

## Succession Planning

### Introduction

These Top Tips are particularly useful for the chairman and committee members, human resources/personnel chairman and/or committee.

Succession planning means finding or developing successors for key positions in the club. It will involve identifying the club's future needs, in terms of skills/positions and the timescale in which they may be needed, and may involve planning 'career' or role development moves to give people the right experience/skills to fulfil the key posts.

An example of this might be that a head coach is appointed for a five-year period. She identifies several young people who are skilled, not only at the sport, but also at working with and helping teammates during training. They are offered the opportunity to attend a coaching training course, and the best ones are offered further training. At the same time, they are given the opportunity to work alongside the head coach and take some junior training sessions under the watchful eye of another coach. When the head coach's term finishes, there are several qualified and experienced coaches who are ready and competent to fill the post.

### Why Do You Need to Do It?

You want:

- ❖ to plan for the future
- ❖ to implement a proper business plan
- ❖ the club to continue to be well run
- ❖ the club to grow (in size, quality, success etc).

### Common Reasons for not Thinking About/Investing in Succession Planning

- ❖ You hadn't thought about it (poor planning):
  - 'The thought hadn't crossed our minds.'
  - 'The management committee haven't got the time to think about such things – too busy running the club.'
- ❖ You think you, and the committee, can go on forever (poor understanding of reality):
  - 'I'm not planning to move on just yet.'
  - 'I don't want to give up or have to think about not doing this job.'
- ❖ You don't think anyone else can do the job so well (poor understanding/lack of knowledge of resources and skills available):
  - 'I really enjoy what I am doing, I've done well so far; why should I think about someone else doing it?'
  - 'There's no-one else to do it anyway.'
  - 'I'm the only one who can do it.'
  - 'I'm carrying on because I'm not willing to let all that I've built up be lost because other people weren't willing to take on more responsibility.'
- ❖ You think you are doing all right as you are (poor management and preparation):
  - 'What do we need succession planning for? We've never done it in the past, and we're doing all right.'
- ❖ When you have a job vacancy, you just advertise for a replacement.

### Where to Begin

It all begins with the business development plan. As you draw up this plan, you will have identified your vision – where you want to be in the next 3–5 years – and will begin to identify

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the resources you will need to get there. These resources will include people. The business development plan will list what you need, when you need it and why.

### Look at Your Current Situation Regarding Roles and Responsibilities

- ❖ Review your club rules and constitution (what does your club look like at the moment?):
  - Make a list of the roles/responsibilities (not positions) you currently have and identify who does what. One important position (eg chair of the management committee) might hold a number of roles, such as to chair the committee, lead the development group and take the minutes.
  - Identify the terms and conditions that apply to people's contracts.
  - Identify the skills and competencies required.
- ❖ Review your current personnel:
  - Complete a skills audit of people currently in post.
  - Identify the skills gaps.

### Starting on the Succession Plan

- ❖ Draw up a simple list of all those people in posts in your organisation who will be retiring/moving on over the next 5–10 years (or the period of your planning).
- ❖ Draw up a simple list of roles your club will need to fill as you fulfil the development plan.
- ❖ Draw up a list of those roles you would like to have filled, but which you do not/cannot fill at the moment.
- ❖ If you are a large club, concentrate on those who are in key positions, whose replacement with the right person will be crucial to the club's well-being.
- ❖ Review each role to decide whether you need to replace or redefine it. (It is possible that the role description has not kept up with the development/practice of the role over time, and will need rewriting.)
- ❖ For each role, decide the timescale you are working with to ensure the skills are in place when you will need/want them.
- ❖ Draw up a list of the skills and competencies required to fulfil each role.
- ❖ Draw up a list of those skills and competencies you would like to have available, but which do not currently appear in any of the roles you have.

### Review, Appraise and Train People

- ❖ Try to meet regularly with people you manage (at least once a month).
- ❖ Carry out formal appraisals at least once a year (have a proper procedure, with agreed written outcomes).
- ❖ Identify people with potential, pinpoint their skills and aptitude, and ensure they receive training/experience to foster their continued growth.
- ❖ Have regular board meetings to discuss people and their potential promotion/progression towards identified future vacancies or oncoming needs.

### Assisting People to be Ready for Promotion/Succession

Create a culture of sharing information so many people can see how the club works:

- ❖ Post copies of minutes and decisions on the club noticeboard, website etc.
- ❖ Encourage:
  - sharing of roles
  - exchanging ideas
  - working in groups/teams to progress projects
  - creating small task and finish groups, with a limited life, for small projects (disband them when the project is completed)
  - buddying/shadowing opportunities.
- ❖ Develop an operations manual (a file that contains guidelines on how tasks are undertaken, including all the information and contacts needed to do each task).

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### Ways of Filling the Post

You may fill vacancies by:

- ❖ appointing internal candidates
  - (usually) promotes a feeling of well-being throughout the club
  - you know their strengths (and weaknesses)
  - they already know the way things are done (the club culture)
  - you don't have the problems/expenses of advertising externally
  - internal candidates may be seen as short-term (stopgap) or long-term replacements
- ❖ appointing external candidates
  - less sure of their strengths and weaknesses
  - new blood brings different ideas and ways of doing things, which could enhance/revitalise the club or create possible conflicts
  - costs of recruitment
- ❖ outsourcing the work/task
  - pay a professional to take on the task (eg accountancy or marketing).

### Good Practice

- ❖ Once agreed by the committee, ensure that the succession strategy is clearly communicated to all members and people in the organisation.
- ❖ Ensure role descriptions are up to date and published/available on request.
- ❖ Define and publish the 'person specification' associated with each role.
- ❖ Ensure all people/roles have regular appraisals in which they discuss their personal development plans.
- ❖ Ensure people in the organisation/members are aware of potential roles/vacancies, and facilitate appropriate training to enable them to advance, including:
  - mentoring
  - job shadowing
  - job rotation
  - short-term assignments
  - project work
  - strategic planning.
- ❖ Develop a culture that encourages people to put themselves forward for internal job promotion/aspirations.

### Further Information

The runningsports website ([www.runningsports.org](http://www.runningsports.org)) has other useful resources, including the *Planning your Club's Future* Quick Guide, other downloadable Top Tips, Role Outlines and information on available training, including workshops and workbooks. Alternatively, telephone the runningsports Hotline on 0800-363 373.

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**End.**