

# WHAT IF?... A QUICK AND EASY GUIDE TO SUCCESSION PLANNING

SUCCESSION PLANNING

People's views of work are changing. The old idea of a job for life is long gone and, because of our funding arrangements, the Community Sector cannot offer that luxury. Perhaps it's a generational phenomenon, but many young employees don't want to be tied to a single organisation or job for more than five years. In addition, considering the mature age makeup of the NT Community Sector, management provisions need to be made to replace key retiring members of staff.

Who will assume many of the soon-to-be-vacant leadership and key positions? Does the NT Community Sector have enough experienced practitioners and leaders to fill these vacancies? It seems that many Community Sector organisations are so overwhelmed by the daily grind, the funding and reporting requirements, that they are caught up in 'managing the moment' rather than planning for the future.

The sector needs to look beyond the near term to identify and prepare suitable employees to be future leaders and key personnel.

Succession management strategies must engage valuable, experienced and mature-age employees in a process of consciously passing on information, knowledge and skills that they have gained through their exposure to the job. Simply briefing the next person in the job about the status of work under way will not be sufficient.

More broadly, this means putting in place strategies to facilitate and encourage knowledge sharing and transfer from employees who are planning to leave the workplace to those who will need to apply that knowledge. The broad aim is to ensure that knowledge is shared as an integral part of workplace practice and not as someone is actually poised to leave. These strategies can include but are not limited to:

- ★ mentoring and coaching by departing employees
- ★ job sharing between employees who may be staying and those who may be leaving
- ★ handovers through planned arrangements such as phased retirement
- ★ ongoing investment in staff retention and development
- ★ cross-training employees to foster knowledge transfer and broaden skill sets
- ★ have open and honest career discussions with your employees
- ★ ensuring that all processes and procedures are comprehensively documented
- ★ targeting and developing existing employees who can move up in the organisation

## DID YOU KNOW?

**33% of respondents to the NT Community Sector Staff survey identified that they were 51 years or over and that they will be retiring sometime over the next few years.**

Source: NT Community Sector Staff Survey 2007

**IF YOU THOUGHT THAT SUCCESSION PLANNING WAS SOMETHING ONLY DONE BY HUGE MULTI-NATIONALS WITH MASSIVE BUDGETS THEN THINK AGAIN ... IT'S A NECESSITY FOR ALL OF US!**

# **NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE SUCCESSION PLANNING – 5 SIMPLE STEPS**



**STEP 1.** Identify key areas and key positions

**STEP 2.** Identify capabilities for key areas and key positions

**STEP 3.** Identify interested employees and assess them against capabilities

**STEP 4.** Develop and implement succession and knowledge transfer plans

**STEP 5.** Evaluate effectiveness

Points to consider in the development of your succession plan are:

- ★ A definition of the developmental experiences that your organisation requires for its leadership and key positions.
- ★ An exploration of various options to support your employees' career goals, including acting assignments, stretch assignments, mentoring arrangements, job shadowing, courses and language training.
- ★ Development of learning plans that are linked to the appropriate knowledge, skills (including language) and abilities required for current and future roles.
- ★ Identify people who can be developed and put in place a plan to help them progress within the organisation.
- ★ Conduct discussions with your employees regarding the various possible means of passing on their corporate knowledge.
- ★ Encourage employees to work in teams and cross-train employees to foster knowledge transfer and broaden employees' skill sets.
- ★ Explore whether employees who are planning on retiring within the next few years are interested in participating in a mentoring arrangement or phased retirement – where the employee gradually moves into retirement rather than leaving abruptly.
- ★ Explore options that would allow you to bring in a new employee while the incumbent remains in the organisation in order to facilitate knowledge transfer.
- ★ Consider offering professional development courses or establishing a Professional Development and Apprenticeship Program to identify and develop talent in key areas and among designated groups.

## **...ANOTHER TAKE**

**43% of participants in the recent NT Community Sector interviews – identified they did NO Succession Planning at all – 23% mentioned that they would be willing to give it a try!**

Source: NT Community Sector  
Organisation Interviews 2007

**A PESSIMIST SEES THE DIFFICULTY IN EVERY OPPORTUNITY.  
AN OPTIMIST SEES THE OPPORTUNITY IN EVERY DIFFICULTY.  
A REALIST SEES BOTH AND PLANS AND ACTS ACCORDINGLY.**