

BUILDING BENCH STRENGTH[®]:
SUCCESSION PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

Institute for Court Management
Court Executive Development Program
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Kelly Aylsworth
Trial Court Director
20th Judicial Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts
Grand Haven, Michigan

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ABSTRACT

In 2004, the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts published its first Long Range Strategic Plan. The strategic plan was published after a year- long planning process involving 35 members of the Courts’ staff and both Courts’ Chief Judges (Strategic Planning Oversight Team, or SPOT). During this strategic planning discovery phase, many issues were discussed and new issues discovered. The SPOT reviewed the current workforce including excesses and gaps in resources.

A glaring light shed on the Courts was the fact that there was no future plan in place regarding replacement of employees as they retire or otherwise leave the Courts’ employment. The SPOT began to look at each position within the Courts and identified several “key positions” for which there is no cross-training currently in place. An outgrowth of the strategic planning process, the Courts’ Leadership Team, consisting of the Courts’ administrator and four divisional directors, began to discuss the need for a plan to sustain the Courts’ operations into the future. By preparing for the future, identifying key positions as well as high performing personnel, the Courts remain positioned as a leader among courts across the nation with high performance and sustainability in mind.

The Courts’ Mission Statement, “To administer justice and restore wholeness in a manner that inspires public trust” encompasses the need for a comprehensive succession plan. As the Leadership Team analyzed the Courts’ readiness and analyzed its current workforce, the need to remain strong kept rising to the top of immediate concerns.

Building Bench Strength© (BBS©), a comprehensive succession plan, is a three-Phase

plan which allows employees to gain personal knowledge and on-the-job skills, along with continuing education while employed with the Courts.

A review of the 20th Circuit Court and Ottawa County Probate Court (herein referred to as Court) in Ottawa County, Michigan management staff shows that 75% of its supervisors and managers will be eligible to retire within the next five years. This is an alarming number and an effective court manager will quickly recognize the urgency of an evidence-based succession plan.

The BBS© program provides Court Leadership the opportunity to ensure having the right people in the right job at the right time. It is important to note, however, that every person who qualifies for a job may not be a good fit for that specific position. The BBS© program takes this into consideration by offering many levels of coaching for the Courts' employees. Court Leadership has also taken into account the fact that there are subtle and not-so-subtle differences in what motivates, energizes, and stimulates each individual on the job. One of the most crucial steps in the development of BBS© is the need to customize training for the employee at hand. Initial assessments include a series of traditional and situational questions to gather into and assess an employees' readiness to move on to a new position within the organization.

The BBS© program is aimed at developing and promoting extraordinary talent within the organization. It is important to focus on the "development" phase of BBS©. Promoting too quickly can make an organization susceptible to candidates who lack the critical skills needed to perform their job duties successfully. Beginning with a self-nomination phase, Phase I, employees in good standing with the Courts may apply to enter into the BBS© program. Employee progress is monitored through employee

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performance evaluations which include the development of Personal Development Plans. By having employees initiate the process and invest in his/her future, employees are empowered and hold stake in their future as well as the future sustainability of the Courts.

The Courts have taken a comprehensive look at the unvarnished truth regarding the current state of its organizations. Are we on stable ground or shifting sands? In order to compete in the marketplace of opportunities of our current and future workforce, an honest assessment of the Courts' basic structure has been performed. This project, BBS©, is the blueprint for succession planning implementation not only for our Courts, but for courts across the nation and private industry, as well.

INTRODUCTION

The United States is entering an era where the retiring baby-boomer generation population will affect the balance in the worker availability pool. Leaders that understand the immediacy of the baby boom exit and thoughtfully prepare for it will be in the best position to achieve unmatched success. Succession planning is one piece of the overall business continuity planning process. It is a vital piece of organizational administration that cannot be overlooked. Ignoring succession planning, whether in the private sector or in government organizations will leave the organization without properly developed managers and key personnel to fill the shoes of those who leave due to retirement or other reasons.

