

Section 4.4
Succession Planning

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INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to provide an introduction to the process of succession planning. While it is hoped that this document will provide a starting point for the process of succession planning for municipal government, it is by no means intended to be an exhaustive resource on the topic. Further details may be found in a host of other works including books, journal articles and web sites.

Succession planning is a process which can provide a framework for anticipating future staffing needs in the short term, mid and long term, and provides the methodology for meeting those staffing needs.

Change is inevitable, and municipal administrators are faced with constant change - a valued assistant takes a job with another municipality, or an admired colleague decides its time for retirement. As public organizations face staff turnovers, the result can often be a reduced workforce with a more limited pool of knowledge, expertise and experience. Preserving that knowledge and expertise becomes of paramount importance especially considering that the pool of potential employees who have the specific skills and experience required for the demanding job of municipal management is small indeed. A well thought out staffing plan allows for the preservation and transfer of knowledge and expertise, and permits the sharing of experiences and lessons learned on the job with the next generation of employees.

In Nova Scotia, it has been commonplace to use outside recruitment as the main strategy for filling vacant management or leadership positions. This is because the pool of potential administrators and managers is small and the tendency has been for young educated people to travel to other provinces to find good jobs. According to a recent survey carried out by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC), competition for quality professionals to fill public sector positions is going to become increasingly difficult for the public sector at all levels, and in all provinces. Municipalities throughout Canada will be facing stiff competition for qualified people from other levels of government, and many municipalities in Nova Scotia will not be in a position financially to attract good people to their communities to work in local government. Inter-municipal partnerships and other forms of municipal co-operation may help to alleviate these difficulties especially for smaller municipal units. *For more information on partnerships and inter-municipal co-operation see Section 4.4 Intermunicipal Partnerships.*

Canadian public executives expect to focus their management attention on four major themes over the next several years:

- **Human resource renewal (234*)**
- **Service delivery (95*)**
- **Performance and accountability (93*)**
- **Rethinking government, governance and policy (90*)**

**IPAC Public Sector Management Issues Survey 2002 * number of times referenced in the responses*

Coupled with the traditional tendency for young well educated Nova Scotians to travel to other provinces to find good jobs, there is a growing need for municipalities to work together to attract these young professionals to the public service in this province, and to keep them here when they have gained valuable experience on the job.

Succession planning can help to reinforce the pool of potential municipal managers within the province, and lessen the need to look beyond our borders for the expertise we need. Used in conjunction with the Association of Municipal Administrators certification initiative, it can help in the development of a provincial pool of skilled workers, and can work to the advantage of all municipalities and the province in general.

1.1 What is Succession Planning?

Succession planning is the process of systematically identifying, assessing, and developing employee talents to meet the future staffing needs of an organization, (*Richard Shore, City of North Vancouver, presentation to BC Recreation and Parks Association annual symposium, Dec 06, 2002*).

Succession planning requires more than just a basic organizational chart showing the various departments and providing an outline of who is in what job. Succession planning is an ongoing, dynamic process which can provide a methodology for developing and maintaining a strong and capable workforce with employees that possess the skills and competencies necessary to meet the future needs of municipal government. A succession plan can aid in aligning an organization's goals with current employees, and help identify the skills and

Succession Planning - A Definition

What succession planning can do for a municipality

competencies required to achieve those goals.

In the past it was a rather simple process where the CAO or Council would decide who should be slotted into senior management positions. Those decisions were often based on hunches, instinct, or intuition. In most instances, the person slotted to be next in line knew in advance that he or she was being groomed for the job. Sometimes they even felt that the job was theirs by right because they were next in line.

Undertaking a succession planning program can offer a number of benefits to the municipality. In addition to the development of a pool of skilled workers, it can also provide a coordinated strategy for identifying key personnel who can be helped to maximize their potential by means of a well thought out career planning process.

In addition to making the municipality a more attractive employer to prospective and current employees, the introduction of such an initiative can have the added benefit of keeping valuable, skilled and ambitious, career oriented individuals in municipal government by providing opportunities for growth and advancement. Succession planning programs offer the opportunity for challenging and rewarding career possibilities, and provides an opportunity for empowering current employees by offering a venue for them to develop the skills and qualifications they might need to develop which may allow them to move into more senior administrative positions.

How do you know if you need succession planning in your municipal organization? Any number of indicators provide the evidence that a succession management strategy may be in order.

“The most critical issue facing the City of Vancouver and most public organizations over the next few years is the attraction, recruitment and retention of talented public service professionals. Over the next decade, a significant portion of the public sector will retire, and the need to recruit and train new professionals has been evident for a number of years. However, the public sector is challenged by on-going misconceptions and outdated visions of public sector career opportunities.” Vancouver City Manager, IPAC Issues Survey 2002

How do you know if you need a succession management strategy?

Answering a few basic questions about your current organization might provide some indication as to whether succession planning is right in your circumstance.

- Are there potential candidates to fill the vacancy if one of your key

personnel leave because of retirement or to take employment elsewhere?

- Are there knowledgeable staff to fill in for management personnel while they are out of the office?
- Are senior management people expected to take cell phones with them to conferences and meetings so that the office can maintain constant contact?
- How are vacations handled? Is the CAO required to phone the office from time to time to answer questions and solve dilemmas while on vacation?

Of course the answers to some of these questions might indicate that senior management should learn to delegate more, but it also could mean that if something should happen to the CAO or other senior management, the organization could be in serious trouble with no one to fill the gap.

Often organizations, and especially small municipalities, may come to rely on a few key people who have been in their positions for a number of years. These individuals have extensive experience and expertise in what they do. These are the people who are relied upon to have the information in a crisis, or who have the expertise to get the job done with a minimum of hassle. A succession management strategy will help to identify personnel who have the potential to become the backup for key positions. A well-managed knowledge transfer can provide continuity and prevent the loss of pertinent information should an important staff person leave the municipality for one reason or another.

