

An Assessment of Succession Planning at the State Bar of Texas

by

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ABSTRACT

Succession Planning is a growing trend in both the public and private sector as the nation's population continues to age and more senior managers retire. A growing labor gap exists between the younger employees and the experience necessary to fill vacant positions. The State Bar of Texas is among the many employers who have experienced high turnover rates and increasing retirements. To address the potential labor gap, the Bar created the Fellows Program as a means to attract and retain top talent for future leadership positions.

This applied research project assesses the State Bar of Texas Fellows Program based on the practical ideal type framework developed through a literature review. The ideal type model for succession planning programs contains seven categories: Top Management Participation and Support; Needs Driven Assessment; Formal Professional Development Opportunities; Focused Individual Attention; Dedicated Responsibility; Extension to all Levels of the Organization; and Existence in the Strategic Plan.

The Fellows Program Assessment is performed through the case study research design and uses multiple sources of evidence. Document analysis, participant observation, and focused interviews enhance the validity of the research through a triangulation of data. The assessment results indicate that the Fellows Program addressed one of the seven model categories listed above. Future recommendations include greater communication with leadership on the goals of the program and a more thorough study of the training needs of the participants, as well as greater accountability and assigned responsibility.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	5
SUCCESSION PLANNING IN THE QUASI-PUBLIC SECTOR	5
THE STATE BAR FELLOWS PROGRAM.....	6
PURPOSE.....	7
CHAPTER 2: SUCCESSION PLANNING MODEL.....	8
TRENDS	9
BENEFITS OF SUCCESSION PLANNING.....	10
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF SUCCESSION PLANNING PROGRAMS	12
TOP MANAGEMENT PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT	12
NEEDS DRIVEN ASSESSMENT	14
PROVIDE FORMAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES	16
FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL	18
DEDICATED RESPONSIBILITY.....	20
EXTENDS TO ALL LEVELS OF ORGANIZATION.....	22
COORDINATES WITH STRATEGIC PLAN.....	23
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	24
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH SETTING.....	28
STATE BAR AS A QUASI-PUBLIC AGENCY.....	28
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	30
FELLOWS PROGRAM	32
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY	35
OPERATIONALIZING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	36
DOCUMENT ANALYSIS	36
PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION	39
FOCUSED INTERVIEWS.....	39
CONCLUSION	40
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS	41
TOP MANAGEMENT SUPPORT	41
NEEDS DRIVEN ASSESSMENT	46
PROVIDE FORMAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES	48
FOCUSED ON INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION	51
DEDICATED RESPONSIBILITY.....	53
PROGRAM EXTENDS TO ALL LEVELS	56
PART OF STRATEGIC PLAN	58
CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION.....	61
RECOMMENDATIONS	61
COMMUNICATE MISSION AND GOALS OF THE PROGRAM TO DIVISION HEADS AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT MORE EFFECTIVELY	63
PERFORM NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF DIVISION HEAD POSITIONS	63
INCLUDE THE DIVISION HEADS AS MENTORS IN THE PROGRAM.....	64
PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS BASED ON INDIVIDUAL NEEDS ASSESSMENTS.....	64
FELLOWS PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS SHOULD HAVE CONSULTATIONS WITH PROGRAM COORDINATOR AND DIRECT MANAGER TO DISCUSS CAREER GOALS	65
DEDICATE A STAFF MEMBER FROM THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT.....	65
INCLUDE STAFF SUCCESSION IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN.....	65
CONCLUSION	66
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	67

APPENDIX A.....70

APPENDIX B.....71

Chapter 1: **Introduction**

Since the early 1990s, all levels of government have been investigating means to reform the bureaucratic style of operations and reinvent government to improve public trust and confidence. David Osborne and Ted Gaebler describe the “entrepreneurial spirit” that is spreading throughout the public sector in their 1993 book *Reinventing Government*. They define entrepreneurial government as one that uses its resources in new ways to maximize productivity and effectiveness (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993, p. xix). They recommend that a government agency, depending on its function, can learn innovations by following the example of the private sector (1993, p. xix).

Succession Planning in the Quasi-Public Sector

The State Bar of Texas is a government organization that can emulate certain private sector practices. The Bar is a quasi-public agency that receives its’ authority to regulate the education and professionalism of Texas lawyers through the State Bar Act, however its’ budget is primarily funded through mandatory membership dues and revenues from continuing legal education programs. It does not receive any funding from state tax revenues, and it is not included in the state appropriations act. Therefore, the State Bar of Texas must operate under a business plan that generates a profit in a competitive continuing legal education market while balancing member, or customer, satisfaction and regulating that same customer through a disciplinary process.

As a quasi-public agency, the State Bar of Texas has a position on both sides of the public/private sector fence, and therefore, it can learn innovative techniques by studying the trends of both sectors. One corporate trend that the Texas Bar has attempted to recognize is the

need for employee development and retention through succession planning programs.

Companies have acknowledged this based on labor and employment trends that have changed with the population and economy. A potential leadership gap supports the need for companies and the public sector to develop their leaders today and retain talent for the future through succession planning. The State Bar of Texas has acknowledged this trend and implemented its own succession planning program, known as the Fellows Program, to address future leadership concerns.

The State Bar Fellows Program

The Fellows Program Pilot Project officially ran from October 2000 to November 2001. In April 2000, the Fellows Program Advisory Group was created by the Executive Director to develop the parameters and goals of the program. The Advisory Group was to include one member from each division of the Bar, who was selected by each division head. In August 2000, the Advisory Group invited applications from the staff to participate in the program as a “Fellow”. After conducting interviews of all applicants, the Advisory Group selected five Fellows who were assigned bar-related work projects intended to create opportunities for the Fellows to interact with many different divisions of the Bar, and consequently, learn more about the organization.

One of the primary goals of the Fellows Program, as stated by the Executive Director, was to build the staff leadership potential of the Bar for the future. The Fellows Program was a special case in succession planning because it was conducted in the quasi-public realm and those involved in the program had unique experiences based on the Bar’s organizational culture. A careful assessment of the program is important to the Bar’s leadership for internal accountability. An assessment also serves a broader purpose. The knowledge and experiences of the Fellows

Program Pilot Project can assist other public sector agencies that are experiencing future leadership challenges and struggling for solutions.

Purpose

The purpose of this applied research project is threefold. First, it will describe the ideal characteristics of an effective succession planning program based on the literature. Second, it will assess the State Bar of Texas Fellows Program Pilot Project using the practical ideal type characteristics. Finally, the project will develop strategies for improving the effectiveness of the State Bar of Texas Fellows Program.

The second chapter fully explains the meaning of succession planning and the growing need for such programs in both the private and public sectors. Through the literature review, a conceptual model is developed for the practical ideal type of succession planning programs. The seven categories serve as a point of departure for evaluating the Fellows Program. In chapter three, the State Bar of Texas and the Fellows Program are further discussed to provide the appropriate understanding of the research purpose. Chapter four explains the case study methodology and the challenges to validity that this type of research design must address. Chapter four also provides the necessary operationalization of the conceptual framework. The results of the case study are revealed in chapter five, and chapter six provides recommendations for the future of the Fellows Program based on those results.

Succession planning is not just a problem for the private sector, but for the population as a whole. All decision makers, whether in business or in government, have a responsibility to ensure the continuity of leadership. This applied research project provides valuable insight into the management challenges of creating a succession plan.

Chapter 2: **Succession Planning Model**

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature concerning succession planning programs in private companies and public agencies in the United States. The chapter provides a background discussion of employment trends that necessitate the implementation of succession plans and the benefits to both the public and private sector when the plans are effective. The development of a conceptual framework for effective program implementation is also examined.

Succession planning, according to Rothwell (2001, p 5-6), is “the process that helps ensure the stability of tenure of personnel.” Further, he states that succession planning includes “any effort designed to ensure the continued effective performance of an organization, division, department or work group by making provision for the development, replacement and strategic application of key people over time.” Through such a program, succession planning helps an organization match present talent with needed future talent, meet strategic challenges, and insures the preservation of institutional memory. It is a proactive approach to developing talent from within the organization through planned training activities (Rothwell, 2001, p. 7).

While most of the literature concerning succession planning comes from the experiences of the private sector, the field of public administration can learn from these experiences because, according to Schall (1997, p. 5), the public sector shares the necessity of developing talent to maintain stability. The public sector also has the unique challenge of providing for succession under different administrations with sometimes opposing viewpoints, and often in a regulatory environment (Schall, 1997, p. 6). Schall describes this challenge as “sustained innovation,” which means keeping change and innovations alive after one administration ends and another takes over. According to Schall (1997, p. 6), succession planning “involves preparing the agency

for a change in leadership, but it also includes assessing what has been valuable and how that can be preserved and transferred to the subsequent regime.” Nevertheless, for purpose of this study on succession planning at the State Bar of Texas, private sector experiences apply. The State Bar is authorized through the public sector and funded through fees. It is not dependent on budget allocation and thus has autonomy more like a private sector organization.

In addition, the points raised by Osborne and Gaebler regarding the “entrepreneurial spirit” apply in both quasi-public agencies and the private sector. The messages of entrepreneurial government can apply to succession planning. Agencies can adapt their operations to mirror the succession planning trends in the private sector.

Trends

The need for succession planning in companies and agencies has increased as labor and employment trends have changed with the population. As of August 2001, the Bureau of Labor was predicting static growth in 16-24 year olds in the 21st century (Delahoussaye, 2001 a, p. 1). Further, 25-39 year olds will trail employment growth by more than 5% by 2008, leaving 1 in 4 mid-management positions empty (Delahoussaye, 2001, a, p. 1). According to Rothwell (2001, p. xiii), “20% of the best known companies in the US may lose 40% of their senior executives to retirement within the next 5 years.” In the public sector specifically, the American Society for Public Administration has acknowledged the likely trend that the sector will face “unprecedented levels of retirements in the near future while budget cuts limit their ability to recruit a new generation of public servants” (Yearwood, 2001, p. 1). In the past, employees were considered plentiful and readily available; however, the future holds few guarantees. The potential leadership gap supports the development of talent and future leaders in both public and private organizations through succession planning.

Corporations are also experiencing a reduced sense of loyalty among their employees (Rothwell, 2001, p. 32). In the past, employers could count on a steady supply of employees willing to take a position with a company for many years, maybe even until retirement (Rothwell, 2001, p. 36). Today, though, employees are looking for short-term gains without long-term commitments, and organizations may lose top talent if steps are not taken to identify, develop and promote those individuals quickly (Rothwell, 2001, p. 36). High turnover will have a negative impact on the intellectual capital of an organization. Succession planning is a means to retain and cultivate the intellectual capital of a company and hold on to people as the most important asset (Rothwell, 2001, p. 37).

Benefits of Succession Planning

There are several reasons why succession planning is an important program for public and private organizations to introduce and continue for years to come. Primarily, succession planning provides continuity of leadership, which is essential for companies to survive as CEOs and Senior Management positions become vacant due to retirement. Succession planning allows organizations to strategically place the right people in the right leadership positions for the future (Rothwell, 2001, p. 49).