Michigan Courts

The Circuit Courts in Michigan are general jurisdiction courts. The Michigan Constitution states that the Michigan Supreme Court “shall appoint an administrator of the courts and other assistants of the supreme court as may be necessary to aid in the administration of the courts of this state.” The Supreme Court of Michigan exercises its administrative oversight of Michigan’s courts through the State Court Administrative Office. There are 83 counties in Michigan and 29 circuit courts throughout the State. While each circuit is governed by the same body, the State Court Administrative Office, each circuit acts independently.

The 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts

The Courts’ mission is “to administer justice and restore wholeness in a manner that inspires public trust”- (20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Court, 2010). In 2004, the Courts embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning process. The

development of public trust in the Courts requires transparency, accountability, quality service and integrity of the Courts' employees. During the strategic planning process, judges, court managers and front line staff formed a group, the Strategic Planning Oversight Team (SPOT), which identified strategic issues for the Courts to address. Over the course of the planning process, the SPOT identified five strategic issues: 1) Resources, 2) Access to Courts, 3) Efficient/Effective Services and Operations, 4) Positive External Relations, and 5) Employee Opportunities and Satisfaction.

One element of "Resources" was the development of a comprehensive, year-long College Internship Program. The Courts' Internship Program provides practical learning experience within the justice system, which benefits both the student, school and the Courts. Intern applicants successfully admitted into the program are required to attend a rigorous 40-hour orientation program covering all divisions of the Courts along with a 40-hour observation period where the students are required to observe/job shadow in all divisions of the Courts, as well. The program was developed, implemented, refined and continues to operate smoothly.

However, it wasn't until the second revision of the Courts' strategic plan that the Courts' Leadership Team realized the Internship Program provided an environment enabling the student intern to become familiar with all areas of the Courts and the local justice system, something not in place for full-time employees as they join the Courts. Further discussion of and investigation into this deficit, exposed the Courts' future vulnerability absent comprehensive orientation and succession plans. This report sets forth the necessary steps and thought processes to successfully prepare a succession plan – Building Bench Strength©.

What's in a Name?

Though literature exists regarding succession planning, little is written regarding the process of implementing a succession plan. There is no blue print available for organizations to mimic or model. At first blush, this realization may seem daunting to organization leaders, yet lack of a model provides an opportunity for organizational leaders to drill deep into their organization to recognize where they are and where they wish to be. It matters not what the program is called, but rather the intent of the organization behind the program that is at the core of any employee development plan. Talent Management, Succession Planning, Employee Development and Coaching, Building Bench Strength© - these are all processes by which an organization can measure employee growth and organizational strength.

Building Bench Strength© is an immediate need for the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts. A review of current staffing including staff competencies, staff generations, staff growth opportunities, and support from the Courts' judiciary had led the Courts to promote the process of Building Bench Strength© (BBS).

The 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts have taken a comprehensive look at the unvarnished truth regarding the current state of its organizations. Are we on stable ground or shifting sands? In order to compete in the marketplace of opportunities for our current and future workforce, an honest assessment of the Courts' basic structure has been performed. The results of the Courts' Organizational Readiness and Workforce Analysis led the Courts' Leadership Team to the conclusion that based on the weight of the organizational structure of the Courts it is top-heavy, consisting of 75% Baby Boomers who will be eligible to retire within the next five years. BBS© will allow the

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Courts to act rather than to react when the labor force trends hit our organization. Rather than reeling from the “brain drain” as managers and supervisors retire, the Courts will have made preparations to continue its operation without skipping a beat.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As our nation is founded upon the principle of secured liberty, it would seem obvious to suggest that while individual liberty is protected by our nation's court system, a breadth of literature would be available for those who manage the courts to develop and strengthen the organization. This is not the case. Succession planning is widely written by employee management professionals such as William Rothwell (Rothwell, 2005), Alexander Aikman (Aikman, 2007), Ernest Friesen, Jr. (Friesen, 1971), and Charles Brooks (Brooks, 2005). These authors write about succession planning for both the private sector and educational institutions. It has become the current "topic-du-jour." In addition, William Rothwell (Rothwell, 2005) and Brenda Wagenknecht-Ivey (Wagenknecht-Ivey, 2010) stress the importance of defining career goals and corporate strategies, looking toward a healthy economic future for individual corporations as well as our nation. Yet, when managers and court leaders look to find relevant information about succession planning for our nation's courts, the shelves are empty.