In many cases potential candidates may not have all the necessary skills or training to fill in for superiors, or to assume vacancies in senior management positions. But with a well thought out career development plan, mentoring, support and encouragement from more senior personnel, these people can be nurtured to eventually play a more senior role in municipal government.

1.2 Benefits of succession planning

Developing potential leaders can pay off in many ways for both the employee and the municipality.

Briefly, some of the benefits for the employee include:

- improved communications;

Benefits to the employee

Benefits to the municipality

- improved morale;
- enhanced ability to manage stress;
- improved effectiveness;
- practical advice in identifying and attaining goals;
- an opportunity for skills development and directed training;
- challenging and rewarding career opportunities;
- growth in personal and professional self-confidence;
- improved working relationships; and
- challenging and rewarding career possibilities resulting from professional development.

For the municipality, there are a number of benefits from including succession planning in the strategic plan:

- improved staff morale;
- improved staff effectiveness;
- minimized disruption in the face of change;
- enhanced knowledge transfer;
- enhanced ability to offer employees challenging and rewarding career opportunities;
- ensured source of potential replacements for key leadership positions;
- increased promotion of municipal government as a valued and vital career path; and
- informed staff as to their value to the municipality and their encouraged career and personal development.

To make succession planning work for NS municipalities one option might be to adopt a province wide or regional approach

Succession planning for Nova Scotia municipalities may not only result in the selection of candidates for specific positions or vacancies, but may also result in a reservoir of experienced and well trained personnel that all of the province’s municipalities can access when they have a need for skilled professionals. Developing such a reservoir can provide career opportunities for professionals in the province, enable municipalities to hire from a pool of skilled workers that they are familiar with, and reduce the need to look outside of the area for the skills and expertise required. An important offshoot of efforts such as these will undoubtedly be the recognition that local government administration can be a viable career choice for young professionals.

William C. Byham, Ph.D. Chairman and CEO of Development Dimensions International (DDI), a leading-edge Human Resources consultancy that specializes in the identification and development of leadership talent has done a considerable amount of writing on the

topic of succession planning and in particular in the value of acceleration pools. The following is based loosely on a number of articles by W.C. Byham.

It seems at times that municipalities in Nova Scotia are competing for skilled workers. Hard feelings may result from employees seeking and accepting better opportunities in other neighbouring municipal units. An “Acceleration Pool” such as described above can minimize the “prima dona” pitfall of having one person singled out for advancement, and limiting the opportunities for other employees who may be trying to advance their careers in local government.

Such an acceleration pool of talent can be developed so that all municipal units may have access to skilled or trained employees. How complex a program such as this might become would be entirely up to those municipalities who choose to participate. It might simply be an agreement to provide opportunities for participants to gain experience through sharing expertise between municipalities by means of mentoring, or it might include an exchange of employees between municipalities so that the participants can gain more varied experience.

One advantage of such a program would be that if one “pool” participant, or “intern” does not work out, there will be other participants in the program who can be brought along and developed.

An internship program, where participants can gain work experience in their own municipality and/or other participating municipalities, can provide not only an opportunity for employees to gain experience, it can also provide a municipality with an opportunity to demonstrate the quality of life and other benefits they have to offer, and promote their municipality as a desirable place to live.

The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) and the Association of Municipal Administrators (AMA) have been advocates for the training and certification of municipal administrators and for the development of a national program for local government administration. Succession planning is a natural offshoot of this type of coordinated effort.

Succession planning then, is the process of developing the skills, abilities, and potential of current and future employees, and prepares them for advancement, while ensuring a return on the training investment the organization makes in its employees.

The planning process

2.0 The planning process

Before diving headfirst into the succession planning process, there needs to be some preliminary planning done in order to determine the parameters. Decide upon how extensive the process will be for your particular circumstances. Start off by choosing a manageable scope, something that can be accomplished within a reasonable time frame. You are probably already doing some things that can be included in the succession planning process such as offering training to employees who choose to enhance their knowledge or skills. Build upon current practices, and track results as you go along, but be careful not to get bogged down on the mechanics of the process. Flexibility and adaptability are key to a successful effort.

2.1 Scope

The scope of the succession planning program may simply be identifying key positions and determining if each position can be filled in-house, if it requires particular specialized training or certification, and where and how participants may acquire the training and skills they might require.

The scope of the succession planning process may encompass the whole of the municipal structure or certain aspects of the municipal workforce. It may be preferable to begin with one area such as front office, and expand the process to other departments as you build.

Questions to consider during the planning process

In determining the scope of the program, it will be beneficial to be clear about the time horizon you might be working with. Are there situations in the foreseeable future where an employee who has unique program knowledge or skill sets is approaching retirement? Do you have time to plan ahead or is it critical that this employee's position be covered as soon as possible? Is there time to bring along a successor and allow them an opportunity to gain the knowledge, experience or training that they require? Perhaps you have no choice but to recruit from outside if the situation is critical. A succession planning program

may make the next situation less urgent.

What is the future for your organization? Does your municipality have a clear vision for the future? Is there a strategic plan that you can tie the succession planning process to? *For more information see Section 6.1 on Strategic Planning.*

PLANNING CHECKLIST:

- *Are your objectives clearly conveyed and understood by all stakeholders?*
- *Do you have the support of key personnel and managers?*
- *Does your planning team have representatives from all the major stakeholder groups?*
- *Is your action plan consistent with the strategic, operational and budget plans?*
- *Have you identified the potential obstacles to a successful program?*
- *Have you determined strategies to minimize the impact of potential obstacles?*
- *Have you developed a comprehensive communications strategy to ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed? This is a good way to give credit and well earned praise for accomplishments and goals that have been achieved.*

Some questions to consider when deciding upon the scope or context of the planning process might include:

Growth:

- In what direction is your municipality headed? Is yours a growing municipality with increasing demands for services by a growing population, or is your population base stable?

Organization:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of your organization? Can you identify areas that might need competencies that are not currently found in your employees?

Leadership skills:

- Are there organizational cultural issues such as staff morale or personality issues that need to be dealt with, and do current or potential leaders have the skill sets required to deal with any such issues that may be emerging?

