

INDIVIDUAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Instructions: The purpose of the Individual Career Development Plan is to help the employee and the supervisor stay on track with developing skills needed for a potential future role.

Employee Name: _____

Date: _____

Supervisor Name: _____

Current Position: _____

Target Position: _____

Target Date: _____

Skill to be Developed/Development Areas		Goal/Action/Method of Development (Examples: Job shadowing, coaching, practice, training, additional support needed, etc.)	Timeline for Development (Provide dates, achievements, Target dates, etc.)	Progress/Comments
1-3 Months				
3-6 Months				
6-9 Months				

9-Box Grid – Individual Assessment: Tool for Deciding who to Include in your Succession Plan

	Under Performance	Effective Performance	Outstanding Performance
High Potential	<p>Box 5:</p> <p>Seasoned professional capable of expanded role, but may be experiencing problems that require coaching and mentoring.</p>	<p>Box 2:</p> <p>Does extremely well at current job with potential to do more; give stretch assignments to help prepare for next level.</p>	<p>Box 1:</p> <p>Consistently performs well in a variety of assignments; superstar employee. Big picture thinker; problem solver; self motivated.</p>
Medium Potential	<p>Box 8:</p> <p>With coaching, could progress within level; focus on stretch goals for this employee.</p>	<p>Box 6:</p> <p>May be considered for job enlargement at the same level, but may need coaching in several areas, including people management.</p>	<p>Box 3:</p> <p>Current role may still provide opportunity for growth/development; focused on tactical; focus should be on helping improve strategic thinking.</p>
Low Potential	<p>Box 9:</p> <p>May be a candidate for reassignment, reclassification to a lower level or to exit the organization.</p>	<p>Box 7:</p> <p>Effective performer, but may have reached career potential; try to coach employee on becoming more innovative, focus on lateral thinking.</p>	<p>Box 4:</p> <p>Experienced high performer but has reached limit of career potential. Still a valuable employee and can be encouraged to develop communications and delegation skills.</p>

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Case Study 1: West Liberty, Iowa describes Succession Planning efforts that have worked for their small town West Liberty, Iowa (population 3,757) August 15, 2021

Background:

West Liberty is a small community located in eastern Iowa, just 30 minutes east of Iowa City. The residents are a culturally diverse population from Latin America, South America, Asia, Europe, and Africa. Many families are fourth generation residents of the city. The Latino population is 54%, the first city in Iowa to have a majority Latino population. The overall population grew just slightly from 3,736 in 2010 to 3,757 in 2020.

Like so many small towns this is an item that certainly has been overlooked. Gone are the days when you have an opportunity to sustain longevity with employees. West Liberty has experienced a great deal of employee turnover in the past ten(10) years due to employees retiring, termination, death, inability to be competitive with wages and growth opportunities. The lack of planning for these events have left the City vulnerable to staff shortages, poor employee morale, overtime costs, safety issues, sustaining less than quality employees to fill the void, and human resources issues that has increased litigation costs.

Lack of staffing levels make it difficult to provide adequate training for new and existing staff members. In most cases staff has learn on their own, resulting in operational and administrative errors, poor customer service, lack of oversight for compliance, and meeting required deadlines.

The simple fact of not planning for these events will continue to be a negative impact, not only on the employees, but trust your community has in the staff and city leadership. The financial cost, employee retention, and lack of trust is truly a failure to manage your organization.

The steps in creating an effective succession plan are to identify, plan, communicate and evaluate.

Step 1: Identify

The City Clerk had the opportunity to serve as an interim city manager, during this time from 2019-2021. During that period, West Liberty had a crucial position retire, a few resign, and a termination. Early in this new role, the City Clerk quickly identified there was going to be at least one retirement, and unfortunately the position was held by a 30 year employee, who lacked in sharing, tracking or archiving his work and knowledge. According to Lee, "this is job security, they can't fire me or retire me, they need me" was this kind of employee. Lee made some quick preparations to plan with the employee who worked in his department. The employee had not been in the department long, but fortunately was willing to take the initiative to step up and take on the interim superintendent role. The employee was also ready to work on his required certification to operate the utilities. In short order, this employee received the required certifications in 18 months, trained and mentored two staff members in the department to also obtain their certifications.