These programs also provide companies with emergency leadership plans when tragic events create unexpected vacancies due to death or serious injury (Peak, 1996, p. 1). For instance, in 1996, Ron Brown, the U.S. Commerce Secretary, and several corporate executives died in a plane crash over Bosnia. Peak (1996) reports a poll the American Management Association (AMA) conducted of its members, weeks after the accident, to determine the existence of succession plans for unexpected leadership vacancies. The poll found that 42% of

AMA companies had succession plans for the Chief Executive Officer, however, fewer had plans to deal with the sudden departure of senior staff members¹ (Peak 1996, p. 2).

The lack of succession plans may not be due to a lack of need. The poll also showed that 5% of the companies had experienced long-term vacancies in the previous three years, and 36% had experienced vacancies in other management areas (Peak, 1996, p. 1). The results showed a “slight but strong correlation” between the presence of a succession plan and the degree of disruption felt by an organization due to an unexpected vacancy (Peak, 1996, p. 2). Succession plans, if in place and updated, can provide organizations with an action plan when life takes unpredictable turns.

Organizations that do not have formal succession planning likely have an informal system where current leaders groom employees reflecting similar values, appearance, and background for top positions. Delahoussaye (2001, a, p. 3) reports that a survey of AMA members, client companies, and *Training Magazine* subscribers found that half of the respondents depended on an informal approach to developing future leaders, which suggests that succession planning is not taken seriously despite the many trends indicating its need. Further, informal succession planning can reinforce the “glass ceiling” phenomena (Rothwell, 2001, p. 9). A formal succession plan can discourage discrimination and enhance multiculturalism by promoting employees with potential that might otherwise go unnoticed because of differing cultural backgrounds (Rothwell, 2001, p. 9).

¹ The AMA poll was conducted of private sector corporations and is included in this chapter to emphasize the trend in the private sector on succession planning. A comparison poll of the public sector has not been found to date, but similarities in government are expected.

Conceptual Framework of Succession Planning Programs

Specific succession planning programs often vary depending on business and public agency purposes and goals. Careful review of the existing literature found that effective succession planning programs have common elements, which can be organized as a practical ideal type conceptual framework². The elements of the framework are:

- top management support
- dedicated responsibility
- performance of a needs driven assessment
- professional development opportunities
- focused individual attention
- extension to all levels of an organization, and
- inclusion in the strategic plan.

The remainder of the chapter expands upon these characteristics and discusses the challenges the public and private sector face to implement succession plans.

Top Management Participation and Support

The first step to develop an effective succession planning program is to have the support and participation of the organization's top management, which includes the board of directors, executive director, and senior management. Ideally, the board of directors supports the program by taking an active role at the center of the process through the approval of a policy that encourages succession planning (Rothwell, 2001, p. 53). Additionally, the board's participation and support in succession plans for the agency's top executive officer, sets the example for an agency wide succession plan (Rothwell, 2001, p. 53).

² Practical ideal type as defined by Shields, 1998.

The backing of the CEO, or Executive Director, is also essential to ensuring other top management personnel follow the lead and encourage succession planning (Rothwell, 2001, p. 53). The CEOs participation also motivates program participants because candidates see interest in their career growth from the top (Rothwell, 2001, p. 53). In contrast, when executives view succession planning as a “tedious exercise,” it seldom produces good candidates (Walker, 1998, p. 1). Furthermore, while larger firms and agencies depend on middle management to promote the succession planning program, smaller groups usually rely heavily on a strong executive to gather talent for the program (Gratton & Syrett, 1990, p. 36).

A third major component of top management participation and support is the interest of senior management (Gratton & Syrett, 1990, p. 36). In fact, this criteria is so important that Shah et al (2001, p. 26) assert, “For *maximum* success, strong commitment from senior management is necessary” (emphasis added). Buy-in from managers and supervisors is essential to create a feeling of shared ownership of the process before it is implemented (Spoor, 1993, p. 2).

While it is likely that if support exists from the board and the chief executive office, then support will flow from the senior management team as well. The enthusiasm of senior management, however, can be enhanced through open discussion of the succession planning program (Walker, 1998, p. 3). Management should discuss the plan during monthly or quarterly meetings to learn which employees have the most potential talent across division lines to move up in the organization (Schall, 1997, p. 8). Further, this discussion allows the management team to discuss each succession planning candidate based on the strategic goals and competencies needed for particular positions. These same employees should then be a part of the applicant pool for positions senior managers have available (Getty, 1993, p. 3). Nowack (1994, p. 3) suggests that an open discussion with senior management through group meetings or structured

interviews also allows the organization to learn the required skill competencies for management positions. Further, when succession planning is open and the plan shared with senior management, it builds credibility for the process agency-wide (Getty, 1993, p. 3).

Problems occur when senior leaders are unwilling to participate in succession planning. These individuals become a barrier to the program because they often feel threatened and view the program as “replacing oneself” rather than “strategic positioning” (Schall, 1997, p. 6). This resistance to change is caused by individuals who are unwilling to relinquish past beliefs or dislike sharing information about their position’s competency skills (Shah et al, 2001, p. 28). Negative attitudes fail to provide a supportive culture to succession planning and must be addressed at the outset by the board or executive office in order for the program to be effective (Shah et al, 2001, p. 28).

Needs Driven Assessment

Executive and senior management support is important for determining the skills necessary for particular positions. Without this support, a needs driven assessment, the second criteria for an effective succession planning program, becomes difficult, if not impossible (Nowack, 1994, p. 3). This section explains what a needs assessment involves and the components of needs assessment necessary for successful succession planning programs, such as determining the core competencies of positions, learning about the programs in similar organizations, and connecting the assessment to employee performance evaluations.

The literature on needs assessments is explained by Holton et al (2000, p. 250-251) through the work of three experts in the field. First, McGehee and Thayer’s 1961 three-level conception of needs assessment continues to serve as the core framework to follow. McGehee and Thayer define the three levels of needs assessment as “organization analysis, operations analysis and man (individual) analysis,” (Holton et al, 2000, p. 250). The most effective

assessment addresses all three levels. Second, Rossett explains the purposes of needs assessment includes finding information about “1) optimal performance, 2) actual performance, 3) how key sources feel, 4) what is causing the problem, and 5) solutions to close gaps between optimal and actual performance” (Holton et al, 2000, p. 250).

Finally, Holton notes Kaufmann and his associates for distinguishing the difference between needs assessment and needs analysis. Assessment purposes are, “1) identify gaps between current results and desired ones, 2) to prioritize gaps, and 3) to select the most important ones to be addressed”(Holton et al, 2000, p. 251). According to Kauffman, needs analysis, on the other hand, “is the process to analyze the causes of the gaps” (Holton et al, 2000, p. 251). Holton et al (2000, p. 251), however, point out that no single model of needs assessment exists, but rather the literature consists of guidelines, principles and tools for the process.

One needs assessment tool is to determine the core competencies of positions identified in the succession planning program. According to Nowack (1994, p. 3), there are three steps to a job profile and analysis for targeted succession planning positions. These are 1) review organizational strategic and business plans to understand future vision and challenges; 2) perform structured interviews with senior management to learn the required competencies for jobs; and 3) conduct competency studies of employees. The information gathered in employee competency studies identify the training program participants need for future management positions. The employee’s participation can then be connected to performance evaluations to monitor the results (Holton et al, 2000, p. 264). A training needs assessment must be measured and evaluated because, “increased emphasis on organizational outcomes means human resource development and training must be more accountable for delivering performance results” (Holton et al, 2000, p. 264).

According to Rothwell (2001, p. 53), another element of the needs assessment should incorporate an examination of companies that have implemented effective succession planning. On-site visits or benchmark surveys that show which practices work best in particular organization cultures are useful steps in succession planning program development. Benchmark surveys are performed by sending out questionnaires to organizations or companies with similar missions and goals as the organization/company considering implementation of a succession plan. This allows the company to draw comparisons based on similar needs and challenges. Rothwell (2001, p. 53) also suggests that boards make succession planning part of the performance evaluation for the CEO as an incentive to encourage the program.

Provide Formal Professional Development Opportunities

A needs assessment identifies the specific job skills required for top management positions. Therefore, the third step in succession planning, providing formal professional development opportunities, addresses employee-training needs by developing the skills necessary for leadership promotions. The literature³ often notes that any effective succession planning program provides numerous opportunities for professional development. Two particular types of education, leadership development and mentoring, are described in detail.

Due to a changing global environment, Foster (2000) notes that organizations will have to develop leaders with new and enhanced skills from those recognized today. The future will still need leaders with strong moral and ethical values, but these will be joined by a greater understanding for diversity (Foster, 2000, p. 3). Leaders must know how to network and build relationships to develop teams and have an expanded knowledge of information technology

³ See Bard & Moore, 2000; Barker, 1997; Schall, 1997; Walker, 1998; Getty, 1993; Rothwell, 2001; Delahoussaye, 2001; Gratton & Syrett, 1990, and Nowack, 1994.

(Foster, 2000, p. 3). Succession planning programs should include leadership development programs that address these needs.

Leadership development planning, also known as executive resource planning, should primarily address the question, “leadership for what?” (Foster, 2000, p. 5). Once this is done, the programs should meet the social context and needs of the agency involved, and provide a clear philosophy on what leadership is and how it can be sustained (Foster, 2000, p. 5). Leadership development programs should focus on the skills and abilities of a leader rather than setting out a series of general steps to follow (Barker, 1997, p. 348). Such steps aren’t always helpful because they fail to transfer to the complex realities of the workplace (Barker, 1997, p. 348).

Leadership development programs, though, lack significant popularity across the country. In the *Training Magazine* survey, Delahoussaye (a, 2001, p. 2) notes that under half of the responding companies had increased the number of employees participating in some form of leadership development compared to five years ago. Also, 42% of companies are doing no more leadership development today than they did in 1996 (Delahoussaye, 2001, a, p. 2). The survey found, however, that the greatest influence on a candidate’s selection to participate in a leadership development program is their company work experience (Delahoussaye, 2001, a, p. 2). Supervisors rarely considered educational background a deciding factor for leadership development program participation. Also, companies are choosing candidates from various levels, with half the participants earning less than \$50,000 per year (Delahoussaye, 2001, a, p. 2).

Public sector companies, for example the Louisville Free Public Library (LFPL), are realizing steps must be taken to avoid potential leadership problems. After losing one-third of the employees to retirement, the LFPL created a leadership development program to attract and retain recently hired college graduates. The library partnered with a professor from the

University of Louisville College of Business and Public Administration to offer management courses on time management and setting priorities, communicating skillfully, leading, coaching, and mentoring, managing change, and enhancing public service (Cooper 2001). Upon program completion, employees were credited with one year of supervisory experience, an LFPL requirement for promotion to a supervisory position (Cooper 2001). Participants found the program worthwhile and the LFPL hopes to continue these efforts (Cooper 2001).

According to Rothwell (2001, p. 56) and Foster (2000, p. 2), professional development opportunities in succession plans can also include formal mentoring programs. Bard and Moore (2000, p. 257) explain that mentoring is highly productive because it combines work experience with development opportunities by matching novices with senior staff members who serve as trusted advisors. Bard and Moore (2000, p. 257-258) acknowledge that mentor programs benefit the business, mentor and mentee. The business benefits by motivating old and new staff through a broader understanding of business issues. Likewise, such programs challenge and reward the mentor because they use their experiences to educate the newer employee and develop their own management skills. Finally, the mentee becomes more acquainted with senior staff and the vision of the organization, and is able to seek advice from the mentor on career paths.