Community expectations:

- What are the expectations of your residents and visitors to your community? Are you meeting their needs currently or is there some aspect that has not received the kind of attention that might be demanded in the near future?

Technology:

- How is technology impacting your organization? Do your staff have the skills and training they will need to deal with new technologies coming online? How will new technology change the way your employees work and deliver services?

Federal/Provincial:

- What impact do federal and provincial economies have on your municipality? Increased fiscal pressures at all levels of government are requiring that fewer employees are required to carry out more roles. Are there ways that you can prepare for such demands through succession planning? For example, can current employees receive additional training in order to assume a broader role in your organization?

Legislation/Regulation:

- How well prepared is your municipality for the impact of possible legislative changes? Changes to regulations concerning drinking water resulting from the Walkerton Inquiry, for example may have caused some additional training requirements or qualifications for municipal water department personnel.

Services:

- What are the emerging trends that might impact the expectations of your residents as well as your employees? Are there services that may need to be outsourced or discontinued? Are there functions or services that are not currently being offered that you might have to consider in the future? How might those services or functions be enhanced, consolidated, or changed? Will changes in service require significant changes in the skills required of your municipal staff?

Structure:

- Does your current structure make sense given future requirements?

The answers to these questions can be explored through a variety of venues such as your municipality’s strategic plan, the annual financial statements, research and studies done by organizations such as the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC), the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM), and the Nova Scotia Association of Municipal Administrators (AMA). Benchmarking with other municipal organizations within the Province of Nova Scotia and municipalities in other provinces, as well as the private sector, can also provide valuable insight into how succession planning is handled in

**Step 1: Identify
Key Positions**

other areas. *For more information on benchmarking see Section 6.5 Benchmarking.*

Once you have established the parameters of succession planning for your organization, whether it is going to be small scale in one or two departments, or you plan to work within a particular region to pool human resource potential with neighbouring municipalities, then it is time to get down to the actual work of analyzing what your needs are and what you will be accomplishing next.

3.0 The process

3.1. Identification

The process of succession planning begins by identification. It is important to identify those positions in particular that are integral to the smooth operation of the municipal organization. Such positions include, but may not be limited to, the CAO or Clerk Treasurer positions. Department heads, as well as other key leadership positions may also be included in the plan.

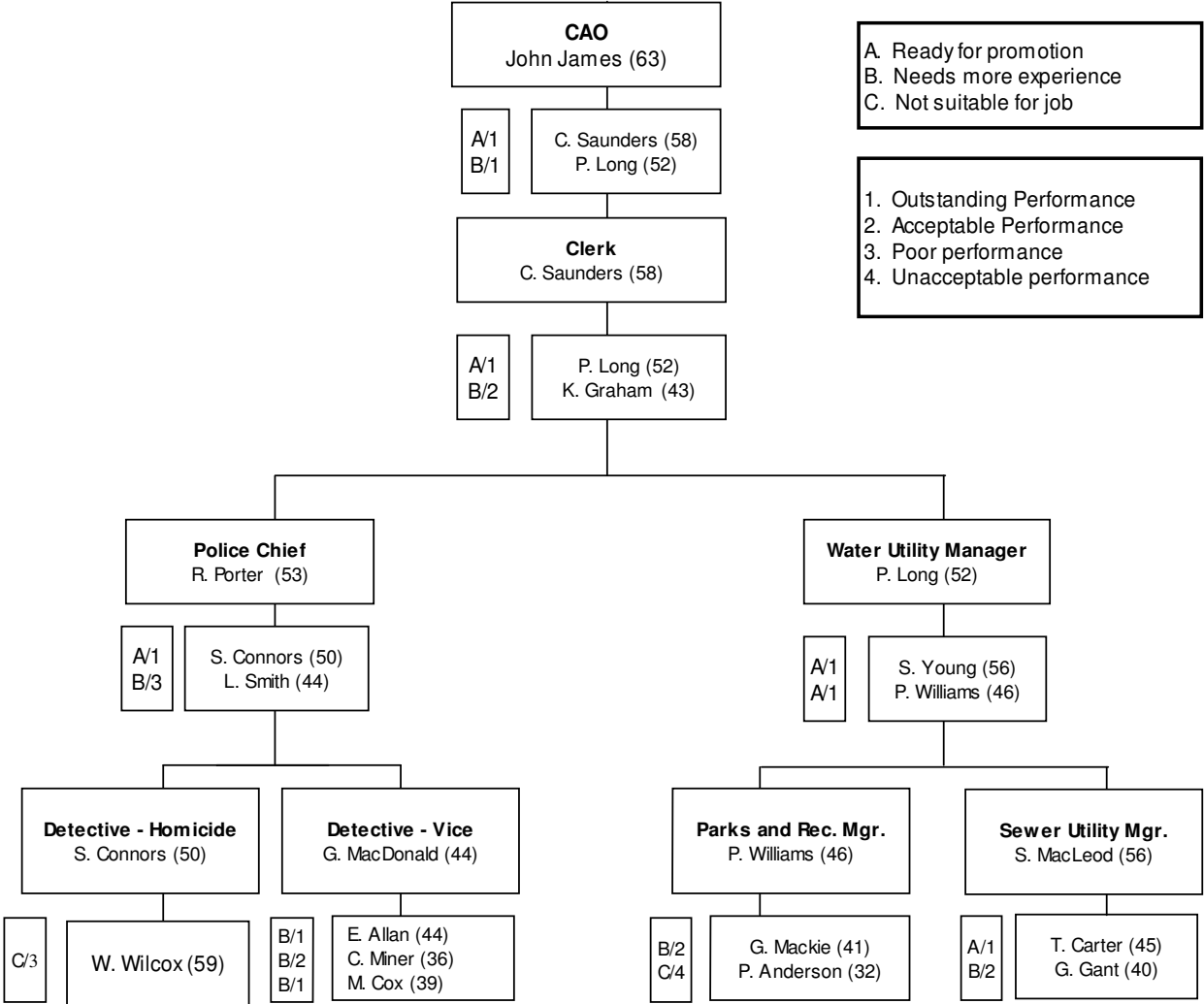
The decision on how far down the organizational structure to go with succession planning depends upon the strategic plan and requirements of each individual municipality. It is most effective when succession planning is linked to other staff development and recruitment policies.