The City Clerk learned you must plan for these events. Employees are not forever, but in most cases the positions are.

Step 2: Plan

The tools that have been successful for West Liberty is mentoring, training specific to the positions, assigning test projects, and communication with the individual. Leadership has identified attainable goals and set a plan over a period time to allow them to succeed, take risks, learn from mistakes, and provide support to assist with their self-confidence. In a smaller city when you are understaffed it is very difficult to provide training, mentoring, and attention to the employee. There is so much information available, so there is no lack of resources and tools, but it is having the ability to provide the time needed to invest in the employee.

Step 3: Communicate

According to the City Clerk, when West Liberty has the opportunity to put a succession plan it will not be difficult to gain trust and understanding from the existing staff, but it will be the ability to gain the trust that management will follow a plan.

Step 4: Evaluation

Lee has experienced promoting an individual to be very disappointed in their performance and had to make the tough decision to demote and or terminate. Planning is always the answer, to prepare employees and to help them succeed. We all need to plan better, evaluate and train.

Advice:

Lee's advice about succession planning is to make sure the plan identifies strengths and weakness of the organizations department. The candidate must understand the positions, duties, and behaviors of those working in the department. There would also need to be one-on-one conversations or interviews with the employees to collect input and learn the behaviors within the department.

And, if a peer or council member approached her about hiring someone they know as a fine candidate, she would communicate the information needed for the individual to apply, thank them for the recommendation, and let them know the hiring processes so the City can be consistent with all applicants.

If you have any additional questions about Succession Planning in West Liberty, you may reach City Clerk Lee Geertz at 319-627-2418 or email her at lgeertz@cityofwestlibertyia.org



Case Study 2: How One Local Government Is Deploying Succession Planning Hiawatha, Iowa (population 7,024) August 15, 2021

Background:

Hiawatha is considered a small city in East-Central Iowa, just northwest of Cedar Rapids. The 2020 Population is 7,262, which is an increase of 4.8% since 2010. Hiawatha had four critical retirements in the past 5-years; Water Superintendent, City Engineer, Community Development Director and the Fire Chief. Only one of them with a succession plan in place due to not having an individual in-house ready to fill the position.

The four steps in creating an effective succession plan are to identify, plan, communicate and evaluate.

Step 1: Identify

To identify the positions and individuals in the organization that could be potential candidates, Hiawatha looked for traits of individuals that are already acting the role; wanting to take on more responsibility, sharing ideas, supporting, and encouraging their team members to strive for more.

A serious concern in this process is that a candidate may believe a promotion is promised or a sure thing; a done deal. In Hiawatha, some individuals had false hope because they are next in line that they are ready for a director position. There were to situation in where the director suddenly decides to retirement early then expected leaving us with really no time to establish a succession plan. In one of the two cases we could have grown and prepared one individual but in both cases their supervisors did not sit either individual up for success. They didn't provide opportunity for them to be in front of decision makers or create leadership opportunities. The other important factor people leave out of the decision factor is in deciding who the next director may be is are they are good fit, do live our mission and match our values.

Step 2: Plan

When putting together a plan, the best way to capture institutional knowledge is to look for the following in a candidate:

- Individuals with leadership potential
- Passion for the field they are in, the city, community, and the people they work with
- Do they have the desire to lead?
- Do they share the same long-range vision of the city?
- Do they aspire for professional growth and promotion opportunities?
- Values-are there values consistent with our organization's values

Here is list of development planning that has worked for Hiawatha:

- Mentoring-primary activity
- Specific training-given opportunities
- Job Shadowing
- Practicing a task or project
- Reading a Book
- Participated in leadership programs or work shops
- Conducting Research
- Attending meetings with a mentor
- Stretch assignments
- Gaging emotional intelligence
- Speaking in public opportunities

A great resource Hiawatha has shared with the candidates to assist with their development is *“The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership”* by co-authors of the Leadership Challenge, Jim Kouzes, and Barry Posner.

