SUCCESSION PLANNING: A TOOL TO PREPARE FOR THE UNSEEN FUTURE

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INTRODUCTION

The pandemic has spread life a fire in the jungle leaving the worst impact on various sectors, where most experts are predicting it to lead to the most terrible recession ahead in the future of various economies in the world and a country like India tops the chart of the aforesaid economies. This pandemic has impacted various service sectors adversely specially the tourism industry where a lot of food and beverages, hotels and airlines couldn't survive the shock leaving many people jobless. There are many sectors that have gained an upper edge due to this pandemic such as Zoom, Webex, Google Meet, Pharma industry, glove, mask and sanitization manufacturing units. In the current situation it has forced all the organization to relook and re-plan their emergency succession planning and identify the real potential.

The most widely used term potential is considered to be a scarce feature which helps an individual to stand out amongst the rest of the employees in an organization. Many organizations consider high performing employees as high potential employees but all high performing employees are not high potentials. The criteria that differentiates a high potential from a high performer is an individual's effectiveness in his present job role where as high potentials are those who possess the ability to handle higher responsibilities at higher positions. Another fact that supports the aforesaid phenomenon is what if the successive higher position requires a different set of skills. In that case past performance may not prove to be sufficient. The major issue faced by any organization today is to prepare an individual for future successive position but that cannot be based on just past performance it has to be a combination of past performance and potential to handle future responsibilities. According to Groves (2007) identifying and frequently updating lists of high potentials based on their past performance forms basis for a successful succession planning program. Succession planning has become a vital phenomenon for organizations as it fills the critical positions, highlights the recognition of internal potentials, and reduces departure of high potential employees to other organizations (Rothwell, 2005 and Neefe, 2009).

It has become important to identify their true high potential employees that can be revitalized in this hour of emergency. The purpose of this study is to provide an overview of the need for emergency succession planning during the current covid-19 pandemic. In this pandemic, one cannot deny the fact that their employees are the most valuable capital. Thus, the present study makes an attempt to identify the individuals for future successive roles based on the aforesaid phenomenon.

Review of Literature

In the present scenario identification of high potential is not the only task but maintaining, retaining and developing the working cadre but is also a critical issue and developing a successful succession model addresses the aforesaid issue (Pitchard and Becker 2009). Succession planning is a plan to capture knowledge of the high potentials or talent pool and transfer them to the organization. Azarra (2007) emphasized on identification of high potential criteria and making those criteria's measurable as they form basis for succession planning. Succession planning is not just about identifying the next successor but also about analyzing different set of steps required to enhance the present pool of high potential employees on both the individual level and the organizational level (Avanesh, 2011). Succession planning is not just about enlisting candidates ready to replace the dropouts but it is about planning the right candidate at the right position at the right time (Fahnestock & Brethower, 2004).Today organizations need to provide a clear career path, high potential training and development programs to enhance individual skills, fast track promotion schemes to attract and retain the key talent of the organization and succession planning seems the answer to the above situation (Barzinpour *et. al,* 2014).

Kelly (2013), Boyatzis(2008),Anisha(2012), Juhdi & Pa'wan (2012) highlighted the need to develop potential appraisal system by mapping competencies as they form basis of various other programmes like fast track promotions, talent retention and individual career plans. Identifying and then differentiating between high potentials and non- potentials

will be an interesting research (Dries & Pepermans, 2012; Upadhyay, 2013 & Barrett & Depinet, 1991). On the basis of the reviewed literature; it is found that limited studies have been conducted to identify high potentials in Indian service sectors.

Further, Grooves (2007), Azaara(2007), Rothwell (2005), Neefe(2009), Pritchard & Becker (2009) & Sengupta *et al.* (2013) have suggested that once the future required competencies and potential competencies are identified and the organizations make a talent pool, a successful succession programme is needed to nurture and retain this talent pool for the key positions of the organizations. Therefore it becomes essential to understand and identify the relation between potential appraisal and succession planning but there is dearth of studies that highlight the above relation and test it empirically. Table 1 helps to identify and bridge the aforesaid gap. The current study focuses on understanding the linkage between potential appraisal and succession planning.

Table 1: Represents the Linkage between Potential Appraisal & Succession Planning as addressed by various authors

Author Name	High Potential	Succession Planning
Jyothsna & Sudha (2014)	✓	✓
Meyers *et al.* (2013)	✓	
Campion et al. (2011)		✓
Pepermans et al. (2003)	✓	✓
Campbell & Smith (2010)	✓	✓
Bersin (2012)	✓	✓
Barnett & Davis (2008)	✓	✓
Bernthal & Wellins (2006)		✓
Kesler (2002)		✓
Sobol, Harkins, & Conley (2007)		✓
Barner (2006)	✓	✓
Corporate Leadership Council (2005)	✓	✓
Karaevli & Hall (2003)	✓	✓
Juhdi & Pa'wan (2012)	✓	✓
Fulmer, Stumpf & Bleak (2009)	✓	✓
Upadhyay (2013)	✓	
Kumar et al. (2012)	✓	
Jain (2013)		✓
Bharathy et al. (2013)		✓
Jainm et. al. (2012)	✓	

Source: Compiled by the Researcher

Findings: The results indicate that there is significant and positive relation between high potential employees and succession planning. The relation between the two variables indicated by various researchers signifies a good relation between succession planning and potential appraisal. The aforesaid studies also indicate that potential appraisal forms the basis for succession planning

Limitations & Future Recommendations: The present study was conducted only on review basis however the results of the study can be generalized because maximum service sector organizations have similar working conditions. Based on the findings of the study multivariate analysis for potential appraisal and succession planning could be an interesting area of future research.

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