Meeting The Succession and Leadership Development Challenge

By William J. Rothwell

Opening Poll

How many of you would say that your university center is:

- *Fully prepared* for the changes confronting the center's workforce over the next few years?
- *Somewhat prepared* for the changes likely to confront the center's workforce over the next few years?
- *Unprepared* for the changes likely to confront the center's workforce over the next few years?
- *Clueless* about what I am talking about?

Overview

Many university centers for excellence in developmental disabilities education face the challenge of dealing with the potential loss of high percentages of leadership and professional staff in coming years due to an aging population in the U.S. generally and in academic institutions specifically. To meet the challenge, current leaders must develop individuals for possible future responsibilities while, at the same, attempting to preserve institutional memory that may be lost as seasoned veterans at all levels retire. And, they must meet that challenge within the unique organizational context of university settings.

Overview

What are some thoughts about how that could be done? What are some practical strategies, tools, and resources that could be used to plan for those purposes? This keynote session will address these questions.

Take Aways from the Session

- A model to guide systematic succession and development
- A model to capture institutional memory
- A list of resources on succession planning and leadership development
- A checklist to compare a succession effort to best practice

Organizational Scheme

I plan to talk to you today about:

- Meeting the Challenge for the Future in the Unique Context of Academic Institutions

- Models and Practical Guidance for Systematic Succession and Knowledge Capture: What to Do and Where to Start

- What Next?

- Questions and Answers

Part I:
Meeting the Challenge for the Future in the Unique Context of Academic Institutions

Overview of This Part

This part:

- Defines *succession planning* and *workforce planning*

- Distinguishes *succession planning* from *workforce planning*

- Defines *technical succession planning*

- Reviews key assumptions that guide succession

- Examines key issues in academic settings that influence succession decisions that do not influence other settings

What Is *Succession Planning*?

Succession planning:

- Is the process of pinpointing key needs for intellectual talent and leadership throughout the organization over time and preparing individuals for present and future work responsibilities needed by the organization

- Does not mean *replacement planning*

What Is *Workforce Planning*?

Bechet (2002) defines *workforce planning* as "the process of identifying and addressing the staffing implications of business strategies and plans" (p. 7).

Source: Bechet, T. (2002). *Strategic staffing: A practical toolkit for workforce planning*. New York: Amacom.

How Is *Succession Planning* Different from *Workforce Planning*?

- *Succession planning* is the process of preparing, and developing, individuals for the future

- *Workforce planning* involves examining the match between the numbers and types of people available to do the work and the number and types of people needed to do the work in the future

What Is *Technical Succession Planning*?

Technical succession planning is the process of capturing, distilling, and transmitting institutional memory from one generation to the next in practical ways.

Key Assumptions Guiding Succession

- Avoid the "like me" fallacy
- Promotion is not a reward for past success
- Promotional decisions are based on the individual's ability to do work at higher levels of responsibility and not based on a track record of success at a current level
- Not all competencies can be developed
- Up is not the only way
- Succession programs can meet many needs—and increasing diversity is one of those

Key Issues in Academic Settings That Influence Succession Decisions

- Academic settings have complicated labor markets—administrative, faculty, civil service, and unionized
- Many promotions occur *across* institutions rather than *within* (up in) the same institution
- Although higher education is the number one industry *most affected* by an aging workforce, higher education is the one *doing the least about it* of any industry in America
- Promotions into administration are not always prized in the same way that other types of promotion are prized
- *What do you think these key issues might mean in higher education and, more specifically, in your centers?*

Part II:

