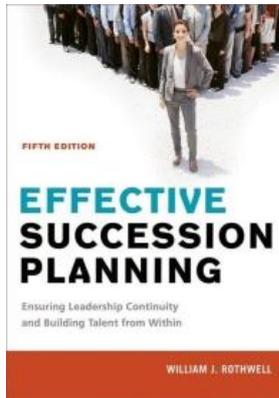


PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Effective Succession Planning: Ensuring Effective Leadership Continuity and Building Talent from Within***

Author: **William J. Rothwell**

Publisher: American Management Association

List Price: \$69.95 Format: Hardback

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Reviewer: **Dale J. Albrecht, MBA, SPHR, SCP**

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Introduction

Succession planning is a critical business topic that can and should be understood from all levels and functions within an organization. People are the lifeblood of our organizations, and they are critical to successful project management just as they are critical to every business function. Effective succession planning addresses an organization's need for *people-continuity* much like effective risk management addresses an organization's need for *business-continuity*. The 5th edition of *Effective Succession Planning* by William J. Rothwell (2016) takes a broad and exhaustive approach to the subject.

Overview of Book's Structure

The book is organized across the lifecycle of succession planning. It builds from establishing a fundamental understanding of succession planning to defining and implement effective organizational processes. The author then takes the reader further through the maturation process by articulating an approach to assessing the organization, and then he closes the succession lifecycle by focusing on development. The book is thick, but don't let that scare you. It's filled with plenty of examples, worksheets, and tools that can be easily applied on the job.

Part I of the book firmly establishes the fundamentals of succession planning. It takes the reader through the establishment of foundational knowledge in language that's easy to understand and digest. This part of the book is complete with ample vignettes which make comprehending the information very easy.

Part II of the book, in the author's words "lays the foundation" for succession planning and management. This section of the book contains three chapters that define a process/approach for how to establish succession planning in an

organization. You'll find plenty of advice and guidance on how to build a case for succession planning and how to start and refine a succession planning program.

Part III of the book consists of two chapters that focus exclusively on assessing an organization. The assessments that the author reviews and discusses address the organization and individuals. It is very practically organized into assessing current needs and then assessing future needs.

Part IV of the book is the longest section, and it addresses people development along with various aspects of the on-going operation of a succession planning program. This part of the book is especially useful to practitioners (those who will be stewards of the process) of succession planning.

Highlights

The four part structure of the book enables a broader audience to find the book useful and educational. If you're a line manager who would like to understand the basics of succession planning and its value to the business, reading parts I and II would be sufficient. If you're in a role where you are launching and establishing a succession planning practice, part III will be especially useful. And, if you're pushing toward succession planning maturity and increased effectiveness, part IV will guide you along the way.

Highlights: What I liked!

What I liked most about the book is that it was very easy to navigate. I found it easy to follow when reading it cover to cover. I also found it easy to use as a reference book after I was done reading it. The author invested a lot of effort in developing useful surveys, assessments, and tools that the reader can apply; these are especially useful if you are charged with launching and running a succession planning process for your organization.

Who might benefit from the Book

The book will best appeal to practitioners of succession planning and those line/operational leaders who need to implement succession planning. The book is especially helpful for those who are early in their exposure to succession planning practices. Tools/worksheets are plentiful in the book, and can be easily deployed to bolster practices wherever you need to apply them. Highly experienced practitioners will also find good nuggets of information, pointers, and reminders; although, experienced practitioners are much more likely to approach the book as a reference.

Conclusion

Effective Succession Planning is a good resource to have, and I recommend it especially for practitioners and managers who will be actively involved in succession planning for their organization. When done right, succession planning creates and enables the long-term and sustainable achievement of an organization's mission.

One thing is for sure, people-continuity is an essential enabler for business-continuity.

For more about this book, go to:

<http://www.amacombooks.org/book.cfm?isbn=9780814449158>

Editor's note: This book review was the result of a partnership between the publisher, PM World and the [PMI Dallas Chapter](#). Authors and publishers provide the books to PM World; books are delivered to the PMI Dallas Chapter, where they are offered free to PMI members to review; book reviews are published in the PM World Journal and PM World Library. PMI Dallas Chapter members can keep the books as well as claim PDUs for PMP recertification when their reviews are published. Chapter members are generally mid-career professionals, the audience for most project management books. If you are an author or publisher of a project management-related book, and would like the book reviewed through this program, please contact editor@peworldjournal.net.

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Dale J. Albrecht is the Human Capital Leader for Rent-A-Center based in Plano, Texas. He is also an Adjunct Professor for Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas, and is a doctoral candidate at the Swiss Management Center in Zug Switzerland.

Dale has fulfilled roles in Human Resources Leadership, Education, Leadership Development, Change Management, Performance Consulting, Organizational Design & Effectiveness, Project Management, Engineering, and Technical Support. Prior to working in the field of Human Resources, he started his career in the US Air Force in Satellite Communications. After he left active duty, he worked as an Electronics Communications Field Engineer for a Department of Defense communications contractor. Then he worked as a Technical Project Supervisor for Motorola, Inc. While at Motorola for 15 years his career evolved away from technical roles into people-centered roles in varying human resources capacities. Dale has industry experience in Military, Department of Defense, Telecommunications, Retail, Medical Devices, Manufacturing, and Construction.

Dale is pursuing a Doctoral Degree in Business Administration from the Swiss Management Center in Zug Switzerland. He has a Master's in Business Administration from Columbia Southern University, with a focus in Human Resource Management. He has a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Workforce Education & Development from Southern Illinois University, where he graduated Summa Cum Laude and a member of the Golden Key National Honor Society. He holds a certificate in Organizational Development from DePaul University. In addition to these he is a certified Senior Professional in Human Resources, a SHRM-Senior Certified Professional, a Six Sigma Master Black Belt, and holds a certificate in Project Planning, Analysis and Control from George Washington University.

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