Replacement Charts

Replacement charts are visual representations of who will replace whom in the organizational structure. The chart below depicts the kind of information usually found in a replacement chart. Such charts contain a brief summary of the status of each candidate. Replacement status is arrived at by reviewing a candidate's present performance, and promotability.

The following charts have been adapted from Canadian Human Resource Management: A Strategic Approach by Hermann F. Schwind, Hari Das and Terry H. Wagar of St. Mary's University.

A Partial Replacement Chart for a Municipal Government



A. Ready for promotion
B. Needs more experience
C. Not suitable for job

1. Outstanding Performance
2. Acceptable Performance
3. Poor performance
4. Unacceptable performance

A replacement summary is a listing of possible replacements for each position and outlines a candidate's strengths and weaknesses. The replacement summary contains a good deal more information than the replacement chart enabling a comparison between candidates for a position.

A Replacement Summary for the Position of CAO		
Replacement Summary for the position of: CAO Incumbent: Age: Probable vacancy: Reason: Experience: Salary grade:	John James 63 Two years Retirement 8 years 99 (\$86,000)	
Candidate #1 Current position Current performance Promotability Training needs Age Experience	Clyde Saunders Clerk Outstanding Ready now for promotion None 58 4 years	Note: Clyde's performance evaluations are always exceptional. Clyde has acted in the CAO position a number of times and has proven himself capable in all duties including policy decisions, union negotiations etc.
Candidate #2 Current position Current performance Promotability Training needs Age Experience	Peter Long Water Utility mgr. Outstanding Needs more experience Training in municipal financial management prior to promotion 52 5 years	Peter's performance has been outstanding. He has been innovative and has managed to trim maintenance costs by redesigning the maintenance schedules to coincide with non peak usage. Although successful, he needs more broad experience.

Step 2: Review current job descriptions

3.2 Review job descriptions

Once the key positions have been identified, it is essential that comprehensive job descriptions are drawn up that outline those skill sets or key competencies required to carry out the duties and responsibilities of each position, in addition to the education and/or training required for each.

With a comprehensive job description for each position, it becomes much easier to identify any gaps in the training or key competencies required for each position. Developing comprehensive descriptors for each position is critical to a successful succession planning strategy.

If the municipality does not have a comprehensive or current set of job descriptions or does not have an HR department or person to complete this work, the municipality may wish to consider securing the services of a consultant to carry out this work.

3.3 Key Competencies

Step 3: Develop initial set of key competencies

James Kierstead describes the origins of competency profiling methodology in his article “Competencies and KSAO’s”. Mr. Kierstead records that the methodology was pioneered by Hay-McBer company founder David McClelland, a Harvard University psychologist in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s. McClelland defined competency variables which could be used to predict job performance while not representing bias toward any race, gender or socioeconomic factor. These performance indicators gave rise to the competency movement as an alternative to intelligence testing as a predictor for an individual’s job performance. The outlined indicators are called KSAO’s (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities (or aptitudes), and Other characteristics).

The Canadian Public Service *Standards for Selection and Assessment* defines the core competencies as “qualifications” consisting of several elements:

What are key competencies?

1. Knowledge
2. Abilities / skills
3. Personal suitability
4. Experience
5. Education
6. Occupational Certification
7. Official Language Proficiency

Byham and Moyer group key competencies into three categories:

BEHAVIORAL:

What a person says or does.

Results show up as good or poor performance. The most obvious indicator.

KNOWLEDGE:

What a person knows .

Knowledge about municipal government, policies and procedures, etc.

MOTIVATIONAL:

How a person feels.

How they feel about their community, their municipality, and relationships with other levels of government.

Kierstead, James. Competencies and KSAO's, Canadian Federal Public Service Research Directorate, 1998.

The New York State Department of Civil Service in their companion guide to *Our Workforce Matters* defines a competency as:

“ a characteristic of an employee that contributes to successful job performance and the achievement of organizational results. These include knowledge, skills, and abilities plus other characteristics such as values, motivation, initiative, and self-control.” New York State Dept. of Civil Service. Companion Guide to Our Workforce Matters, June 2002

This definition of competency encompasses the idea of identifying those attributes required for an employee to successfully meet the requirements of a position. Whether this definition for competency is adopted by individual municipalities is not important. The important thing is that everyone in the organization agrees upon the definition that is adopted.

Examples of Key Competencies

The Alberta Municipal Affairs Municipal Internship Program has identified a number of key competencies that are felt to be integral to local government managers. The competencies Alberta uses include:

- **Management of staff effectiveness** - coaching/mentoring, team leadership, empowerment, leading by example, motivating.
- **Policy formulation** - ability to engage others in identifying issues and outcomes, pro-active policy development, contributes to council effectiveness.

- **Service delivery** - functional and operational knowledge of key municipal services, operational planning, delivery of services to customers, and quality of result.
- **Strategic management leadership** - initiative, vision, creativity and innovation, bias for action, facilitate change.
- **Democratic responsiveness** - encouraging local democracy and citizen participation, working with council to achieve their objectives.
- **Organizational planning and management** - budget, financial analysis, system-wide thinking, organizational structure and human resources management.
- **Communication** - advocacy, presentation skills, media relations and interpersonal skills
- **Integrity** - personal and professional.

Competencies such as these provide a means to identify those capabilities, attitudes, attributes and behaviours that are required to meet not only the current staffing needs of the municipality, but also the future needs as priorities and strategies develop and change. Competency models also allow the individual to focus their efforts to develop the particular skills and abilities required to eliminate the gap between their own current capabilities and those identified as required for the position they aspire to secure.

