

Thoughts and Observations for Succession Planning in 2012 and Beyond



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January 2012

We are most fortunate to work with a myriad of clients who have already launched a successful new business year and in so doing what a great opportunity to embrace all of the profiles of new beginnings that organizations often take for granted. We had many U.S. organizations close completely this year through January 3 for an extended holiday break. In so doing, I had the opportunity to meet with many clients as they were in-between projects or finishing last minute efforts for the calendar year end. Many were engaged in key knowledge management efforts to support either formal or informal succession planning work that will be underway in their organizations in 2012. Here is what I learned from a broad spectrum of private, public and not for profit sector leaders who are shaping the work of their organizations for the next five years and beyond:

- a) Organizations are expecting another shift of talent as the economic recovery continues to move forward, albeit slowly. In so doing, these organizations are cautiously willing to invest time and resources in current talent. Many are unsure that if they do this that this 'current talent' will be available inside the organization in the next fiscal cycles for advanced placement in new opportunities. Movement of key performers has become the expected norm for most industries.
- b) Succession planning is now shifting to 'project planning with key talent'- in other words the use of many individuals being sought for key roles that are willing to be as fully cross trained as possible to be truly utility players.
- c) The best succession planning is based upon full scale competency development - not simply archiving present knowledge and re-writing job descriptions that often lead to a replay of past use of stale ideas and little in the way of future innovation.
- d) The best selection processes are including extensive behavioral interviewing to determine the full range of skill sets needed in order to meet the thresholds for success in every role.
- e) Success is being defined by intensive and long standing relationships with customers and constituents, not just by the ability to sustain revenues and funding sources. 'Impactful human connections' are replacing products as the most cherished outcome for a majority of the high performing organizations that weighed in during my conversations with leaders.

We wish you an incredible and deliberate New Year. May your work produce great efforts in the most meaningful ways.