Focus on the Individual

Part of the needs assessment, according to McGehee and Thayer, is individual analysis, or individual training attention (Holton et al, 2000, p. 250). Leadership development and mentoring are important tools for professional development, however the needs assessment results will also lead succession plans to focus on the specific training needs of employees in the program. Individual attention means the selected candidates work with management to prepare career development plans that are consistent with an employee's career goals and expectations

(Nowack, 1994, p. 5). An effective program that identifies talented individuals and provides career development to enhance skills by using focused attention will ensure that the candidates are willing participants who see the succession planning program as an opportunity to grow and advance their goals (Nowack, 1994, p. 5).

Focused attention benefits the firm by increasing employee motivation. Spoor (1993, p. 2) explains the importance of keeping employees challenged through the “Roop's Theory,” which states that “talented and motivated people pass their point of maximum contribution in a position some time between 18 and 30 months.” Therefore, to guard against stagnation, the scope and responsibilities of a position must change, or a person must change jobs. Further, the “time to peak and plateau” (Spoor, 1993, p. 2) depends on the employee’s initial readiness for the position, goal orientation, opportunity for change and creativity. Employers should expect to see growth in skills and experience as the individual attention benefits the employee (Rothwell, 2001, p. 18).

Training programs that address the goals of individual candidates are usually well received by succession candidates. Shah et al (2000, p. 22) report that in a July 1999 survey of the American workforce by the Nierenberg Group, “86% of employees see self-improvement as important to success, while 97% see up-to-date skills as crucial. Only 72% reported they get enough training from their company.” Shah et al (2000, p. 22) also suggest that training and interest in an employee’s future can “instill commitment . . . by designing and promoting long-term career paths through employee development programs.” Organizations will, therefore, improve the succession planning program through focused training attention because the employees will more likely commit to the organization. When employees receive individual

attention, they usually appreciate the opportunity to communicate and establish with management their respective career goals (Rothwell, 2001, p. 18).

Gratton and Syrett (1990, p. 38), however, warn maintaining individual attention is a challenge to the program because employees constantly grow and change career goals. Therefore, Gratton and Syrett suggest annual management review for succession program participants to ensure plans reflect the changing needs of both the organization and the candidates. Given top management support and participation, a regular review will be more easily accomplished.

Another challenge of focused attention is the needs of future applicant pools (Gratton and Syrett, 1990, p. 38). Almost half of those in leadership positions in the future will be women; many of whom will have different goals and aspirations than male counterparts, especially in relation to maternity leave (Gratton & Syrett, 1990, p. 38). Gratton and Syrett point out that maternity often occurs at the age and experience level when many women are considered for inclusion in the succession planning program. Other future employees may desire greater flexibility in career development, such as time off for travel or sabbaticals (Gratton & Syrett 1990, p. 38). Also, minorities may choose to stay with companies with a history of minority recruiting (Gratton & Syrett, 1990, p. 38).

Dedicated Responsibility

Top management support, needs driven assessment, professional development and focused attention are all aspects of succession planning that require skilled coordination. While directors are ultimately responsible for establishing and continuing the program, a designated program coordinator should be assigned to develop the program, stay in touch with top talent, and manage training opportunities (Rothwell, 2001, p. 54). This person, most likely in the

human resources area, also monitors and evaluates the progress of candidates to determine their readiness to advance to leadership positions (Nowack, 1994, p. 5). Coordinators have found it helpful to maintain a database tracking system that ensures the occurrence of training and development (Nowack, 1994, p. 5). Senior management can then review the database when possible promotions come under consideration (Nowack, 1994, p. 5).

Rothwell (2001, p. 54) also found a succession planning program needs a dedicated operating budget. The budget provides the salary for the coordinator, and also the funds for training and development opportunities. While agencies are often under strict budget guidelines, partnership opportunities can exist with local colleges for educational programs in order to cut costs (Shah et al, 2001, p. 25). Recall, for example, the LFPL utilized a partnership with the University of Louisville for its' professional development program.

An assigned coordinator also ensures that the program will remain organized with a systematic approach. The coordinator can keep management focused on succession planning as a goal for the organization through the use of performance evaluation forms that must be returned to the coordinator (Rothwell, 2001, p. 54). Further, the Human Resources staff can serve as "agents of change" (Gratton & Syrett, 1990, p. 37) by recognizing the necessary development programs. Regular meetings with senior management requires the coordinator keep the plan up to date and encourages management to follow the progress of employees (Peak, 1996, p. 2). Getty (1993, p. 1) also supports a coordinator who will treat succession plans as living documents through regular plan use.

Aside from performance evaluations and training monitoring, the coordinator can keep a recorded timeline of likely retirees in order to anticipate future replacement needs. Once the timeline is known, the coordinator can better prepare executive management for upcoming

vacancies and track the developmental needs of potential replacements to guarantee candidates reach the necessary skill level (Rothwell, 2001, p. 54).

Extends to All Levels of Organization

The needs assessment and training opportunities have benefits for all positions and employees, and thus an effective succession program will extend to all levels of the organization for a complete evaluation. The executive staff identifies talent at the level directly below and the process continues down the chain of command (Schall, 1997, p. 8). The system allows the entire organization to consider its overall mission and determine the skills and managerial abilities needed to extend that mission into the future (Schall, 1997, p. 8). An open program also recognizes, as Sogunro (1997, p. 20) found in a study of leadership training programs, that all employees are capable of becoming leaders.

A company wide process also improves communication of the program (Walker, 1998, p. 3). In the past, succession programs were often clouded in secrecy because employers worried about the loyalty of those not included in the plan (Getty, 1993, p. 3). Leaders also feared that employees identified in the plan would develop unrealistic expectations or feel entitled to particular positions (Getty, 1993, p. 3).

In recent years, though, organizations have recognized the problems with non-transparent succession plans. For instance, managers were unaware that they needed to develop leadership skills in their employees and therefore failed to challenge potential talent to grow or offer leadership development opportunities (Getty, 1993, p. 2). Also, it left information gaps regarding individual employee strengths, development needs and career aspirations (Getty, 1993, p. 2). As a result, talented employees left the company fearing little opportunity for advancement or continued education. Rather than create rivalries, firms discovered that

employees who saw other employees advancing in the organization developed hope for their own advancement, and morale improved (Getty, 1993, p. 3).

Coordinates with Strategic Plan

Embedded within each of the previous practical ideal type components has been an assumption that the succession planning program fits the strategic plan of the organization. Top management support, needs assessment, professional development, dedicated responsibility, and inclusion in all levels of the organization all rely upon the underlying existence of a strategic plan that acknowledges the importance of retaining and developing top talent for leadership positions. This section will explain that it is essential for an effective succession planning program coordinate with the strategic plan.

Gratton & Syrett (1990, p. 35) cite IBM and other large conglomerates as classic models for succession planning programs. They note, however, that one universal approach to succession planning programs is impossible, but rather each program should be matched to an organization's business strategy and strategic vision. Leaders should consider whether an organization has specific executive needs to meet and how the organizational culture will effect the program. Spoor (1993, p. 1) further explains that, while succession planning was a luxury for large companies, today every business must make succession planning a part of the strategic plan. According to Rothwell (2001, p. 7), succession should have a place in the strategic plan so that generations of leaders share the vision and goals for the firm that the current leadership endorses. Management should examine the succession plans written purpose statement and ensure the program has measurable goals that correspond with the strategic plan (Rothwell, 2001, p. 15).

In difficult economic times, succession plans can also help an organization's business plan by determining how agencies should restructure the workload after layoffs. It is a tool to help management determine which workers to layoff without damage to the organization's future. It allows managers to make strategic decisions and reduce the number of employees, when necessary, to only those essential positions identified in the succession plan (Rothwell, 2001, p. 20).

Conceptual Framework

The employment trends indicate that both public and private organizations will experience a leadership gap in the future. Whether due to retirement, staff turnover, illness, or death, no company or agency is immune to position vacancies. Peter Drucker illustrated the social implications of these realities when he said,

The question of tomorrow's management is, above all, a concern for our society. Let me put it bluntly – we have reached a point where we simply will not be able to tolerate as a country, as a society, as a government, the danger that any one of our major companies will decline or collapse because it has not made adequate provisions for management succession (Rothwell, 2001, xx).

As the public and private sector partner through outsourcing functions and entrepreneurial government, a succession planning program can assist management to handle the recruiting challenges, motivate employees, and promote multiculturalism.

Succession planning programs, though, need more than organizational charts and abstract models to follow. The conceptual framework for this research is the *practical* ideal type. Practical ideal types “can be viewed as standards or points of reference,” particularly as a comparison for a real situation (Shields, 1998, p. 219). In this study, the practical ideal type serves as a point of reference for assessing the existing State Bar of Texas Fellows Program. The

framework is developed based on the characteristics of an effective succession planning program linked to the literature review, as illustrated in Table 2.1.

Top management participation and support is the first characteristic in the ideal type. Support can be demonstrated through the board, CEO (or Executive Director), and Senior Management buy-in (Rothwell, 2001, p. 53). Such buy-in can be reflected in open discussions at meetings or a willingness to hire and promote employees across division or department lines (Getty, 1993, p. 4). Further, open succession planning from the top on down builds support for the program agency-wide (Getty, 1993, p. 4).

An effective succession planning program will also include a comprehensive needs assessment of the positions in the plan. A needs assessment will include interviews with senior management, competency studies of employee's skills, and a review of strategic and business plans (Nowack, 1994, p. 3). External benchmarking will also ensure that the most essential positions are included in the succession program, and that the skills necessary for a position are known (Rothwell, 2001, p. 53).

Professional development opportunities for succession planning program participants are also an ideal characteristic of an effective program. Employees should be provided with formal training, mentoring, and undergo an organizational orientation process (Rothwell, 2001, p. 56). These methods will be beneficial to enhancing the participant's knowledge of business strategies and improve their comfort with the organization.

The fourth ideal type category in a succession planning program, leadership development, should also be focused on the individual goals. Leadership training should be determined based upon an employees goals and desires for their career (Gratton & Syrett, 1990, p.38). Additionally, the training should take the employee beyond the basic skills necessary for

advancement to the “next rung,” but rather should develop the employee for greater responsibilities further in the future (Rothwell, 2001, p. 53).

A succession planning program, though, will not take shape unless it has a coordinator with the dedicated responsibility for making the program succeed. The program coordinator should keep the plan alive by making alterations and course corrections as employees retire from the organization, and he/she should keep track of future needs (Nowack, 1994, p. 5). It is also important that the program have the necessary funds to facilitate training opportunities.

Another effective succession planning program characteristic is that it extends to all levels of the organization. This means that succession is not limited to only the CEO and Senior Management, but mid-management and lower positions are included in the discussions as well (Schall, 1997, p. 8). All levels of the organization should also be aware that the program exists, and the results are visible through promotions (Getty, 1993, p. 3).

Finally, an effective succession planning program is mentioned in the firm’s strategic plan. The positions, which were identified in the needs assessment, should also be included in the strategic plan for the organization’s future (Rothwell, 2001, p. 56). This brings continuity to the system. Additionally, the succession program should have a written purpose statement with measurable goals.

The characteristics of a succession planning program are not mutually exclusive. Each component draws upon the accomplishments of the other areas for ultimate effectiveness. At the core of succession planning is attention to talent and developing people as the strongest asset of any organization. The State Bar of Texas made an effort to develop a succession planning program through the Fellows Program. The special status of the Bar and its organization

structure sets the stage for understanding the environment of the Fellows Program. The next chapter further details the State Bar of Texas.