Self-Assessment

The Nova Scotia Government has developed a self-assessment questionnaire which enables individuals to assess their personal strengths and identify development opportunities. The assessment tool consists of a number of statements describing how work is to be performed. Respondents are asked to rate themselves on how often or how well they perform in the outlined manner. The Nova Scotia Government self-assessment questionnaire is included as **Appendix A** at the end of this section.

Core Leadership Competencies

These “behavioral descriptors” are grouped into clusters called the “Core Leadership Competencies” which are categorized as follows:

- Communication
- Ethical Behaviour
- Knowledge
- Development of People
- Client Orientation
- Achievement Orientation
- Team Orientation

3.4 Focus Groups

Step 4: Focus Groups

Identify members of the management team for focus groups and/or expert panels to review and validate the key competencies you have selected. This focus group can expand on the competencies, or pare down the list to the essentials.

Leadership qualities:

People are born with, or develop certain skills and abilities early in life that allow them to become natural leaders in whatever group or organization they might choose to become involved in.

Although some of these skills are inherent, most can be developed with some training and acquired experience. George B. Cuff, a recognized expert in the field of local government, lists a number of leadership behaviours that are most valued in successful municipal leaders:

An expert’s opinion on leadership qualities

- the ability to communicate on a multi-level basis;
- adherence to the highest standard of integrity;
- willingness to hear the views of others regardless of how divergent these are from the leader’s own views;
- the ability to search for and find areas of compromise;
- sense of what the community would see as important;
- willingness to stand alone in spite of the heat created by others;
- pragmatic approach to issues;
- an understanding ear to those who others would set aside;
- a vigorous defense of what is right;
- deference to others who are senior and more experienced in the matter while being prepared to differ;
- compassion and willingness to forgive quickly and without

reservation;

- persistence bordering on tenacity in pursuit of a course;
- ability to bring out the best in others;
- sufficient strength of character to accept blame for failures, and to deflect praise to others when success is evident, and
- confidence, and the ability to communicate this to others.

Other qualities that Mr. Cuff describes as assets to aspiring leaders include:

- the ability to quickly discern issues and principles at stake;
- the willingness to take a personal stand based on what is morally right;
- an understanding of what would appear to constitute the public will;
- the strength of character to resist the nay-sayers of an issue; based on a defensible position, and
- the foresight to see the longer term impacts of the issue, and the willingness to stick with the decision in light of an alternative that would be immediately more acceptable, but an unwise choice in the future.

When comprehensive job descriptions are completed and available for the succession planning process, the next phase of step one is to identify those individuals within the organization who might already possess some of the training and/or the skills required to fill the identified positions. It might also be valuable to identify those employees who, although they might not have the skills and training, have those inherent personal characteristics that can be developed to maximum potential through training and experience.

3.5 Individual identification and assessment

**Step 5:
Identification
and assessment
of candidates for
development**

This may be the most difficult aspect of the succession planning process, identifying individuals with the potential to become future leaders in your organization. As previously mentioned, this was something that in the past was often done by hunches or intuition. This approach to succession planning is no longer appropriate given the complexity and skill sets required for administering a municipality in the 21st Century. Only by developing and relying on well thought out and appropriately reviewed and refined core competencies, can a municipality fairly identify those individuals who possess the potential to become leaders in local government.

Should participation be open to all employees?

Assessment may be carried out on a top down basis, with management observing and assessing employees for development potential and selecting those who appear to have the qualities and capability for further development. This might seem to be an elitist way of selecting future leaders, but the bright career oriented individuals appreciate being noticed, recruited and developed.

Who should be included?

Participation in a succession planning strategy can also come from the bottom up, with employees empowered to opt-in to a development program and to take a hands on approach to their individual career development and advancement.

A combination of the two directions may provide opportunities for a more successful strategy, particularly for employees who may not outwardly demonstrate the competencies, but who are highly motivated and determined to accomplish higher goals for themselves.

By allowing employees to voluntarily participate in career development, there is less chance for alienation from co-workers due to a perceived “teachers pet” situation. Allowing self directed career development also enables employees to advance as far as they are capable and motivated to go with their education and training. This approach may lead to the identification of unsuspected potential within the municipal organization. An employee may self-identify as having the ambition and interest to pursue a lengthy process of education, training and development in order to pursue a career in management that might otherwise have been overlooked.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER STRATEGIES:

- *Document the processes, procedures and methods for performing the work.*
- *Document the processes, methods, tools used and techniques employed by people with special skills and responsibilities.*
- *Have retiring employees serve as mentors to other employees for a period of time before their expected retirement,*
- *Appoint a successor to a retiring employee to “shadow” the incumbent for at least three months prior to the expected retirement date so the successor will have the opportunity to learn first hand.*
- *Put a communications system in place that will encourage the sharing of information of all aspects of the organizations operations and share experience across departments.*

**Step 6:
Mentoring and
coaching**

3.6 Mentoring and coaching

The New York State Department of Civil Service has done a considerable amount of study on mentoring and has produced a report in 2002 that contains valuable information on mentoring and coaching. This report is available in pdf format from the New York Department of Civil Service website. Some of the information contained in that report is included in this section but readers are encouraged to obtain a copy of the report for their own use.

Usually, mentoring (or coaching) involves an experienced individual who is fairly advanced in their career, and a person in an earlier stage of their career. The actual process of mentoring can basically be whatever the individuals involved want it to be.

Informal mentoring

Mentoring may be as informal as two people meeting over a cup of coffee to discuss issues as they arise, lend support when required, or offer advise as to the best possible course of action in a given situation. With the convenience of the internet, mentoring may simply involve the exchange of email from one person to the other, and mentoring can take place across large geographic areas with very little difficulty. Such informal mentoring has been reported from students participating in the National Advanced Certificate in Local Authority Administration (NACLAA) program currently being offered through Dalhousie University and the University of Alberta.

Formal mentoring programs

A formal mentoring program may involve regularly scheduled appointments between partners, with identified short and long term goals established and time frames set for accomplishing those goals.

Mentoring is defined as "a deliberate pairing of a more skilled or more experienced person with a less skilled or less experienced one, with the mutually agreed goal of having the less skilled person grow and develop specific competencies."

