SUCCESSION PLANNING AT THE MINISTRY OF FORESTS AND RANGE: A FOCUS ON DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE FORMAL MENTORING PROGRAM

by

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Abstract

This study examined the Succession Planning initiative at the BC Ministry of Forests and Range (MOFR), with a focus on developing an effective formal mentoring program. Using a change audit approach, the researchers examined work completed to date and interviewed Succession Planning team members and other project stakeholders, with the purpose of assessing the initiative against 8 key change project success criteria. Individual research in Mentoring, Visioning and Succession Planning also provided the MOFR with some further recommendations, with the in-depth assessment of the Mentoring program   presented in this paper. Results of the audit indicated that while the MOFR's change initiative had some strengths, there are some key recommendations for improvement in all 8 dimensions. Additional improvements included succession mapping, stock flowcharting, communications strategy, stakeholder analysis, training and development, performance measures, vacancy chains and a pilot project. The research on mentoring resulted in some recommendations for developing a formal mentoring program.

Executive Summary

This study focused on the succession planning initiative at the Ministry of Forests and Range (MOFR). Currently, the MOFR is anticipating a staffing crisis when the baby-boom generation retires, and wishes to avert this crisis through effective workforce and succession planning. The purpose of the analysis was to assess the MOFR's readiness to implement its succession planning initiative. The SFU MBA team compared current plans, past surveys, and future plans against eight change initiative markers used in change audits. The SFU MBA Team also conducted independent research in the areas of visioning, succession planning and mentoring to present some additional recommendations based on this research. Research and detailed recommendations on Mentoring are also included in this paper.

Results of the change audit found that the Ministry has a well developed strategy which is aligned to organizational goals and has structured the project into well defined and allocated tasks and responsibilities. There is also a well developed change leadership and internal communication structure in place. The MOFR has also made efforts to identify key stakeholders. There are however some improvements to be made in the strategy to communicate the project vision to employees, change leadership competencies, project success measures, stakeholder management, team development and performance measures. Results of the stakeholder interviews also found that there are some issues to address to minimize stakeholder risk and improve the succession planning effort.

Key recommendations from the change audit include communicating a vision, developing project success measures and using in performance management, training in change leadership competencies, using informal networks, improving stakeholder management and involvement, and training in group development. Stakeholder interviews also resulted in several recommendations to mitigate project risk. Finally, additional recommendations were provided that included succession mapping, stock flowcharting, a communications strategy, stakeholder analysis, training and development, performance measures, vacancy chains and a pilot project. The individual research on mentoring resulted in a recommendation for a formal mentoring program and suggestions for modification of the existing program to improve its effectiveness.

Dedication

To my grandmother, Bernice Glover, whose unconditional support enabled me to realize my dreams. I didn't become a dentist, like I promised you 20 years ago, and I won't be rich enough to buy you your "seven dwarfs" cottage. I will, however, be able to buy the vino now, but no more twist tops!

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I would also like to thank my partners on this project, Sheila Allen and John Cheng. They worked tireless hours with me to tame this beast, and we did it!

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1. INTRODUCTION

The aging of the Baby Boomer generation is expected to cause a mass exodus from many organizations within the next 20 years. The BC Ministry of Forests and Range (MOFR), will reflect this trend, in that nearly 50% of its critical work force are expected to retire within the next 15 years (BC Ministry of Forests and Range, 2005a, 2005b, 2004d).

To address this issue, a Succession Planning Group has been formed within the MOFR to perform a comprehensive analysis of the organization and present some viable and forward-looking alternatives and recommendations. The Succession Planning Group is part of the larger Work Force Planning Group. The plan is broken into five components: full workforce gap analysis, recruitment and retention plan, knowledge management plan, competency infrastructure and succession plan.

The following chapter describes the Ministry, its current situation, and the project as negotiated between the Ministry Team and the MBA team.

1.1 Business Function

Responsible for the stewardship of 47 million hectares of provincial forestland, The Ministry of Forests and Range is a Ministry within the Provincial Government of British Columbia. The MOFR also provides fire protection for over 84 million hectares. The fact that 90% of BC forestlands are publicly owned, endows significant responsibility on the MOFR for the management of these lands.

The ministry pursues its goals for sustainable forest resources and benefits in a consultative manner with the public, industry and other Crown agencies, while recognizing the unique interests of aboriginal people. In this way, the ministry works to earn the public's trust as staff make day-to-day decisions which ensure that all British Columbians can look forward to healthy forests and a strong forest economy now and in the future. (Strategic Planning, 2005)

The MOFR comprises four divisions: Corporate Policy and Governance, Operations, Forest Stewardship and Tenure and Revenue. Within the Operations Division lies the Northern Interior region, The Southern Interior Region, The Coastal Region, BC Timber Sales and Fire Protection. These five segments contain 47 district offices/fire centers, 4 satellite offices, and 19 field team locations. The Forest Stewardship division consists of: the Forest Analysis Branch, the Forest Practices Branch, the Forest Science Program, the MOFR Library, and the Research Branch and Tree. The Corporate Policy and Governance Division consists of: the Business Improvement Branch, the Business Solutions Branch, the Information Management Group, Strategic Human Resources Planning, and Strategic Policy Planning. Finally, the Tenure and Revenue Division consists of the Aboriginal Affairs Branch, the Economic and Trade Branch, the Resource Tenure and Engineering Branch and the Revenue Branch. In all, the MOFR has approximately 2,500 full-time equivalent employees (see Appendix A).

1.2 History

As elected governments change, the MOFR has been subject to shifts in roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. While its core areas of operations remain intact, various departments can be spun off, merged, split apart, or absorbed by other ministries depending on the new government's focus.

The MOFR has experienced many shocks with relation to its workforce. The present composition of today's workforce is a product of the ministry's history. In 1981, 1989, 1994, and 1998, the ministry experienced varying degrees of budget and workforce downsizing. With the arrival of the new BC Liberal Government in 2001, voluntary buyout packages followed by mandatory layoffs were used to bring about workforce attrition and contribute to an overall reduction in the BC Public Service.

Centralization of a number of administrative tasks has also been brought about by shifts in government policy. The BC Public Service Agency was created in 2001 to handle a payroll, recruitment, and IT functions. As a result, such jobs within each ministry were eliminated and those occupying them transferred or laid-off. However, the results did not meet expectations and the MOFR has subsequently rehired many of these workers.

1.3 External Pressures

1.3.1 Economic and Environmental Factors

The ministry has also had to deal with many significant externalities. The WTO Softwood Lumber Trade Dispute with the United States had a massive effect on the forest industry, through softwood duties exceeding 24%. All over BC, lumber and pulp mills were forced to seek new efficiencies, which have resulted in industry consolidation, new business process practices, and workforce realignments. The introduction of 24-hour operations, combined with economies of scale as a result of numerous mergers, has greatly increased the competitiveness of the BC lumber industry. There is still great

uncertainly around the future of the dispute, as the United States is currently appealing the WTO ruling against US softwood lumber duties and Byrd Amendment.

World consumption is also a major force affecting the softwood industry. Though world commodity prices have seen large dips in the last 20 years, rising demand for timber from East Asia has resulted in newfound energy in BC forestry related activities. As Asian consumption continues to grow, (it now exceeds US consumption) demand pressures will continue to mount for BC lumber products.

BC weather has also posed significant challenges for the forest industry. Over the past two years, BC has experienced unusually warm and dry seasons, most likely has a result of El Nino systems operating within the Pacific Ocean. Warm, low precipitation winters are followed by hot and dry summers, have dried out forests and increased the risk of damaging forest fires. Fire bans, controlled burns, and increased prevention measures have been put in place, but record numbers and sizes of wildfires in BC has presented challenges to the MOFR.

However, the most devastating crisis facing the BC Forest Industry is the Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic. The mountain pine beetle burrows into the bark of trees, killing them and increasing the susceptibility to rot or wildfires. Since nearly three years ago, the mountain pine beetle has survived abnormally warm winters to consume large tracts of forest in BC's interior. The current spread of the insect now sits at an area in BC equivalent to the size of New Brunswick.

1.3.2 Unions

Currently the MOFR engages with two major unions: the BC Government Employees Union (BCGEU) and the Professional Employees Association (PEA). Collective agreements with these groups over the years have placed an higher value on

the protection of employee's jobs that have the most seniority. Unfortunately, during the latest downsizing, the result of this seniority policy was the layoff of younger workers with shorter tenure. The collective agreements have also created competitive wage levels suitable to maintain high degrees of employee retention, quality of work life, and job flexibility. However, generous pension benefits coupled with early retirement stipulations have presented a new problem to the, mass work force exodus.

At this point, our interviews with the project managers have informed us that the unions are aware of the Workforce and Succession Plans, but are not directly involved with the process.

1.3.3 Canadian Demographics

The aging of the Baby Boomer generation (aged 40 – 59) has inspired the development of new long-term planning projects in workforce succession and training. It is critical (from a knowledge management perspective) that enough talent be developed in time to replace this generation of professional and managerial employees who will be retiring en masse.

Workforce pension and retirement provisions, as mentioned before, will present a serious challenge to the MOFR. Currently, employees are eligible to retire when the sum of their age and their years of BC public service equals 85, and the mandatory retirement age for the government is age 65. In addition, the size of the pension benefits paid out is also determined by the highest five income-earning years. All these factors drive the senior workforce toward early retirement, and this may be a problem if not enough replacements can be readied in time.

1.4 Project Objective

Our project team's objective was to conduct a change audit for the BC Ministry of Forests succession planning change project. We examined the work completed to date, surveyed relevant stakeholders in the project and analyzed the MOFR's plans using a set of 8 evaluative criteria. Based on this analysis, our team provides a set of recommendations to assist the project team in ensuring successful implementation.

Within this analysis, Sheila, John and Rachel took a particular focus on the "Stakeholder Management" portion of the analysis by interviewing key stakeholders, who are directly affected by the change project. The SFU team used the information gathered to identified stakeholders' issues and concerns, with the objective of sharing the results with the MOFR so that they may develop strategies to address those issues. Given that the MOFR expressed interest in identifying the risks of the project, both internal and external to the organization, the stakeholder analysis also identifies key areas of risk posed by various stakeholders. An additional component of our risk analysis will be provided with a project Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis.

The Succession Planning Committee, in addition to the 8-dimension change audit, was provided with some relevant aspects of the MBA team's individual research - specifically in the areas of visioning, mentoring, training and development, and succession planning tools, processes, and strategies.

1.5 Purpose

A mass exodus from many organizations within the next 20 years, is expected once the Baby Boom Generation begins to retire (www.statscan.ca). To address this, the MOFR has formed a Work Force Planning Group to perform a comprehensive analysis

of the organization and present some viable and forward-looking alternatives and recommendations. The plan has five aspects: full workforce gap analysis, recruitment and retention plan, knowledge management plan, competency infrastructure, and succession plan (BC Ministry of Forests and Range, 2003).

The Project Team Lead, Leslie Bush has asserted that the succession planning component of the project is really the foundation for the Workforce Plan, and thus it is fundamental to the success of the entire project. The succession planning group is thus concerned with minimizing risks in order to increase stakeholder buy-ins, reduce project time lags, and increase financial efficiency.

1.6 Scope

The scope of this project is to examine the BC Ministry of Forest's Succession Planning Project across three years. To date, the MOFR is approximately one year into their project, which provided the MBA team an opportunity to examine past efforts, current status, and future plans.

1.7 Deliverables

On July 15, 2005, in the MOFR's Squamish Regional Office, The SFU MBA Team provided a power point presentation to the 16-member Succession Planning Group. The presentation included a summary of the change audit, a presentation of the key stakeholder interview findings and recommendations, and the risk assessment of the change project. Each member of the SFU team also provided his or her focused research analyses on the above sections.

1.8 Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders of the project include Unions, the succession planning group, employees, the public, private forest companies and the BC government. SFU team interviewed 4 Union officials, 4 Educational institutes who provide Forestry related programs, 11 employees from varying sectors and departments, 2 independent consultants, 6 forestry students, an executive member, and 4 members from the succession planning team. In total, the SFU team interviewed 32 key stakeholders. The SFU MBA Team identified and selected key stakeholders with the help of Leslie and Sandra.

1.9 Budget Resources

The project required the SFU team to conduct several in person and phone interviews. The cost of these phone calls was the responsibility of the MOFR. All costs associated with travel to conduct one-on-one interviews were covered by the MOFR.

The SFU students prepared the necessary materials for the presentation, however all room fees, photocopies, use of projection equipment and other associated costs were the responsibility of the MOFR.

Special Client Deliverables:

1. In order to complete the project on time, timely response by telephone and email was essential.
2. Email of all updated succession planning information and or Copies of all information was given to the succession planning group during meetings.
3. Client was to have made initial phone calls with interviewees to set up and pre-approve interviews. (Once done, SFU students will set up interview appointments.)
4. Access to MOFR's website.

1.10 Potential Issues and Constraints

Risks associated with the project include time lags, heavy student course load, unforeseen expenses, unforeseen illness, unavailable research information and possible external constraints. As the project deadline was Aug 2nd for Rachel, John and Sheila to graduate, to minimize time lags, constant communication and a drive toward meeting time commitments was essential. Also, open and honest communication was encouraged throughout the duration of the project to ensure all issues and constraints are discussed as they arise.

A final project constraint is the inability to administer a survey. Leslie and Sandra expressed a preference that a survey not be administered, because the Ministry is planning to administer their own survey in the near future. Thus, interviewing was the main form of primary data collection, and could serve to better identify areas of concern providing a foundation for future survey questions.

1.11 Completion Criteria

The MBA Project Criteria includes four sections:

1. A description of the contract
2. A feedback report and analysis given to client
3. A chapter including individual research as it relates to the project
4. A reflection of what the students learned about the field project

The MOFR Power Point presentation will include:

1. A summary of the change audit.
2. A detailed look at the Stakeholder Analysis and Entrepreneurship component.
3. Research findings
4. Recommendations

2. ANALYSIS OF THE BC MINISTRY OF FOREST'S SUCCESSION PLANNING INITIATIVE

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the data collected and analyzed during the MOFR Succession Planning Change Audit. The MBA team examined the MOFR's Succession Planning project, which is a part of the larger Work Force Planning Group (Appendix B). Overall, the Succession Planning Project is scheduled to span across three years. As of today, they are roughly one year into their project, which provided the MBA team with opportunities to examine past efforts, current status, and future plans.

The purpose of data analysis is to assess the MOFR's readiness to implement their succession planning initiative. To measure their preparedness, our MBA team compared the MOFR's current plans, past surveys, and future plans against eight change initiative markers as modified from the 'inspire action' method taught to us by Nancy MacKay in BUS 901 class (2005). The eight markers used in this analysis are strategic alignment, project structure, change leadership, communication strategy, stakeholder analysis, risk assessment – stakeholder interviews, resilient teams, and aligned performance. Throughout the chapter the Ministry's plans are analysis against the markers and where there are shortcomings in the ministry's plans, recommendations are made. Finally, the chapter concludes with additional recommendations and insights.

2.2   Project Approach and Methodology

Once the project charter and received approval from both the SFU Team Project Supervisor, Gervase Bushe, and the Succession Planning Group (Leslie Bush and Sandra Letts, Project Team Leaders, 2005), the project research and stakeholder analysis began. Several conference calls were held with Leslie Bush and Sandra Letts between May 15th and July 30th.

The next step included exchanging with Sandra Letts and Leslie Bush, some of the relevant e-mail documentation of the Succession Planning Initiative, including data from past surveys. The MBA Team began interviewing stakeholders in late May of 2005 and completed this in late June. During our interviews, standardized questions were asked (see Appendix C) in order to compare the data.

Finally, we conducted an in-depth analysis of the Ministry's change efforts and the interview data using the eight criteria as described above. From these analyses, we were able to evaluate the success of their project efforts to date, and provide a series of alternatives and recommendations to ensure risk minimization and enable them to use this information in future planning.