Given the rapidly growing arena of educational opportunities centering on court management, it is the appropriate time to develop a basic, yet comprehensive, succession plan which can be easily implemented at any court level. From 1970 to 1985, very little literature was written on the topic of court management or future planning in the courts. However, over the past 25 years and even more so in the past 10 years, great strides have been made in court management education. Only in recent years has the *profession* of Court Management been recognized. Positively, several universities, institutes, and colleges have developed curricula surrounding the profession of court management. In fact, the National Center for State Courts' Court Executive Development Program held

its first graduation in 1970 and the first graduation from Michigan State University's Judicial Administration was held just this year.

It is essential that effective managers are in place, at all levels of the court's organization. While the demand for effective managers continues to grow, the retirement of baby boomers is producing a sharp decline in the ranks of available personnel. Members of our nation's workforce are living longer and working later into their golden years than did their parents and grandparents. Many organizations boast having three and sometimes even four different generations of workers within their organization, working side-by-side, at any given time. Employers expect more from employees and employees expect more in return. Employees expect to be given the opportunity to learn more, to grow within the organization, and to be given the tools necessary to achieve such advancements.

It is only fitting that a comprehensive view be taken of the management plans in our courts across the nation. Who is in charge now? Who will be in charge in the future? How can leaders assure new leaders are in place as they make their own future retirement plans? In addition, managers of the future are expected to be more sophisticated in order to develop strategic initiatives and become leaders among courts. Careful planning for the eventual replacement of managers at all levels is essential.

Succession planning is one of the most critical endeavors a court can undertake. While different companies apply succession planning for different purposes, most often there are common goals. The most commonly stated goals are 1) development and replacement of key leaders; 2) clarification of key positions and the criteria required to fulfill them; 3) generation of an internal talent pipeline to fill key positions; 4)

acceleration of leadership growth of individual and a total talent pool; 5) development of the leadership success criteria and practices to generate the talent required to meet business strategies, and; 6) generation of a program to manage the leadership talent pool most efficiently. No matter what the purposes, succession planning criteria and processes should stem from the clarification of key principles to guide the initiative.

The dynamics experienced today are unique to our era: younger generations have made a dramatic shift in work values leading to harsh judgments and criticisms within the work environment. The solution? Steve Covey, of “7 Habits of Highly Effective People” would say leaders need to begin by first by seeking to understand (Covey, 1989). If leaders can begin to understand what is important to each generation, they can then learn to see things in a wider perspective and begin to build bridges of communication between the gaps. The four generations present in today’s workforce are: The Veterans, comprised of those born between 1922 - 1945; the Baby Boomers, who were born between 1946 – 1964 (and are the children of the Veterans); Generation X , who were born between 1965 – 1980; and finally, the Millennials, born between 1981 – 1999 (and are the children of the Baby Boomers). (Cran, 2010).

At a glance, the values differences between the four generations is one cause of conflict and communication breakdown in the workplace. Leaders need to build sensitivity around those value difference issues and try to understand where a person may be coming from based on their generational values. As a leader becomes a master communicator, s/he will learn to recognize the differing perspectives among the generations and then create unique solutions that appeal to each belief system. Each group has its own distinct characteristics, values and attitudes toward work, based on its

generation's life experiences. To successfully integrate these diverse generations into the workplace and create individual succession plans, court leaders need to embrace changes in recruitment, promotion, and development of its current workforce that actively demonstrates respect and inclusion for its multigenerational work force.

A core challenge in succession planning implementation with four generations in mind is to attract and retain a skilled work force as the labor market continues to tighten, technology continues to evolve, and the nation's current workforce ages. As the aging workforce continues to interact with new employees, court leaders can no longer assume that high pay, basic medical benefits and a profit sharing account will secure the top talent. The current workforce demands challenging but balanced work assignments along with perks in exchange for loyalty and technological savvy. Leaders must find creative ways to recruit and retain talent to fit those criteria.

