



## Succession planning: Planning for future leadership in sports

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### ABSTRACT

*In sports seniors are supposed to procure imperative advice and help to the individuals who are selected with the hopes of contributing well and to be their successors. But a major problem faced by sport clubs and associations is finding people to serve on the management committee, board and a better player for a required position in the team. While reviewing the history of successful teams and organizations it is analyzed that consistent performance and continuous success is associated with grooming in of talent which can be later developed into future leaders. Every team needs a roadmap for the future. The key to this roadmap is a robust organizational structure, with clear guidelines for roles and responsibilities. It is essential for any sporting team to have a clear succession plan in place. Reliance on the knowledge and skills of sole individuals is risky, can create uncertainty and a lack of performance continuity. A succession plan provides opportunities for potential leaders within the team to be identified and developed in readiness to move into leadership positions. Teams that plan for smooth transitions of leadership positions are less likely to experience disruptions to their operations and can better in position to replace volunteers who vacate their current positions. In spite of having its tremendous utility in sports, the term succession planning is not focused by team management, its owners and even by the researchers having their interest in sports, and techniques of enhancing sports performance. Therefore it is suggested for all those interested in sports to have a hawk eye on the term succession planning.*

**KEYWORDS :** Succession planning, sports.

### Introduction

Sport today is more competitive than ever. This competition is not only among the players on the field but also among all the stakeholders of the team. Everyone wants to attain pinnacle by unveiling their dexterity. But for success at elite level is not confined to the vigorous physical and mental training, meanwhile it involves proper planning and management of the resources. Among such planning and management of resources is a term known as succession planning. It is widely used term in business area, however in sports it's still in embryonic stage. If we go through the profiles of successful organizations we would realize that succession planning has been the catch phrase for a while. From Rattan Tata to Steve Jobs, Narayan Murthy to KK Modi, we will find that support and advocate for the term succession planning (Rajaraman, 2012). Succession planning is a critical element of any well run organization. When there are processes in place to assist with succession planning, much of the stress in team or organization can be minimized. Succession planning is a key in the contemporary setting of stretched talent markets and competitive times. It is the process of identifying and strengthening the emerging talented individuals who have direct impact on the success of an organization or team.

The Human Resources Management in any organization today is struggling to maintain the workforce and face two harsh realities of which exist at any organization: i) the loss of experienced rich talent, ii) changing trends in the talent market (Pandey and Sharma, 2014). Succession planning is a valuable but somewhat underused concept in sports. Rather than a panic driven effort to fill vacancies as they occur, succession planning emphasizes a commitment to long term strategic planning to meet talent needs (Durst and Wilhelm, 2012). If utilized effectively, it can help to create powerhouse teams who have the ability to win convincingly for successive years, even when top quality players are turned over.

Succession planning enables a team to share the load among its players and entire staff members, it also prevent the chance of burnout among them. Succession planning allows a smoother handover of key positions and improves the players 'bench strength'. Succession planning also leads to the creation of a more appealing environment for players and management staff which eventually leads to the better performance of a team. It is about putting a system in place to ensure that when someone leaves (such as a player, a coach, the team manager or the captain) the team is not left with a massive black hole of knowledge and expertise and that there is someone in the wings ready to step up into that role.

Succession planning ensures right person with the right skills in the right positions at the right time (Hills, 2009).

Succession planning is a process for identifying and developing new leaders, who can replace old leaders when they leave, retire or die (Sambrook, 2005). In dictatorships, it aims for continuity of leadership. In other words it is a strategic process of recruitment, development and retention of key individuals within an organization to maximize the potential of the organization and employees by preparing successors of all positions (Longenecker, 2009). Succession planning may also be referred to the grooming of players for specific positions when turnover inevitably occurs.

Recently Queensland Maroons Rugby Team's head coach Mal Meninga and assistant coach Michael Hagan at a press conference had shared their views on how succession planning can contribute to the success of a team (Bo Hanson). When a team or organization do not follow the strategy of succession planning the chances of recruiting less skilled and irrelevant players will hike and eventually leads to decreased success rate of team and organization. By succession planning the team management can have detailed insight into the role they will need to fulfill therefore leads to finding the right candidates for the available position to achieve a successful outcome. But without succession planning there would be lack of consistency in the performance of players and teams (Garman and Glawe, 2004).

Succession planning was followed by the Aussies National Cricket Association and everyone knows its aftermaths; they dominated for almost one and half decades in cricket. They outplayed their opponents in every aspect of the game. But now they are focusing less on this imperative part of success. This is the reason The retirement of legends like Shane Warne, Glenn McGrath, Damien Martyn and Justin Langer first and then of Adam Gilchrist and Matthew Hayden left the Australian team short of experience and talent to the point that it lost Test series at home for the first time in 17 years. So it is not as if Australia has been consistent with its planning.

BCCI is also trying to follow a similar kind of strategy of succession planning and the results are visible on the field in the form of success. There was a time when bench strength of Indian cricket team was not supposed to be that much competitive, but now a day's not only the bench strength but the players at domestic level are also very competent. The credit for this dramatic shift goes to the governing body of cricket in India and also to those who are the

active part of this succession planning/management (Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, and V.V.S. Laxman). The committee constituting them is likely to be consulted for enhancing cricket development in Indian cricket. The committee has been asked to prepare a plan to increase the talent pool of Indian cricketers and mentoring young and India cricketers on technical as well as mental aspects ahead of major assignments.

### **Why Succession Planning is required in sports**

1. Succession planning can be an important way to identify players who have the current skills or the potential to develop skills that can help them move up in a team, or on to other positions.
2. The process of succession planning can help to identify other areas of performance where players may be weak and where training could help to manage and improve performance outcomes.
3. Effective succession planning activities have a positive impact on performance management not only in terms of ensuring that key positions will remain filled with competent performers, but also in terms of saving money on external recruitment and training, which can be significantly more expensive than promoting from within.
4. Training must be put into place to provide players with the knowledge, skills and abilities they may need to move into future vacancies.
5. An important benefit in strategic succession planning is identifying in advance where there may be gaps between what players need to know and what they currently know-competency gaps. The gaps may be based on current needs for key positions and the lack of players with the required skills, and also on a look into the future to determine what new competencies may be necessary.

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