As mentioned, the SFU MBA team prepared individual research papers which link empirical research to the methodologies provided by the MOFR. This research was also used to give provide the client with some additional recommendations which may be relevant to the change project. The final outcome was a PowerPoint presentation made to the Succession Planning team July 13th, 2005.

The following section contains an analysis of the MOFR change project based on the 8 evaluative criteria, and a discussion of our findings and recommendations. References and appendices can be found at the end of this document.

2.2.1 Strategic Alignment

Succession planning research shows that the Human Resource and Corporate Strategy should align with the overall company mission, vision, values and goals. To this point, the BCFS does state where they stand on these dimensions (see Appendix D). Thus the MOFR is clear on what it does, how it should do what it needs to, and where it is going. This creates an effective foundation for the organization to operate towards common objectives and perform work according to four common values: integrity, accountability, innovation, and respect.

The critical challenge here is to communicate these foundation statements to a large and diverse organization, and attempt to adapt the culture of the organization to its new foundation. Unfortunately, an analysis of a past survey conducted by the Auditor General in 2001 and 2004 show the MOFR still has some challenges in this area. This will be expanded upon in a later section.

2.2.1.1 Succession Planning Strategy

It is clear that the Succession Planning Committee has done an excellent job of developing a strategy which covers such important aspects as deliverables, budget, place of distribution, team communications and team goals (BC Ministry of Forests and Range, 2005c).

2.2.1.2 Succession Planning Alignment to Overall Company Strategy

In the case of the Ministry of Forests Human Resources strategies flow from six areas: Mandate, stewardship, leadership development, learning organization, workforce planning, and organizational wellness. Theses Human Resources strategies are part of a broader goal to become a higher performing organization (BC Provincial Government,

2005a). The succession planning strategy is to ensure the continued effective performance of the BCFS by making a provision for the development and replacement of key people over time. Therefore, the succession planning strategy directly aligns to the overall work force planning initiative.

2.2.1.3 Challenges Identified via BCFS Workforce Survey Analysis 2001 and 2004

An analysis of the Auditor General Surveys from 2001 and 2004 (BC Ministry of Forests, 2004g) showcase some key areas for improvement in the communication, understanding, and behavioural adherence to the organizations foundation statements:

- In each of the three questions relating to mission vision and values, about 1/3 showed a high understanding and ¼ of the work force have no clear understanding of these organizational foundation statement. The reality that 2/3 of the work force have little or no clear understanding of the organizations foundation statements highlights a key area of concern.

- 2/3 of employees have a clear' understanding of their department's goals which is a positive finding.

- 2/3 of employees have a clear understanding of how their work contributes to departmental goals, which is also a positive finding.

- However, negative shifts from 2001 to 2004 have occurred in both the employee understanding of the ministry's overarching foundations as well as the employees' individual departments goals. Between 2001 and 2004 there was at 7% decrease and an 8% decrease respectively. This may be due to industry restructuring of roles, jobs, and lines of authority.

- In 2001 only 22% of employees in the Ministry of Forests and Range strongly agree that executives provide a clear direction for the future. This of course could have serious implications for the succession planning initiative. If the Ministry wishes employees to follow their vision, they must communicate to them where they are being lead to. It is encouraging to note, however, that from 2001 to 2004, a statistically significant increase of 7.5% of employees strongly agreed that management is now providing clear direction for the future.

- Only 22% of employees strongly agree that they receive recognition for high-quality customer service (this point has implications for the aligning performance component of the project as will be discussed later in this paper).

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2.2.1.4 Creating a Compelling Vision for the Succession Planning Initiative

Vision is the ideal state that the organization wishes to achieve in the long-term. During our May 13th meeting, Leslie indicated that the Succession Planning Vision was the same as the Work Force Planning Vision: *Have the right people in the right place at the right time and fill critical positions quickly and efficiently from a pool of qualified candidates* (BC Ministry of Forests and Range, 2004c). The ideal for the succession planning team would be to align systems and resources to ensure that once a critical position becomes vacant, a candidate with the appropriate skills can be chosen from a pool of qualified candidates. Currently there is some concern regarding whether to use pool, individual or role based succession planning (BC Ministry of Forests and Range, 2005c). Therefore it is necessary to clarify the vision before moving forward, and to communicate a passion for this vision in order to inspire employees to share the vision.

2.2.2 Project Structure

An assessment of the Ministry's use of project structure examined whether they use a clear business case with project success measures, and whether they have clarified team member roles and responsibilities.

2.2.2.1 Defines Clear Business Case and Project Success Measures Owned by Business Leaders

The succession planning project has many of the elements of a successful project structure, through the application of project management and a clearly defined business case, although it has not incorporated project success measures well. The Succession Planning Group is currently using project management software in the succession planning project (BC Ministry of Forests and Range, 2005g). During their

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June 16 meeting, the succession planning team used computerized project system to identify a completed task list and action plan, distributed tasks among members and set timelines (BC Ministry of Forests and Range, 2005g). The Succession Team has also developed a clear business case to guide the project. Based on discussions with Leslie and Sandra of the Strategic HR committee, they have defined the case as centered on two main business objectives. One of the main objectives of the project is to improve the quality and quantity of the Ministry's human resource assets, through the retention, recruitment and development of qualified employees. The other objective is to minimize costs associated with employee retirement and succession. This includes minimizing hiring and replacement costs, as well as time lags associated with finding a replacement for retired employees.

A key part of project structure that is missing from the Succession Project is the integration of project success measures. Such measures are needed to gauge project progress and success, and also may serve a role in increasing team member motivation as they are better able to see the results of their efforts. Relevant project success measures that could be integrated into the Ministry's succession planning project include turnover and absenteeism rates, time taken to fill critical positions etc. Currently the Ministry does track turnover and absenteeism rates, so it may be possible to use these in conjunction with the Project. Of course, some control for other factors influencing these rates would have to be established, so that the effect of the Succession Planning Project in particular could be isolated. For example: Leadership competencies could be diagnostically tested which may be a useful indicator of a person's leadership style and personality. These might include such tests as Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, or the "Big Five." These may be used for an individual under consideration for a leadership position, to assess areas in which they may need additional training or development, or

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their suitability for a position. It should be noted that caution should be exercised in using this as a "weeding out" tool for a pool of applicants, as it may not be legally defensible to use these diagnostic tools this way.

2.2.2.2 Identifies Succession Members' Roles and Responsibilities for Project Success

The Project Team has identified team leader and member roles and responsibilities and assigned these under the consideration of member competencies and availability (BC Ministry of Forests and Range, 2004e). Task allocation has been done using their project management software. During the May 13th phone meeting between the SFU MBA Team and Leslie Bush, Leslie indicated that those members who were best suited to the task in terms of time available and competencies would be assigned to given tasks.

One area of improvement for the Project Team however, is to assign responsibility for project success measures once these have been integrated into the project. Another opportunity for the Project Team to improve allocation of roles and responsibilities would be to take other factors besides competencies and availability into consideration. Such factors could include the motivation and drive to complete the project, as well whether the team member intends their participation to be short-term or long-term. This would ensure that the project team motivation and commitment is maintained to drive the project to achieving its goals.

2.2.2.3 Change Leadership

Change leadership refers to the ability of the project team leaders and members to lead and take responsibility for the project's success. The following assesses the

leadership structure, and the clarity of the roles and responsibilities of the change leaders.

2.2.2.4 Identifies a Change Leadership Structure to Lead and Sustain the Project

Change leadership implies that there is a leadership structure in place to take an overall responsibility for pushing the project toward completion and success and obtaining the necessary resources from the executive level that is sponsoring the project. Essentially, it is important to identify who reports to whom, and more importantly, to ensure that the change leaders are the right 'people' for the job i.e., that they are given the skills to succeed. To its credit, the BCFS has done a commendable job of identifying the change agents and reporting structures (BC Ministry of Forests and Range, 2005h). The Succession Planning Project has identified Team Leaders who are responsible for the overall success of the project, and all Team Members have been chosen for their extensive government and Forestry experience and leadership capabilities. One area of opportunity, which can be identified here, is a need for specialized training in change management for change leaders, which the BCFS has begun implementing. An additional area of opportunity would be to identify the level of commitment and future career/personal plans of team leaders to ensure retention and group continuity.

2.2.2.5 Clearly Defines Change Leadership Roles, Responsibilities and Accountability

It is important to ensure that clear lines of responsibility and accountability have been identified once the change leaders have been identified. Further, it is important to ensure that all Team Members have change management competencies, a clear understanding of their responsibilities and are accountable for these responsibilities. It is

apparent that BCFS has identified the succession planning group members, and assigned responsibilities. However, as already mentioned, team members have not had their roles defined or been assessed in terms of change management competencies. It is recommended that once change management skills have been identified, group members are issued training. Essentially, a set of change leader competencies will need to be developed, areas of opportunity identified, and training implemented. For example, employing transparent and effective communications is an entire area of expertise that lends high degrees of success to any change initiative. Identifying and reducing resistance, and facilitating meetings and discussions are essential skills in involving employees in the process and communicating to them all the details.

It is difficult to assign specific accountability for project success because the members work on a voluntary basis and are not specifically evaluated on the basis of the project outcomes. Once project success measures are identified, it will be important to motivate team members to be accountable for these outcomes. This could be done by linking project progress and success with rewards and outcomes.

2.2.3 Communication Strategies

An important factor to ensure commitment to any change initiative is an effective communication strategy. Open, honest, and constant communication are essential at every stage of the change process, from identification of a need, to conception of a change project, right through to the back-end support after a change initiative is completed. People left out of the loop can become challenging opponents to a change initiative and never commit to the transition or the desired end state of the firm.

The SFU MBA Team's telephone surveys, discussions with Leslie Bush and Sandra Letts (June 2005), and review of Auditor General's workforce 2001 and 2004

workforce surveys have indicated that there is some significant room for improvement in the internal and external communication strategies.

2.2.3.1 Internal Communication Strategy

Internal strategies refer to the methods used to reach internal stakeholders, including employees and management. Phone meetings with Leslie Bush and Sandra Letts, as well as phone interviews, analyses of the BC Auditor General's Public Service Survey, and the BCFS 2001 and 2004 Workforce Environment Surveys have revealed that, while internal communications has some strength including Succession Team communication and improved employee information access, there are still some shortfalls in this strategy (Ministry of Forests and Range, 2004a, 2004g).

Currently the Succession Planning Committee has established an effective communication strategy, which includes monthly 1 -2 day meetings, conference calls, meeting notifications and minutes, distribution of all working documents via e-mail, and internal website project updates (Ministry of Forests and Range, 2005h).

Access to information for employees has also improved. Employees indicated in the internal surveys that they are better able to access information on their department, their ministry, or from other ministries. While there is still room for improvement in information access, statistically significant increases in access to information from 2001 to 2004 show that the BCFS can use centralized web sites or a project website to help disseminate information on the Workforce Planning Project (BC Ministry of Forests and Range 2004a, 2004g).

From a review of the Ministry and SFU MBA Team surveys, there appears to be a challenge in communicating the Ministry's vision and specifically, the Succession Planning Initiative. An assessment of the MOFR internal survey documentation (BC

Ministry of Forests and Range 2004a, 2004g), indicated that 1/3 of employees had no idea what the organizational vision was, and that they do not feel that the Ministry is capable of successfully carrying out a major change initative. Furthermore, the SFU MBA Team surveys indicated that many employees had a vague or no idea at all what the succession planning project was about. This is a critical area to ensure the success of the change initiative: employees not fully aware of the succession planning project or its purpose cannot be effectively managed to support the change.

To better communicate with employees, there are many alternatives that can be considered. The use of informal networks, i.e., utilizing key, "go to" employees to communicate the intended message, can be an effective communications strategy (Appendix J). Employees surveyed by the SFU Team also expressed a desire for more personalized communication rather than internet or email based. They explained that they often ignore emails or websites, although the information may be useful. An option to address this would be to have a video-taped message to send out to employee to watch at their regional offices.

2.2.3.2 External Communication Strategy

From the SFU MBA Team's interviews with students, educational institutions and contractors, it appears that the Ministry is not communicating effectively with these stakeholders. Students and educational institutions have expressed some mixed perceptions of the MOFR in terms of what employment there is like, and what kind of qualifications are required. The MOFR has to develop a consistent communications strategy to deliver the right message to these stakeholders. The MOFR should consider developing a strategic position in the marketplace for forestry graduates, and then

develop informational materials and messages that communicate to employers and students exactly what they offer and what kind of people they are looking to hire.

2.2.4 Stakeholder Management Strategy

In an effective stakeholder management strategy, the organization identifies their stakeholders and designs appropriate strategies for minimizing resistance.

2.2.4.1 Identifies Key Stakeholder Characteristics and Strategies for Minimizing Resistance

The succession planning group and the MBA team have identified the following Stakeholder groups: Employees, the project team, managers, potential candidates for hire, the public, unions, government, employee's family and friends, forestry companies and environmental groups. These stakeholders can be subset into primary, secondary and tertiary groups (Wexler, 2005). Primary stakeholders have a fiduciary relationship with the organization i.e., have a direct role in its financial performance, who can directly be affected by or can influence the project. Primary stakeholders include management, employees, and shareholders. Secondary stakeholders are those outside of the organization who can either directly or indirectly influence or be influenced by the organization, such as the media, labour unions, the government, foreign governments, etc. Tertiary stakeholders are those outside of the organization that may be influenced by the organization, but have no current power to influence it. These are stakeholders with which companies usually take a stewardship relationship (Wexler, 2005).

Managing these stakeholder groups properly is essential to the success of this project, especially to the groups that will be affected the most, such as the employees, managers, and BCFS clients. Forecasting possible implications of stakeholder support

or opposition will prepare the managers of this change project for many contingencies, and allow for more comprehensive planning.

Appendix K outlines the usage of a stakeholder map, an effective tool designed to identify the current state of a stakeholder group, map the desired state of that group, and employ strategies to bring that group to the desired state. Without effective stakeholder management in this initiative, the succession planning project will simply be deemed 'another government change program,' lose support from critical groups, or never gain support from potential allies who were improperly managed. In addition, the Succession Planning Group would benefit from identifying additional stakeholders that could have serious impacts on the success of this project. Politicians could decide to step in and cut budgets once again, or reorganize the BCFS. The unions could become vehemently opposed or resistant to this initiative because it may run counter to their collective agreements or oppose their interests in the recruitment, selection, and compensation areas. Resistance from a non-cooperative workforce or middle management group also could threaten the project in various ways. Evaluating each stakeholder's potential to cooperate with or threaten helps mitigate the risk that the project will fail.

2.2.4.2 Utilizing the 20-60-20 Rule to Manage Employee Stakeholders

In change management, the 20-60-20 rule is a rule of thumb among change management professionals with experience consulting on change initiatives. Simply state, this states that at the beginning of a change initiative, twenty percent of workers will support the change, sixty percent of workers will be undecided or unsure, and the remaining twenty percent will oppose the change (MacKay, 2004).

An analysis of the Auditor General's workforce survey in 2001 of the MOFR workforce showed that most employees do not believe the MOFR can successfully adapt to change, and many employees are confused about the MOFR's mission and values (BC Ministry of Forests and Range, 2004a). This suggests that there is a significant number of employees who fall into the unsure or undecided category in terms of supporting the change initiative. These will have to be managed using effective involvement and communication strategies to change their perspectives and win their commitment to the project.

From discussions with Leslie Bush of the Strategic HR group, we believe that the 20% of stakeholders who are fully committed at this time are mainly management and executives who have received information surrounding the project and are aware of the impending staffing crisis. As the undecided 60% of a change initiative's stakeholders have the potential to either cooperate or not, this group should be the focus of change leaders' efforts to achieve buy-in. With the right communication strategy, and level of involvement, these stakeholders can be influenced to support the project. Currently, this 60% is derived form those employees with some knowledge of the succession planning initiative. For the remaining 20%, these individuals typically will not buy into any change project regardless of the level of effort or resources designed to sway them over.