As more established and experienced workers head toward retirement, the development of strategies to ensure knowledge transfer is essential. The more structure lent to a succession plan that create knowledge transfer the better. Leaders must remain open to new ideas and provide constant feedback, working with managers and staff to shape the company's strategic plan, and ultimately, its succession plan. Leaders must avoid projecting their own expectations about work and remain open to different perspectives based on generational attitudes. Organizations can achieve real strategic advantage by embracing the diversity among generations to create a flexible work environment that values all people and keeps them productive, regardless of age. While recruiting and Building Bench Strength© within the organization, leaders must also be secure in their confidence in their current abilities to staff these leadership positions with

effective leaders. Succession planning serves as an interface between the human resource function of court management and the strategic direction of the organization. It is a vital resource in anticipating the future needs of the court and assists in finding, assessing, coaching and developing the court's most valuable resource: its people.

The vast majority of organizations involved in succession planning are private sector companies. While there are some similarities between succession planning in the corporate world and succession planning in a state court, many important issues to address in court do not exist in private companies. There is a practical approach to the work that must be done if organizations are to establish and sustain systematic efforts to ensure that the right people will be in the right places and at the times so as to achieve the right results.

The first step in BBS© implementation is planning. Leaders must set the stage for employees by diminishing fear and uncertainty through open discussion, clearly defined goals and objectives and clearly stating the purpose of the succession plan. At the outset of any planning process, leaders need to decide on a plan of action. Succession planning is no different. Depending upon the type of the organization, several designs have been identified (Wolfe, 1996), (Rothwell, 2005), and Cornell University. Not one author offers their list as necessarily complete, and the lists are not duplicative suggesting that the approach chosen is organizationally and culturally dependent. Wolfe offers five approaches and suggests that an organization may choose more than one of the following approaches: Career-driven approach; competitive market approach; visionary approach; problem-solving approach; and corporate-directed approach (Wolfe, 1996). Cornell University takes a similar stance in offering the following six approach styles and

challenges: Intense competing for faculty; intense competition for students; limitations on tuition revenues; increasing infrastructure costs (libraries, research facilities); declines in state funding for contract colleges and the land grant mission, and; diverse and excessively complex funding modes for academic units. Rothwell, while including many of the same elements in his research as Wolfe and Cornell, takes a more inclusive approach by offering five approaches to consider for developing and carrying out a succession plan: Top-down approach; market-driven approach; career planning approach; future approach, and; the rifle approach (i.e., specific, singled out) (Rothwell, 2005).

METHODS

The Circuit/Probate Leadership Team of Ottawa County meets on a bi-weekly basis and discusses, among other issues, current trends and the future of the Courts. This team consists of the Court Administrator and the Courts' four divisional directors: Friend of the Court, Juvenile Services Director, Trial Court Director, and Probate Register. These regular meetings provide an avenue for discussions regarding all areas of the Courts' operation including: budget, personnel, emerging trends, strategic planning issues and current focus. Each of these issues play an important role in the daily function of the Courts as well as in the strategic and succession planning processes.

The idea of succession planning has been discussed for several years; however it had not been acted upon until now. Four of the five Leadership Team members (the 4 divisional directors) were employed by the court in the late 1990's when the idea of succession planning was first introduced. The idea was launched, with no discussion outside of the then current court administrator and his "heir-apparent."

The idea was staunchly opposed by the 3 other members of the Leadership Team as well as by the organization members as a whole.

The current Leadership Team quickly recognized that the idea of succession planning was a valid and necessary step for the Team to take in ensuring the Courts remain as high-performing courts in the future, they also recognized the importance of transparency of the program as well as open participation by all court employees.

In order to ensure the continued integrity of court operations and the support of court staff, the Leadership Team set out to determine several factors:

- Do the Judges support the BBS© program?

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- Who will be eligible for participation?
- What positions are viewed as “key positions” within the courts?
- Do current job descriptions accurately reflect the responsibilities of all positions?
- How will an employee move through the Phases of BBS©?

