



Succession Planning vs. Replacement Planning

Succession and replacement planning are two different strategies.

- Succession planning is often confused with replacement planning and leadership development in organizations. In reality these strategies are very different.
- Replacement planning involves simply acting to replace positions that become vacant due to turnover, which may be either voluntary or involuntary. Succession planning is a more detailed analysis of anticipated future needs, which includes a component of leadership development designed to ready persons to step into future vacant roles.

What Is Succession Planning??

- Succession planning is the process of evaluating an organization's workforce to identify potential gaps in skills for the future. The process generally involves an assessment of those currently in existing positions, the identification of new positions or skills that the organization will require in the future, an analysis of the gaps and the development of a plan to fill the gaps with talent that may either be nurtured internally or recruited from outside the organization.

What Is Replacement Planning??

- Replacement planning is similar to succession planning in that it is an effort to respond to changes in the workplace that result in open positions that must be filled to allow the organization to continue to function effectively. Replacement planning is, however, somewhat more a reaction than succession planning and is not as forward-looking. Replacement planning generally occurs at the point when a position becomes vacant. It involves an assessment of need based on the position description, potential revisions to the position description or position requirements and the identification of areas where new persons might be recruited.

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Succession Planning and Leadership Development

- Leadership development is a component of succession planning. Many organizations wish to grow talent from within. The succession planning process is used to identify potential future gaps, as well as individuals with the talent or potential to fill those gaps. Few people are ready to step into new positions with no training, however, and this is where leadership development comes into plan. Leadership development activities may include education and training, special projects or temporary assignments designed to provide persons with skills and experience in specific areas.

The Impact of Technology

- Technology often has a significant impact on the need for replacement planning. New technology may require the need for a large number of new staff with the requisite skills and abilities to master the technology. In these cases, companies may embark on extensive recruitment campaigns designed to fill a large number of open positions at one time. Because technology and other factors may impact an organization's succession and replacement planning efforts it is important to be continually monitoring the environment for changes.