2.2.5 Stakeholder Interview Analysis Risk Assessment - Stakeholder Interview Data and Recommendations

This section of the chapter contains a brief overview of our key findings based on the stakeholder interviews, along with recommendations flowing from those findings. The following information is based on the compiled stakeholder interview data as well as a Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities (SWOT) assessment which can be

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found in Appendix F and G respectively. This section of the analysis is divided, using the compiled data, as follows: union officials, professors at institutions offering forestry programs, students, MOFR employees, contracting companies, executive members of the succession team, and succession planning committee members. For ease of reading, the following section is numbered.

2.2.5.1 Key Recommendations to Mitigate Risk from the Union Group

1. When asked about their knowledge of the succession planning committee, many members indicated they were aware of the project on only a very general level. Some also expressed an interest in being invited to join the Succession Planning Project Committee. Therefore we recommend inviting unions to be involved in the Succession Project, to help create generate commitment.

2. Interviews also revealed that some perceived the job interview process to be unfair - specifically stating that it rewarded people who say the right things in the interview (as the interview process awards points based on the mention of specific things) instead of those who actually possess the appropriate competencies for the job. Therefore, we recommend that interviewers add an experiential component to the interviews which focuses more on the interviewees' work experiences rather than looking for 'key words' which may not encompass the candidates' experiences and other competencies associated with the work.

3. Many union members expressed an interest in giving more opportunities to in-service employees and providing employees with strategic career pathing. They also expressed an awareness of the Ministry's mentoring program, but were unsure of how this program related to succession planning. We recommend the mentoring program be designed to help employees acquire the competencies needed to advance to their desired career.

4. Union members we interviewed felt that job interviews are not standardized throughout the Ministry. For this reason, we recommend that interviewers be given standardized training to ensure consistency of the process, and perceived fairness among employees.

5. The Ministry finds it challenging to attract employees to work in expensive/remote locations. Some union representatives recommend providing the following incentives: isolation pay, market adjustment pay, lateral transfers out of remote locations after two years, increased vacation time, a medical travel allowance, and flexible working hours. The MOFR could make moving to remote locations a requirement for career advancement.

2.2.5.2 Key Recommendations to Mitigate Risk for Educational Institutions

1. From our interviews with various instructors and career counsellors from various educational institutions offering forestry programs, we discovered that many students were unaware of the types of jobs that the MOFR offers. We recommend that the MOFR conduct information sessions and job fairs, which would allow the ministry to provide students and instructors with information regarding the industry, the MOFR, how to apply for jobs, benefits, and the succession planning project.

2. Additionally, these educators told our MBA team that they perceived the MOFR as offering a narrower range of experience than other employers. We recommend that the MOFR provide opportunities for students to gain variety of skills by cross training in different job positions, temporary job assignments, and mentoring.

3. Many educators perceived the MOFR to be a low paying employer relative to other organizations in the industry. For this reason, we recommend that the MOFR conduct a salary benchmarking analysis to compare its pay level compare to other companies in the industry. They should also estimate the value of the benefits e.g. medical/dental, pension etc. offered by the Ministry, if these compare favourably to other employers. The results of the benchmarking could be used to change students' and educators' perceptions of the Ministry as a low paying employer.

4. Some educators interviewed expressed that enrolment has been declining for the past couple of years and that this may be due to negative media coverage of the Forest industry. Therefore, media relations is important to MOFR because the public perception of MOFR influences potential entrants into this field of study and thus the industry. We suggest that MOFR inform the media of the succession planning project and other Workforce Planning initiatives to change public perceptions.

2.2.5.3 Key Recommendations to Mitigate Employees' Risks

1. Our interviews found that many employees did not have an understanding of the Succession Planning Project's Vision, and felt that internet and email based communication was not the best way of conveying an important message. Therefore, we recommend communicating the vision using a videotaped message - This video can then be issued to each division and viewed by employees and managers alike. If possible, have regional managers meet with staff monthly to communicate this information in person.

2. The interviews also found that there was employees were unsure how to get involved in the mentoring program what the values of the program are. We recommend developing a communication plan to outline the program, expectations, and the benefits for both the mentor and the protégé.

3. Third, employees expressed an interest in more opportunities to gain experience and knowledge. We recommend increasing the number of

temporary assignments and the opportunity for lateral transfers so that employees will gain more skill variety.

4. Some managerial employees we interviewed expressed concern regarding wage to work load value. We recommend the MOFR conduct a salary and job responsibility review to help ensure that salaries are appropriate for the required job responsibilities.

5. Some managers expressed an interest in advancement but felt they needed to develop the necessary skills to move up. One possibility is to have job preview interviews for critical positions. The top 5 interview candidates could be given temporary job assignments to increase their competency levels.

2.2.5.4 Key Recommendations to Mitigate Risks from Contracting Companies

1. The contractors we spoke to expressed an interest in learning more about the Ministry's Succession Planning Project and believed that there was an opportunity to work with the Ministry to share information. There could be a possibility in sharing employee resources with contractors, thus forming a mutually beneficial relationship. This could happen if, for example, contractors recommended employees that wished to work on a more stable full-time basis to the MOFR, and the MOFR referred top interview candidates who they could not hire to seek work with contractors.

2.2.5.5 Key Recommendations to Mitigate Risk for Students

1. Forestry students interviewed felt that the Ministry did not offer as diverse a work experience and was relatively low paid compared to other employers. The MOFR needs to develop a mentoring program for new graduates and other opportunities such as temporary transfers to acquire valuable experience and expertise.

2. Next, some students felt that the MOFR job requirements were too high, and that they were unsure about how to apply for Ministry jobs. We recommend working closely with university professors and career centers by informing them about new job postings and application requirements so that this information can be communicated to students. Also, they should consider developing more entry level positions for new graduates.

3. Our interviews revealed that a primary resource for career information is instructors and career counsellors. For this reason, it is maintain good communication channels to ensure professors are receiving accurate information regarding the MOFR.

4. Many students observed that most organizations list job postings in January and that the MOFR posted job offerings in the spring. To be competitive and attract the best students, the Ministry should try to post at the same time or earlier than other institutions.

5. Interviews showed mixed results regarding key factors influencing their career choice (i.e., nature of work, stability, pay, location, and opportunity for

advancement). For this reason, we recommend surveying students in order to determine what factors they consider most important. The ministry utilize this important information to design their recruitment strategy.

2.2.5.6 *Key Recommendations to Mitigate Risks for Executive Members and Other Groups*

1. Executive Members interviewed seemed extremely knowledgeable about the succession planning program and had many insights and suggestions. We suggest the Succession Planning Committee Members utilize executives' knowledge and thus it is recommended that the executive members participate in all succession planning meetings.

2. Executive Members cautioned that employee perceptions must be managed effectively in order to gain their buy-in. It was suggested that the Succession Team deliver a consistent message to the staff promoting the benefits of succession planning and ensuring that this program is here to stay and not a "flavour of the day" program.

3. Executives suggested that the Succession Committee deliver a consistent message to management to ensure that respective staff are similarly informed. This could be achieved through the use of videotaped messages, as previously suggested.

4. Executives warned that instilling the Road Ahead and its implications in the minds of all current and future employees is critical. It is thus recommended that the organization change its processes and structure to support this new reality.

2.2.5.7 *Key Recommendations for Succession Committee Members*

1. Committee members suggested that meetings often strayed from the agenda and that not everyone was given an opportunity to speak. For this reason we recommend the committee elect a rotating chairperson for each meeting. Training on meeting management would also help give structure to meetings.

2. Some members interviewed expressed were unsure how the Succession Plan fit in with the other Road Ahead initiatives. For this reason, we recommend that other Work Force Project Committee Members be invited to Succession meetings and vice-versa.

3. Committee members expressed support for inviting a union member to join the succession committee, so long as this member is open minded and willing to join the team. It is recommended to invite a union member into the team and assign them tasks and duties.

4. Some committee members also felt that they did not have enough strategic HR information or training. We recommend training Succession Planning Committee Members in the strategic HR, succession planning processes, and possibly group dynamics.

2.2.6 Resilient Teams

Building resilient teams is essential to a change project, because it reduces team conflict and increases creativity, trust and performance, which facilitate the change process. To build resilience requires change leaders use a coaching approach. It is unclear given the documents provided whether coaching skills have been taught and are being used throughout the BCFS

2.2.6.1 Team Coaching

The team coaching approach identifies what parties will be impacted by the change and identifies how prepared these members are to make a change. Currently, this change initiative has identified its stakeholders, but has not specifically identified the impact and unintended consequences which may arise out of workforce and succession planning.

2.2.6.2 Increasing Team Resilience and Productivity

Conner (1992) suggests that change leaders should constantly look for ways to help employees to better handle change by teaching them the dynamics of the change and processes for managing change. Leaders should try to increase the employees' 'assimilation point threshold,' or their ability to cope with change.

2.2.6.2.1 Theories of Group Development

It is recommended to the Succession Planning Project manager to look into the Lacoursiere's 5-phase model to further their understanding of group development. The phases are: Orientation, Dissatisfaction, Resolution, Production, Termination (Lacoursiere, 1980). It is important to emphasize group development at each phase in order to ensure a high productivity from the group. Recognizing Lacoursiere's model

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would allow the leader to understand why the phases occur, and how to better develop the group and move on to the next phase.

Gibb's TORI theory of Trust is also useful in understanding and facilitating group development. Gibb hypothesised that fear is a crippling force which prevents growth, creativity, effectiveness, and productivity (1978). Gibb believes that only when group members are able to exhibit trust, openness, and interdependence, can the group truly develop (1978). If the Succession Team is able to facilitate "risk-taking" situations which build trust, they may expedite the development and thus productivity of the Team. Through awareness of these theories of group development, the Succession Team will be better prepared to lead the group through the developmental phases.

2.2.7 Aligned Performance

2.2.7.1 Aligns the Company 'Performance Management' Strategy to the Succession Planning Project

In a change project, the organization's performance management system must be changed to support achieving the goals of the change and to drive the behaviours required of the new system. They key components of aligning the performance management system to the succession planning project is to establish project success measures to evaluate progress; to provide feedback to team members as to their performance; to align rewards to the achievement of project goals.

In order to assess team member's performance in the succession planning project, measures of success must be used. Responsibility for these success measures must be allocated, and they must be monitored on a periodic basis. For example, the team must take responsibility for minimizing time lags to replace key positions. If

monitored on a regular basis, by for example, being presented at Team progress meetings, they can be used to evaluate performance.

Also part of performance management is providing feedback. To ensure members are functioning and contributing effectively, they must receive both complimentary and constructive qualitative feedback. To sustain commitment to the project, members must be recognized for what they are doing right, and given the opportunity to improve in areas where this is needed.

Finally, performance management must align rewards with success of the project goals. It is recommended that the Succession Team Leaders find the resources and the right way to reward team members for their role in the project's success. This could include a celebration party or dinner gift certificates for those involved, and/or a personal letter from the executive sponsor of the project thanking them for their efforts. Whatever the reward chosen, it must be ensured that the rewards are valued by the team members. It would thus be recommended that the team members participate in deciding what they would like their reward to be.

2.2.7.2 *Identifies and Creates the Competencies and Behaviours to Ensure the Project Success*

Performance management also includes making sure the project team members have the right competencies to perform their assigned roles and tasks. Competencies for project success must be developed which, as mentioned earlier, should include change leader competencies, such as facilitation and team skills and communication and project management skills, for e.g., members must then be assessed for whether or not they possess the competencies, by looking at past experience or current behaviour in the project team. Training must be offered to team members in

2.3   Additional Recommendations

In addition to those recommendations made thought out this analysis, our MBA team offers the following additional recommendations.

2.3.1 Mentoring

Currently, the succession planning and Work Force Planning Group have a formal mentoring program in place, and we recommend they continue and expand this.

The Ministry currently has this for many of their management positions, but we recommend that they expand this to non-management, which they are making efforts to do. The Ministry uses mentoring primarily to assist in career advising, knowledge transfer and personal development. They are also trying to attract retired forestry employees in order to help keep their expertise in the organization.

An important role of mentoring in succession planning is through making the process of developing candidates for critical positions more efficient. Mentoring helps reduce the lost productivity and training costs associated with promoting a person into a more senior position. The mentoring program can identify potential candidates in conjunction with the use of the Succession Map (see Appendix H). Given the hierarchical structure of the BCFS, using a succession map can identify potential candidates within or across divisions departments, and regions, and link those candidates with those nearing retirement.

Currently the mentoring program is entirely voluntary, but we recommend that more emphasis be placed on mentoring, as it is so critical in retaining employees and knowledge. Specifically, we recommend that:

- mentoring be expanded to all levels of the organization;
- both mentor and protégé should be offered training

- both qualitative and quantitative success measures be used to measure the effectiveness of mentoring.

The effectiveness of the mentoring program overall would be significantly increased by expanding it to all levels of employees and management. A mentoring program increases employee perceptions of career success and improves affective commitment, which leads to lower turnover intentions and employee retention, which is a key component of the Ministry's stated business objectives for the succession planning project (Joiner, Bartram & Garreffa, 2004). Mentoring should be used even at the most junior levels of the organization, as this can help add to the diversity of experience a new recruit may have, as they are able to communicate their career needs to the mentor who can provide them with necessary resources and information. This program could also help improve perceptions of the Ministry as an employer and increase their competitiveness in the scarce market for qualified graduates.

To improve the success of the program, both mentor and protégé should be trained. Such training should cover what their roles and responsibilities are (i.e., meeting times, confidentiality etc.), the purpose and benefits of mentoring, and effective mentoring strategies. This will help improve the success of the mentoring program, as each party will know what is expected of them, and how to deal with some likely situations which could disrupt the relationship i.e., replacing a mentor who has retired, resolving personality conflicts, etc.

Finally, it is important to develop success measures to improve buy-in for the mentoring program at all levels of the organization (Alleman & Clarke, 2000). Linking mentoring to business outcomes will increase executive and management support for mentoring. Success measures such as turnover rates, absenteeism, and return on program investment can all be used to measure the effectiveness of mentoring.

Gathering feedback through interviewing mentors and protégés and communicating this to employees and managers could help achieve buy-in by demonstrating that mentoring does work.

2.3.2 Succession Mapping

Succession mapping is a very useful tool for identifying those people that will be approaching retirement, and to provide evaluative criteria for those individuals potentially able to replace them. As illustrated in Appendix H, a succession map is basically on overlay of an organizational chart (Pinfield, 1995a). However, on this map, different information is provided. For potential retirees, it includes their expected date of retirement. To fill that vacancy when they leave, the succession map then highlights all potential candidates who could fill the vacancy. This is accomplished by summarizing performance evaluations, competency analyses, technical knowledge, education, training, willingness, and availability on the map to assess the 'fit' of the candidates. From here, the succession map has now identified a pool of candidates with a high degree of job fit that can be placed into the recommended formal mentoring program or a job competition.

In addition to the succession map provided in the Appendices, we would recommend the Succession Planning Group source other government agencies or related private sector firms to determine if this strategy has been used. In addition, a computer program centralized in the Human Resources department to track and maintain a succession map would provide a visual reference to the organization's diverse departments and regions, and allow for better budget and resource targeting to fill critical positions.

2.3.3 Stock Flowcharting

Stock flowcharting is a tool used by organizations such as Weyerhaeuser to examine the composition, distribution, and flow of employees in, through, and out of the organization (Pinfield and Hirsh, 1998). These flowcharts are diagrammatical, but operate along two dimensions: size of job group, and salary level. Weyerhaeuser has used the flowcharts to establish the lines of movement and promotion through the organization, and stock flowchart analysis was also employed by Ashley Bennington at the Canada Revenue Agency's Client Service Division at the Surrey Tax Centre (Appendix I).

