

PSA Strategic Planning: The Process of Succession Planning
Master Operating Manual
September, 2019

INTRODUCTION

This master operating manual, or MOM as it's known, is not for a POSITION, it is for a robust PROCESS. Before detailing that process, a word about what the definition of Succession Planning includes or should include is necessary. Succession Planning is simply a way for an organization, society or group to plan for the orderly and successful replacement of key officers, leaders, chairs or any position in the organization deemed to be essential to function efficiently. It can be used equally between corporate and not-for-profit entities with only slight modifications. The key is to take the time and the formal effort to identify those individuals in the group that are ready now or soon to take on new, and normally increased, responsibilities.

BENEFITS

In any type of organization, there is the inevitable need to replace office-holders either for reasons of term limits, illness, personal choices, incompetency in role, and several other reasons. PSA prides itself in a well-described and effective Nominating Committee, and this group routinely identifies talent in the Society and works to fill the vacancies as quickly as they arise. In many cases, however, the Nominating Committee is working from a point or reaction to an opening rather than a proactive approach that would offer up a rich and multi-name list for filling key positions. Succession Planning complements or is simply a key component of a rich, robust Strategic Plan that is focusing on the Mission and Vision of the organization. It is an element leading to a successful leadership structure if it is done routinely and done thoroughly. The only cost associated with succession planning is the time it takes to do it thoroughly.

ASSUMPTIONS

The key assumption of this process is that it be conducted in a real-time, ongoing manner by the Nominating Committee for those positions deemed critical by the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. Executive Committee members would be responsible for those positions that fall under their organizational authority. Once succession plans have been developed, they should be reviewed by the Executive Committee at both the Spring and the Annual meetings of same. Of course, they can be a routine discussion topic for the Executive Committee's planned conference calls as well.

THE PROCESS

1. Firstly, decide which roles or position within PSA are capable of and necessarily dictate that a succession plan be developed for the role or position. It may be obvious, for example, that the Executive Vice President is to replace the President at the end of her/his term, but who is in line to replace the EVP? Who's the next Treasurer or Secretary, or who might be the next two or three in line to fill these roles? Similarly, we could ask this question for any office, but the scope of succession planning must be defined, else needless effort is expended to build lists for positions that might not need such planning. It is the Nominating Committee's role to define the scope of succession planning in terms of which roles/positions are included, subject to a review and approval of same by the Executive Committee (EC). This should be done before beginning a succession planning 'cycle' each year. What positions need to be added; which might be removed from the succession plan lists; how deeply must we populate those lists, etc.
2. Once the role/position (hereafter referred to as 'position') lists have been developed, we must insure or validate that a current MOM exists for each role/position. This will insure that candidates are evaluated against specific criteria for the job and insure a more successful placement.
3. Given a 'roster' of positions to be included and having validated that a current MOM exists for each, the Nominating Committee can begin to populate their position lists. How do they do this effectively?
4. Populating the succession lists can be done various ways. It is suggested that the Division Chairs make it a part of their routine communication to their Vice-Chairs to name and keep current a list of those individuals that might be suitable to replace each of them. In the case of most Divisions, this means identifying a individuals that are READY NOW, ready in SIX MONTHS, or ready IN A YEAR OR MORE to fill the role of the last Vice-Chair position. This is assuming an orderly migration of roles from 2nd Vice-Chair to 1st Vice-Chair to Division Chair subject to the normal time-in-role for each. Always having a list of suitable candidates to replace the last Vice-Chair position will insure that the Divisions are ready for either the orderly terms of office or equally ready for a sudden resignation from office during a term.
5. A similar process should be done by the Nominating Committee for the Board of Directors (BOD), obviously including the EC. Remember, this list is reviewable at any time by the EC and should be kept current by the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee. It should formally be reviewed twice per year when the EC meets face to face and can, as detailed earlier, be reviewed any time during an EC scheduled conference call.
6. It is not adequate to just have a simple listing of those candidates who are seen as successors to incumbents. What's equally important is to give thought to what kinds of developmental activities these individuals should have to be fully ready for the position. Developmental activities can be anything that gives the successor candidate skills, knowledge or ability to perform successfully in the new position. For PSA, some of those developmental activities might include:
 - a. Thoroughly reading the PSA Bylaws as a method of understanding governance.

