackling issues. The research reveals certain important issues that need to be taken into consideration for succession planning to achieve the desired result. Based on the findings, the following are the recommendations:

Different circumstances demand different leadership skills and management qualities to prosper and to grow. That is where succession planning takes real vision. Effective succession planning is closely aligned to strategic planning-applying approach to understanding what lies ahead and what major characteristics and qualities fit your needs. Successful companies as the research reveals do not subscribe to traditional thinking or current trends. They do what is right in the situation or circumstance they expect to confront in the future. There are no hard or fast rules for effective succession planning, one cannot project where tomorrow will come from.

Make sure certain succession candidates are intelligent. Style is nice but substance is essential, there is nothing more dangerous than an articulate fool. Education is not a substitute for intelligence, but as intelligent and well educated candidate certainly make's one desirable.

Make sure succession candidates are free. If they are going to add value to the company, they are going to have to disrupt the status quo. If you keep doing what you are doing, you will keep getting what you are getting no added value.

Make sure succession candidates genuinely like people. Great leaders understand and appreciate their people. They strive to continually earn their respect and loyalty because they care.

Make sure succession candidates understand the fundamentals and all aspects of the entire process of the business, from the producer to the consumer. They do not have to be an expert in all areas, but have to know enough to know what they do not know. Make sure they are honest and trusted by their peers.

Balance is important. Unless extreme measures are called for do not consider an extremist, at least not for a long period of time.

One last thought about succession is that those who fail to prepare generally, prepare for an inevitable future failure.

Management development should be seen as inseparable twin brother of succession planning and should be accorded the necessary attention in terms of quality and modernization.

Succession planning should be regarded as an issue that involves everybody in an organization. Succession planning should be seen as life planning. It should be seen as asking oneself what you and I want to do for the rest one's life. That is, if one does not have a succession plan you will be either forced to sell or close your doors.

Key leadership criteria should be identified. It is essential that an organization knows what skills and competencies it needs to succeed. No one group can identify all these traits. As a result, successful organizations usually rely on focus groups and task forces to better understand core competencies and personnel requirements.

Future leaders should be identified and motivated. An organization must have a system in place for finding star employees and ensuring that they get ready for key positions.

Most employers have traditionally focused succession planning on the top levels of management; there is the need to expand their plans to a broader employee base. As this will lead to help identify high-potential employees, which can further strengthen organizational succession plans.

Results should be measured and desired behaviour reinforced. The only way to know whether a succession plan is effective is to put systems in place to track results, and have human resources managers review the overall effectiveness of the programme. Then the organization must develop systems, such as reward-based compensation, training and appropriate assignments, to motivate workers and push them along desired development paths.

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