As Appendix I shows, a stock flowchart uses boxes to group employees by job or pay group level. The horizontal dimension of the box indicates the current or average size of the employee group, while the vertical dimensions stretches across the salary level indicated on the y-axis. Arrows are numbered and flow in, out, or in between various boxes to show the size and flow of employees. In addition, arrows can be subdivided according to the reasons for employee movement, such as retirement, promotion, layoff, voluntary quit, or dismissal.

The benefits of stock flowcharts are that Human Resources planners can quickly identify where and how employees are moving throughout the organization, and for what reasons. It also point out potential problems that could occur in the future if certain areas of employment are not experiencing any movement, as in the example from the CRA division in Appendix I. The Workforce Planning Group may find this very useful, but its ultimate success relies on gathering data from exit interviews to determine the reasons employees are quitting or moving. Targeted strategies could then applied by job group or region to correct the problems.

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2.3.4 Communications Strategy

Our analysis of the succession planning communication strategies highlight some important areas of opportunities are identified. First, top-down, proactive communication is required to properly inform all employees and stakeholders of the change initiative (BC Ministry of Forests and Range, 2004a, 2004g). While a website would be effective in disseminating information, typically, only a small portion of the workforce will refer to it to gain the necessary information. Furthermore, the committee should examine getting managers onboard with the project's vision first, and then have them help disseminate the information to employees to gain their commitment to the project.

Many non-managerial employees also hold a high degree of influence in terms of technical knowledge, trust, and communication. Employees rely more heavily on these so-called 'opinion leaders' for knowledge, trust, and information than their own managers or supervisors (Lawrence, 2004). Identifying these informal 'trust networks,' 'knowledge networks,' and 'technical networks' is important to elicit true commitment from stakeholder groups (Lawrence, 2004). For the purposes of this change initiative, trust and knowledge networks will be critical.

Using tools illustrated in Appendix J, surveys can be distributed to employees asking them questions regarding who they obtain information from, whose opinion they trust, and who they refer to for technical knowledge. Using the data from the surveys, managers can map out the information about trust or knowledge network to determine where to divert their efforts in gaining commitment for a change initiative. Upon identifying an 'opinion leader,' a manager can meet with them, provide them with the information about the change, and elicit their commitment to the change. When they

return to their information or trust networks, they will have the right message to pass on to their peers and will be able to gain their commitment to the project.

The benefits of using these informal networks is to prevent distortion of information, allow for clearer communication, and elicit the highest level of employee and stakeholder commitment possible for this project. In addition, important data will not be lost in the process, misunderstandings and resistance can be minimized, and enthusiasm for the project will increase.

2.3.5 Stakeholder Management

As previously mentioned, the use of a Stakeholder Map is important in identifying all the stakeholders involved in the change initiative. Simply listing the stakeholders is not enough: their potential impacts on the project's success or failure need to be taken into account, and strategies employed to ensure they provide the greatest benefit to the project or minimize the negative impact they could have. As illustrated in Appendix K, the stakeholder map consists of two dimensions (cooperation and threat) and maps stakeholders into four distinct areas: Supportive, Non-supportive, Marginal, and Mixed Blessing. Effectively, the map shows the current state of all the stakeholders, and additionally, the users of the map can determine where they would like the stakeholders to migrate toward (i.e., cooperative and non-threatening). From this, the project leaders can devise strategies to ensure the stakeholders do not become opposed to the project, but become key allies to ensure its future success.

2.3.6 Training and Development

It is essential for project success that the project team itself possess the skills and competencies required to lead such a large change initiative. While we recognize

the skills, knowledge, and experience of the people leading this change with respect to the jobs they perform now and have performed in the past, we would recommend that a set of change competencies be assessed and developed where needed. The impending staffing crisis is a phenomenon never before experienced by employees of the BCFS. Therefore, it is essential that the project leaders of a change initiative designed to address a problem of this magnitude possess all the necessary skills and knowledge necessary to ensure its success.

The project team might consider assessing themselves along key competency areas related to change management. For example, information collection, research methods, statistical analysis, knowledge management, project management, and group development skills are all important competencies to possess in properly managing a change initiative of this magnitude.

In an organization as diverse as the MOFR, training is essential help employees function in the new reality after the change, whether they are managers, new recruits, or candidates for promotion. The importance of training and development must be underscored because of its benefits in terms of productivity, knowledge management, safety, and client service. Government organizations are typically very good at training their employees, and the MOFR is no exception. If the MOFR deems it necessary to train individuals for promotions across departments, these individuals should receive adequate on-the-job training to ensure a full knowledge transfer prior to the retirement of the person they are replacing. For example, someone being promoted from Timber Sales to Protection should receive more on-the-job training than someone promoted internally. For this reason, it may not be economically feasible to promote individuals across departments unless absolutely necessary.

Mentoring besides being an effective tool for socialization and career development can also be a training tool for individuals being promoted from within the BCFS. It not only allows the transfer of technical knowledge, but also the leadership competencies needed for senior positions.

2.3.7 Performance Measures

While the Road Ahead Project has identified a performance measure of 'Production' for succession planning as replacing retirees within 6 months at a 100% success rate (phone conversations with Succession Planning Team Leads) - this performance measurement can only be assessed in hindsight. For a forward looking performance measure, we would suggest a quantitative measure that can be used to assess the effectiveness of the Succession Plan Initiative and the Workforce Plan at any point in time. Specifically, the Human Resources department for any given region could run the following scenario: if every person occupying a critical position retired today, what percentage of these positions could be filled by people skilled and qualified enough to perform that job at the same level of effectiveness and productivity? The answer to this scenario question could help determine where resources are needed, by department, region, or division, and assist in diverting funds in the budgeting process.

Another performance measure, for example, would be to identify the time gap between the retiree's departure and the identification of his or her replacement.

With respect to the 'Quality' performance measure of the Workforce Planning Project, a combination of methods will need to be employed. Use of our recommended succession planning map would geographically or functional identify upcoming retirements and possible internal replacements. The Workforce Planning Group also needs to emphasize the use of accurate, detailed, and timely performance appraisals of

employees that are within striking distance of the positions that could become vacant due to retirements.

The Workforce Planning Group also needs to be aware of the succession chain, a ripple effect of promotions and transfers that occurs when filling positions at high levels in the organization. Using the concept of a succession chain will enable the Human Resources department to be aware of vacancies that will arise and ensure they realize their performance measure for this change initiative. As succession chains occur at lower levels of the organization, the project team will find that becoming the 'employer of choice' will be important to attract individuals from outside the BCFS to work in entry-level positions now vacant because of promotions.

2.3.8 Vacancy Chains

As per Appendix L, Vacancy Chains can be used to follow the lines of key positions (Pinfield, 1995b). In other words, the vacating of key positions has a waterfall effect on the organisation which requires additional positions down the chain to be filled. For succession planning and workforce planning, these vacancy chains determine all movements necessary within an internal labour market. If movements are not possible because of unqualified candidates or lack of availability, then the HR department will have to fill those gaps with people from the external labour market. Vacancy chains can help to increase Managements line of sight from the one position to be filled to all positions which will become vacant.

2.3.9 Pilot Project

After people and processes have been put into place, and tools and training have been implemented, Burns and Martin (2002) suggest implementing a test plan – a pilot

project. 'Pilot projects' are very common when implementing new systems. A pilot project is basically a mini project or working model of the larger project. The pilot project would encompass all parts of succession planning but can be rolled out on just one division or unit. Using a pilot project would enable the team to identify areas of change required and opportunity prior to rolling out the full program; thus minimizing risk, decreasing expenses and saving valuable time. An additional benefit of using a pilot project is in demonstrating results to upper level managers thereby increasing their level of buy-in for the project. This positive reinforcement can help to secure the necessary budgets required to implement the project. Results can also show employees that the succession plan works and is a valuable asset for them thus solidifying their level of buy-in.

2.4 Conclusion

In summary, the MOFR already has many of the processes and structures in place to guide the Succession Planning Project, but should take into consideration some of the recommendations presented in this paper in order to improve the project's likelihood of success. Organizational change can be a painful process, and it is best to set out with a plan that anticipates and has approaches to deal with the challenges ahead. The change audit and the stakeholder interviews provided some valuable insight into how the project could be improved to minimize risks, and take advantage of many opportunities to improve stakeholder perceptions and buy-in. It is hoped that this information will provide the MOFR with valuable knowledge that will help see the Succession Planning Initiative to long-term success.

3.   MENTORING:
DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE FORMAL PROGRAM

The focus of this individual research is to evaluate the formal mentoring program being implemented at the MOFR and suggest areas for improvement. The research will provide an overview of the functions and effects of formal mentoring programs; a description of the program being implemented at the MOFR; an assessment of the program's appropriateness for the succession planning project at the MOFR; and suggestions for improvement to address some of the major issues that the MOFR faces, as determined by the SFU MBA Team's research and stakeholder interviews.

Based on a review of some relevant literature on the topic of mentoring, mentoring can be defined as a process of sharing information, feelings and experiences between a senior employee and a junior employee, with the purpose of providing support, direction and feedback around career advancement and personal development (Payne & Huffman, 2005). Mentoring programs can serve two major functions: career development and psychosocial development (Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988). In terms of career development, mentoring helps the protégé by helping them participate in challenging projects, increasing their visibility to decision makers, and helping them develop strategies to be more effective in their job roles. Mentors act as role models for more junior employees, modeling the values and characteristics that are necessary for successful performance in more senior levels in the organization.

Psychosocial functions are concerned with personal development and socialization of the protégé. Mentoring can assist with development of the employee's

sense of confidence in their competences and ability to function effectively in their jobs. Through the coaching relationship, it also serves as an outlet for the employee to discuss and resolve concerns related to work and personal life (Rothwell, 2001). The mentor also helps speed up the protégé's socialization into the organization, through their friendship and by role-modeling the accepted culture i.e., the values and behaviours of the organization. Thus, mentoring is considered a key component of an effective succession planning program serving as an effective tool for personal and professional development of internal successors.

3.1 Effects of Mentoring on Commitment and Employee Retention

There is evidence that formal mentoring programs promote employee retention. In a two year study of 10,000 employees in the advertising and recruitment industry who had been involved in mentoring programs, it was found that formal mentoring programs are negatively associated with an employee turnover intentions and positively associated with perceived career success. It was determined that through increasing perceived career success, mentoring promotes organizational commitment which in turn is positively related to employee retention (Joiner et al., 2004). In another study of 1000 U.S. Army Officers (Payne & Huffman, 2005), it was found that one year later, employees who had been involved in a formal mentoring program had higher levels of affective and continuance commitment than employees who had not undergone mentoring. It was also found that mentoring was negatively related to turnover intentions, and that affective commitment mediated this relationship. Thus formal mentoring programs are considered to have a significant, lasting impact on employees

through increasing their perceptions of their own success, leading to higher affective commitment and lower turnover.

3.2 Formal vs. Informal Mentoring Programs

Although mentoring can be either informal or formal, much recent research has focused on formal mentoring programs as these are increasingly being considered to be highly effective. A 2000 survey of human resource professionals by Rothwell (2001) suggested that formal mentoring is believed to be more effective in supporting a succession planning program than is informal mentoring.

In informal mentoring, the mentoring relationship is more casual and incidental. There are usually two individuals who mutually choose each other, primarily out of first a social connection. There are no formal rules or expectations governing the relationship such as required or measured outcomes or progress, training, set meeting times or organizational resources devoted to supporting the relationship.

Formal mentoring is a structured approach to mentoring with a more systematic method of setting up the relationships, planned and measurable outcomes, and formal rules governing the relationship. Based on a review of the literature (Alleman & Clarke, 2000, Stott & Sweeney, 1999), a successful formal mentoring program has the following characteristics:

3.2.1 A Database

A database serves as a tool for matching willing and available protégés with willing and available mentors. A database could collect information from potential protégés such as the skills and competencies they wish to develop, career plans and

availability, as well as information from mentors such as areas of experience and competencies, in order to provide a match which will be beneficial for enabling the most effective knowledge transfer and career development. However, a database may not be suitable for ensuring the social compatibility of the relationship, so it would be best used for creating a pool of possible matches from which to make the final decision which incorporates the mentor and protégés social preferences.

3.2.2 Training

Training is important to ensure the most effective relationship between the mentor and protégé. Training should be provided to both mentors and protégés which covers what to expect from the mentoring relationship, the function of mentoring in personal and career development, and the individual responsibilities in the mentoring relationship (frequency of meetings, content of meetings, responsibilities for achieving outcomes such as competency development, etc.) Since mentors play an important role as coaches and advisors (Klauss, 1981) they should also be trained in coaching techniques. There is research that also recommends training mentors in formal learning concepts, such as the power of positive reinforcement, learning plateaus, and trying not to teach everything at once (Lawrie, 1987).

3.2.3 Time and Financial Resources

An organization must support its mentoring program by allocating time and resources. The participants must be able to devote some of their work hours to the mentoring relationship and not face negative consequences for doing so (extra work hours, discipline and pressure from managers/employees). This being said, however, research has found that the amount of time spent with a mentor is not related to the

attainment of career or psychosocial functions (sense of competence, identity, work role effectiveness), but the quality of the interaction between the mentor and protégé is related to the attainment of psychosocial functions. Therefore, it is more important to ensure the interaction is productive rather that focus on devoting more organizational time to promoting the relationship. The organization must also devote some financial resources to training, progress monitoring and other support for the mentoring relationship, such as a budget for mentor meetings (coffee, lunch, etc.).

3.2.4 Executive and Management Support

Any successful mentoring program must have support of the top leadership and managers within the organization. Without the buy-in of these members, it will be difficult to garner the time and financial resources necessary to support the mentoring relationship.

3.2.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to generate support and buy-in for the mentoring program, it is important to demonstrate that it works. For executives and management, this means establishing some key performance indicators which can be tied to financial results and organizational performance. Such indicators may include turnover rates, hiring costs, and return on investment in the mentoring program (cost savings/program costs). For employees and mentors participating in the program, some performance indicators may include pre and post-mentoring tests of knowledge, skills and abilities, or mentor evaluations of the protégés leadership abilities, strengths and weaknesses, etc.

3.3 The MOFR's Mentoring Program

Mentoring began in the BC Provincial Ministries in April of 2005. It has to date been restricted to individuals at a senior management level. It has begun to be rolled out for all levels in certain ministries, and the Ministry of Forests and Range is currently in the planning stages for implementing its mentoring program for all job levels.

The mentoring program planned for the MOFR is a formal mentoring program based on the one that began in April 2005 for the management levels. The features of this program include the following (BC Provincial Government, 2005b):

- It is voluntary for both mentors and protégés.
- The program uses questionnaires, including the "Mentoring Compatibility Indicator" and the "Mentoring Style Indicator" to collect information from mentors and protégés to create an optimal match.
- The program utilizes a database to store information on available mentors and protégés and their preferences and characteristics. This database is used to provide options for mentors and protégés, but ultimately, the decision rests with the participants.
- The Ministries support the mentoring program by allowing 2 hours per month of the participant's work-time to be devoted to the mentoring relationship.
- The program is not linked to the participant's performance reviews or evaluation process, unless they wish it to be. Participants may complete a "Mentoring Action Plan (MAP)" to self-assess their own competencies developed as a result of mentoring and use it in their performance review.
- The program is encouraging retirees who have left the Ministry within the past year to join the program as mentors on a voluntary basis.

3.3.1 Assessment of the MOFR's Mentoring Program

A formal mentoring program should have the five characteristics of successful mentoring programs, as outlined in previous paragraphs, and support the goals within the MOFR's succession planning initiative.

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3.3.1.1 Fit with Characteristics of Successful Mentoring Programs

The MOFR's mentoring program currently has three of the characteristics of a successful mentoring program. It utilizes a database for collecting information to match mentors and protégés; it has devoted organizational time to supporting the mentoring relationship; and it has the support of the executive levels.