- b. Reading the MOM for the new position and posing questions about it to the current position holder.
 - c. Accessing and studying key sections of the PSA web site to better understand a position-related topic or program or responsibility.
 - d. Actually shadowing the current position holder in advance of their turnover to get a realistic assessment of the positions duties, time requirements, and skills needed.
 - e. Utilizing online training to build requisite skills in software such as Microsoft WORD or EXCEL.
 - f. If timing allows, place the individual into a related or even a completely unrelated volunteer role to build knowledge and skills necessary for the successor role.
7. Process point #6 also allows for the succession plan to add an aspect of time as enumerated also in process point #4. In other words, it may be necessary to allow adequate time to pass before declaring a potential successor candidate to be declared READY. All this can be described All this can be described more succinctly with this diagram:



PSA will not likely need a detailed competency gap analysis as depicted in stage 3 above, but the idea of a developmental plan as defined by Process point #6 is analogous to this. Similarly, stages 4 and 5 above are part and parcel of defining how the individuals being considered in the succession plan should be coached, counseled, skilled or developed to have the best chance at being successful in their new positions.

All of this information as defined by the Process points #1-6 can be summarized for each position on the attached Succession Planning form. It is possible to use one form for two positions.

Developmental plans for each candidate might be more clearly explained if we refer to the (K)NOWLEDGE, (S)KILLS, (A)BILITIES and (B)EHAVIORS that are thought to be best for success in the position. What do we mean by K, S, A and B?

- **Knowledge – is all the information one needs to effectively perform the role or position (ex: She knew all the history of PSA over the last 20 years in regard to Conference speakers and thus was able to effectively select new and different ones for this year in the role of Conference planning assistant.)**
- **Skill(s) – is a competence to perform (ex: He was very good at explaining layout and design and also competent in writing articles, so was a perfect fit for editor.)**
- **Ability – Not only skilled, but able to perform, to execute, to actually be able to apply knowledge and skill to DOING things. (ex. The editor had a rich background in layout and design and provided the group several examples of past articles and layouts they had completed and had published.)**
- **Behavior – What personality traits are best to be effective in the role. (ex. The President must be able to communicate effectively, work in either large or small group settings, and be very clear and transparent in written and oral exchanges without being either defensive or domineering.)**

You will thus see a column labeled Key K, S, A, B development on the Succession Planning Worksheet.

PSA—Strategic Planning—Succession Planning Worksheet

POSITION	Current Holder	Term Expires	Potential Candidates	Date Joined PSA	Key K, S, A, B development	Time until READY NOW	Development Plan Goals	Comments

Describe Development Plan Goals in Detail: -

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Describe Development Plan Goals in Detail: -

Strictly Confidential—To be held in HQ only and distributed as needed.

Date Completed _____

Detailed IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE for PSA:

- 1. Begin the process with the following roles: All Members of the BOD (including of course the EC); All Division Chairs.**
- 2. Request the BOD members and all Division Chairs update their position MOM's by November 1st each year—BOD request comes from the PSA President; Division Chairs request for these updates comes from the VP Divisions.**
- 3. The Nominating Committee begins the process each November 1st, using current MOM's from the BOD, while the VP Divisions coordinates with the current Division Chair for a full assessment and updating to be done on each of the vice-chair positions. The Succession Planning form is completed in full for every member of the BOD and every Division chair and vice-chair position by April 1st each year following the previous year's updating of position MOM's. For example, succession plans are made between November 1st, year X, and completed by April 1st of year X+1.**
- 4. Completed Succession Plan data, summarized by position, is submitted to the President in adequate time to be reviewed by the EC at the Spring meeting each year.**
- 5. Prospective candidates are contacted by the Nominating Committee Chair or a member of the EC designated by the Nominating Committee Chair to assess potential interest in a future position. This takes place as soon as all Succession Planning Forms are complete and have been thoroughly reviewed by the EC and the Nominating Committee.**
- 6. If a candidate accepts but is in need of a developmental experience, the appropriate BOD member, EC member, or Division Chair initiates a dialogue with the candidate to initiate such development.**
- 7. This process is dynamic and ongoing; it cycles each year. It is vital, therefore, that MOMs and the Succession Plan Forms remain current and ever in a stage of revision and updating.**

SUMMARY and CONCLUSIONS:

Succession Planning is a critical part of an orderly and well executed strategic plan. It sets the stage for, and the eventual realization of an organization staffed correctly with people who will be able to execute their position MOMS and be successful in role. As important is the simple fact that a succession plan provides a form of 'insurance policy' from abrupt or unexpected departures of a volunteer in his/her position prior to the expiration of their term of office.

It is not difficult to do this process as long as the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and the Nominating Committee will support it and aggressively keep the plans dynamic and current, reviewing them at least twice a year and perhaps more often. It also will allow or give incentive to the idea of always being aware of new members or recent members who display the K, S, A and B elements we feel will be successful for future positions within the Society. While much of this is currently being done by the Nominating Committee in the normal course

of their activities, this MOM formalizes the process and adds in more rigor and the idea of 'development' as described to insure as much success as possible for incumbents into each of the designated roles and positions.

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