Table 2.1: Conceptual Framework of Succession Planning Programs

Ideal Type Categories	Sources
Top management participation & support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board, CEO and Senior Management support and participation - Open discussion of potential employees - Willingness to hire across division lines 	Rothwell 2001, Schall 1997, Spoor 1993, Walker 1998, Getty 1993, Shah et al 2001, Gratton & Syrett 1990, Nowack 1994
Needs driven assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - external benchmarking - assessment of core competencies of positions 	Rothwell 2001, Holton et al, 2000, Nowack 1994
Provide formal professional development opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orient potential leaders with organizational environment - Formal Mentoring - Access to leadership development seminars 	Rothwell 2001, Bard & Moore 2000, Cooper 2001, DiMattia 2000, Delahoussaye (a), 2001, Foster 2000, Barker, 1997
Focused on individual attention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - listen to employee's goals/desires - individuals make training choices - emphasize growth in qualities to take employees beyond "next rung" in ladder 	Rothwell 2001, Spoor 1993, Shah et al 2001, Gratton & Syrett 1990, Nowack 1994
Dedicated Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinator that keeps plan current - Create computerized models - Dedicated funds/budget - Systematic approach - Keeps track of future needs 	Rothwell 2001, Getty 1993, Shah et al 2001, Gratton & Syrett 1990, Nowack 1994, Peak 1996
Extends to all levels of organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify talent at all levels - open communication and knowledge of plan 	Schall 1997, Walker 1998, Getty 1993, Sogunro 1997
Part of strategic plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strategic plan determines which positions will be in succession plan - have written purpose statement and measurable goals 	Rothwell 2001, Spoor 1993, Gratton & Syrett 1990, Foster 2000

Chapter 3: Research Setting

Succession planning developed at the State Bar of Texas through the Fellows Program Pilot Project, which officially began in the fall of 2000. The State Bar is a unique agency because it is a quasi-public agency. Through this status, it has greater opportunity to attempt innovative projects and reflect the trends of the private sector. The Bar does, in part, serve public regulatory functions, which presents its own challenges and possibilities for succession planning. This chapter discusses the status of the State Bar as a quasi-public agency, its responsibilities, and the organizational structure. It also provides a complete description of the Fellows Program.

State Bar as a Quasi-public Agency

The State Bar is an administrative agency of the Supreme Court of Texas serving both attorneys and the public. According the State Bar's 2001 Sunset Evaluation Report (SER), the Bar is unified, meaning, "all attorneys who practice law in Texas are members" (2001, p. 2). The core competencies of the Bar are professionalism, public protection, and public service (SER 2001, p. 2-3). Further, the mission of the State Bar is "to support the administration of the legal system, assure all citizens equal access to justice, foster high standards of ethical conduct for lawyers, enable its members to better serve their clients and the public, and educate the public about the rule of law" (SER 2001, p. 2).

The Bar receives its' authority to regulate the professionalism of the lawyers of Texas and promote legal services for all citizens through the State Bar Act in Texas Government Code §81.102, which states:

In order that the public responsibilities of the legal profession may be more effectively discharged, the State Bar has the following purposes:

- (1) to aid the courts in carrying on and improving the administration of justice;*
- (2) to advance the quality of legal services to the public and to foster the role of the legal profession in serving the public;*

- (3) *to foster and maintain on the part of those engaged in the practice of law high ideals and integrity, learning, competence in public service, and high standards of conduct;*
- (4) *to provide proper professional services to members of the State Bar;*
- (5) *to engage the formation of and activities of local bar associations;*
- (6) *to provide forums for the discussion of subjects pertaining to the practice of law, the science of jurisprudence and law reform, and the relationship of the State Bar to the public; and*
- (7) *to publish information relating to the subjects listed in Subdivision 6 above.*

In its quasi-public agency status, the State Bar, through its Board of Directors, has dual responsibility to the Texas Legislature and to the Texas Supreme Court. The Bar was created by the Legislature and by an Order of the Supreme Court, with both entities providing oversight (SER 2001, p. 23). The Legislature maintains oversight through the Sunset Review process, and the Supreme Court provides budget approval on an annual basis (SER 2001, p. 23).

The Bar does not receive state appropriations or federal funds, and is therefore, “not subject to standard budget and performance reporting required by the Comptroller, Legislative Budget Board, and the Governor’s Office of Budget and Planning” (SER, 2001, Exhibit 2). Rather, the Bar is funded through dues revenue and other income. Membership dues and other fees contributed approximately 51% of the total revenue in fiscal year 2000 (SER, 2001, p. 40).

The next largest contributor to the Bar’s budget is revenue from continuing legal education (CLE) seminars, courses and exams, which totaled approximately 19% of the budget in FY 2000 (SER, 2001, p. 40). The Bar’s CLE program is coordinated through the Texas Bar CLE department. The department “operates in a competitive market” with other CLE providers (SER, 2001, p. 70). Further, the department strives to generate the necessary revenue by avoiding head to head competition with other providers and instead “prefers to offer something

new, different, and more balanced” (SER, 2001, p. 72). The Bar’s competitive market-driven budget further distinguishes it from other public sector agencies.

Organizational Structure

Most state agencies rely on state officials and paid staff to conduct the majority of the business in the agency. The State Bar, however, relies heavily on a wide range of lawyer and public volunteers to provide leadership and guide staff duties. Primary players in the organization of the Bar include the Board of Directors and its subcommittees, standing committees, sections, and staff.

The State Bar Board of Directors serves as the governing body for the administration of the Bar. Specifically, the role of the Board is “to develop and implement policies that clearly define the respective responsibilities of the board and staff of the State Bar” (GC §81.020). Further, the Board uses a system of committees to perform its duties. One such committee is the Board Administrative Oversight Committee, which serves to “advise and assist the Executive Director in the administrative operation of the State Bar and assist as directed with other projects having an impact on the internal organization of the State Bar. It reviews proposals, programs, and services for Texas lawyers” (SER 2001, p. 26). This committee, therefore, was assigned the role of board oversight of the Fellows Program Pilot Project.

Another important component of the leadership of the State Bar is the role of standing committees and sections. The wide array of standing and special committees serve advisory, regulatory, and rules revision, service to the profession, and service to the public functions to assist the Board of Directors (SER, 2001, p. 56-57). These committees “make recommendations to the board regarding related programs and/or policies that improve the administration of justice” and “assist in implementing the board’s decisions” (SER, 2001, p. 56). The President of the State Bar appoints all committee members.

Sections can be related to a particular area of law, or reflect the interests of a particular group or “associational areas of law” (SER, 2001, p. 56). All lawyers can voluntarily join a section(s) and pay an annual membership fee. Their roles are to study statutes related to their particular areas of law and propose changes, offer continuing legal education and networking opportunities for their members (SER, 2001, p. 57). Sections are guided by a Section Council (elected by section members) and submit annual reports to the Board of Directors.

The primary role of the staff is to facilitate the decisions of the leadership. To clarify their role, the Bar staff developed a mission statement, which reads:

The mission of the staff of the State Bar of Texas is to serve our diverse membership and the public in a fiscally and socially responsible manner with programs adopted by the board of directors to enhance the quality, integrity, and understanding of and access to the legal system (SER, 2001, p. 25).

In 2000, the bar had a total of 285.5 actual full time employees. It does not have a cap on full time employees because it does not receive state appropriations (SER, 2001, p. 42). Further, employees are not employees of the State of Texas, but do participate in the Employee Retirement System and selected other state benefits (SER, 2001, Exhibit 2). The staff is overseen by the Executive Director who executes the policies and directives of the Board of Directors, except where the Board assigns duties to the General Counsel (SER, 2001, Exhibit 2). The Executive Director, together with the General Counsel and Chief Operating Officer and the External Affairs Officer and Director of Governmental Relations make up the Senior Management Team. The Senior Management Team oversees eight Division Heads, who in turn oversee department heads within each division. The divisions are Administration, Attorney Compliance, Governance, Member & Public Services, Professional Development, Finance, Technology & Strategic Initiatives, and Information & Communication.

The State Bar of Texas is not the typical state agency. It does not face regular staff turnover as a result of party politics. The Executive Director is chosen by the Board, and serves until the Board terminates employment. Its reliance on continuing legal education seminars for a large portion of its operating revenue places it in the unique position as both a state agency charged with public protection, and a for-profit business that must understand private sector trends. One such trend is succession planning and the need for all businesses, whatever their size, to develop talented staff in order to fill vacant top positions.

Fellows Program

The State Bar Executive Director has long had an interest in developing talented staff for future leadership positions⁴. Since he was hired in 1996, the Executive Director has envisioned an employee development program that would create “fellows” among the staff who could then receive special attention for promotions when management positions became vacant. Little progress was made on this idea, however, until April 2000.

In an effort to energize the idea of a Fellows Program, the Executive Director called upon each division head to assign a staff person to the Fellows Program Advisory Group (FPAG). This staff work-group was intended to outline the Fellows Program objectives. Initially there were nine Advisory Group members who met once a month between April and August 2000, to develop ideas for the Fellows Program. As a result, the FPAG created the following mission statement:

The State Bar of Texas Fellows Program is a professional development and educational program which seeks talented individuals to participate in projects to support the mission and strategic plan of the State Bar of Texas.

The program will provide opportunities for individuals to expand their working knowledge of the State Bar departments in order to develop greater understanding of the statewide and national role of the State Bar of Texas.

⁴ This statement is based on many conversations with the Executive Director as his assistant for the past five years.

Through their participation, the selected Fellows will have opportunities to:

- 1. Develop leadership and project management skills.*
- 2. Develop options and strategies for improving the internal operations of the State Bar of Texas; and*
- 3. Serve as resource for the State Bar of Texas leadership.*

After an application and interview process, five Fellows were selected by the FPAG.

Four participants were from mid-management and one was an administrative assistant. Each Fellow was assigned to a work project that was intended to enhance project management skills and encourage the Fellow to learn more about the organization overall. The project descriptions included:

- **Call Center** – Develop a State Bar Call Center to utilize current staff and external resources to handle incoming public and membership calls.
- **State Bar Annual Report** – Develop and draft an annual report for the State Bar of Texas outlining critical functions, projects, accomplishments and financial data for the year.
- **Administrative Assistant Training Standard** – Identify general and job specifics for administrative assistant training requirements for performance measurements, including merit and pay scale advances, enhance career development and morale, and identify candidates for increased job responsibility.
- **Intern Program** – Develop a program to educate second year law students in practical application of the practice of law, client relations and law office management.
- **Jawarski Fountain** – Provide a steering document for the implementation of the repair of the Jawarski Plaza and Fountain outside the Law Center.

The Fellows projects began in October 2000 and were completed by November 2001. The FPAG met periodically with the Fellows to monitor progress and determine if FPAG members or other interested staff could give any assistance.

The State Bar of Texas Fellows Program attempted to address the Bar's need for future leaders. It was hoped that each Fellow would develop networking skills and enhance their knowledge of the organization through the work projects, which were outside their everyday duties. As the pilot project came to a close in November 2001, all those who participated

recognized the need to thoroughly study its accomplishments and address problems. The next chapter discusses the methodology of the case study to assess the quality of the Fellows Program as a succession planning program. It also addresses the threats to validity that accompany any case study.