Models and Practical Guidance for Systematic Succession and Knowledge Capture: What to Do and Where to Start
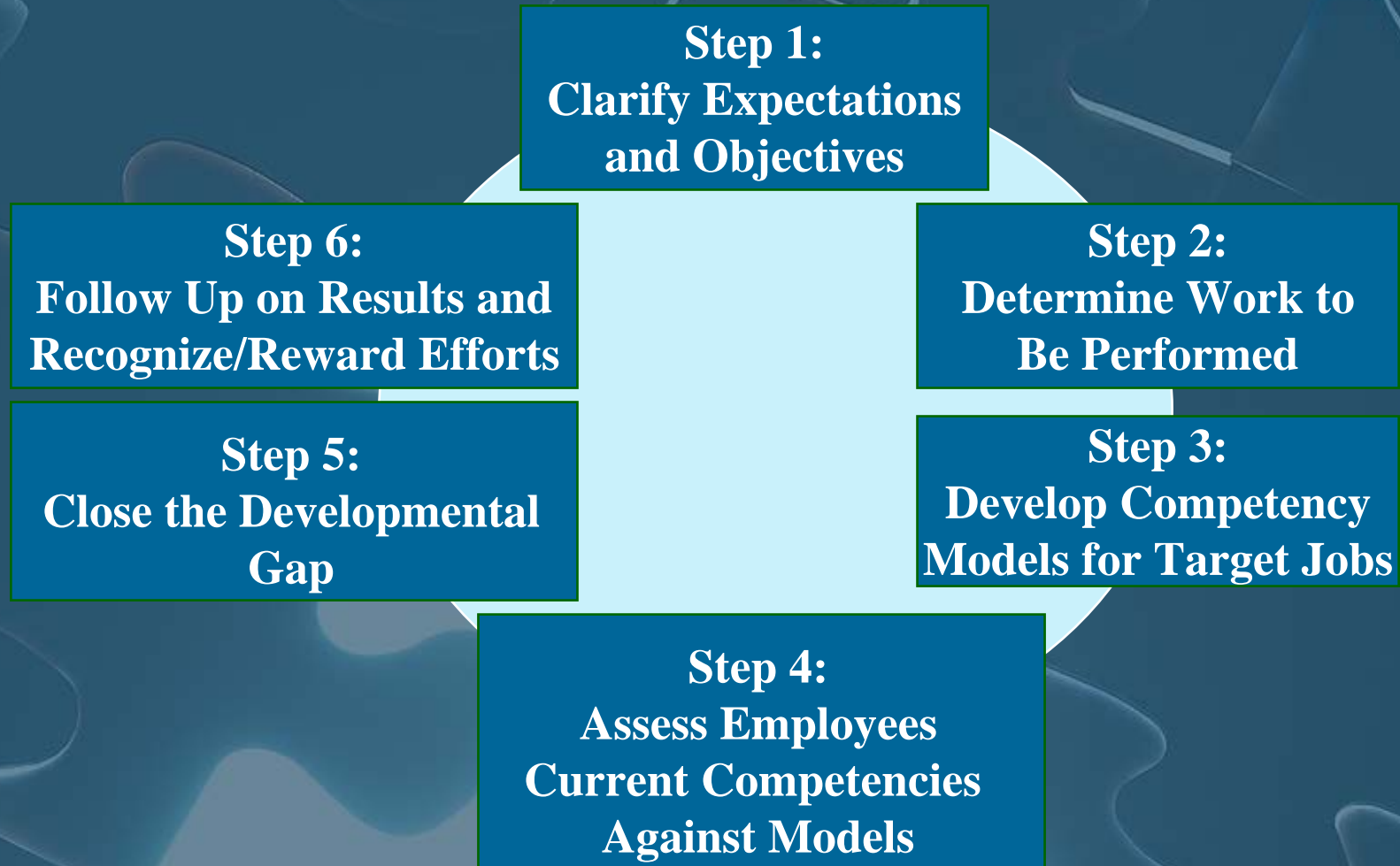
Overview of This Part

This part provides:

- A model to guide systematic succession and development

- A model to capture institutional memory

A Model for Succession Planning and Management

Step 1: Clarify Expectations and Objectives

Step 2: Determine Work to Be Performed

Step 3: Develop Competency Models for Target Jobs

Step 4: Assess Employees Current Competencies Against Models

Step 5: Close the Developmental Gap

Step 6: Follow Up on Results and Recognize/Reward Efforts

A Model for
Technical Succession Planning

Step 1:
Get Commitment

Step 6:
Follow Up on Results and
Recognize/Reward Efforts

Step 2: Clarify Key
Work Processes

Step 5:
Distill and Make the
Special Knowledge Available

Step 3:
Identify Who Possesses
Special Knowledge

Step 4:
Find Ways to
Capture the
Special Knowledge

Part III:
What Next?

What Next?

*What are **your** thoughts on the following questions*:

- How should you and your center get started in succession planning?

- What are some missteps to avoid?