(Source: Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring by Margo Murray, pg. xiii)

Mentoring provides opportunities for personal and career development

Scheduled sessions may include discussions of scenarios that the mentoree might face and the possible responses that could be taken in those situations. The mentor might offer advice on how to handle particular scenarios, and discuss why a particular course of action would be the most appropriate course to follow in that particular situation or what alternatives might also prove helpful in a similar situation.

The mentor can provide valuable insight into why a particular response might be the most appropriate, based on personal experience in a similar situation, or based on knowledge acquired during their career.

The process of mentoring may be designed according to individual needs and comfort levels, a formal program may involve scheduled one-on-one or group meetings.

Although mentoring is something that is usually thought of as a relationship between one mentor and one mentoree, the process may also involve a number of mentors selected for their specific areas of expertise. The individual mentoree would consult a specific mentor for advice or feedback based on the situation, according to the mentor's particular skill set or experience.

Simply put then, a mentor is someone who agrees to share the expertise, skills and knowledge they have gained over their accumulated years of experience with someone who is in an earlier stage of their career. It is a relationship which can pay dividends to both parties in the arrangement.

Mentoring can provide an opportunity for networking, sharing contacts, assisting in problem solving, providing strategic support, or just acting as a sounding board for ideas and issues. While providing the opportunity for exploring issues, it is important that the mentor not take it upon him or herself to solve all the problems discussed, the value of having a mentor lies more in the opportunity to explore issues in a safe environment.

Benefits of the mentoring process

One of the major benefits is the self-confidence which comes from having an opportunity to work through problems with feedback and reassurances from someone who has already had the experience and the opportunity to develop the required skills.

Small municipalities may benefit even more from mentoring and networking

Mentoring aids in the development of more effective working relationships among members of the management team. It can improve performance, productivity and profitability, as well as assisting the participants in identifying those areas which might require improvement or modification.

Mentoring also aids in developing the skills to deal effectively with resistance to change, and increases an individual's ability to manage stress.

Particularly for small municipalities, mentoring provides an opportunity for municipal employees to draw upon the resources and advice of people from other municipalities when issues arise that may have been already faced in another area. For example, when a small municipality is considering developing a citizen engagement and consultation process, the CAO might make contact with other municipalities in the province who have gone through the process already, to ask advice on what may have worked for them while developing their citizen consultation program, what pitfalls to avoid, and what lessons they learned from their experiences throughout the process.

Mentors should be

- willing to teach and learn
- able to give feedback
- comfortable with mentoree
- prepared to give time when needed
- confidential
- good communicator
- patient
- achievement oriented
- good motivator

Every mentoring or coaching relationship is unique. What works well in one situation may not be ideal in another. The focus of every mentoring situation should be the identification of specific personal and professional goals for the mentoree, and the advice, feedback and encouragement the mentor can provide to help the other person attain those goals. Areas that the partnership should also focus on include motivating, team building and team leadership, communication skills, change management and performance management skills.

Mentorees should be

- committed to listen and to learn,
- capable of taking criticism as well as praise,
- open to new experiences and willing to accept challenges,
- willing to set goals and work to achieve them,
- capable of self assessment and evaluation,
- positive in attitude.

Practical experience

Management prospects should be exposed to situations where they can acquire the strategy skills and broad vision to handle situations they might be faced with in the future. They should be included in important discussions, and be encouraged to voice their opinion and to make recommendations. Opportunities to build upon their leadership potential in areas of negotiation, communication, and diplomacy, project management, and intergovernmental relationships should be provided whenever possible.

The process demands advanced planning and commitment on all parties involved. The time spent in selecting the best candidates, developing realistic, attainable yet challenging goals, will pay off in the future by having available leaders who will be capable and available to take on new responsibilities in a timely fashion when upper level vacancies occur within the municipal organization.

4.0 Small municipalities and succession planning

Succession planning presents particular difficulties for those small municipalities who may employ only a small number of employees. However, certain aspects of the succession planning process may be adapted to fit individual circumstances.

As mentioned in the previous section, mentoring is one aspect of the succession planning process that can become an invaluable asset to even the smallest municipalities. Mentoring can be particularly important to the small municipality because it provides access to resources that a small municipality may not normally be in a position to access. For example, a small municipality might have a clerk treasurer on staff where a large urban municipality might have a whole department of financial specialists. That small municipality, through

Succession planning can provide a whole new perspective on issues, particularly for large and small municipalities working together in a mentoring relationship

networking and mentoring, may draw upon the expertise and experience of those specialists who have been trained in the particular aspect of finance that is emerging as an issue in the smaller municipality. The reverse is also true however, sometimes a larger municipality may have difficulties in seeing the “broader picture” because their specialization may result in a narrower focus. A mentoring relationship with personnel from a small municipality may offer a whole new broader perspective on issues.

Other aspects of succession planning that may also prove to be valuable to small municipalities would include the identification of key competencies required for each municipal employee. In fact, this particular step might be even more important to small municipalities because those employees tend to be less specialized, and are required to fill a variety of roles during the course of their work day. In a small municipality, the same individual may be responsible for scheduling the recreation facility as well as being the finance officer. The identification of KSAO’s (Knowledge, Skills, Aptitudes and abilities, and Other characteristics) as described by James Kierstead in “Competencies and KSAO’s”, becomes even more essential for a small municipality when hiring a new employee, especially since that employee would require a much broader skill set than a specialized employee in a large municipality dedicated to one particular aspect of municipal administration.

Other aspects of the succession planning process might require less advance planning in a small municipality. For example, developing attrition patterns, outlining anticipated retirements, resignations, transfers or promotions, may be of little use in a municipality with only a few employees. Staff turnover would be minimal, and would be readily apparent for each position. However, this being said, even a small municipality can benefit from having a gap analysis done to determine the number of full time equivalent (FTE) positions that are required to carry on the business of the municipality.

Regardless of the size of the municipality, succession planning can be adapted to any situation, and the process should be reviewed in order to determine what aspects might be useful in each individual situation.