Chapter 4: **Methodology**

The single case study research design is used to assess the succession planning of the State Bar of Texas Fellows Program based on the practical ideal type. The case study design is appropriate when the examined events are contemporary and when behavior of the subject cannot be manipulated (Yin, 1994, p 8). Also, the single case study is appropriate when the rationale is based on an extreme or unique case (Yin, 1994, p. 39). The Fellows Program is a unique case for succession planning because the State Bar of Texas is a rare example of a quasi-public agency attempting such a project. Additionally, the very fact that the succession planning program takes place in the quasi-public realm rather than the private sector sets the Fellows Program apart.

The holistic single case study design does have inherent weaknesses. Yin states that any single case study must face the possibility that the particular case may later turn out not to be the case it was thought to be at the beginning of the research (1994, p. 41). To address this concern, Yin recommends a thorough investigation before committing to the case study (1994, p. 41). First-hand knowledge of the Fellows Program provides the necessary confidence that it matches the description of a succession planning program and it did not, therefore, alter its purpose midway through the study.

The holistic single case study design has several other weaknesses. First, it relies on a global approach, which prevents the researcher from examining specific phenomenon in detail (Yin, 1994, p. 42). Second, because of this global approach, the study may be at the abstract level and lack clear measures and data (Yin, 1994, p. 42). Finally, the nature of the study could shift without the researchers knowledge (Yin, 1994, p. 42). These weaknesses will be addressed

in the Fellows Program case study by following the case study protocol and the practical ideal type conceptual framework.

Operationalizing the Conceptual Framework

A part of the protocol is to determine the unit of analysis and data collection method for the research. In this study the unit of analysis is the State Bar Fellows Program, and the sources of evidence are document analysis, focused interviews, and participant observation. One of the strengths of case study research is the ability to use multiple sources of evidence to develop “converging lines of inquiry”, or triangulation (Yin, 1994, p. 92). Table 4.1 further illustrates the operationalization of the conceptual framework. Statistics were not used in this design.

Document Analysis

Document analysis was chosen as the first source of evidence because a review of the notes, minutes, mission statement, and budget relating to the Fellows Program provides significant historical background for assessing the Program based on the practical ideal type. Documentation is a strong source because it can be reviewed repeatedly, such a review is unobtrusive, it is exact, and documents can span a long period of time (Yin, 1994, p.80). Some of its weaknesses, though, are retrievability, biased selectivity, reporting bias, and access (Yin, 1994, p. 80). Retrievability and access are addressed for the Fellows Program case study because “insider” information is known and readily accessed. Biased selectivity and reporting bias, however, are closely monitored and openly acknowledged due to the direct experience of the researcher.

Table 4.1: Operationalizing the Conceptual Framework

Ideal Type Categories	Research Methods	Evidence	Sources
Top management participation & support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board, CEO and Senior Management support and participation - Open discussion of potential employees - Willingness to hire across division lines 	Document Analysis Focused Interviews	Board recognizes need for program. CEO displays verbal and written support of program. Program is discussed at senior management meetings. Existence of written policy of hiring/ promoting across divisions.	Board Meeting minutes Senior Management meeting notes, email messages from Executive Director to Division Heads HR promotion records Interviews with Senior Management
Needs driven assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - external benchmarking - assessment of core competencies of positions 	Focused Interviews Participant Observation	Benchmarking studies of other organization's succession planning programs was performed before implementation. A review of positions to be included in succession planning program performed and agreed upon by upper management. An assessment of core competencies of positions in succession plan performed.	Document analysis of Fellows Program Advisory Group meeting notes. Participant observations as member of Fellows Program Advisory Group.
Provide formal professional development opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orient potential leaders with organizational environment - Formal Mentoring - Access to leadership development seminars 	Focused Interviews Participant Observation	Open access to organization's leaders available to program participants. Participants attend board meetings and senior management meetings. Participants learn about structure, mission, and goals of agency. Participants have a mentor from within the organization. Participants attend external leadership seminars.	Interviews with Fellows program participants and Division Heads Participant observation as member of Fellows Program Advisory Group.

Table 4.1: Operationalizing the Conceptual Framework (continued)

Ideal Type Categories	Research Methods	Evidence	Sources
Focused on individual attention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - listen to employee's goals/desires - individuals make training choices - emphasize growth in qualities to take employees beyond "next rung" in ladder 	<p>Focused Interviews</p> <p>Participant Observation</p>	<p>Program participants discuss training needs with supervisor and program coordinator.</p> <p>Participants submit career goals in writing to program coordinator.</p> <p>Employees are encouraged to develop skills that will take them beyond current position.</p> <p>Training reflects employees written goals.</p>	<p>Interview with Fellows Program Participants</p> <p>Participant Observation as member of Advisory Group.</p>
Dedicated Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinator that keeps plan current - Create computerized models - Dedicated funds/budget - Systematic approach - Keeps track of future needs 	<p>Document Analysis</p> <p>Focused Interviews</p> <p>Participant Observation</p>	<p>Existence of recognized program coordinator.</p> <p>Funds are allotted in the budget for program.</p> <p>Program coordinator tracks employee development through computerized models.</p> <p>Program coordinator has records regarding retirement trends for organization.</p>	<p>Advisory Group meeting notes.</p> <p>SBOT Budget for FY 1999-2000 and FY 2000-2001.</p> <p>Participant Observation as member of Advisory Group.</p>
Extends to all levels of organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify talent at all levels - open communication and knowledge of plan 	<p>Document Analysis</p> <p>Focused Interviews</p>	<p>Program seeks talent from every level in agency.</p> <p>Program is publicized to agency employees.</p>	<p>Advisory Group meeting notes.</p> <p>Interviews with Fellows program participants</p>
Part of strategic plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -strategic plan determines which positions will be in succession plan - have written purpose statement and measurable goals 	<p>Document Analysis</p>	<p>Program is mentioned in strategic plan.</p> <p>Program has clear mission statement.</p> <p>The goals of the succession plan are clearly identified.</p>	<p>SBOT Strategic Plan</p> <p>Fellows Program mission statement and goals.</p>

Participant Observation

First hand knowledge and access is also why participant observation was chosen as a source of evidence. According to Yin, participant observation is a valuable case study technique when the researcher assumes a variety of roles in the case study and may participate in the events (1994, p. 87). As an employee of the State Bar of Texas and a member of the Fellows Program Advisory Group (the internal working group responsible for the development of the program), both of these criteria are met. Intimate knowledge of the Fellows Program provides insight into the interpersonal behavior of the other subjects in the case study. This knowledge, though is one weakness of participant observation because it can create a bias to manipulate events (Yin, 1994, p.80). Bias is addressed through a strict adherence to the ideal type framework as the basis of observations. Whenever bias occurred, the results discussion reports the inherent weakness.

Focused Interviews

Focused interviews were chosen to supplement the participant observation and document analysis findings. The interviews add greater credibility to the findings because the perceptions of other subjects in the study, beyond the researcher's observations, will be included. The focused interview, though, must be careful to avoid poorly constructed questions that create response bias or reflexivity (Yin, 1994, p. 80). Interview questions, therefore, are developed based on the ideal type framework for succession planning programs in order to avoid bias (see Appendices A and B for interview questions). Interviews can also be inaccurate due to the length of time that passes between the interview and the events being studied (Yin, 1994, p. 80). The Fellows Program existed for over one year and recently concluded in November 2001. Consequently, the interviewees' memories will be stronger than if the program had run further in the past.

Conclusion

The practical ideal type framework for succession planning programs serves as a point of departure for assessing the State Bar of Texas Fellows Program. The framework's categories of top management support, dedicated responsibility, performance of a needs driven assessment, professional development opportunities, focused individual attention, extension to all levels of an organization, and inclusion in the strategic plan, assess the effectiveness of the Fellows Program. Finally, the findings of the case study provide necessary conclusions and strategies to develop the Fellows Program for enhanced results. The applied research project, following this described methodology, is useful to the State Bar of Texas as it strives to develop and retain the organization's talented employees in a competitive labor market.

Chapter 5:

Results

A case study of the State Bar Fellows Program is used to assess the quality of the Bar's program based on the practical ideal type for succession planning connected to the literature review. Through document analysis, focused interviews, and participant observations, the case study reveals that the Fellows Program Pilot Project suffered from fundamental misunderstandings, but, with modifications, has the potential to recreate itself using new strategies. A summary table of the case study results is provided at the end of each criterion discussion.

Top Management Support

The buy-in of division heads and the senior management team at the State Bar was a crucial factor for the success or failure of the Fellows Program Pilot Project. The literature explains signs of such support include Board, CEO and senior management participation, open discussions with senior management of the potential employees in the succession plan, and an organization's willingness to hire across division lines. The Fellows Program had the support of the Executive Director, however document analysis, participant observation, and interviews showed that the crucial buy-in was lacking from other key players.

Document Analysis

Meeting notes, interoffice e-mail messages, and board committee meeting were analyzed for key indications of support, such as:

- open recognition by the Board of Directors that the Fellows Program is necessary for the Bar;
- verbal and written support by the Executive Director;
- discussion at Senior Management and Division Head meetings; and
- the existence of a written policy that promotes hiring across division lines.

Board support for the Fellows Program is based on reports to the Board Administrative Oversight Committee (BAOC). In Fiscal Year 2000 – 2001, the BAOB approved the Executive Director’s performance objectives, which included the Fellows Program as a “special project” for the Executive Director. BAOB meeting notes dated October 27, 2000, reflect that the Executive Director reported the creation of the Fellows Program Advisory Group. Notes from the BAOB meeting in January 2001, reflect that the Fellows Program was “off and running” with the interview stage of the application process, and five to six candidates were to be selected from the applicants.

The last report to the BAOB was given in March of 2001, eight months prior to the end of the pilot project. One of the Fellows Program Advisory Group members explained the development of the program, its mission, and the work projects selected by the candidates. Further, the FPAG member announced the names of the selected Fellows candidates.

The program had strong support from the Executive Director. The Fellows Program was actually the brainchild of the Executive Director, as stated in an e-mail dated April 17, 2000 to the Administration Division Director. The Executive Director requests the Division Head’s assistance in developing a planning group to formulate the parameters of the Fellows Program and provide the necessary details for “my ideas.” Further, in an e-mail to all Division Heads dated April 18, 2000, the Executive Director outlines his objectives for the program as:

- A. Recruiting, retaining and developing talented individuals*
- B. Create a cadre of talented individuals who recognize they are part of the State Bar Team*
- C. Build on the strengths of the people the Bar presently employs through an intense management training module.*
- D. Develop the “dream makers” who will succeed current management leaders in the next few years.*

The Senior Management Team/Division Head meeting notes from August 23, 2000, show the program was on the agenda and FPAG members provided a status report. Specifically, The Advisory Group informed upper management of the parameters, goals, and objectives of the program and the importance of the Division Heads to its ultimate success. Special attention was made to involve the Division Heads in the development of the work projects for the Fellows. It was stressed that Division Head input would be necessary to create projects that allowed the Fellows to interact with many different levels and divisions of the organization.