The MOFR's mentoring program is using a database to support the process of matching mentors and protégés. It collects information on individual interests and styles to achieve compatible matches, but it does not require that the participants accept the matches which are chosen. This is an important feature of a successful mentoring program: for the participants to be "at choice." The Ministry has emphasized that the mentoring relationship is completely voluntary and can be cancelled at any time. The Ministry thus has employed the database in a way that helps the matching process, but does not restrict the choice of the participants.

It is evident that the Ministry has also supported the mentoring program through dedicating organizational time. The Ministry has allocated two hours of work time a month for participants to meet, which seems like a fair amount of time to support the relationship. As the research has shown, the amount of time devoted is not as significant as how that time is spent.

Finally, the MOFR has the support from the executive level. The project was initiated by the Provincial Government for all leadership levels, and their website communicates a message that the mentoring program is fully supported by the BC Government. Although it could not be determined through the SFU MBA Team's interviews whether or not other levels of management support the mentoring program, this could be information to collect in a survey.

Currently, the mentoring program does not have a system in place for training mentors and protégés, nor does it utilize a system of performance measures or indicators to track the progress or success of the mentoring program. These will be the included in the recommendations for improvement.

3.3.1.2   Fit with MOFR Goals and Strategies

In the following paragraphs, the MOFR's goals and strategies are identified and the ways in which a formal mentoring program could support them discussed.

3.3.1.2.1   Support for Succession Planning Goals

The succession planning team has identified its primary goals as the retention of knowledge and of talented employees; to prevent chaos as a result of inability to fill critical positions; to decrease the time taken to fill those positions, and to increase efficiencies. The MOFR's mentoring program is an effective way to support these goals.

As described above, the MOFR's mentoring program has the effect of improving knowledge retention and employee retention. The Ministry has established part of its mentoring program as an effort to lure back some of its knowledgeable retirees on a voluntary basis. Through this effort, they will be helping to retain and transfer some of the valuable knowledge lost through retirement. The MOFR has also improved employee retention by enhancing participants' perceptions of their own career success and improving their affective commitment to the organization. By providing its employees with mentoring, the MOFR will be able to retain its existing pool of talent and knowledge needed to fill the critical positions left vacant by the oncoming wave of retirement.

The goals of preventing chaos as a result of mass retirement from key positions and decreasing the time needed to fill those positions can also be addressed by a mentoring program. Through mentoring relationships mentors will have the opportunity to learn about the career interests and competencies of their protégés. Protégés will be able to express their desired career paths and request feedback and support from their mentors in following these career paths. The career intentions expressed by the protégé through the relationship, with their permission, can be shared with the Ministry, enabling the MOFR to build pools of employees who are willing to advance to more senior positions in the organization. Thus, when time comes for senior employees to retire, the MOFR will have identified a pool of qualified and willing replacements, and will not be left scrambling to find a suitable candidate.

Mentoring can also help the MOFR improve efficiencies through reducing recruitment needs, improving the productivity of newly promoted managers, and reducing training needs. Mentoring, by improving employee retention, helps mitigate costs associated with recruiting internal or external employees to fill vacant positions. When someone retires from a critical position without an available successor, costs are incurred which include creation of job postings, HR department time allocated to searching for an appropriate successor, and lost departmental productivity employees scramble to take over the job duties. For those advancing into newly vacated positions, mentoring would be expected to speed their advance up the "learning curve," as they have acquired some of the competencies needed for the position through their mentoring relationship. Finally, mentoring could help improve efficiencies by reducing training costs. Through mentoring, employees could acquire the leadership and other competencies needed for more senior positions, instead of having to be offered training in these.

3.4   Issues Identified by the Stakeholder Interviews

Based on an analysis of stakeholder interviews performed as primary research on succession planning, there are a number of important issues that a mentoring program could address.

3.4.1 Focus on Competencies

A number of stakeholders expressed that the competition process needs to be improved so that candidates are chosen based on their competencies to perform the job, rather than their abilities to mention "buzz words" in an interview. Mentoring could play a role in helping employees develop the competencies that they need to advance in the MOFR. This role of mentoring could be communicated to employees to emphasize that this is a way to acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities, for e.g., leadership qualities, to advance to more senior positions.

3.4.2 Graduate Recruitment

Another issue that arose from the stakeholder interviews was perceptions among forestry students that the Ministry was relatively low paying and not offering a sufficient diversity of experience. The Ministry could establish a mentoring program for new graduates which provides them with direction and opportunities for working in different positions in the MOFR. To develop such a program and a plan for communicating it to new graduates, the MOFR could attract larger pools of potential recruits for its entry and lower level positions.

3.4.3 High Degree of Support for Mentoring

Our interviews showed there is a high level of awareness of the mentoring program at the MOFR, and a belief that mentoring is effective and should be used at the MOFR. Two stakeholders whose support for mentoring is critical expressed positive views toward a mentoring program. Union representatives interviewed expressed support for mentoring to help fill candidate pools, so long as credit for mentoring is given and results are measured. Employees interviewed also expressed support and desire to participate in the mentoring program. The MOFR could utilize this support to enlist volunteers for leading its training seminars, as will be discussed.

3.5   Suggestions for Improvement

In light of the knowledge of the current state of the MOFR's formal mentoring program, the research of the characteristics of effective mentoring programs, the goals of the succession planning project and the issues identified in the stakeholder interviews, the following are suggestions for improvement.

3.5.1 Training and Assessment

Training is a fundamental part of a formal mentoring program, which the MOFR has not yet developed. Mentors and protégés require guidance to ensure the continued success of the relationship. It is important for each party to understand what is expected of their relationship, what roles they play, and strategies to make the relationship a success. Mentor training is especially significant, because mentors play an important role as coaches and advisors, roles which may require some knowledge of how people learn and change. Many who may express interest in becoming mentors, for example,

may have significant experiences and advice to share, but may not possess the right mentoring competencies for communicating this to their protégé. Coaching is a skill that involves listening skills and non-judgmental questioning; this is not necessarily intuitive to people. Investments in training also communicate to employees that the company takes the program seriously, through committing organizational resources to the endeavour.

A training program for the MOFR should have two components: an initiation training program for mentors and protégés and a mentoring skills program for mentors. The initiation program could cover the topics of role expectations and responsibilities, utilizing organizational resources in the mentoring relationship, and ways of assessing protégé development and progress. The next part of the program would be oriented toward mentors, to help them build a set of "mentoring competencies." These could include such competencies as listening skills, learning strategies, and Emotional Intelligence. Since HR is already working on developing competencies for job positions, they are familiar with the process of identifying competencies, and their help could be enlisted to do the same for the mentoring program. Once a set of mentoring competencies is established, an appropriate training program can be developed.

Given that the MOFR is concerned with maximizing efficiencies, internal resources should be used as extensively as possible in delivering and supporting the mentoring program. Experienced employee mentors could be enlisted to provide mentor training, as well as the initiation training. Given the positive attitudes of employees toward mentoring, it seems that it would not be difficult to find employees who would be willing to participate in training mentors and protégés.

3.5.2 Developing Measures of Progress and Success

Currently the MOFR has not developed any success measures to support the mentoring program. Having a means of monitoring the effectiveness of the mentoring program is important for many reasons. To ensure continued support from the executive levels of the government who have control over the needed resources, there should be some way to demonstrate that the program is producing results that can be associated with organizational goals. Although the executive levels currently appear to support the mentoring program, the program could be at risk if the economy finds itself in a downturn and cutbacks are necessary. With the forest industry still not in a stable position, given the pine beetle infestation and continuing appreciation of the Canadian dollar, this is a very real risk. Mentoring would likely be seen as a "frill," or a benefit that, while nice to offer employees, is not really cost effective. To sustain the program in the long run, it is critical that the MOFR prove that it provides very tangible, quantifiable benefits.

There are many aspects that the MOFR should consider monitoring, to measure the effectiveness of the mentoring program, including the effects on employee commitment, employee development and learning and on cost-effectiveness (a cost-benefit analysis).

Given that one of the primary goals of the succession planning project is to increase employee retention, measuring the effects of mentoring on retention would help executives and management understand how mentoring supports this goal. Some measures that could be monitored are turnover and absenteeism rates, and monthly or annual hiring and replacement costs. Although it might be difficult to isolate the impact of mentoring on turnover and absenteeism rates, since these are already monitored by the MOFR, they could compare post-mentoring program levels with "normal" levels

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observed in the pre-mentoring period. Monthly or annual hiring and replacement costs could be monitored by Human Resources, as this is likely already monitored under their budgetary responsibilities.

The effect of mentoring on employee development should also be monitored. This could be done by using pre and post mentoring evaluations of competencies. The way this could work is by a goal setting and assessment process at the outset of the mentoring relationship. The protégé, through this process, could identify competencies that they wish to improve or acquire. They can then assess their levels of competency prior to the start of mentoring. This can be done as part self-evaluation and part evaluation by the mentor or the protégé's manager. During the mentoring relationship, progress evaluations could also be done, in addition to a final assessment at the end of the relationship. Such competency assessments do not have to be in the form of diagnostic tests, but could be qualitative assessments such as those done in performance reviews.

Finally, a cost-benefit analysis should be performed to demonstrate the impact of mentoring on the "bottom line," which will be highly relevant to executive sponsors of the mentoring program. Such a cost-benefit analysis would include quantifying the cost-savings that the mentoring program has realized, for e.g. turnover costs, and comparing these with investments made in the program, which include work hours devoted to mentoring, and other resources.

3.5.3 Graduate Recruitment

The SFU MBA Team, in their research, found that many students have the perception that the MOFR offers a limited range of experience, and is not competitive in

terms of pay. The MOFR faces a great opportunity to use mentoring for newly hired forestry graduates.

Mentoring can have several benefits for newly hired graduates. First, it speeds up the learning curve for their position i.e., it makes them functional in their jobs faster. It does so by facilitating the development of the core values and practices within the Ministry. Mentoring can be also be a way for employees to express their desire for certain career paths and provide them information and resources for following these paths. It also provides new graduates opportunities to develop valuable leadership skills that they might otherwise gain. If the Ministry can expand the mentoring program to include new graduates, it will help to improve their reputation as an employer.

If the Ministry decides to expand the program in this way, it will have to develop a communication plan and incorporate this into the HR strategies for recruitment. During the recruitment process, the mentoring program should be a selling feature for the Ministry as an employer. To assist in this, the MOFR should enlist those with positive experiences in a mentoring relationship to attend career fairs and interface with students during recruiting events.

3.5.4 Retiree Mentor Strategy

The MOFR, through its call for retired Ministry employees to act as mentors, is heading in the right direction for helping knowledge retention, but could improve this program. To add to this program, the MOFR should consider a "phasing out" strategy for those close to retirement which would gradually shift the weight of the employee's duties from regular work to mentoring. Effectively, would increase the amount of available mentoring time and thereby facilitate the transfer of knowledge before an individual retires.

Once an individual has identified their plan to retire, a plan could be set in motion which changes their job requirements over time. Eventually, their duties become largely focused on training and mentoring their successors.

There could be some challenges to this type of program. The Union sets specific standards for work requirements and it may not be easy to change these. Also, the individual would have to agree to have their job change in this way, and there may be some resistance encountered here. Finally, the executive level of the MOFR would have to approve of effectively paying senior employees for mentoring rather than their normal job duties.

It is difficult to quantify the value of knowledge transfer, and therefore difficult to determine the cost-effectiveness of this solution. However, such a plan could vastly expand the mentoring time available and facilitate the transfer of valuable Ministry specific knowledge that is quickly being lost as individuals retire.

4. FIELD PROJECT REFLECTIONS

This section is devoted to reflecting on what was learned and what I would improve about field projects and about studying organizations.

4.1 Field Project Learnings

There were several valuable lessons I learned from participation in a team research project. There were many challenges along the path to completion, and I am glad to have had the opportunity to learn from these challenges. There are two main learnings to present, including the challenges of team research, and the importance of project management skills.

4.1.1 Challenges of Team Research

During the three months that I participated in this field project, I encountered some challenges in working effectively in a group. Previously, most major projects I had been involved in were solo efforts, and I had always preferred having a great deal of control over my own work. I found that in working with a team, I had some difficulties with sharing control, adapting to others' work styles and communicating effectively.

When we set out on this project, the idea had been based on a team member's previous project for the Ministry of Forests and Range. She had a developed great deal of expertise from her previous work, and had accumulated many resources that would be useful for the project. When I joined the team, I felt that she had effectively taken a

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leadership role in the project. She had taken the initiative to collect and summarize some of the information we used, and took a dominant role in conversations with the client. She had also taken it upon herself to put together information booklets for the Succession Planning Group presentation, but had not asked myself or our other team member for help. I felt a little secondary because of this. I thought that in essence, this was her project and rather than all of ours' equally. Whether is or not, this is how I experienced this. Looking back, I wish that I had asked for a larger role in the project, instead of backing away from asking for more control. I would have liked to have had more responsibility in the project, but I have to be more assertive in the future to ensure this.

I also experienced difficulties adapting to others' work styles. I found myself struggling to adapt to other members' very efficient work pace. I tend to push work to the end of the project, rather than take a more proactive approach, getting work done early. I found that this was a source of conflict between me and a particular group member, who had a more proactive approach. Many times, work was done before I expected it, so that at times I didn't have the level of involvement I would have liked. I felt bad about myself because of this, because I wanted to be more involved, and felt that my team members may be developing some negative impressions of me because I took a little longer on my own sections.

Finally, I thought that communication was a challenge for me in a group setting. The group communicated primarily by email, and my email skills have some weaknesses. While I read all messages, I tend not to reply back to them. From discussions with my team members, I learned that they struggled with this at times, wondering whether or not I knew about meeting times, deadlines, etc.

I also found that I did not communicate my concerns or needs effectively, to foster better understanding and trust within the team. I should have explained to them that I while I tend to leave work until close to the deadline, I always get it done.

4.1.2 Project Management Skills

Although we started used some project management skills such as a timeline, we neglected to plan and allocate the work, have frequent enough meetings, or ensure we consulted often enough with our supervisor regarding the project requirements.

The work allocation needed to be done better in this project. Although at the outset, it was not entirely clear what needed to be done, we had no system of outlining the tasks and allocating them in a fair way. We did not properly forecast the work that needed to be done, the availability of team members, and anticipate possible conflicts. As it was, there were meetings scheduled ad-hoc that not all project team members could attend, and we were pressed to get our individual projects completed on time for our Succession Team presentation.

We did not schedule enough meetings to ensure that the project was on track. We met sporadically, sometimes weekly, and some times there would be weeks that passed before a meeting. Frequent, at least weekly, project meetings would have been helpful in keeping the project on track, and encouraging those who worked at a slower pace to complete their responsibilities on time.

We also needed to better consult with our project supervisor. We ended up doing some work on our Chapter 2 that we found out later on was unnecessary. Our project was too long and we were rushed to cut it back at the end. Had we consulted more frequently with our supervisor, we may have avoided the hassle at the end of the project, when there were multiple other stresses on our shoulders.

4.2 Learnings about Studying Organizations

This section presents some of the lessons learned about performing research and consultation for organizations.

4.2.1 Consultation with Client in Planning and Designing Research

One of the major lessons learned from this project is the importance of consulting with the organization when planning and designing research, to ensure that the research is appropriate and runs smoothly.

We had initially planned to administer a statistical survey, however, upon discussions with the client, we found out that this was not appropriate. The MOFR planned to administer its own internal survey in the approaching fall/winter. We thus had to alter our original plan and consider alternative research methods. Thankfully, we had not performed a great deal of work toward a statistical survey, but had we not consulted the client, we could have wasted a lot of time and effort.

We also found that it was important to consult with the client in selecting the appropriate candidates to interview. We found that the client had some interests in interviewing particular stakeholders, such as contractors and executive members. They were able to inform some of the Ministry employees who we planned to interview, that when we planned to call, and what our project was about. In this way, our client was able to help us identify the relevant interviewees and to help us achieve buy-in for the interview process.