5.0 Conclusions

Succession planning is a combination of workforce and strategic planning within the budget forecasting process. The process involves careful analyzing of employee skills and competencies, as well as those intangible assets that make a good leader, identifying potential managers, providing valuable experiences and feedback, identifying specific goals, and subsequently nurturing and developing their skills and abilities in order to maximize their potential. The overall intent is to develop management successors. The greatest contributory factor in the failure of succession planning is the lack of follow-through. Performance appraisals, and mentoring won't accomplish much if there is no commitment on the part of senior managers. Succession planning is a long term investment that must be viewed as a multi year strategy tied to the strategic planning process.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL SUCCESSION PLANNING

While no task is more momentous than the selection of a new CAO, the task of grooming a successor for incumbent CAO's or managers is often left for chance. Often at the time a new CAO is needed the only alternative is to look outside the organization for a replacement. With some advance planning, a successor might be developed from within the current organization.

Tips for developing a successful succession planning program

- 1. Ensure senior management is on-side.**
- 2. Set specific goals. For example to reduce turnover by a certain percentage, or to increase internal promotions by a specific percentage. This kind of goal setting will demonstrate the effectiveness of the program.**
- 3. Plan and design the program thoroughly. Identify who will be involved, and how often you will meet to review your progress and accomplishments.**
- 4. Determine assessments and create templates. Keep assessments simple and promote objectivity. Multiple assessments might be required for fairness.**
- 5. Design a reporting process. What do you want to know? How will you track career progression, history, terminations and performance development?**
- 6. Train managers and supervisors. Ensure that managers are trained on how to approach employee performance appraisals and ranking in an effective manner without introducing bias.**
- 7. Evaluate the program on a regular basis.**
- 8. Revise as necessary.**
- 9. Measure and celebrate the successes. Some words of encouragement and recognition can go a long way to ensure a successful program.**

The pitfalls of succession planning.
The 5 Pitfalls Of CEO Succession. Fortune, Nov 18, 2002 v146 i10 p78

GLOSSARY:

Work force planning: The systematic process of identifying the human resources required to meet the goals of an organization, and for developing strategies to accomplish those goals.

Succession Planning: A process of analyzing the current workforce, projecting what future human resources may be required, and developing strategies designed to ensure the continued effective performance of the organization. Succession planning provides for the development and replacement of key personnel over a period of time.

Competencies: A set of behaviours that encompass skills, abilities knowledge, training and education, as well as personal attributes that, as a package, are essential for the successful completion of work.

Competency assessment: The process of developing a set of competencies that correspond with an organization's mission, vision and strategic goals.

Focus group: A group interview or discussion, where the focus is on a particular topic. Usually this involves a group of seven to ten individuals in a meeting that lasts no longer than two hours and is guided by a facilitator.

FTE: Full-time equivalent. Personnel fill targets are often expressed this way. FTE's might be fewer than the actual number of people employed because of part-time employees.

Function: A major responsibility of a program or department with particular outputs or outcomes for external or internal clients or customers.

Gap Analysis: The process of comparing the number of employees required to carry out functions, and the number of employees who are or will be available to carry out those functions.

Individual Development Plan: A document which includes an assessment of an individual's current skills and abilities, and an outline of the way in which that individual plans to develop the knowledge skills and abilities needed to achieve career goals, or to meet changing organizational needs and environmental demands.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA's): The knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform a job. Knowledge is an understanding of facts of principles relating to a particular subject area; skill refers to the application of knowledge resulting from a development of basic abilities through formal training and practical experience; ability is capacity in a general area that may be utilized to develop detailed, specific skills.

Personal characteristic: An attribute that a person has that may effect their job performance such as attention to detail, timeliness, personal organization, charisma etc.

Position: A budgeted line item assigned duties and responsibilities that can be performed by one employee.

Skill set: A group of skills, knowledge, and abilities that, taken together, is necessary for the proficient performance of a particular function.

Strategic Plan: A systematic process for identifying and implementing programs that capitalize on a municipality's strengths and weaknesses, while recognizing there are external threats and opportunities that have an impact upon the municipality.

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Appendix A.

**Core Leadership Competencies
Self-Assessment Questionnaire**

INTRODUCTION:

This self-assessment provides an opportunity to assess your personal strengths and highlight opportunities for development.

The assessment tool consists of a number of statements, each one being a descriptor of “how” work is to be performed.

The behavioural descriptors have been grouped into clusters which are called the “Core Leadership Competencies”.

- Communication
- Ethical Behaviour
- Knowledge
- Development of People
- Client Orientation
- Achievement Orientation
- Team Orientation

Having a better awareness of “how” you do your job as manager / leader is one step towards achieving success. This in combination with the targets will give an accurate profile of your individual performance.

This self-assessment questionnaire will allow you to see which leadership behaviours you are using naturally and which ones might require further development.

COMPLETING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT :

Read each statement carefully, and be honest with yourself as you complete the self-assessment. Otherwise, the tool will have little value in helping you to assess your true strengths and areas for development.

Before you decide to respond, you should try to remember examples of situations where you have demonstrated this behaviour. By doing this, you will be able to more effectively circle the appropriate number.

Complete the self-assessment by circling the number that best describes your behaviour using the following scale:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Almost Never | (1) - I never demonstrate or practice this behaviour |
| Rarely | (2) - I rarely act in this manner |
| Sometimes | (3) - I less frequently behave like this, but can give some recent examples. |
| Often | (4) - I frequently and regularly behave in this manner, and can illustrate this by recent examples. |
| Almost Always | (5) - I always behave in this way, and can illustrate this by many recent examples. |

The words Almost Never, Sometimes, Often, and Almost Always are repeated at the top of every page for easy reference, but you should refer to the full definition of the words..

