

Leadership Qualities and Succession Planning



Boris D. Lushniak, MD, MPH
RADM, USPHS
Deputy Surgeon General



Disclosure Statement

- No relationship with commercial supporters
- No off-label discussion of drugs or devices
- Federal government employee
- Work supported by US Government (DHHS, USPHS)

Overview

- Learning about leadership
- Succession planning
- Qualities of a leader

How we learn about leadership

- Hit the books and be a student of the topic
- Personal experience as you experience the different levels of leadership



Level 5 Hierarchy

Levels of Leadership (Collins)

- Level 1 -- highly capable individual
 - Makes productive contributions thru talent, knowledge, skills and good work habits
- Level 2 – contributing team member
 - Contributes to the achievement of group objectives
 - Works effectively with others in group settings

Levels of Leadership (Collins)

- Level 3 – competent manager
 - Organizes people and resources toward the effective and efficient pursuit of predetermined objectives

- Level 4 – effective leader
 - Catalyzes commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision
 - Stimulates the group to high performance standards

Levels of Leadership (Collins)

- Level 5 – executive
 - Builds enduring greatness thru a paradoxical combination of personal humility plus professional will

Deflect Credit

- As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence. When the best leaders' work is done, the people say, "we did it ourselves".

– Lau Tzu

How we learn about leadership

- Observation

- great leaders in action
- not-so-great leaders in action

Be Observant

- You can observe a lot just by watching.
 - Yogi Berra

Succession Planning Defined

- Process for identifying and developing internal people with the potential to fill key leadership positions (succession development)
- Increases the availability of experienced and capable leaders that are prepared to assume these roles as they become available
- Replacement planning – feeder groups up and down the entire leadership pipeline

Succession Planning Benefits

- Allows leadership to engage in supporting the development of high-potential future leaders
- Builds a database that can be used to make better staffing decisions for key jobs
- Improves employee commitment and retention
- Meets the career development expectations of employees
- Counters the increasing difficulty and costs of recruiting externally

Be Tolerant

- Everybody is ignorant, only on different subjects.
 - Will Rodgers

Succession Planning Success

- Many such initiatives fall short
- Higher success if ownership taken on by high level leaders and high degree of engagement

Succession Planning Success

- Level 5 leaders have ambition not for themselves but for their organization
- Routinely select superb successors
- Want to see organization become even more successful in next generation
- Comfortable with idea that most won't even know that roots of that success trace back to them

Succession Planning Failure

- Level 4 leaders often fail to set up the organization for enduring success
- What better way to demonstrate your personal greatness than that the place falls apart after you leave

Succession Planning

- Need to define, teach, and be able to measure the achievement of the leadership qualities you seek
- Fly, little bird, fly
 - Those being looked at need to be given experiences that allows them to shine (or not)
 - They also need multiple tries and varied challenges

Be Inclusive

- Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I may not remember. Involve me and I'll understand.
 - Native American saying

Succession Planning Objectives

- Identify the talent pool
 - Those with the potential to assume greater responsibility
 - You need to be looking at the right people
 - Do they always stand out?
 - Some need to be coaxed (mother bird pushes)

Succession Planning Objectives

- Provide critical development experience to those that can move into key roles
 - You need to give them the right mix and progressions of responsibilities and challenges
- Monitor, assess, evaluate, adjust
 - Multiple methods and multiple raters
 - “Calibration meetings” -- You need to adjust them (or allow them to self-adjust)

Four D's of Leadership

- Decide
 - Best way to make a decision is via a committee
 - Consisting of an odd numbered of people
 - Totaling less than three
- Delegate
- Disappear
- Do / Deliver