4.2.2 Building Credibility

One of the major challenges we encountered as a project team was that MOFR employees were unfamiliar with the purpose of our project, and the value that we were bringing to the MOFR. At times, indeed, we came up against some resistance surrounding a lack of information about the relevance of our project.

At one Succession Team meeting, some members expressed that they were unsure of what value we were adding to the MOFR. Leslie Bush and Sandra Letts did their best to explain to the team who we were and the value of our research, but we ourselves had not had the opportunity to present to them our research plans and our backgrounds. In the future, I would plan to make a personal presentation to the project sponsors, and define to them exactly the value of our project, including what issues we plan to provide them with advice, and to what extent we can help. I would also present a brief personal background overview, including my professional experience and expertise, in order to build my credibility.

Due to a lack of information about the purpose of our project, I had a couple instances of employees expressing reluctance to participate in the survey. I was asked straight away what the survey was for and how it was going to be used. One employee refused to complete the survey, saying that he did not have enough time if it was not a "required" survey. This illustrates the importance of proper communication about the value of the project to the MOFR. To address this, we should have provided Leslie and Sandra with an overview of our project and its purpose and a brief description of who we were. Had this been provided to employees, combined with a communication from Leslie and Sandra that this is a Ministry supported project, we likely would not have encountered this kind of resistance.

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4.2.3 Value of Stakeholder Consultation During a Change Process

During our stakeholder interviews, we found that each group had incredibly diverse and interesting perspectives, and had a lot of recommendations of their own regarding how to address particular challenges that the Succession Team was facing. For example, one contractor expressed a desire for sharing employee resources, which would help the Ministry access a qualified pool of employees, a key goal of the Succession Plan. This illustrates the importance of involving stakeholders in the change process. Each stakeholder may have creative and innovative suggestions to address key challenges, and as discussed in our research, this involvement also has the effect of winning their buy-in for the change initiative.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A.

Organizational Chart

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                    │      Minister       │
                    │ of Forests and Range's │
                    │       Office        │
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
                               │
                    ┌──────────┴──────────┐
                    │       Deputy        │
                    │      Minister       │
                    │ of Forests and Range's │
                    │       Office        │
                    └──────────┬──────────┘
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Corporate Policy & Governance Division	Operations Division	Forest Stewardship Division	Tenure & Revenue Division

Northern Interior Region	Southern Interior Region	Coastal Region	BC Timber Sales Office	Fire Protection HQ

9 District Offices 1 Satellite Office	12 District Offices 2 Satellite Offices	8 District Offices 1 Satellite Office	12 Timber Sales Offices 19 Field Team Locations	6 Fire Centres

Note. BC Ministry of Forests and Range (2005) Strategic Planning.

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Appendix B.

Project Hierarchy MOFR Road Ahead Revitalization Initiative

1. Leadership Improve leadership at all levels.	**2. Workforce Planning** The right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time. (Our change audit scope)
3. Organizational Wellness A healthy, safe workplace where all employees understand and practice a good work – life balance.	**4. Learning Organization** Understand, support, and practice ongoing individual and corporate learning.

Note. Developed by Facilitator Training Group (2005) for the MOFR.

Workforce Planning Components

1. Workforce Gap Analysis
2. Recruitment/Retention Plan
3. Knowledge Management Plan
4. Competency Infrastructure
5. Succession Plan

Appendix C.

Interview Questions

Goal of Interviews

1. To assess the understanding each group has regarding the MOFR and its succession planning project in order to identify areas of risk and opportunity.
2. To assess the level of involvement each stakeholder desires.
3. To identify and rate the level of risk each group has to the succession planning project.
4. To foster ideas regarding retention and attraction of employees as they pertain to the succession planning vision.
5. To better understand the supply and demand of labour and factors as they pertain to the MOFR.
6. To explain succession planning to the stakeholder groups as defined by the MOFR.

Interview Questions

Four Union Officials

1. What is the union's understanding of the succession planning initiative currently being developed by the MOFR?
2. What do you think is the role of the bargaining unit in the ministry's succession planning process?
3. We understand that positions in undesirable and/or expensive locations are hard to fill. What could you offer as ideas to implement succession strategies for these areas?
4. What are the benefits of the current staffing and/or succession planning process? What could be improved?
5. Do you think the current ministry recruitment processes will be effective in meeting the future succession needs of the Ministry? If not, do you have any suggestions for improvement?
6. One of the goals of succession planning is to develop pools of employees that would be eligible to compete on positions. Do you have any suggestions on how the pools should be populated?; i.e., self-identification, personality assessment career pathing set out in EPDP (Employee performance and development plan)?
7. What risk or advantage does the bargaining unit see to the Ministry's adoption of a succession strategy?

Four Educational Institutes Offering Forestry Programs

1. What forestry programs do you offer? Explain.
2. How are the programs designed to meet the needs of the public and/or private sectors?
3. What companies target your school for graduates? How do they do this – job fairs etc.?
4. Do you get feedback from these agencies? How could this be improved?
5. Have you experienced an increase or decrease in enrolment within the past 5 years and why?
6. What do you expect enrolment trends to be? What are the key drivers for enrolment?
7. Are students looking to gain industry specific experience via forestry companies before applying to the MOFR? Why/Why not? Do you think this is a viable strategy?
8. What is your perception as the MOFR as an employer?

Eleven MOFR Employees (varying sectors and departments)

1. What is your understanding of the workforce planning working group and the succession planning project team currently working in MOFR?
2. Would you want to be involved in the succession planning project of the MOFR? If so, to what extent would you want to be involved - sub group/ team participation, surveys, interview, or no process involvement?
3. Do you think there is opportunity for advancement in the MOFR? Explain.
4. What could be improved in the process of advancement - availability or type of opportunities or the process of selecting and developing candidates?
5. Do you think the current Ministry recruitment processes will be effective in meeting the future succession needs of the Ministry? If not, do you have any suggestions for improvement?
6. One of the goals of succession planning is to develop pools of employees to be eligible to compete on positions. Do you have any suggestions on how the pools should be populated?, i.e., self-identification, personality assessment career pathing set out in EPDP (Employee progress development plan).
7. What role do you see personality assessment playing in determining succession candidates, communication strategies, training, coaching, and/or management capabilities?
8. We understand that positions in undesirable and/or expensive locations are hard to fill. What could you offer as ideas to implement succession strategies for these areas?

Two Forestry Contracting Companies

1. Are you aware of the MOFR succession planning project?
2. What impact will the MOFR succession planning project have on your company if any?
3. Do you currently recruit future candidates directly for educational institutes?
4. Is your company currently undergoing succession planning?
5. Do you perceive an opportunity to become involved with the MOFR and information share regarding succession planning?

Six Forestry Students

1. What are your career plans – immediate future, short term, long term?

2. Why did you enrol in the forestry program?

3. What are the key factors in your career choice? Rank: location, pay, opportunity for advancement, stability, status.

4. What is your perception as the MOFR as an employer? Rank: location, pay, opportunity for advancement, stability, status.

5. How did you conduct your career search – career fairs, internet, University?

6. What is your opinion of working for MOFR related contractors to gain industry experience first after graduation? Would you prefer to work for MOFR right away after graduation, please explain?

One Executive Member

1. What is your understanding of the MOFR Succession Planning Project?

2. Why is the MOFR Succession Planning Project important?

3. What would the ideal project outcomes be?

4. What does success look like to you?

5. What do you perceive to be primary risks (internal & external) associated with this project?

6. Are there any other stakeholders you feel should be on the MOFR Succession Planning Committee?

7. What could be improved in the succession planning process?

8. Additional Comments.

Four Succession Planning Committee Members

1. What is your understanding of purpose and importance of succession planning?

2. What is the motivating factor for your joining the succession planning team?

3. What advantages do you see to being involved in this process?

4. Are there any other stakeholders you feel should be on the MOFR Succession Planning Committee?

5. What could be improved in the succession planning process?

6. What are the benefits of the current staffing process?

7. What are perceived to be the restriction of the current process in getting appropriate candidates?

8. What role do you see personality assessment playing in determining succession candidates, communication strategies, training, coaching, and/or management capabilities? See changes to question in sections above

9. We understand that positions in undesirable and/or expensive locations are hard to fill. What could you offer as ideas to attract and retain people in these locations?

Appendix D.

Foundation Statements

Goal, Vision, Mission, Values

Long-Term Goals

- Sustainable Forest Resources
- Sustainable Forest Benefits
- Effective and Responsive Forest Manager

Vision

Diverse and sustainable forest and range values for BC.

Mission

To protect, manage and conserve forest and range values through a high performing organization.

Employee Value

People are valued for their contribution and dedication to the MOFR, its mission and vision.

Core Values

Integrity	Open, honest and fair
Accountable	Responsible for our own decisions and actions
Innovative	Encourage and support each other to create new and better ways to do our business
Respect	Show respect by listening to and recognizing a diversity of values and interests, work with each other in a spirit of trust, mutual respect and support

Appendix E.

BC Ministry of Forests and Range Stakeholder Analysis

Identified Stakeholders	Current State	Recommended State	Strategy to Use
Primary			
Employees	Mixed Blessing	Supportive	Involve + Communicate
Succession Planning Committee	Supportive	Supportive	Maintain working groups
Senior Managers	Mixed Blessing	Supportive	Communicate + Deliver Results
Middle Managers/Supervisors	Mixed Blessing	Supportive	Involve + Communicate + Train
Potential Employment Candidates	Marginal	Supportive	Communicate
Human Resources Management	Supportive	Supportive	Involve + Communicate
General Public	Marginal	Marginal	Communicate
Unions	Mixed Blessing	Supportive	Consult + Communicate + Involve
Media	Mixed Blessing	Supportive	Communicate
Deputy Minister		Supportive	Improve relations + communicate +aware
Secondary			
Family and Friends	Mixed Blessing	Supportive	Communicate via employee
Government	Supportive	Supportive	Communicate + Deliver results
Alternative Employers	Non-Supportive	Marginal	Communicate to candidates – Benchmarking
Post Secondary Institutions	Mixed Blessing	Supportive	Communicate and Consult
Forestry Companies	Supportive	Supportive	Communication
Tertiary			
Green Peace	Marginal	Supportive	Communicate
Environmental Groups			

Note. Created by the MBA Project Team.

Appendix F.

Stakeholder Interview Results

4 Union Officials

The union's understanding of the succession planning initiative currently being developed by the MOFR

- Dealing with retirement and departures and how to replace these people into the future

- Career pathing and advancement processes

- Next 5 – 10 years the baby Boomers will be leaving and the MOFR will need to get both external and internal employees and transfer knowledge in a smooth way

- Cross training so people can transition into new jobs via mentoring and training

The role of the bargaining unit in the Ministry's succession planning process

- Union leaders and member would like to be involved and provide input from the 'grass roots'. They would like the opportunity to provide feedback, and have a clear understanding of the organizations issues and concerns for the future

- Union members would like to have representation on the project committee to provide input and to communicate to members with accurate and timely information. Some union officials cited instances where they have been involved with other sub-groups & committees on joint ventures and where this has been successful i.e., registered forest technology committee

How to deal with succession planning in undesirable and/or expensive locations

- Isolation pay

- Incentive for market adjustments

- After 2 years lateral out of undesirable locations

- Assistance with housing costs

- Additional incentives such as vacation allowance to fly out to visit relatives, medical allowances to visit doctors in larger centers, flexible working hours (later days earlier days etc), child care allowance, more time off, telecommuting

- Mandatory to work in an undesirable location to get promoted or use this as a points system toward promotion, i.e., 10 points for having worked in an undesirable location

Benefits of the current staffing process and suggestions for improvement

- Eligibility list is a good idea, i.e., employees are given one interview and then they go on a list for 6 months; this could help create pools

- Merit based system is good

- Asking more questions regarding job experience in interview would be preferred vs. asking questions and looking for with buzzwords. This penalizes those who have had a lot of experience but do not do well in interview situations. The MOFR may not be getting the best candidates

- The current process is good in that it is easier for the interviewers to interview to give points and it avoids interview bias

- More in service recruiting would be preferred via strategic career pathing

- Many feel that job qualifications are artificial and that it should be easier to apply. In other words, decrease the parameters around experience required and focus on competencies, skills and abilities

- Use mentoring to build competencies and add to on-line profile to help fill candidate pools. Must give credit for being involved with mentoring. The results of mentoring must be measurable.

- Need to have more consistency in interview processes. Managers should be better trained

Suggestions to improve the hiring process to meet the future needs of the MOFR

- No the current process will not be effective

- Need to add internal training to maximize internal potential

- Get more new recruits by posting outside. For example, improvements could be made by being at universities, high schools, and information sessions. Communicate to get schools and universities on board

- Include an advertising strategy to promote education and advancement opportunity within the MOFR – like the army does

Suggestions on how the pools of qualified candidates should be populated

- When interviews are done for a positions create a top 10 list. Use these interviews to pre test candidates before actual positions become vacant. This could save time and money.

- Pools can be populated by self-declaration via EPDP, mentoring participation, training and development participation

- A note of caution: the MOFR has to be committed to support this over time which requires long term planning and commitment. This cannot just be the 'flavour of the day' – it is annoying, discouraging and not motivating.

- Need managers to be trained for consistency to ensure filling pools is fair

- Psychometrics tools are excellent if they are accurate, legitimate and fair. They should be one measure used to fill pools

Risks and advantages the bargaining unit (union) sees in the Ministry's adoption of a succession strategy

- "Flavour of the month"

- Not recognizing people who have been around for a long-time i.e., Overlooking more experience personal in terms of training and opportunity.

- Union is all for good succession planning. They would like to see more need more employees

- The union feels there are more positives than negatives associated with succession planning. They see it as a proactive measure.

Other Union comments

- A communication strategy needs to be developed to ensure that all ideas and inputs are heard

- A survey would help uncover more information regarding what employees are looking for and how they would react to new opportunities

- Survey private sector employees to find out how the MOFR can become more attractive to these employees

4 Educational Institutions Offering Forestry Programs

Forestry programs offered

- One year Forest Resource Technician Certificate

- Two years Forest Ecology Technician Diploma. The 2 year diploma program is national credited and students who graduate from the Certificate program can enrol in the Diploma program if their grades are outstanding

- Bachelor of Natural Resource Science Degree. Educate students of all areas of resources, recreation, wild life management etc.

- Bachelor in Forest Resources Management

- Bachelor of Forestry in Forest Operations

- Bachelor of Science Natural Resources Conservation

- BS Forest Science

- BS Wood Product Processing

How the programs are designed to meet the needs of the public and private sectors

- Accreditation process in which the institution ensures the program meets the minimum National Standard Skills

- Advisory Committees that assesses the needs at the current industry skill sets

- Work with Association of BC Forest Professional to ensure we include the new provincial standards

- Add input from practitioners. Our programs are designed to generate employees who have the ability to do a variety of tasks and communicate with varying stakeholder groups

What companies target school for graduates and how they do this?

- Job postings

- E-Jobs bulletin board

- Direct contact from staff

- Co-op and career fairs

A wide range of companies:

- MOF

- Forest Consultant

- Small regional municipals

- First nations

- Mostly are BC based companies (private)

- Some international firms

How feedback from these agencies could be improved

- Feedback is usually done in an informal way: "students provide feedback to us after they were hired or through word of mouth from the companies to the staff"

- Co-op feedback

- Industry conferences

Enrolment trends and causes of such over the past five years

Trends

- First 2 years we saw decrease in enrolment and for the remaining 3 we see a slight increase

- There seems to be a 2-4 year spike spins i.e., a 6-year cycle. The only way to stop this is to take limelight out of the forestry. Increase positive forestry image in the media. Improve media communications.

- In the past 5 years overall enrolment decreased by 11% - it is the lowest level of enrolment since 1993.