Participant Observation

Board support for the Fellows Program likely flowed from the overall support the Board has for the Executive Director⁵. While the program was one of the 2000-2001 Executive Director performance objectives, it should be noted that the Executive Director establishes his objectives, which the BAOC then recommends for full board approval. The board accepted the program because it trusts the judgement of the Executive Director and encourages new projects to develop and retain staff. This was especially the case because the program aimed to reduce staff turnover. In the fall of 2000, the Bar was experiencing a turnover rate of approximately 23%, primarily due to highly competitive labor market.

BAOC members, in general, viewed the FPAG reports as progress updates for the Fellows Program performance objective. While appreciated, the reports to the BAOC were not critical items on the agenda. Comments and questions from BAOC members were minimal, and little interest was exhibited beyond these occasional reports.

⁵ The Boards' trust is based on work experiences as an assistant to the Executive Director and close working relationships with the Board. Further, the Board has continued to employ the Executive Director for over six years, which is a record length of service for a Bar Executive Director.

While the Fellows Program was discussed with upper management through both the Executive Director and the FPAG, full management support was lacking. During meetings, the Division Heads were disinterested in the Advisory Group reports, and never fully acknowledged their role in the program or provided feedback. Further, over the course of the pilot project several Division Heads expressed confusion over the exact purpose of the program and questioned its necessity, especially if Fellows Program duties would distract the employees from other work.

Another sign of poor management support was experienced throughout the existence of the FPAG. The Advisory Group was intended to include members of all the divisions, however, some Division Heads pulled their representatives from the Group as other activities necessitated the employee's attention. As a result, the Advisory Group numbers decreased from nine to six active members. Those divisions underrepresented ultimately lost communication on the program's progress and the program lost those divisions' input and support.

Focused Interviews

FPAG members agree the program lacked top management participation. In an interview, one Advisory Group member stated that the Division Heads failed to understand the urgency or importance of the Fellows Program and lacked an interest in the program's success. The member also stated that the primary failing was a lack of communication between the Advisory Group and Division Heads.

While another Advisory Group member saw the poor support from senior management as the greatest problem for the program, she also felt the Fellows would have benefited from more verbal support from the Executive Director. She acknowledged that the Executive Director's support was strong at the outset, but it decreased as time and other items caught his attention.

Further, she felt the Executive Director should have sent a clearer message to the Division Heads that their support was essential and mandated.

Division Head interviews, however, provides another viewpoint of top management support. One manager stated that he resented the lack of communication between the Fellows and managers, especially when the project directly affected the managers' area of expertise. From his perspective, the Fellows lacked guidance and input from the upper management, and there should have been more discussions between the FPAG, Fellows, and leaders to fully understand where and how assistance could be given. Additionally, he never saw the Fellows Program as a succession planning effort. He was unaware that one goal of the Fellows Program was to provide leadership resources for the future.

Interviews with the Fellows reveal further miscommunication and tension. Fellows Program participants clearly saw the program as a form of succession planning, and were surprised to learn that anyone misunderstood that goal. Further, one Fellows Program participant revealed that the Fellows felt thwarted by the Division Heads whenever they requested input on projects. Instead of being helped, their questions were met with resistance. The projects were perceived as "turf issues" rather than an educational experience for the individual Fellow to learn more about the entire organization.

Another criterion for top management support is a written policy of hiring and promoting across division lines. According to the Administration Division Director, the Bar does not have a written policy on internal promotions, but the Bar does have an excellent record of encouraging internal advancement. Participant observation as an employee of the State Bar agrees with this statement as many internal promotions have been observed over the course of five years with the organization.

The results of the document analysis, participant observation and focused interviews to demonstrate top management participation are summarized in Table 5.1. As the evidence states through document analysis, participant observation, and focused interviews, perceptions of support were strong in some areas, and inadequate in others. The CEO support was evident by those involved in the Fellows Program, however Division Head and Board support were not adequately provided. Finally, the organization does not have a *written* policy on promoting across division lines.

Table 5.1: Top Management Participation and Support – Results

Ideal Type Categories	Evidence	Research Method	Evidence Supports
Top management participation & support - Board, CEO and Senior Management support and participation - Open discussion of potential employees - Willingness to hire across division lines	Board recognizes need for program.	Document Analysis	Somewhat
	CEO displays verbal and written support of program.		Yes
	Program is discussed at senior management meetings.	Participant Observation	No
	Existence of written policy of hiring/ promoting across divisions.	Focused Interviews	No

Needs Driven Assessment

According to the literature review, primary examples of a needs assessment for a succession planning program include:

- benchmark studies of other organizations;
- positions reviewed for inclusion in the succession program and agreed upon by upper management; and
- an assessment of core competencies of positions in the plan.

Focused interviews, document analysis, and participant observation were used to determine the level of needs driven assessment performed for the Fellows Program.

Document Analysis

During the early stages of program development, the Fellows Program Advisory Group created a background study subcommittee to research other fellows programs and provide guidelines for what the State Bar of Texas program should include. Notes from Advisory Group meetings on the subcommittee indicate that the benchmark subcommittee had difficulty finding appropriate examples. The subcommittee reported on the Judicial Fellows Program, which developed employees using work assignments. It was from this example that the practice evolved to provide projects from various divisions for the State Bar Fellows to complete.

Participant Observation

The Fellows Program Advisory Group failed to discuss the idea of performing a training needs assessment for participants in the program or for upper management positions. None of the Fellows Program Advisory Group members were from a Human Resources background. Therefore, the knowledge and expertise for a needs assessment was neither recognized nor available.

Focused Interviews

An interview with the Administration Director revealed that the State Bar has never performed a needs assessment of upper management positions to determine the core competencies of such positions. The Director indicated that such an assessment has never been deemed necessary because of the relatively small staff size at the Bar. Rather, the Director was more familiar with assessments performed at large companies like General Electric.

While the FPAG did some preliminary benchmarking, these studies were not extensively researched. Further, interviews and participant observation reveal that the necessity of a needs assessment was never recognized by either the FPAG or the greater bar leadership. As

summarized in Table 5.2, the results of the needs driven assessment criteria show that little attention was given to this component in the program development.

Table 5.2 : Needs Driven Assessment - Results

Ideal Type Categories	Evidence	Research Method	Evidence Supports
Needs driven assessment - external benchmarking - assessment of core competencies of positions	Benchmarking studies of other organization's succession planning programs was performed before implementation.	Document Analyses	Somewhat
	A review of positions to be included in succession planning program performed and agreed upon by upper management.	Participant Observation	No
	An assessment of core competencies of positions in succession plan performed.	Focused Interviews	No

Provide Formal Professional Development Opportunities

The third ideal type category discussed for a succession planning program is to include formal professional development opportunities for program participants. The criteria includes:

- open access to organization leaders;
- participants attend board meetings and senior management meetings;
- organization orientation for participants to learn about the structure and mission of the agency;
- involvement of a mentor; and
- participation in external seminars.

Participation observation and focused interviews reveal that the State Bar Fellows program lacked opportunities in all the above.

Participant Observation

As earlier discussed, the lack of senior management support, both perceived on the part of the Fellows and the Fellows Program Advisory Group, hindered the Fellows' open access to the organization's leaders. The only leader who repeatedly expressed an interest in the Fellows was the Executive Director. While this is an essential and powerful voice to support the program, the Fellows needed the specific skills and expertise of the Division Heads to fully

utilize the work projects as a training mechanism. Without this support in place, the Fellows could not learn the organization's culture or the history of their particular project objectives.

Further, the Fellows declined to attend board meetings or senior management meetings to update leadership on their activities. While the idea was briefly discussed by the Advisory Group and presented to the Fellows, the participants lacked an interest in attending these meetings. Rather, the Fellows expressed that their presence would be unnecessary and would inadequately benefit them.

Another shortcoming of the program was that it failed to provide any orientation or in-depth training on the State Bar's mission and goals. It was hoped that this knowledge would be acquired as a result of the work projects, and therefore no formal opportunities were provided. The intention was for participants to have more interactions with divisions outside their day to day operations. When top management support appeared to diminish, however, the Fellows participants isolated themselves and avoided working with the Division Heads.

The Fellows Program Advisory Group also discussed the use of mentors in the beginning of the program's development. This idea, however, was never fully implemented and fell by the wayside as the emphasis shifted to work projects. In addition, while external seminars on project management were offered to the Fellows, none of the participants were interested in attending such a seminar.

Focused Interviews

An interview with a Division Head revealed that senior management may have welcomed the opportunity to serve as a mentor to the Fellows, but the program never presented this possibility. The Division Head worked with one Fellow participant and found it was a positive experience overall and the person was open to his suggestions. By contrast, other Fellows admit

they never approached other Division Heads. As a result, it appeared to the Division Heads that the Fellows were working without their supervision.

The Fellow who worked with the Division Head referenced above was interviewed to determine her experience. She stated the Division Head was helpful and interested in her project. She learned about the organization and believes the results of her efforts will benefit the Bar because they were developed in cooperation with the appropriate office director. Other Fellows interviewed, however, had different experiences. By contrast, they felt Division Heads resisted their assistance on projects related to a Division Head's field and therefore were unable to obtain any input.

The Fellows were also asked if the program should have provided more outside training opportunities. One Fellow stated that the project management seminar that was offered ignored his training needs, and therefore he had no interest in attending. He would have been more interested in a seminar that addressed working in teams or discussed team dynamics. Another Fellow thought the training seminars should be mandatory because a required course would force program participants to schedule the time to attend.

Overall, the case study found little, if any, existence of formal professional development opportunities in the Fellows Program. As Table 5.3 summarizes, participant observation and focused interviews agree that few opportunities were presented for the Fellows. In those rare instances that formal professional development was offered the Fellows declined to take advantage of the opportunity due to a lack of interest or a lack of time.

Table 5.3: Professional Development Opportunities - Results

Ideal Type Categories	Evidence	Research Method	Evidence Supports
Provide formal professional development opportunities - Orient potential leaders with organizational environment - Formal Mentoring - Access to leadership development seminars	Open access to organization's leaders available to program participants.	Participant Observation	Somewhat
	Participants attend board meetings and senior management meetings.	Focused Interviews	No
	Participants learn about structure, mission, and goals of agency.		Somewhat
	Participants have a mentor from within the organization.		No
	Participants attend external leadership seminars.		No

Focused on Individual Attention

The literature review chapter discussed the major sources of evidence for succession planning program that focuses on the individual training needs of participants. The evidence includes:

- an open discussion of the training needs of participants with a supervisor or program coordinator;
- career goals are submitted in writing and the training will reflect these goals; and
- employees are encouraged to develop skills beyond their current position.

Participant observation, document analysis and focused interviews with Fellows Program participants are the primary sources to determine if these components existed in the Fellows Program.

Participant Observation

The training needs of the individual Fellows and their career goals were discussed during the candidate interviews held in the fall of 2000. One interview question all candidates were asked was, "What are your career goals for the future?" Responses to these questions, however, did not reflect an interest in further training seminars, but rather centered on general statements. Personal experience recalls most candidates kept statements focused on their current strengths

and skills. Many candidates wanted to enhance their overall knowledge and experience, but few specified their career goals or the type of professional education they desired.

In addition, training needs assessments were never performed for the selected Fellows. The goals of the program included employee development beyond current positions, but no actions were taken to understand the specific skills to include. Rather, the program focused on the work projects with the goal of developing project management skills. The Fellows, though, refused any formal training in this area.