Core Leadership Competencies (Self Assessment)

COMMUNICATION - Shares information/ideas clearly and listens for understanding to promote productive work relationships

Behaviour	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Provides a clear sense of direction for the team and co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5
Delivers consistent messages that reinforce the organization's priorities.	1	2	3	4	5
Gives feedback which is specific, timely and issue-focused	1	2	3	4	5
Tailors communication style to suit the audience and situation	1	2	3	4	5
Encourages open discussion of differences of opinion through impartial questioning and clarification that is directed toward a positive outcome	1	2	3	4	5
Maintains the self-confidence and self-esteem of others respecting cross cultural and diverse perspectives	1	2	3	4	5

Add the numbers you circled in each column and record the sum in the box for that column

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Add the scores in the 5 boxes together and divide by 7 to get the overall rating

<input type="text"/>

Core Leadership Competencies (Self Assessment)

ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR - Understands and actively supports the integrity of public service

Behaviour	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Leads by example through consistent actions that impact positively on the municipality	1	2	3	4	5
Acts responsibly in the best interest of the public	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrates integrity and builds trust in relationships through fair and honest behaviour	1	2	3	4	5
Treats others with respect and dignity	1	2	3	4	5
Maintains confidentiality when dealing with personal issues and sensitive/difficult situations	1	2	3	4	5
Responds to issues / conflicts of interest respecting municipal policies and public service	1	2	3	4	5
Creates an environment that builds diversity and supports different perspectives	1	2	3	4	5

Add the numbers you circled in each column and record the sum in the box for that column

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Add the scores in the 5 boxes together and divide by 7 to get the overall rating

Core Leadership Competencies (Self Assessment)

KNOWLEDGE - Possesses knowledge and professional competence relative to work function

Behaviour	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Works toward creating practical solutions to problems	1	2	3	4	5
Produces sound conclusions and recommendations that contribute to effective decision making	1	2	3	4	5
Knows when and where to obtain assistance when faced with challenging work problems	1	2	3	4	5
Applies expertise to perform the job effectively	1	2	3	4	5
Deals with complex, sometimes ambiguous information, revising priorities as necessary	1	2	3	4	5
Analyzes pertinent information to better understand its impact prior to making decisions	1	2	3	4	5

Add the numbers you circled in each column and record the sum in the box for that column

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Add the scores in the 5 boxes together and divide by 7 to get the overall rating

Core Leadership Competencies (Self Assessment)

DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE - Works to develop people's contribution and potential

Behaviour	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Positively communicates the vision / goals of the municipality helping others to understand their role in achieving the business plan	1	2	3	4	5
Helps people reflect and learn from previous experiences to avoid future pitfalls, and build on past successes	1	2	3	4	5
Offers suggestions that help people find solutions to their problems	1	2	3	4	5
Shares information and expertise with others to increase understanding and informed decision making	1	2	3	4	5
Documents a specific development plan to support the achievement of performance targets and competencies through the performance management process	1	2	3	4	5
Recognizes people's work and effort that benefits the municipality	1	2	3	4	5
Refers individuals to available resources to help further their success	1	2	3	4	5

Add the numbers you circled in each column and record the sum in the box for that column

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Add the scores in the 5 boxes together and divide by 7 to get the overall rating

Core Leadership Competencies (Self Assessment)

CLIENT ORIENTATION - Develops and maintains strong relationships with clients

Behaviour	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Elicits information from clients to identify needs and set realistic expectations	1	2	3	4	5
Provides clients with timely, effective information/products and services	1	2	3	4	5
Responds to a client's concern and ensures that the client is aware of what actions are being taken	1	2	3	4	5
Explains the rationale for decisions/outcome to the client	1	2	3	4	5
States candidly what can be done to meet client needs, offering innovative and creative solutions to problems	1	2	3	4	5
Works cooperatively with other agencies to meet client needs	1	2	3	4	5
Meets and strives to exceed client expectations	1	2	3	4	5

Add the numbers you circled in each column and record the sum in the box for that column

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Add the scores in the 5 boxes together and divide by 7 to get the overall rating

Core Leadership Competencies (Self Assessment)

ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION - Works to achieve results and improve individual and organizational contribution

Behaviour	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Sets and achieves individual performance targets aligned with the strategic plan	1	2	3	4	5
Organizes own work to stay on track toward targets, keeping others informed of progress or barriers to achievement	1	2	3	4	5
Organizes people and allocates tasks and responsibilities so that multiple objectives can be accomplished simultaneously	1	2	3	4	5
Accepts accountability for actions, and can be relied upon to keep commitments	1	2	3	4	5
Assumes own responsibility for developing leadership competencies and management skills to meet individual performance targets	1	2	3	4	5
Is receptive to feedback from others on existing ideas, procedure, and policies, seeking out creative / innovative solutions for improvement	1	2	3	4	5
Inspires and encourages others to do their best by providing meaningful constructive feedback and encouragement	1	2	3	4	5

Add the numbers you circled in each column and record the sum in the box for that column

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Add the scores in the 5 boxes together and divide by 7 to get the overall rating

<input type="text"/>

Core Leadership Competencies (Self Assessment)

TEAM ORIENTATION - Works collaboratively with others to achieve common goals

Behaviour	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
Creates a team identity by developing a shared vision, mission, and goals jointly with the team	1	2	3	4	5
Fosters collaboration and exchange of ideas with others from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and functions	1	2	3	4	5
Actively contributes individual expertise and experience to achieve team goals	1	2	3	4	5
Gives praise and recognition to team members for their achievements and contribution	1	2	3	4	5
Facilitates and actively supports team decisions	1	2	3	4	5
Proactivley raises difficult issues within the team providing suggestions and support to move forward	1	2	3	4	5
Foresees and influences change by maintaining a positive attitude to new ideas and new ways of doing things	1	2	3	4	5

Add the numbers you circled in each column and record the sum in the box for that column

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Add the scores in the 5 boxes together and divide by 7 to get the overall rating

<input type="text"/>

Core Leadership Competencies (Self Assessment)

COMPETENCY PROFILE - Enter the overall rating for each of the 7 core competencies in the corresponding box.

Communication

Knowledge

Client Orientation

Team Orientation

Ethical Behaviour

Development of People

Achievement Orientation

Add the ratings in each box and divide by 7 to get your overall leadership competency rating

Overall competency rating