Step 3: Communicate

Hiawatha communicated the purpose of the plan to staff and elected officials in a memo form to spell out the direction the department, the qualities of the individual and a checklist of those qualities, training, etc. The succession plan was a three-years process, and the successor has been very successful and is supported by their team, department directors and their board. Everyone throughout the organization understood the purpose of succession planning.

Hiawatha did not have any specific issues to the water superintendent position. In the two other positions that we did not have time to implement a traditional succession plan there was disappointment of employees that did not get the position, but with a little coaching and explaining the why they have come around. One person has decided they are not interested in a potential promotion. The second individual continues their growth opportunities, and they are more focused on getting that individual to that level whether that be in our community or in another community. It is important for directors to develop their people, so they are ready to consume the position with a gap in time. It is hard for directors to relinquish control, which then does not aid in succession planning.

Elected officials completely accepted the ideal of succession planning.

Step 4: Evaluation

Hiawatha has never started someone on a plan and upon evaluation felt the move was unsuccessful.

According to Hiawatha City Manager Kim Downs, “succession planning is a valuable opportunity to learn more about your team members at a different level then you would on a daily interaction.” “I believe it is important to assess active commitment within your organization. Who demonstrates that trait? With those traits there is value in investing in person(s) and reciprocate that commitment back in training, opportunity for growth and

provide leadership experiences. You do have to be careful in wanting more for an individual than they want for themselves. Don't convince someone this is their next step in the career if they don't already have the drive to do more," she added. And, if an elected official stated they had the perfect person for the job. Kim said she would listen and then assess.

If you have any additional questions about Succession Planning in Hiawatha, you may reach City Manager Kim Downs at 319-393-1515 ext. 523 or email her at cityadmin@hiawatha-iowa.com.



Case Study 3: Succession Planning that Works in Clive, Iowa August 5, 2021

Background:

Clive, Iowa, population 17,167, is in both Dallas and Polk County and is land-locked in the heart of the Des Moines metropolitan area.

City Manager Matt McQuillen describes the efforts over the years that have worked well for them. A few years ago, we had a department director indicate his desire to retire in the coming year.

The four steps in creating an effective succession plan are to identify, plan, communicate and evaluate.

Step 1: Identify

Before Clive was even made aware of the retirement, they knew there was the potential for this to happen in the short term, so they started thinking about and discussing with the department director the potential for any internal candidates for his position. Once he decided to set his retirement date, leadership revisited prior conversations to see if progress had been made with internal candidates to see if they would be ready for the position.

Step 2: Plan

The succession planning Clive has done typically focuses on the department director level positions and above in the organization. As indicated above in the framework, the identification process is key so you know what kind of plan you need to build. Part of identification and the initial planning process is to inquire with each department to obtain what their retirement projections are and the City Manager provides an annual report to the Mayor and City Council of what may be coming in terms of key retirements. This has assisted greatly when discussing the need for funding for overlapping positions (allowing the new hire to have 2-3 weeks with the retiring person).

After identification, The City Manager works with the department director to determine if there are potential internal candidates that we both see for upcoming retirements within the department or even at the director level. These types of conversations require a substantial amount of trust between the City Manager and their Department Director. Matt McQuillen advises to make sure you have that level of comfort with your Directors before having these conversations. The Director also has to be comfortable with you, as you may be discussing who might replace them!