Document Analysis

Additional training and future goals were addressed on the Fellows Program Applications. A review of the application form shows one question was, “How would this Fellows Program affect your professional goals?” Responses to this question included a desire to learn more about the State Bar and other departments to improve current job performance and an interest in developing managerial skills for advancement in the organization. Another question asked applicants to, “describe the experience that you anticipate as a Fellow and how this might benefit you, your department, and the State Bar.” The majority of applicants looked forward to the program because they expected to learn more about the State Bar as a whole, and this knowledge would benefit the Bar by making the employee a more knowledgeable worker. None mentioned specific career goals or skills.

Focused Interviews

Three Fellows Program participants were interviewed to determine if the program addressed individual career goals and training needs. Two of the Fellows could not remember any discussion of their career interests and only remembered the application and interview questions after each were mentioned. Further, the Fellows expressed discontent that the projects

they worked on poorly reflect their professional interests and goals. One of the Fellows, in particular, felt the project was forced upon him even though he was not interested in the task. He would have preferred to choose the project based on his own skills and goals. The third Fellow interviewed enjoyed her project, perhaps, she offered, because she developed the topic. The subject allowed her to build upon her past experiences and enhanced her skills for the future.

The case study assessment of the Fellows Program reveals one of the weakest components of the pilot project was focusing the program on the individual training and goals of the program participants. Through the interviews, it was learned that the Fellows were not learning positive lessons on the organization. Rather, the Fellows were dissatisfied with projects and the attention they received from Division Heads. Additionally, document analysis shows that the FPAG had an initial interest in career goals, but this message was lost as the program continued. The career goals, if any, mentioned on the application were set aside and never shared with supervisors. As Table 5.4 further summarizes, the program failed one of its primary goals, improving the individual employee.

Table 5.4: Focused on Individual Attention - Results

Ideal Type Categories	Evidence	Research Method	Evidence Supports
Focused on individual attention - listen to employee's goals/desires - individuals make training choices - emphasize growth in qualities to take employees beyond "next rung" in ladder	Program participants discuss training needs with supervisor and program coordinator.	Participant Observation	No
	Participants submit career goals in writing to program coordinator.	Document Analysis	No
	Employees are encouraged to develop skills that will take them beyond current position.	Focused Interviews	No
	Training reflects employees written goals.		No

Dedicated Responsibility

Fifth in an effective succession planning program's prescriptive is the need for a coordinator with dedicated responsibility. In addition, there should be funds allotted in the

budget, a computerized tracking system for employee training needs, and ability of the coordinator to track retirement trends. Document analysis, participant observation and focused interviews are used to determine how well the Fellows Program complied with the above criteria.

Document Analysis

According to the State Bar of Texas Fiscal Year 2000-2001 budget, the Fellows Program was designated \$40,000 in the training budget for the pilot year. This money could be used for outside training seminars, travel reimbursements, or any other necessary expenses related to the program. At the end of the fiscal year, much of \$40,000 was unspent due to few professional development programs. Most of the expenses incurred related to travel for one Fellow, who worked in the Dallas Regional Office, and who occasionally came to Austin for program-related meetings. Additionally, none of the budgeted funds were allocated for a coordinator's salary.

Early e-mails from the Executive Director indicate that he recognized the need for an assigned coordinator for the program. In a message to the Administration Division Director in April 2000, the Executive Director asked "who can be tasked (part time) as perhaps a player coach to head up the program?" Meeting notes from the first meeting of the Advisory Group indicate that the Executive Director also asked the FPAG to consider who would be an appropriate coordinator. Notes, however, do not indicate that a decision was ever made, nor are there any response e-mails providing suggestions.

Participant Observation

The budget for the Fellows Program was a source of much confusion. The Advisory Group was informed that the program was allotted \$40,000 in the budget for fiscal year 00-01, however there was hesitation to provide an accounting code for the program, which would facilitate payment of expenses. Consequently, requests for reimbursement were not smoothly

processed. Further, the program straddled two fiscal years, 00-01 and 01-02. When the new 01-02 fiscal year began, the Fellows Program was excluded from the budget. The Fellows Program had been eliminated from the training budget without any discussion or consultation with the Fellows Program Advisory Group. The Group was unaware of its deletion until it tried to process a reimbursement in the new fiscal year.

A program coordinator may have facilitated the budget process, but a designated staff person, while discussed, was never assigned. Rather, responsibility for the program fell upon the Advisory Group. These six members relied upon each other to schedule meetings, submit updates to the division heads and the Executive Director, and maintain contact with the program participants. Problems occurred when other work duties overwhelmed the Advisory Group and therefore the responsibilities for the Fellows Program lost priority. Further, the Advisory Group lacked accountability because no one in upper management was assigned oversight of the program. Instead, the FPAG operated independently and made decisions as a group without adequate input from senior management.

Finally, without a designated program coordinator and known training needs, tracking of the participants was difficult and poorly performed. Retirement trends of the organization were never discussed, and few consultations were made with the Human Resources department. The FPAG intended to serve as coordinators and advisors to each of the Fellows. Advisor duties, however, were unspecified and therefore the Fellows were unclear how the FPAG related to their projects. As a result, tensions developed between the Fellows and the FPAG when advisors attempted to oversee the Fellows' work.

The Fellows Program attempted to designate responsibility through the FPAG. This plan, however, had many flaws because it relied upon a number of busy staff members to remain

focused on the pilot project, outside of their regular duties, for an extended period of time. Also, the FPAG lacked accountability to any supervisor or method of outcome measurement. Finally, the FPAG needed greater expertise in the field of human resources in order to track program participants, monitor training needs, and determine retirement trends. As Table 5.5 summarizes, the Fellows Program failed to meet the practical ideal type for the dedicated responsibility category in all but one criterion, allocated funds.

Table 5.5: Dedicated Responsibility - Results

Ideal Type Categories	Evidence	Research Method	Evidence Supports
Dedicated Responsibility - Coordinator that keeps plan current - Create computerized models - Dedicated funds/budget - Systematic approach - Keeps track of future needs	Existence of recognized program coordinator.	Document Analysis	No
	Funds are allotted in the budget for program.	Participant Observation	Yes
	Program coordinator tracks employee development through computerized models.		No
	Program coordinator has records regarding retirement trends for organization.		No

Program Extends to All Levels

The sixth category in the model of succession planning programs is that the program extends to all levels of an organization. This means that talent from every facet is eligible for participation in the program and it is publicized to all employees. Document analysis, participant observation and focused interviews find that the State Bar Fellows Program made an effort to address this category.

Document Analysis

A review of Fellows Program materials found that the program was publicized to all State Bar staff. Flyers were posted around the building that “teased” staff interest in the program. A formal Power Point presentation was made at a State Bar staff meeting in September 2000 to

explain the program and how to apply. Later, in October 2000, an e-mail was sent to all staff, including those in regional offices, to remind employees to turn in their applications. Further, the written announcements encouraged all State Bar employees to apply to the program, regardless of their position.

Participant Observation

The Fellows Program Advisory Group had several discussions about who would be included in the program prior to making any announcements. While some in the group argued that the program should limit itself to only those mid-level managers who would most likely advance, others worried that an elitist program would send a negative message, and therefore, all staff should be given the opportunity. Eventually, the latter argument made the consensus, and thus the program applications process was open to all levels.

Once the application deadline passed, and interviews of all applicants performed, the Advisory Group selected the program participants. Five Fellows were chosen, of which four were members from mid-management. Two Fellows were department heads, one was a managing investigator in a regional office, and a fourth was a project manager. The fifth fellow was an administrative assistant.

Focused Interviews

The three fellows interviewed had varying opinions on how open the program was throughout the organization. Two felt that the program should have included fewer managers and concentrated more on staff members with more opportunity for advancement. Likewise, the one Fellow who was not a member of management found the program to be very open and she would encourage other staff members to apply should it ever be offered again. She felt the program enhanced her skills and taught her more about the entire organization.

The Fellows Program succeeded in keeping the selection process open to all staff members within the organization. As Table 5.6 shows, all staff were encouraged to apply and efforts were made to ensure understanding. Interviews, however, indicates that the program would perhaps benefit by limiting participation to non-management positions.

Table 5.6: Extends to All Levels - Results

Ideal Type Categories	Evidence	Research Method	Evidence Supports
Extends to all levels of organization - identify talent at all levels - open communication and knowledge of plan	Program seeks talent from every level in agency.	Document Analysis	Yes
	Program is publicized to agency employees.	Participant Observation	Yes
		Focused Interviews	

Part of Strategic Plan

The final category in the practical ideal type is that an organization's succession plan should be included within the strategic plan. Further, the program should have a clear mission statement and goals that connects the succession plan to the strategic plan. An examination of the Fellows Program mission statement and the State Bar strategic plan provide the necessary evidence to determine the existence of these criteria.

Document Analysis

The Fellows Program mission statement reads, in part, "The State Bar of Texas Fellows Program is a professional development and educational program which seeks talented individuals to participate in projects designed to support the mission and strategic plan of the State Bar of Texas." It should be noted, the mission statement only mentions the strategic plan in relation to the projects the Fellows will work on. It fails to connect individuals and the top management positions of the Bar with the strategic plan.

The mission statement also states the goals of the Fellows Program, which were for the participants to:

- 1) Develop leadership and project management skills;
- 2) Develop options and strategies for improving the internal operations at the State Bar of Texas; and
- 3) Serve as a resource for the State Bar of Texas leadership.

The third goal is subject to interpretation. It is unclear if the intent is for the Fellows to be considered future leaders of the organization, or if merely the knowledge obtained through the projects will allow the Fellows to assist Bar leadership on particular issues.

The strategic plan was examined for additional information on the intent of the Fellows. It was hoped that the plan would mention the program in relation to succession planning. The State Bar strategic plan has undergone revisions in fiscal year 2001-2002. Therefore, an analysis was made of both the previous plan and the drafted revision. The previous plan, dated 1999-2000, does not mention succession planning as a priority. Further, it does not discuss the succession of top management or Board leadership positions should sudden departures occur.

The new strategic plan draft dated January 25, 2002, lists “Organizational and Financial Effectiveness” as one of the primary goals for the Bar. The targeted results of the goal specifically states that the bar will “improve the effectiveness of leadership succession” (SBOT Strategic Plan, p. 9). Under “Strategies to Achieve Targeted Results”, however, the plan does not include senior management positions or mention the Fellows Program. Rather, it focuses on developing “leadership succession planning and processes for the leaders of the board and the committees to assure continuity, alignment, and progress” (SBOT Strategic Plan, p. 9).

Table 5.7 summarizes the results of the analysis of the written mission statement of the Fellows Program and the Bar’s Strategic Plan. The FPAG made efforts to have a mission statement, however the goals for succession planning are unclear. Further, the strategic plan fails

to mention the Fellows Program as a tool for managing the succession needs. Based on this analysis, the Fellows Program must make changes to its goals for the future, and market itself for inclusion in the strategic plan.

Table 5.7: Part of Strategic Plan - Results

Ideal Type Categories	Evidence	Research Method	Evidence Supports
Part of strategic plan -strategic plan determines which positions will be in succession plan - have written purpose statement and measurable goals	Program is mentioned in strategic plan.	Document Analysis	Somewhat
	Program has clear mission statement.		Yes
	The goals of the succession plan are clearly identified.		No

The Fellows Program is assessed based on the practical ideal type framework of succession planning programs developed through a literature review. Document analysis, focused interviews, and participant observations provide the necessary evidence to support the assessment. Through these methods, the case study results indicate that the Fellows Program completely addressed one of the seven succession planning models. Therefore, the pilot project has numerous areas to improve upon if there are any hopes of continuing. The next chapter will provide strategies for improving the State Bar of Texas Fellows Program based on this assessment.