The idea of succession planning had been introduced to the staff as a whole in 1998 with an unfavorable reaction. The 1998 “plan” was, simply put, an “heir-apparent” plan which was provided for one specific person who wished to fill one specific position in the future. Court leadership met with such resistance to the plan that it was ultimately tabled and not followed through to completion.

As a lesson learned, great care has been given in the development of this BBS© program to ensure its viability and its longevity with the Courts. The following table outlines the differences between the previous succession planning attempt in 1998 and the current, comprehensive BBS© plan.

This table compares the differences between the succession planning effort in the Courts in 1998 to the comprehensive BBS© program on 2011. The differences are vast as the BBS© program allows for input from all employees, judges, and administration. Of the seven comments shared by employees at the 2011 All-Staff meeting, 100% of them were negative regarding the Courts’ 1998 succession planning effort. In contrast, BBS© has provided judges and employees the opportunity to share their concerns and to provide input into the development and implementation of the program.

Table 1 – 1998 Succession Planning vs. Building Bench Strength© 2011

1998 Succession Plan	Building Bench Strength© 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants were chosen by Administration 	In Phase I, participants are “self-nominated”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plan was secreted 	Employee input has been sought and thoroughly examined throughout the process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no written plan 	BBS© is a written plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession planning was unknown, therefore feared 	BBS© is clearly defined
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees did not have a voice 	Employees have provided input into BBS© which will be on ongoing process as the program evolves and is evaluated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no support from the Judges or the Court’s Leadership Team 	Both the Judges and the Courts’ Leadership is fully invested in BBS©

Identifying Key Positions

Key positions are not always obvious. Longevity and “titles” don’t mean that the position is crucial to the mission of the organization. Through the BBS© plan development process, the Courts learned that there are several key positions within the organization that provide significant importance in the strategic and operational decisions that affect the Courts’ success.

Key positions are not always at the top, but are positions distributed throughout the organization that if left unfilled would cause problems for the functions of the Court. There are three main reasons why key positions must be separately identified in every organization:

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- Work distribution is different in every organization and even in like departments of the organization
- Every organization has its own set of standards and priorities
- Every organization is different in size and strengths

To effectively prepare a plan for the implementation of the Courts' BBS© program, close review of the Courts' existing staff and staff knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) was necessary. This analysis provides documented information for Court staff to review when investigating whether or not they wish to participate in the Courts' BBS© program.

During the review of the court's 47 positions (123 employees), each position was evaluated and identified by several criteria.

- Critical Task. Any position that would stop critical action from taking place if it were left vacant.
- Specialized Leadership. Any position that requires a specialty or expertise.
- Organizational Structure. Organizational history and structure can define some key positions.
- Future Projects. High functioning organizations recruit for future needs and recognize future positions as opposed to simply the "duties of today."
- Workload. A position which is part of the process by which decisions are made.

Table 2. Identified Key Positions

Minimum Education Requirement	Position
Juris Doctorate	Circuit Court Administrator <u>Trial Division</u>
Master’s Degree	Trial Court Director
High School Diploma	Felony Collections Clerk Alternative Dispute Resolution Clerk
State Cert. / Assoc.’s Degree	Court Reporter/Recorder <u>Friend of the Court</u>
Juris Doctorate	Friend of the Court (Director)
Master’s Degree	Custody Investigator Family Services Coordinator
Bachelor’s Degree	Asst. Friend of the Court – Internal Operations Asst. Friend of the Court – Field Services Investigator
Associate’s Degree	Senior DP Specialist <u>Juvenile Services</u>
Master’s Degree	Juvenile Services Director Detention Superintendent Treatment Specialist Treatment Services Manager
Bachelor’s Degree	Asst. Juvenile Services Director Asst. Detention Superintendent Casework Services Manger Caseworker Shift Supervisor Program’s Supervisor/Foster Care Licensor
Associate’s Degree	Juvenile Register
High School Diploma	Administrative Aide-Detention <u>Probate Court</u>
Bachelor’s Degree	Probate Register
Associate’s Degree	Chief Deputy Probate Register

Trends Analysis

The Leadership Team took a close, careful look at the organizational structure as it exists today. Several questions were raised that needed to be carefully considered and given thoughtful, realistic review.