Some Thoughts on Getting Started

- Make the commitment to act
- Make others aware of the issue
- Take steps to become more knowledgeable about what to do—and how to do it
- Consider what will happen if no action is taken
- Move forward like we always do in academe— start with a committee or task force!
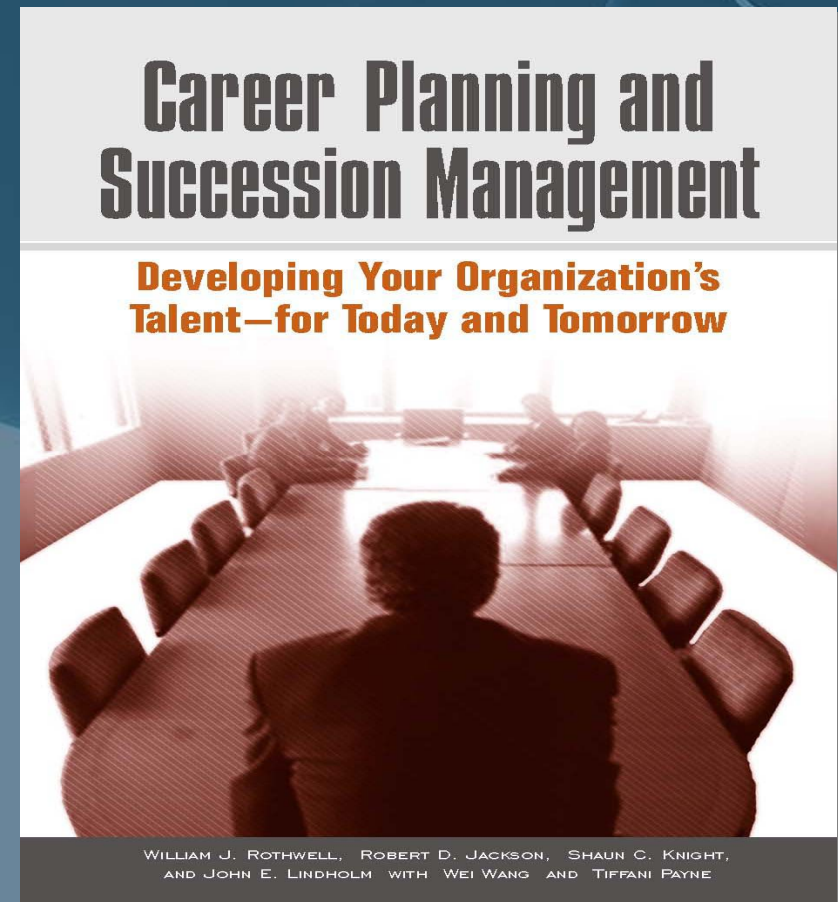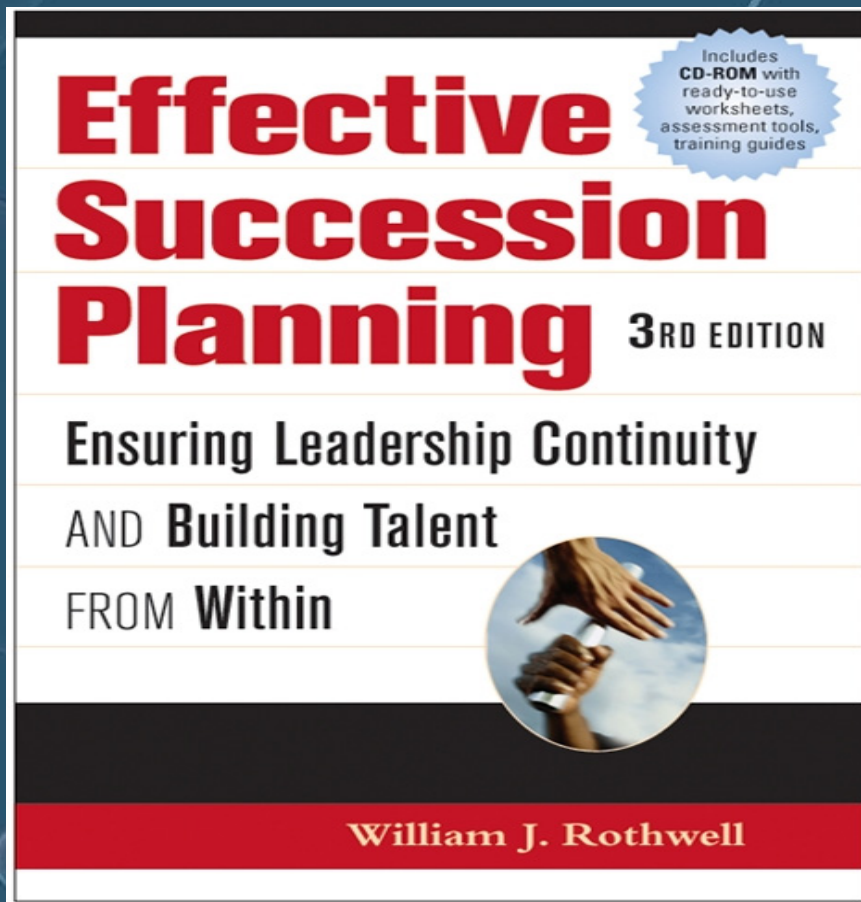- *What other things can you think of?*

What Are Some Missteps to Avoid?

- Do nothing!
- Put the wrong people on the task force or committee to move forward
- Allow yourselves to be paralyzed by those who do not wish to do anything because they fear losing control
- Ignore issues of diversity
- Fall into the traps of the "like me" dilemma or regarding promotions as entitlements for past good works
- *What other things can you think of?*

About the Speaker:
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Author of numerous books. A few examples—and what to read next:

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Part IV:
Questions and Answers

Questions and Answers

- *What final questions do you have?*