Once individuals have been identified then determine what kind of tools make sense for this particular succession situation, as each one is likely to be different. Depending on the internal candidates, some may need more soft skill development where mentorship, leadership development and other specific tools would be needed. Other candidates

may need more technical skill development that could be addressed through specific training opportunities or stretch assignments where they haven't had the opportunity before. These are just a few development planning tools that Clive has used:

- Mentoring
- Specific training
- Job Shadowing
- Practicing a task or project
- Reading a Book
- Participated in leadership programs or work shops
- Conducting Research
- Attending meetings with a mentor
- Stretch assignments

Most recently, Clive used special training opportunities, professional conference attendance, and stretch assignments. From the City Manager's perspective, the stretch assignments are critical and one option he highly encourages with his department directors as it provides an opportunity to see and evaluate self-motivation, motivating others/leadership, decision-making, judgment and how the staff person utilizing discretion that you are delegating to them by leading a project/assignment.

Step 3: Communicate

At a high level, the City Manager shares the upcoming retirements with the elected officials annually during their strategic planning workshops. They appreciate getting this insight into what is coming and how it may impact the organizational goals and project planning we are doing during those sessions. The elected officials have been very supportive of developing internal candidates where possible. As in this case with most small to medium sized organizations like Clive, they only have so much opportunity for internal candidates. So, they try to develop their employees when and where they can, also recognizing that a recruitment process is likely still going to need to consider external candidates even when they have viable internal candidates.

As for communicating within the organization, The City Manager encourage the directors to engage and discuss the opportunities with those folks who they think can develop and be promoted internally. There are many occasions where Matt gets involved in some of those conversations to provide encouragement and set expectations. He sometimes needs to have the conversations with folks who think they are internal candidates for a coming retirement, but he may feel they have not reached the development goals necessary to be considered. Those can be hard conversations, but necessary to be transparent with those staff members as you never know if a new hire is going to last two, five or ten years, so those internal candidates may be ready in five years when the new director hire leaves or retires.

Step 4: Evaluation

The City Manager has not ever started someone on a plan and not felt they should be considered for a position when it comes open. However, he has had situations when

they have started folks on a plan and they are just not ready to make that leap yet but may need a few more years.

What Clive learned about succession planning is even if you don't have an immediate job opening opportunity or coming retirement, it is still a great idea to have these types of conversations with the rising stars in your organization. In some ways you can treat them as a "retention" strategy for those staff that you feel are capable and have the potential for advancement, because this likely means they are doing a great job in their current position. The additional attention to those key positions and "rock stars" in your organization is more critical than ever in retaining staff and competing in a very difficult job market.

Advice:

If there are concerns with how hiring is done in the organization, this should be an issue of focus for the City Manager or CEO of the organization. The trickle-down impacts from inefficient or biased hiring practices can have long lasting negative consequences in an organization. Clive City Manager's advice would be for the chief executive to lead a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity, Threats (SWOT) analysis of the hiring process and put the necessary resources and staff focus in place to address those issues immediately.

Further, he advises if anyone, including elected officials, think they might know a great candidate, he/she should encourage that person to apply for the position to ensure the City treats the candidate fairly in the process. You should also inquire with that referral or elected official on why they think that person is perfect for the job, as their expectations of the position may be drastically different than yours.

In Clive, the City Manager has utilized a City Council's Personnel Committee (Mayor and two City Councilmembers) in the final interview process for department director level positions. He thinks some City Managers are reading that and may be concerned with having that level of involvement from the elected officials. What Matt would tell you is this has been very beneficial to the process as the ground rules are clearly stated up front. He likes the input from the elected officials in the process, but they fully recognize the hire recommendation is that of the City Manager. Having this trusting relationship with your elected officials is key to making this work. In the end it also creates additional advocates for the hire recommendation when that is brought forward to the entire City Council for wage/hire approval.

If you have any additional questions about Succession Planning in Clive, you may reach City Manager Matt McQuillen at 515-223-6220 or email him at mmcquillen@cityofclive.com.