Causes

- Downturn in the forest sector has reduced confidence in the employment prospects of forestry: softwood dispute, media publicized closing mills, environmental perceptions, misunderstanding from the public that this is not environmental friendly

- The poor environmental image of the forest sector has turned students off of considering forestry as a career choice. Often parents are affected by this and discourage their kids from entering this field

- There is an acute lack of knowledge (which we have verified through focus groups) of the various roles, responsibilities and educational opportunities that "forestry" offers at the high school, university and adult (parent) level

- Stereotypical perceptions of the forest sector as white, male, labour-intensive, low-tech, and undereducated, with lumberjacks, millwrights and truck drivers being the most commonly understood jobs in the forest sector

- Consolidation and streamlining by major licensees has reduced the amount of advertising and community involvement by forestry companies, which reduces the "positive presence" of this sector in the minds of the public

- Outsourcing of jobs from major licensees to consultants has made the job market and a career path much less recognizable or certain

- Decrease in the interest of youth to work in a rurally based industry

Future trends and projections

- We expect the demand to be increasing because the industry has regained its strengths. For BC, graduates will receive professional status

- Media, environment, cyclical

- Unless the general image of forestry shifts in the public's mind, enrolment in forestry programs will continue to decrease

- The number one key driver in enrolment is the perception of a healthy, well-paid job market. Students and parents alike will orient themselves towards where they perceive the stability and career prospects to be

- The perceptions of social standing would need to be improved i.e., a well-educated professional is seen as more desirable than a labourer

- There must be a concerted, widespread, long-term effort in communicating the true nature of forestry work and education, from conservation to wood products processing, and a dispelling of the myths and stereotypes that predominate people's perceptions

Are students looking to work with the MOFR after graduation or gain experience elsewhere after graduation?

- No not necessarily. They see MOFR and the rest equally in terms of job and organization because what they look for is experience first. They go where they can get a job

- Co-op is effective in helping familiarize students with understanding certain employers and working environments. Students want to work for both the MOFR and private employers to get an understanding of what both are like

Professors' perception of the MOFR as an employer

- MOFR job offering for graduates are more narrowly defined because they do not seem to be very flexible in terms of working in different positions to gain a variety of job skills

- Consultants provide more variety in terms of experiences

- Although MOFR and other companies' salary level is about the same to start, after few years, the discrepancy is huge
- MOFR is not paying as much as the other companies do if an employee has more experience but fewer years of seniority
- Managers may have more responsibility and authority but they are paid less than private companies

NOTE: Instructors are very powerful in that they influence student perceptions. Developing a communications strategy will help increase positive students perceptions of MOF.

11 MOFR Employees

Understanding of the Workforce Planning Working Group and the Succession Planning Project Team

- Limited or no knowledge of either of these groups. However, it is known that the Ministry is beginning to focus on succession planning, but that is about it.
- Succession planning is important
- Some employees are aware of the mentoring and job-shadowing programs; however, they feel that they are working for nothing, there is no support, and there are time constraints on when mentors are available
- Employees have a sour taste in mouth regarding mentoring. They feel that there is not enough time to do this and not enough resources are available to support the program. There is no unified system of mentoring and it is not monitored in a way to add to the employees competencies

Level of involvement employees would like to have in the succession planning process

- Employees would like to be involved at some level
- Would like to be involved with mentorship and training programs rolled out by succession planning
- Some would consider being on a committee that deals with succession planning
- Some would like to be survey to provide input on ideas
- Time of involvement is a concern – perhaps no time to be directly involved, but would like input recognized.
- Some feel that they have put in suggestions regarding succession planning to their superiors but that they have not been heard. They would be happy to volunteer but are not given opportunities and there ideas are not heard.
- Those employees who do not wish to be directly involved wish to be informed regarding outcomes
- Employees suggest formal roll-outs vs. rumours and website postings and e-mails that they have no time to read

Other input

- Workforce planning really needs a heightened awareness, what some find frustrating is that the MOFR is still in an 'old mindset'. The suggestion is to rebuild policies, adopt new HR processes including innovative hiring processes

How employees feel about the opportunity for advancement at the MOFR

- Hoping that there will be substantial opportunities due to the number of staff planning to retire over the next several years.

- There're opportunities, but some are limited for example Scientific Technical Officer 4's have to go work and live in Victoria

- There are opportunities, but it's limited by people's own choices

- At this time not many opportunities, but down the road yes....

- Yes there are opportunities, but fewer for technicians, feeling being replaced by professionals

Suggestions for improving the MOFR's ability to offer advancement and or the selection process

- Increased opportunities to have temporary assignments or work closely with existing managers that may soon be leaving in order to gain experience and knowledge. Another advantage of temporary assignments is that it allows employees to 'test the waters' in terms of jobs – people are reluctant to move their families if they are not sure they will be happy in a position

- Incentives should be offered for receiving higher education or professional development

- There is a misalignment of salaries. Sometimes getting a promotion means being paid less money - this needs to be improved

- More diverse skills training and lower the barrier for gaining different skills – must suit emerging lifestyle preferences

- For BC Timber Sales lateral transfer is not an option, but in other parts, it is. Enabling lateral transfers within the same location and classification would provide employees exposure to different jobs and may save money by avoiding a bidding process.

- Local management needs more input into staffing decisions, mentoring, and secondments

- Counselling service needs to be implemented to improve leadership abilities thus far training not effective

Perceived benefits of current staffing process

- Knowledge-based interviews are effective in determining how competent candidates are.

- A posted competition puts everyone on a level field

- Competency based interviews are preferential; however, this should be assessed by allowing candidates to relay experiences not just list items or key words interviewers are looking for

- Lots of opportunity to move around - it's good to have people move around.

- By going to competency based hiring, it should allow people with less experience to get jobs

Perceived to be the restriction of the current staffing process

- Sometimes I think the geographically restricted postings run the risk of excluding some potentially superior applicants

- Seniority blocks entry as former work history is not accounted for (i.e., if you don't have 1827 consecutive hours)

- Exams alone do not reflect one's complete expertise

- There should be some loyalty to former employees

- Short-listing may not get the right people at the final interviews

- In the case of the behavioural interview there may be too much emphasis to what experiences a person has had, when they might be an ideal candidate. Perhaps a combination of knowledge as well as experience

- Not enough FTE openings

- Some of the competency questions do not accurately reflect jobs – they should be more

- External recruitment is poor business – MOFR should be personally investing in their future. Leaving hiring to outsiders results in poor decision making – local managers should be directly involved in selection process

- Failure in the short-listing process i.e., MOFR may not be using the right tools- if we were looking for people who could really fit in we need to assess who wants to get on board

- Job competencies should be assessed by professionals

The role personality assessment or psychometrics testing should play in determining succession candidates, communication strategies, training, coaching, and/or determining management capabilities

- It would help to identify leadership styles, areas for improvement, as well as strengths, so that training could focus on key areas.

- It would help identify career paths candidate might be best suited for and identify areas for improvement

- Extremely important – good attitude is important. Need to be willing to do the job

- I believe in more of the person's common sense, willingness to learn, ability to learn, and willing to be mentored and coached.

- This needs to be done more, especially interviewing. This could also be used to determine whether the person is in the wrong position, need to reshuffle

- Must be taken as only one part of the process and must be developed by someone qualified

How positions in undesirable and/or expensive (remote) locations be filled more easily - ideas to implement succession strategies for these areas

- Perhaps make the mandatory requirements for these positions slightly less stringent, thereby giving applicants who are willing to relocate the opportunity

- Make it easier for people to laterally transfer out of these locations by following up with these people – don't just put them there and forget about them

- Increase salary, benefits and moving expenses

- Telecommuting. Fund it

- To retain these employees long term in remote locations, MOFR must be more competitive. For example, private companies offer medical travel expenses and the federal government offers more money and allowances.

- Travel time for managers needs to be accounted for. Moving to a remote location means always traveling to meetings and although we may get some time off, the workload is such that it is impossible to take flex time and still complete all duties

- The group in the 40's is feeling left out - younger workers expectations are big - people want to be promoted after 6 months. It is important to make sure everyone is included in the process of succession

- Flexibility with hours

- More vacation time

- Increased flex-time

- Make it a necessary step if you want to move upward and work in the South, you have to work in the North first. Offer this as a means to a fast track to a better job

- Workout facilities

2 Forestry Contracting Companies

Awareness of MOFR Succession Planning Project

- Neither of the contractors contacted had any idea of what the MOFR Succession Planning Project was, or that the Ministry was involved in anything of that nature.

The perceived impact the MOFR Succession Planning Project has on private companies

- Perceived negative impact mostly. Fear will lose valuable employees to the MOF-already have lost several. However, they would prefer to deal with their former employees than new recruits because of experience in the industry.

The student recruitment process

- Yes, both recruit from educational institutes such as UBC, UNBC, technical schools, etc.

- Currently succession planning
- Yes, both are involved in some form of succession planning. They are experiencing challenges in having a lack of people to advance into senior positions.

Information sharing and level of desired involvement with MOFR succession planning

- Yes, they would be interested in information sharing, mainly in the form of sharing information regarding employees who the ministry can't hire or who wish to move into contracting

6 Forestry Students

Career plans - Short term

- MOFR for the summer
- Gain 2 years worth of forestry experience in order to complete the work requirement for the ABCFP. Currently working as an Assistant Forestry Engineer for a local forestry company in the Lower Mainland
- Work for an Alberta contracting company in the area of Silviculture
- Work for non-profit agency
- Like to learn broad issue of sustainability
- Employed by Forestry company
- To graduate and travel a bit

Career plans – Mid term

- Finish the program
- Stay in Alberta for 3-5 years then move back to BC
- Conservation jobs in Scotland or England

Career plans –Long term

- Stay with MOF
- Masters Degree in Forestry or Wild Life Management and move back to BC
- Interested in working with MOF
- Unsure, most likely to work in the private forestry companies and move up
- Secure a management position. That may be as an Area Engineer or a Woodlands Manager or maybe even work my way up to District Manager or Chief Forester
- Possible Masters, most likely looking for conservation officer/biologist jobs in the lower mainland. I may also look at government jobs

Why students enrolled in their respective programs

- Variety in terms of programs and what they offer

- Friends in the program
- Wasn't stuck in the office
- Want to have an impact on the environment
- More beneficial to understand the entire picture instead of just one thing
- Family is in forestry
- Helps with resource management
- Protect environment
- I love the outdoors
- Subject of interest

Key factors influencing student career choice

- Nature of work
- Stability
- Pay
- location
- advancement
- status

Note: actual ranking could not be determined with this small pool of interviewees. A survey would better flesh out data

Perception of MOFR as an employer

- Largely influenced by professors input
- Need to communicate messages from MOFR directly
- Mixed results

How students conduct career searches

- Networking with people inside the forestry
- Internet
- Careers fair
- Instructor contacts
- Talk to employees within the firms of choice
- Co-op program involvement
- University job site
- Government job site

Note: Suggest surveying to identify ranking

Student opinion of working for MOFR vs. contractors

- Prefer to work with MOFR first but the requirements were too high
- Knowing how to apply to MOFR would help: when to apply and advertise hiring dates earlier. Most private industries have post jobs in January and the MOFR hires in spring.
- MOFR is not open to hire people with less experience - they should provide quantifiable mentorship
- Contractors offer limited experience opportunities
- Would not want to work with MOFR right after graduation
- Working for the MOFR right out of school would be a great idea and would love to work there to build up my field experience. It is the perfect starting point for any recent graduate that wants to make a difference and use the knowledge and resources that the MOFR can offer

Executive Member

Understanding of the Succession Planning Project

- Understanding they are doing a framework of succession planning so that when they do a pilot they will be ready to roll it out
- Dealing with an aging work force needs to be proactive and knowledge transfer is essential
- This group is putting together the framework, key positions, competencies and options

Why succession planning is important

- An organization is only as good as people it has working for it.
- Need to have pool with motivated competent, people to increase diversity

The ideal project outcome

- Good understanding of which positions will become vacant and when.
- Have a process in place where we have qualified and motivated candidates to fill vacancies
- The program is well monitored on an on-going bases - not just a one time deal
- A proactive part of the MOFR culture

Perceived risks associated with the project

- Dither and get hung up in process – not moving forward

- The concept of a pool may leave some thinking that there are winners and looser – this perception should be avoided
- Knowledge loss may occur to prevent this MOFR needs to develop a specific, measurable, consistent mentor program
- External risks are the difficulty to enter the ministry – high qualifications prevents entrants and diversity is necessary

Stakeholder involvement

- University an industries should be involved Initially
- Project leaders should be present at all succession meetings to show support and offer ideas.

Suggestions to improve the succession planning process

- Employees are unaware of the details of Road Ahead
- Succession group must communicate vision, ideas, incites and updates directly to management teams to give an update so that momentum isn't lost
- Stress knowledge transfer component. It is critical to continue on with succession planning
- Run a pilot quickly – get it in play from a profile point of view to sustain momentum and to show results
- Make sure employees understand Road ahead is part of 'who we are'

4 Succession Planning Committee Members

Succession teams understanding of purpose and importance of succession planning

- Aging work force → MOFR: 2015 or 2020, shortage of people because of retirements, and plus government is not attracting enough recruits → be proactive
- Has to do with the future - putting people in the right place at the right time.
- Developing people within and outside the firm (external, and internal)
- Knowing where the MOFR is going and how to get there without wasting time and effort
- Continued efforts for fit – suitability, capabilities, skills, and performance
- Factoring experience into competencies

Motivating factors for joining the Succession Planning Committee

- Being prepared and proactive
- Belief in government
- To quit talking and start doing → get the ball rolling
- Want to give something back to the government

- Enjoys career and wants others to
- Secure future

Advantages to being involved in the succession planning process

- To learn from the process
- To learn new skills to pass on
- Input on direction
- Gain understanding
- Input my own idea
- Help others

Other stakeholders that should be on the Succession Planning Committee

- Pretty well rounded I think
- Perhaps structuring meetings more to ensure a well-rounded and structured discussion to ensure points are taken and the process is moved on.
- A meeting facilitator could maintain control and focus and decrease wasted time
- Other reps from other teams should be involved (e.g. retention and recruit group etc.). This would ensure communications and decrease overlap
- The union - but if they must be open and realistic and should have some responsibility

Suggested process improvements

- More communication to the entire workforce on the project's progress and should update the project on the web page so that others can see
- More training for the committee on strategic human resource management: What it is and how it relates to others in the organization and how are all the pieces of the Work Force Plan fit in
- Ensure equal input: encourage open and honest response from all members and energize a good group dynamic

Benefits of the current staffing process

- Now that we're separated from the Public Agency that we're becoming more efficient for the staffing
- More opportunities to be on the panel and gain interviewer experiences
- Opportunities to move throughout the province
- Opportunity to learn new skill and meet new people.
- Standardized process (guidelines)

Restriction of the current staffing process

- Less support level because the agency do it for the MOF. MOFR didn't have to pay for anything, but now it is fee-based service. And the Agency doesn't' report to MOFR and they providing MOFR with advice and not service

- In service limitations of unions

- Union restrictions

- Hard to get certifications, and certain positions need those certifications and not everyone is able to get certifications due to room, money, time, location.

- Too set → need flexibility

The impotents of psychometrics testing

- Not all - past work experience and work standards are the most important things

- Some value and interpretation is important

- Very important to a certain degree and has to do with cost and time involved

Ideas for filling positions in undesirable and/or expensive locations

- Isolation allowance should continue

- Lateral transfer after 2 years

- Additional holidays

- Annual leave in the contract - need to consult with the unions

- Lower qualifications

- Mentorship

- Subsidize housing

- Living allowance

- Don't forget about these people – involve them is succession out

- Like RCMP → earn your boots. Everybody has to move in order to move up.

