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The topic of succession planning has come and gone in industry literature as the issue of main concern over the last 5-10 years. With the advent of economic distress in the U.S., fractured pension systems and the ongoing debate between the wisdom of defined contribution versus defined benefit plans, the movement of the oldest contributors to our workforce numbers have gained greater spotlights and attention now more than ever in the history of the U.S. workforce. Coupling this now with intense advancement in longevity and medical intervention that sustains and prolongs healthy living, the debate in some work locations is now around 'how long' the most senior contributors will be indeed be on the payroll as opposed to concerns about a mass exodus. The real issue however, beneath all of this debate is how best an organization can really plan for the transfer of critical knowledge and sustained exemplary performance at all levels of its workforce. The answer quite simply is that it can accomplish this by simply embedding the transfer process within each job description. As such within each transfer of assignment, new recruitment or internal promotion, the expectation (and time) is designed and provided for in terms of mentoring and coaching of multiple successors for integration of talent into ever evolving levels of the workforce. We have listed below the quick steps for doing this from a very practical perspective:

1. Within each job description include a 'knowledge/technical transfer' skills block.
2. Embed this component inside the performance management system in use within the organization.
3. Design measurable criteria for each job description, effecting commitments in writing from each employee as to how they will accomplish this during each annual cycle of performance;
4. Include demonstrated measures of this type of performance as mandatory for any merit increases/future promotions;

Lift up the internal team members as recognized talent coaches and allow them to teach these methods on company/organization time to further strengthen the ability of all employees to achieve this advanced skill set in terms of knowledge acquisition.