

Succession Planning Service Description

Overview

Due to the variety of challenges faced in today's globally competitive environment, successful organizations must be keenly aware of their leadership talent and how to best develop that talent. Strong leadership is critically important for business productivity and viability. Thus, many business leaders today acknowledge the value of succession planning as a means of fortifying the bench strength of their companies and organizations. Corporate America has realized that succession planning provides long-term organizational and leadership sustainability, and now Boards of Trustees and Presidents of colleges and universities are embracing the concept and practice as well. In the past, the pipeline of identified and mentored leaders within institutions has been less than robust. The future of academic institutions depends on the ability of the current executives to ensure adequate leadership continuity through the constant identification and building of talent from within. **Stevens Strategy** offers assistance to boards and presidents that seek to increase their senior leadership stability through the incorporation of succession planning processes into their overall business structure.

Succession Planning Process

Succession planning is the process of identifying and developing high potential employees, and preparing them for top leadership positions within an organization. For succession planning to exist within the academy, intentional and systemic elements must be established. These efforts generally require an investment of time, energy and resources in planned change. As such, institutions that seek to strengthen their leadership continuity must incorporate deliberate succession planning activities into their business strategies.

Using a planned change model, **Stevens Strategy** will assist the board, president and senior management team in developing a Board Policy on Succession Planning with four critical dimensions: (1) culture, (2) talent, (3) leadership, and (4) organization, and then we will work with the president and his/her management team to develop and implement the policy.

In Stage 1 of this service, we engage the institutions executive team in the examination of the need for change as it relates to leadership continuity. This typically requires a quantum leap from the status quo in institutional thinking, which can only be accomplished with full executive team participation and engagement. We then help the institution verify gaps between the current and desired states of leadership continuity by assessing current problems and practices within the organization. Attention will be focused on identifying the most important problems the organization is facing, and review how those problems are influenced by existing succession planning practices or lack thereof.

In Stage 2, **Stevens Strategy** works with the institutions to explore and understand the independent and interdependent nature of the four critical dimensions of a Succession Management System – culture, talent, leadership, and organization – by which its existing human resource processes and priorities operate. The premise is that alignment must be present among the institution's four dimensions for the organization to produce effective succession planning practices. Understanding how these forces interact and relate to

leadership continuity is critical to fashioning a sound policy for Board approval. This policy will include the creation of a Succession Management System Champion, whom **Stevens Strategy** will train to lead and manage the Succession Management System with a strategic integration approach that manages risk and organizes talent development activities effectively. These skills will aid in developing future programming strategies and managing current operations.

Once the Succession Planning Policy is approved by the board, in Stage 3, **Stevens Strategy** helps the institution implement the new succession planning process. These efforts will be tightly aligned with the business strategy and the organizational culture of the institution, and then integrated with other talent management processes. Because there is no universal approach that works best across all organizations, **Stevens Strategy will ensure that the institution effectively matches their succession strategies to their business strategies.**

Developing Talent

The institution must build the leadership capacity needed to stay productive as well as competitive to ensure tomorrow's business environment. Therefore, during Stage 3, **Stevens Strategy** will work with institutional leaders to develop a four step program to identify and develop high potential talent within the organization:

1. Conducting a Needs Assessment
This diagnostic process determines the competencies believed to characterize effective leaders in the institution. Whether conducting interviews or reviewing published information, the logic assumes that if the right leadership skills and knowledge can be identified, a comprehensive program can be established to educate and equip high potential employees with these competencies. In addition, data will be gathered on individuals to understand the existing talent pool. The **Stevens Strategy** program will assess the talent pool of your organization on two dimensions – past performance and future potential. An annual appraisal of the success of individualized development plans will also aid in identifying high potential employees.
2. Establishing Objectives and Outcomes
This step will identify objectives for the development program, and expected outcomes for high potential employees based on the competencies established in Step 1. **Stevens Strategy's** program will identify how the institution will assess the extent to which program participants achieve these outcomes and the evidence required to make those assessments.
3. Design and Delivery of the Training Program
The design of the training involves making choices from among a wide variety of techniques. Methods range from classroom lectures, 360-degree feedback, simulations, case studies, experiential exercises, rotational assignments, on-the-job training, coaching, and action learning projects. **Stevens Strategy** will assist the Succession Management System Champion in (a) determining which methods are best for the organization, (b) creating an implementation plan for each development program, and (c) selecting and training program facilitators.

4. Evaluation of the Training Program

This final step assesses the training to determine whether the institution met its objectives. To evaluate the training effectiveness, **Stevens Strategy** will establish assessments that focus on four key areas of importance: (a) participants' reaction, (b) participants' learning, (c) participants' behavior, and (d) system results.

Support

Stevens Strategy offers full support for clients interested in developing a Board policy on succession planning and/or establishing talent development interventions. Our specialists are trained in organizational change and succession management practices.

Timeline

This full service is designed to be implemented over a 10-12 month period. Length of individual components of the service will be determined on a per client basis.