Chapter 6: **Recommendations & Conclusion**

The purpose of this research was to: (1) describe the ideal characteristics of an effective succession planning program based on the literature; (2) assess the State Bar of Texas Fellows Program Pilot Project using the practical ideal type characteristics; and (3) develop strategies for improving the effectiveness of the State Bar of Texas Fellows Program. Chapter 2 described the ideal characteristics and developed a conceptual framework for an assessment based on the literature review. Chapter 5 presented the results of the assessment based on document analysis, participant observation, and focused interviews. This chapter addresses the third purpose by presenting strategies and recommendations for improving the Fellows Program based on the assessment results. Additionally, the practical ideal type presented in Chapter 2 is modified due to needs and challenges of the State Bar as revealed by the case study.

Recommendations

The succession planning model allows the case study to identify gaps in the Fellows Program Pilot Project and the ideal succession planning program. Table 6.1 connects the recommendations to the practical ideal type based on the results of the case study. In short, the following recommendations are made:

1. Communicate mission and goals of the program to Division Heads and Senior Management more effectively.
2. Perform needs assessment of Division Head positions;
3. Include the Division Heads as mentors in the program;
4. Provide professional development for program participants based on individual needs assessments;
5. Seminars and mentoring should be mandatory components;
6. Fellows Program participants should have consultations with program coordinator and direct manager to discuss career goals;
7. Designate a program coordinator from the Human Resources department;
8. Limit participation to non-managerial positions;
9. Include staff succession in the strategic plan.

Table 6.1: Fellows Program Pilot Project Case Study Recommendations Summary

Ideal Type Categories	Evidence Supports	Recommendation
Top management participation & support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board, CEO and Senior Management support - Open discussion of potential employees - Willingness to hire across division lines 	Somewhat No No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate goals of program to the division heads. • Involve division heads in the decisions of the Fellows Program in order to receive their input and vision.
Needs driven assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - external benchmarking - assessment of core competencies of positions 	Somewhat No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform a needs assessment to identify the necessary skills for leadership positions
Provide formal professional development opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orient potential leaders with organizational environment - Formal Mentoring - Access to leadership development seminars 	No No Somewhat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve the division heads as mentors to obtain their expertise in related projects. • Offer more professional development seminars based on the needs of individuals. • All seminars should be mandatory.
Focused on individual attention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - listen to employee's goals/desires - individuals make training choices - emphasize growth in qualities to take employees beyond "next rung" in ladder 	No No No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop probing questions to understand individual career goals. • Once goals are known, involve supervisor in discussions of career advancement.
Dedicated Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinator that keeps plan current - Create computerized models - Dedicated funds/budget - Systematic approach - Keeps track of future needs 	No No Yes No No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign a staff person from the Human Resources department to coordinate the program, perform tracking assessments, and maintain accountability.
Extends to all levels of organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify talent at all levels - open communication and knowledge of plan 	Yes Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit Fellows participants to non-managerial staff. • Continue to publicize as in past.
Part of strategic plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -strategic plan determines which positions will be in succession plan - have written purpose statement - measurable goals 	No Somewhat No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include staff succession in the strategic plan • Specifically state in the Fellows Program mission statement and goals that the program is intended as a succession planning program.

Communicate mission and goals of the program to Division Heads and Senior Management more effectively

The strongest, and perhaps most detrimental, weakness of the Program was in the first category, ensuring top management participation and support. While Executive Director and Board support was given, the interviews and participant observation demonstrate that Division Head buy-in, or lack thereof, can be a powerful force. Miscommunication about the roles of the division directors, Fellows Program Advisory Group, and even the Fellows themselves riddled the program from the outset. Once the wrong impression is made, it can be extremely difficult for a program to recover and build support. The next attempt at the Fellows Program should address the Division Heads one-on-one to learn their vision for the program. Once these goals are incorporated, the Division Heads will feel more ownership of the project and work harder to ensure its success.

Perhaps one of the most stunning results of the case study was the revelation that a division director did not recognize the Fellows Program as a succession planning program. This encapsulates the most fundamental flaw of the pilot project. Communication of the mission and goals of the program is essential. The practical ideal type discusses the need for a clear mission statement in succession planning, however it fails to recognize that the mission must be communicated to all concerned. It may be that communication is an assumed requirement of any new program, however, it should be reflected in the practical ideal type. As the Fellows Program demonstrates, sometimes even the most basic concepts are forgotten in the rush to institute a new initiative.

Perform needs assessment of Division Head positions

One area the Division Heads can be consulted on is the needs assessment. While the State Bar of Texas is a relatively small organization with approximately 300 full-time

employees, it still has a responsibility to train the future leaders of the agency. To do this sufficiently, it must first know the skills necessary for the Division Head positions. The case study results show that a needs assessment has never been performed. This should be undertaken at the start of the next Fellows Program.

Include the Division Heads as mentors in the program

The needs assessment will assist the overall Fellows Program, not only by involving Division Head input, but also because it will focus the professional development opportunities necessary for the Fellows participants. Once a Fellow identifies the position(s) he or she aspires to hold, the related division head can be assigned to the Fellow as a formal mentor. The mentor program not only benefits the Fellow, but also further involves the division heads. Also, the needs assessment will help the employee identify the external professional development seminars necessary to improve their skills. Finally, the seminars and mentoring should not be optional, as was the case in the pilot project, but rather mandatory requirements to complete the program.

Provide professional development for program participants based on individual needs assessments

Professional development is directly connected to the fourth practical ideal type category, focused individual attention. The Fellows Program made initial attempts to address the specific career goals of the participants, however these first attempts did not go far enough. Focused attention should go beyond application and interview questions. The participants should have consultations with the program coordinator and their supervisor to assess their current skill level and determine where future development should be made to attain the employee's goals.

Fellows Program participants should have consultations with program coordinator and direct manager to discuss career goals

The document analysis, participant observations and interviews all indicated weaknesses in the Fellows Program in six of the seven practical ideal type categories. The only category the Program met the ideal standard was extending participation to all levels. Here, the Program was adequately publicized to everyone in the organization and all staff members were given ample opportunity to apply. Improvements, however, can be made in this category in the future that contradict the practical ideal type. Participant observations and interviews suggest that the program should consider limiting participation in the Fellows to lower level employees who have more opportunity for advancement and require more skill development.

Dedicate a staff member from the Human Resources department

The lack of a single program coordinator, or dedicated responsibility, was another major weakness of the Fellows Program. The Program relied heavily on the Fellows Program Advisory Group rather than on a single individual. This resulted in confusion over duties and enhanced communication problems. Further, no one on the Advisory Group had a Human Resources background. Changes should be made to place the Fellows Program within the department of Human Resources and assign primary responsibility to one of the HR staff members. This will facilitate coordination of training needs and the development of retirement timelines. Additionally, a HR staff person can monitor the budget for the Fellows Program easier since it falls within that department's expenditures.

Include staff succession in the strategic plan

Finally, the State Bar of Texas redrafted strategic plan is improved from the previous plan because it addresses succession planning. It does not, however, mention the need for succession planning at the staff level. This should be revised as soon as possible, before the draft

is approved by the Board in June 2002. Specific mention of the Fellows Program should also be made in the new strategic plan. Thus, performance objectives can become tied to the Fellows Program and further ensure the support and participation of top management. Also, the Fellows Program goals should specifically state that the program is intended as a succession planning program. This will help avoid confusion in the future and facilitate understanding.

Conclusion

The awareness for succession planning is growing in the public sector. In May 2001, the Texas Governor's Center for Management Development will hold a seminar for top agency executives entitled, "Succession Planning, Preparing for the Boom Exit." Ideas for program development are plentiful as the population continues to age and younger, less experienced, employees are advancing faster to senior leadership positions. All businesses, whether public or private, are faced with staff continuity challenges. Only through careful planning, communication, and training assessment can effective programs begin to take shape.

Succession Planning is a fluid process. Each of the practical ideal type categories discussed in this applied research project builds upon the other categories for the ultimate effectiveness of the program. The Fellows Program was an ambitious undertaking by a quasi-public agency to attract and retain the top talent and encourage the development of future leaders. While the pilot project had failings, these should be attributed to the learning process for any new program. The State Bar of Texas can build on the lessons and recommendations in this study to improve the Fellows Program in the years to come.

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Appendix A

Division Head Focused Interview Questions

Ideal Type Categories	Interview Questions
Top management participation & support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board, CEO and Senior Management support and participation - Open discussion of potential employees - Willingness to hire across division lines 	<p>Did you view the Fellows Program as a succession planning program?</p> <p>Did you see/ understand the need for the Fellows Program?</p> <p>Do you see a need for the State Bar to have a staff succession plan?</p> <p>Did you ever work with a Fellow on any project?</p> <p>What is the Bar's record on internal promotions?</p>
Needs driven assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - external benchmarking - assessment of core competencies of positions 	<p>To your knowledge, has the State Bar ever performed a needs assessment of top positions?</p>
Provide formal professional development opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orient potential leaders with organizational environment - Formal Mentoring - Access to leadership development seminars 	<p>How do employees currently communicate their career goals?</p>
Focused on individual attention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - listen to employee's goals/desires - individuals make training choices - emphasize growth in qualities to take employees beyond "next rung" in ladder 	
Dedicated Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinator that keeps plan current - Create computerized models - Dedicated funds/budget - Systematic approach - Keeps track of future needs 	
Extends to all levels of organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify talent at all levels - open communication and knowledge of plan 	
Part of strategic plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -strategic plan determines which positions will be in succession plan - have written purpose statement and measurable goals 	

Appendix B

Fellows Program Participants Focused Interview Questions:

Ideal Type Categories	Interview Questions
Top management participation & support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board, CEO and Senior Management support and participation - Open discussion of potential employees - Willingness to hire across division lines 	<p>Did you work with a division head on your project?</p> <p>What was your experience with the division heads?</p> <p>Did you think the program had the support of top leaders?</p>
Needs driven assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - external benchmarking - assessment of core competencies of positions 	
Provide formal professional development opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orient potential leaders with organizational environment - Formal Mentoring - Access to leadership development seminars 	<p>What kind of training would you like to see included in the program in the future?</p> <p>Did you receive any mentoring?</p> <p>What did you think of the seminars offered?</p>
Focused on individual attention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - listen to employee's goals/desires - individuals make training choices - emphasize growth in qualities to take employees beyond "next rung" in ladder 	<p>Were Fellows projects aimed at your interests and goals?</p> <p>Did the program consider your goals?</p>
Dedicated Responsibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinator that keeps plan current - Create computerized models - Dedicated funds/budget - Systematic approach - Keeps track of future needs 	
Extends to all levels of organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify talent at all levels - open communication and knowledge of plan 	<p>Did you feel the program was well publicized?</p> <p>What was your perception of the purpose of the program?</p> <p>How did you learn about the program?</p> <p>Did you feel the program was open to all staff members?</p>
Part of strategic plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -strategic plan determines which positions will be in succession plan - have written purpose statement and measurable goals 	