- Offer job flexibility

- Accommodations allowance

Appendix G.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities

Internal Strengths

- Massive internal information
- Employee pride
- Employee resilience
- High employee retention
- Positive front line management relations
- Employees happy with pay scale
- Excellent training (safety, orientation)
- Effective teams
- Forward outlook
- Experienced people
- People from different departments on committee

Internal Weaknesses

- Survey structure is inadequate for effective conclusions and targeting problems
- Survey analysis carries incorrect assumptions
- Information dissemination
- Performance appraisals not maintained
- Perceived poor relations with upper level management at lower levels
- Internal inequities in workloads, work ethic, and rewards
- Misaligned reward and reinforcement mechanisms
- High average employee age
- Lack of accountability (i.e., performance appraisals and committee success)
- Not ready early enough to deal with unintentional hires
- Training required on how to lead change?

Note. Created by the MBA Project Team.

External Threats

- Limited recruitment pool for middle and upper echelons (Gen X)
- Change in world lumber trade – Planning group
- Mountain pine beetle infestation
- Possible Droughts (1998, 2003, 2004, 2005?)
- Increasing number of intense forest fires
- Change of government / May 2005 election
- 5 to 15 years to mass retirement by Baby Boomers

External Opportunities

- New Forest and Range Practices/Wildfire Act/replaces Forest Practices Code? Leslie
- Lumber market expansion into China. Increase market demand = increased monitoring and practices.
- Large pool of new university grads/specialization (Gen Y and X)
- Privatization of other government sectors creates a recruitment pool of available employees
- New technologies available (i.e., statistical analysis software, info management software, communications)

Appendix H.

Succession Map

Enforcement Managers, SIR

H. Jarvis	4	***	*	Yes	Yes
H. Piper	11	*	***	Yes	No
C. Juser	19	/	*	Yes	No

Enforcement Managers, SIR

R. Bush	12	*	***	No	No
A. Kyle	13	*	***	No	Yes
W. Long	17	***	/	Yes	No
B. Storey	22	/	*	Yes	No

Project Managers, All Regions

F. Goland	5	***	/	No	No
C. Pitts	8	***	/	No	Yes
M. Murry	12	*	***	Yes	Yes
S. Golds	19	*	*	Yes	Yes

Scientists, NIR

S. French	12	***	*	Yes	No
W. Chan	12	***	*	Yes	Yes
T. Peters	18	***	***	Yes	Yes
G. Fritz	22	*	*	Yes	Yes

Technical Supervisors, SIR

S. Ramos	15	*	/	Yes	No
C. Hood	20	*	*	Yes	No
L. Scheitz	22	***	*	Yes	No
B. Lee	26	/	***	Yes	Yes

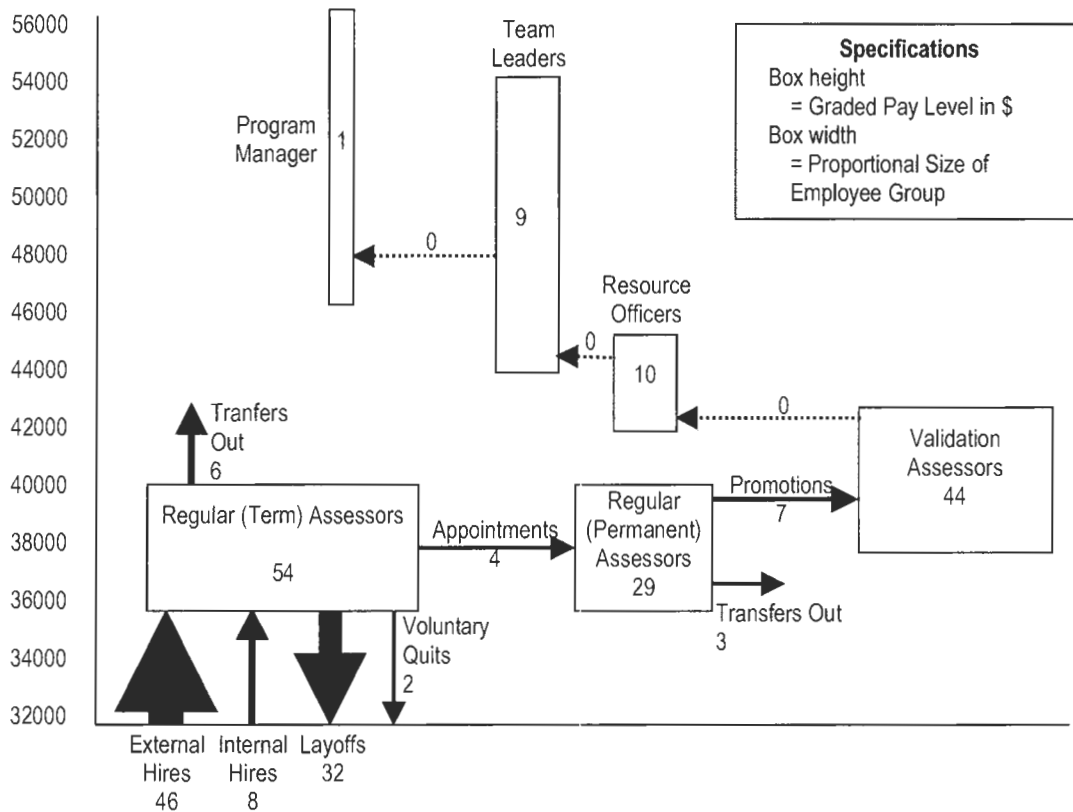*Note.*   Recreated from Ashley Bennington's figure (2004b, by permission).

Items on this chart do not depict actual members of the BC MOFR or any other organization, thus, names and positions are used for illustrative purposes only.

Appendix I.

Human Resources Stock Flow Chart of Canada Revenue Agency Surrey Tax Centre's Client Services Division

Note. Adapted from Ashley Bennington's figure (2004a, by permission).

Appendix J.

Informal Networks

Survey

Trust Network Questions

1. If you wanted to tell someone something, and trust they won't tell others, who would that be?
2. Out of all your coworkers, whom do you trust to stick up for you the most?
3. Who is the best at making AND keeping agreements with you?

Information/Technical Network Questions

1. Who do you go to first to find out information on how to do your job?
2. Who has the most specialized/practical knowledge about your team's tasks?
3. Who are you most comfortable in approaching for technical help or information?

Communication Network Questions

1. Who is your chief source of information about management or organizational initiatives?
2. Typically, who has the latest information on job tasks or deployments?
3. If you wanted to inform others of something you've learned, whom would you tell to spread it quickly?

Trust Network

As can be seen above, despite the formal structure in the organizational chart, one supervisor and two employees are key players in the **informal trust network.** These people should become **change champions.**

Information Networks (aka The Grapevine)

In the **informal communication network** above, note that the supervisors are relatively uninvolved in communicating information to their subordinates. The manager conveys information to the supervisors, but the lower level employees by and large rely on key players at their own level. These key players will be the ones reading the Intranet, or the news, and should be leveraged by managers and supervisors to help communicate information about the change initiatives to the rest of employees.

Technical Networks
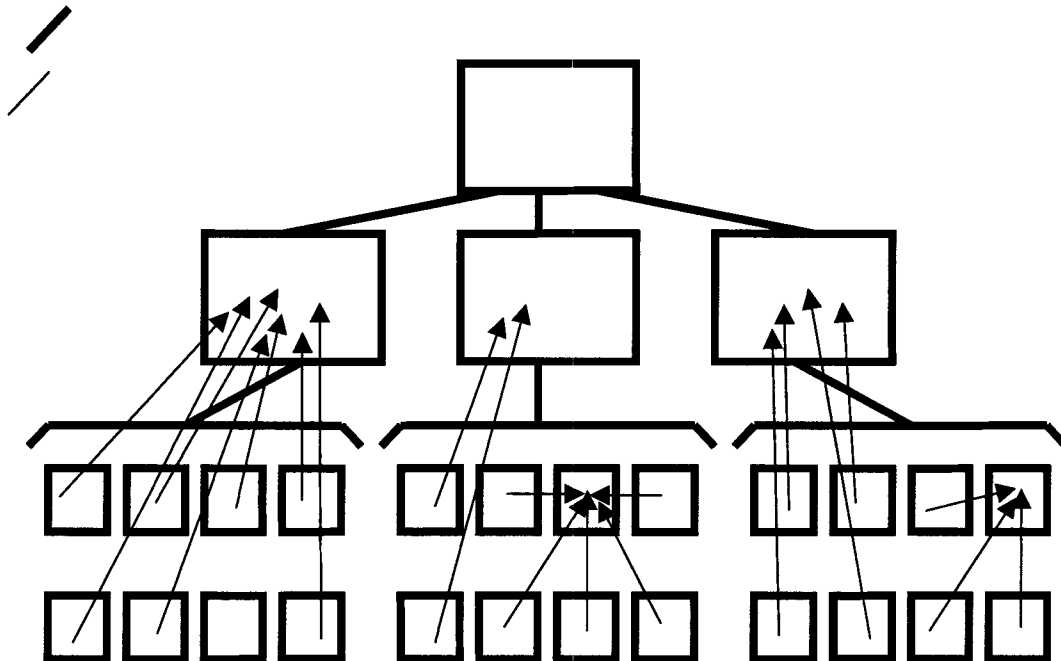
Note. Adapted from Ashley Bennington's figure (2004c, by permission).

In the **informal technical network,** a wide range of people are consulted on task related issues. In succession planning, the team on the left will be problematic in that if their supervisor is promoted, a very knowledgeable replacement will have to be found to provide all eight employees with technical advice. This is not so much the case in the other two teams. In addition, for lower level employees to be identified as pivotal in the technical network, a good deal of knowledge will be lost if they are promoted to another department or region and can no longer be reached by their former coworkers.
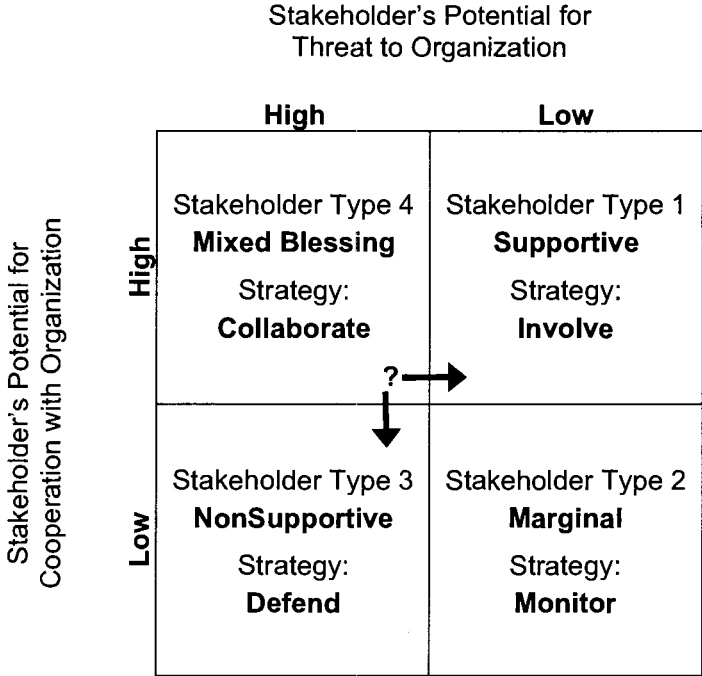
Overall, be sure to watch for **holes** in the informal trust networks. Supervisors and managers identified as not being consulted heavily in any informal network will be largely ineffectual in managing stakeholders and eliciting commitment for a change project.

Bowties, too, are dangerous for networks with respect to succession planning. "Bowtie" employees are pivots to disseminate information to employees above, below, or across teams. Promoting a bowtie out of a network can break down several sub-networks at once and create dysfunction, so very qualified replacements will have to be found.

Identifying change champions out of informal networks is critical. Trust and communication networks are important in rolling out changes as large as the Workforce Planning project, especially since you want to manage employees and other stakeholder groups to be supportive rather than neglected or unsupportive.

Appendix K.

Stakeholder Map

Stakeholder's Potential for
Threat to Organization

	High	**Low**
High	Stakeholder Type 4 **Mixed Blessing** Strategy: **Collaborate**	Stakeholder Type 1 **Supportive** Strategy: **Involve**
Low	Stakeholder Type 3 **NonSupportive** Strategy: **Defend**	Stakeholder Type 2 **Marginal** Strategy: **Monitor**

Stakeholder's Potential for
Cooperation with Organization

Note.   Recreated from Tom Lawrence's (2004, October) lecture notes.

Appendix L.

Vacancy Chains

Pay Grade Hierarchy	Vacancy Chain	Reason for Movement
Senior Manager	V5 ⟶	Quit to private sector
Regional Manager	V4	Promotion from V4 to V5
District Manager	V3 ← V3	Promotion from V3 to V4 Lateral V3 Transfer
Team Leader	V2 V2 → V2	Promotion from V2 to V3 Lateral V2 Transfer Demotion to V1 at end of acting Contract
Technician market	V1 V1 V1	Promotion from V1 to V2 Hire from external labour Demoted from V2 to V1
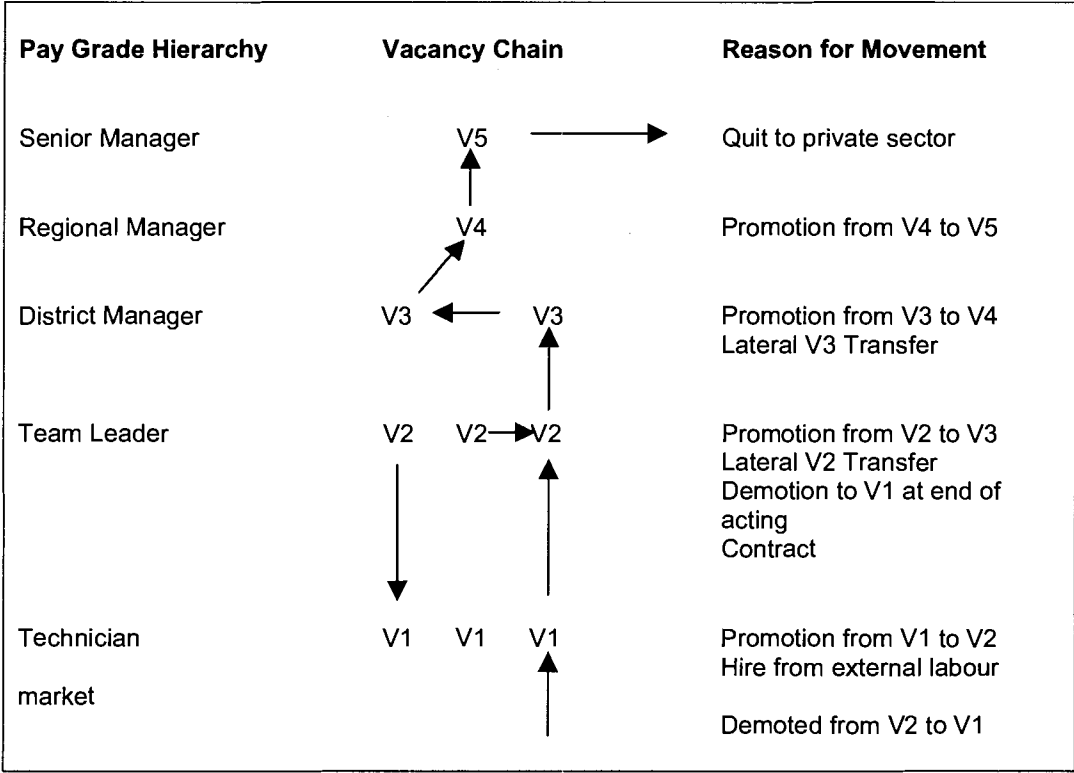
Note. Recreated from Ashley Bennington's figure (2004d, by permission).

Based on this example of a vacancy chain, one person quitting at the top produced seven separate staffing actions for replacements, rather than focusing on the one replacement at the very top. For succession planning and workforce planning, these vacancy chains determine all movements necessary within an internal labour market. If movements are not possible because of unqualified candidates or lack of availability, then the HR department will have to fill those gaps with people from the external labour market.