

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 423 Getting People Ready to Move Up — Part 2

Succession planning is a key part of doing business for every organization. That's private sector, government, military, big ones and small ones. Nobody escapes the need to get people in place to assume leadership when the time comes. I'm Jerry Roberts and today, more on how to make that work. That's up next, on The Extra Point.

Yesterday we said succession planning is not an event, it's a process, and it doesn't involve just senior leadership, but to satisfy needs throughout the organization. Let's dig deeper.

1. We need to think of succession as a natural part of every employee's journey, with an eye to growing talent immediately and then finding them new ways to use it. This is not the CEO's job or HR's job, it's the job of every manager. I repeat, every manager must be in the talent development business. John C. Maxwell, speaker at the Live2Lead conference, has long said that the job of every leader is to create more leaders.

2. You may think this is curious, but the process begins at the hiring stage, when you make it clear that your company values the personal development of every employee, has a strong program for training, and will first look to fill every job opening from the ranks of the already employed. Those are three key steps and you marry them to this one: let everybody know as much as you can about growth and expansion plans, and what that may mean for staffing. This gives self-motivated people a target.

3. Keep the narrative alive in your teams. If you want workers to believe the plans for your growth, have managers regularly mention them in their departmental meetings. This is the age of distraction and people will forget what you say. Consistent reminders are important.

4. Managers should identify those workers who display strong skills and a desire for promotion.

Those who do make it clear that they have an interest to move up should be mentored and coached to improve talents that will be needed at the next level. This is an extra level of personal attention, and let's the worker know there may be opportunity for them. Caution: don't make promises you can't keep with offering jobs you don't have. Simply make it clear that yours is an aggressive organization where opportunity exists, and they, the worker, will be in a better position to capitalize on that when the time comes, by preparing now.

5. Senior leaders should have these people on their radar screens and frequently reach out to them with encouragement.

6. Use the power of the one-to-one meeting to establish how serious people are about being promoted, and to help guide them to the next steps. This is where you get to know workers better, establishing deeper relationships, and at some point you can drop a question like, "So, what do you feel your ideal job would be here at XYZ Corp?" Or, "Where do you see yourself here at XYZ, five years from now?" Getting feedback on questions like these will tell you whether or not you have someone who thinks big and wants more.

As stated, succession is a process. If your organization is late to the party on this, you've got work to do. That said, starting late is better than not starting at all. Next in this series, some thoughts on succession in a family business, and when senior leadership is comfortable.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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