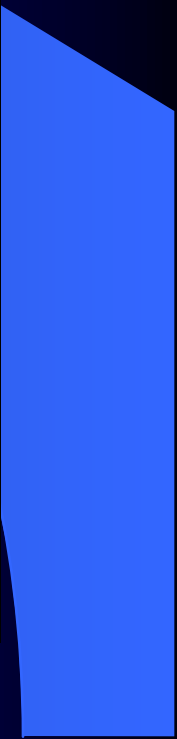
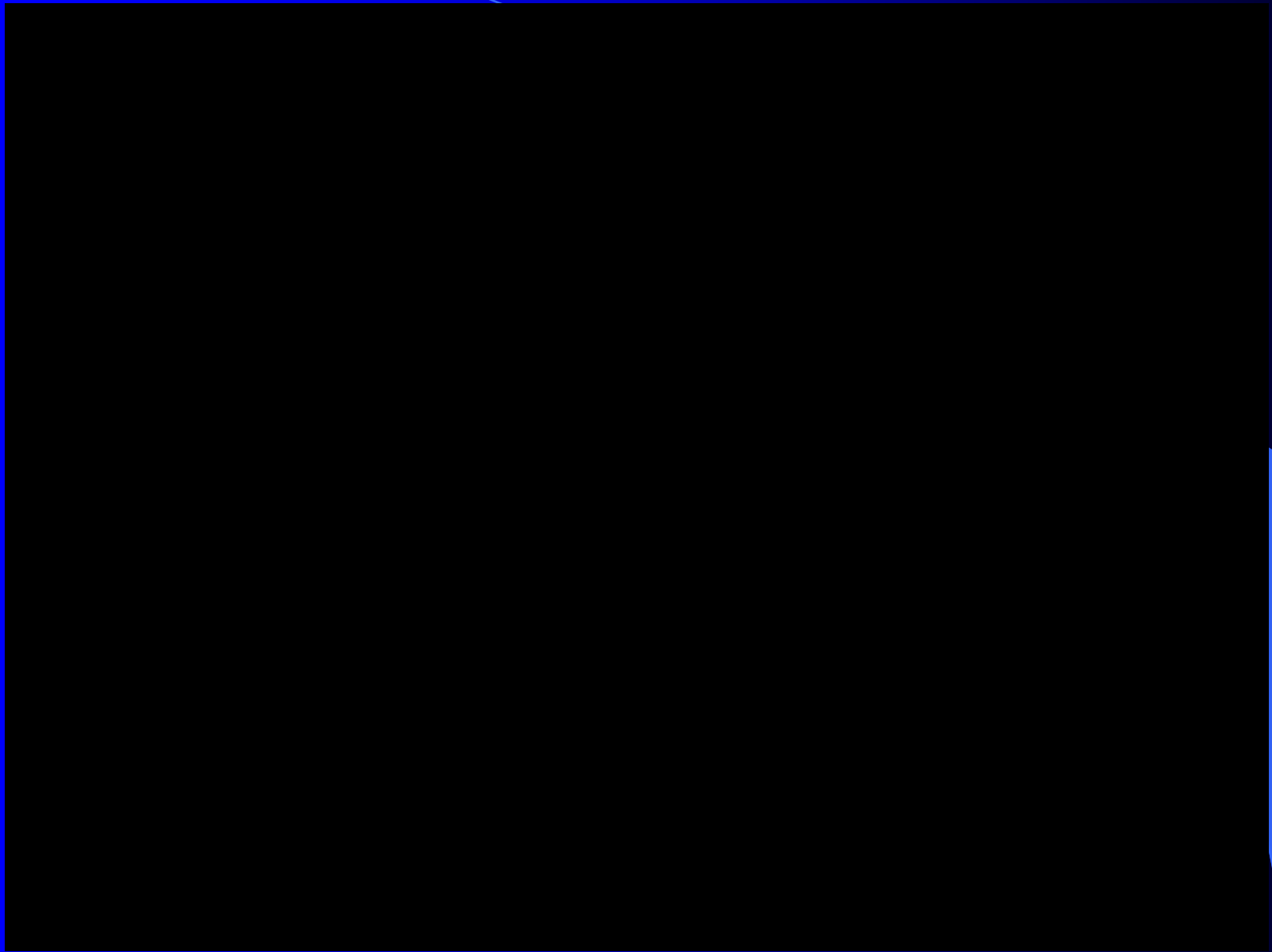
Seize the High Road

- I learned long ago not to wrestle with a pig.
You get dirty; and besides the pig likes it.

– Curys Chang

Most Importantly

- Your observation skills are key
- Eyes wide open and camera pointed in the right direction
- Evaluate and teach



You Need to Evaluate and Provide Feedback

- Before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes
- That way when you criticize them, you are a mile away from them
- And you have their shoes

Leadership Qualities

- Keeps calm and cool under pressure
 - Deal with quick-paced happenings
 - Not an unemotional rock
 - Function, thinks, and is a source of strength for others
- Is a good communicator

Adapted from the Army War College

Leadership Qualities

- Builds and supports teamwork and cooperation
 - Praises, criticizes as warranted
 - Emphasis is on accomplishments of the unit
- Is positive, encouraging, and realistically optimistic
 - Does not need to be liked by all, but respected by all

Avoid Reckless Competition

- When elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers.
 - African saying

Leadership Qualities

- Able to provide perspective and context – the big picture
- Makes decisions in a timely and efficient manner (and not paralyzed by over-analysis)
- Adaptable to new situations, requirements, environments – “change gears” outside the comfort zone

Seek Lasting Rewards

- It is better to deserve honors and not have them, than to have them and not deserve them.

– Mark Twain

Leadership Qualities

- Serves as an example (role model) for others and sets high standards
 - Sets the tone, coaches, provides feedback
- Sets a high ethical tone, respects and demands honesty, learns from others
- Relies on team members and knows how to delegate – allows others to get the job done

Four Tips for Efficient Successions Planning

- Think of the process as succession development
 - Plans do not develop anyone, only development experiences develop people
- Measure outcomes, not process
- Keep it simple
- Stay realistic
 - Don't jerk around high performing leaders with unrealistic development expectations

Review

- Learning about leadership
- Succession planning
- Qualities of a leader

Lead in Crisis

- In Chinese, the word for crisis is *weiji*, composed of the character *wei*, which means danger, and *ji*, which means opportunity.

– Jan Wong



Boris Lushniak, M.D., M.P.H.

RADM, USPHS

Deputy Surgeon General

202-401-8073 boris.lushniak@hhs.gov

WWW.SURGEONGENERAL.GOV

WWW.USPHS.GOV