



## **SUCCESSION PLANNING**

It is no secret! CEO's and other executives know that one of the most important Key Performance Areas for them is succession planning. No doubt they are also aware that the process of identifying potential leaders is neither simple nor straightforward.

Evaluating a candidate for a senior-level position is not easy purely because leadership is so multifaceted. It is a strong recommendation that the candidate be interviewed by a panel consisting of the individual's manager and other senior managers whom might have worked with the candidate at some stage. Leadership has a lot to do with character and behavior and therefore many of the questions posed and observations done should focus on these aspects, i.e. does he / she give credit to others; how firm is he / she on his / her values and standards?

His / her Communication ability is also extremely important! As we know, leadership is et al, about influencing people and being persuasive. If your candidate does not have the ability to build effective relationships through rapport building, chances are good that he / she will not have the ability to motivate and inspire a team effectively. The ability to reason and analyze situations is paramount to his / her success. However, having said this, superior problem-solving capabilities can also mask a deficiency in long-range, conceptual, or strategic thinking. Many operational experts are good at tackling well-defined problems, however leaders must also be adept at handling problems that are nebulous or ambiguous, such as how to reposition the same product when a competitor enters the market. The effective leader must also have the ability to decide when and / or whether a product should be discontinued or not.

And then, let's not forget the importance of hands-on coaching in the development of the candidate. Sadly many leaders try to develop others through close mentoring relationships. However, many excellent leaders prefer to select strong people and

delegate fully to them, providing them with various opportunities to grow through their own experiences and make their own fair share of mistakes. This approach is a combination of a Style 2 and Style 3 in the Situational Leadership model – S2 being coaching and S3 is supporting. This, in effect, means that the leader of today has adopted a brand new approach to developing people which makes Style 4 – Delegation – more of a reality in the workplace – a style which most leaders can actually implement with far greater success than before.

Coaching at this level, can be divided into three categories: Business Coaching, Executive Coaching and Operational Coaching and the leadership of any organization would really benefit greatly from exploring coaching and its value-add component to any organization. This is **the** way to fast-track a career (which many organizations are desperate to do due to BBBEE pressures), to **ensure** strategic excellence at top level and to foster a healthy corporate culture and a motivated workforce.

It is also a fairly common practice for executives to tend to favor those with backgrounds, experiences and characteristics similar to their own. The danger in this is that promising candidates are often overlooked due to race, gender or socio-economic reasons, (or other), because they never held a comparable position at a similar company. Effective leaders must guard against this practice.

It is very unfortunate that many companies tend to focus their energies on developing leaders rather than on accurately identifying them in the first place.

At TMS GAUTENG we assist many organizations with succession planning and leadership skills development with exceptional results. We have a holistic approach to the organization and we ensure that the expected strategic outcomes of the organization are always considered. Call us today for a consultation on how to achieve operational excellence through effective leadership and planning.

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