The Leadership Team needed to determine whether or not BBS© was an

immediate need or something that could be delayed until the economy recuperated and funding for training and education was more readily available. The Leadership Team also recognized that it was important not to place unrealistic expectations on employees and that Leadership needs to stress the importance to employees that they perform an honest assessment of their personal skills along with their future goals.

Until everyone involved accepts that BBS© is not a one-size-fits-all program, the program is destined to fail. Historically, the Courts have provided many opportunities, including on-site training, webinars, tuition reimbursement, conferences, and other means of furthering education to employees. However, while the Courts fully supports further education, court leadership also recognizes that BBS© will not be the right fit for everyone. It is important to recognize that many employees may be fully satisfied to continue their employment in their current position and those employees need to be fully supported by the judges and the Courts' Leadership Team.

In order to fully appreciate the views and concerns of others regarding a program such as BBS©, several means of information gathering were implemented. This author presented some general question surveys to several different groups of people within the Court and from courts around the State of Michigan, by way of personal interviews (Appendices 9 through 11), as well as an internet survey using an on-line survey tool (Appendix 12). Succession planning is new to courts and the potential for failure nearly equals the potential for a successful program, if improperly implemented. The questions presented to these groups offered the opportunity to learn what type(s) of succession planning is currently in place across the State of Michigan as well as providing an opportunity for concerns and questions to be addressed.

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Before employees with potential to fill key leadership positions within the Court are identified and developed, a conscious decision must be made to foster and promote the continual development of employees and to identify and address their concerns about the BBS© program. It is imperative that employees understand the Courts' long-term goals and objectives, and in the same way, vital that Leadership understands the concerns of its staff. Unless development is a strong part of a succession planning program, the actual implementation is destined to fail.

Throughout the development of the BBS© program implementation process, Leadership also posed many questions to Court staff - (Appendix 1). The responses by and suggestions from employees have assisted this author in setting forth a comprehensive implementation process for BBS©. Simply knowing the necessary components of succession planning is not a guarantee of success. It is critical that all employees are aware of the BBS© program and its elements; that there is a focus on closing the gap between expected competencies and the current KSA's of BBS© participants; that there are a wide range of learning and development opportunities for employees to consider and; that there is good organization skills and attention to detail by the Court's Leadership Team.

Survey-Questionnaires

Several surveys have been conducted including Judges, court administrators across the State of Michigan, the Courts' Leadership Team, and employees to assess the need and commitment to BBS©. The first of two surveys conducted by this researcher was to 20 members of the Courts' staff including judges, administrators, directors and supervisors. The primary focus of this survey was to obtain perception from the Court's

judges and administrative team on all aspects of the succession planning process. A 100% response rate was collected on these two surveys. Those surveyed provided startling answers and also provoked investigative questions as to the timing and implementation of the BBS© plan. It is vital that these responses be taken into consideration throughout the planning and implementation phases of the BBS© plan (Figure 1).

The third survey conducted focused on the 37 members of the Michigan Association of Circuit Court Administrators (MACCA) from which this author benefited only a 67% response rate through an on-line survey tool. The primary focus of this survey was to ascertain whether or not courts across the State of Michigan had formal a formal succession plan in place along with identified objectives, written policy statements by which to review their succession plan, and succession plan evaluation processes.

PRESENTING THE CONCEPT OF BBS©

The concept of Building Bench Strength© was first introduced to the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts at an all-staff meeting held in 2010. Members of the Court's Leadership Team, along with Consultant Brenda Wagenknecht-Ivey, prepared an outline for employees to follow and explained the concept, the process behind the concept, and a basic overview of how the BBS© program would be implemented. The Leadership Team also invited input from the employees by offering employees the opportunity to ask questions and to raise concerns that they may have. Printed forms were also provided which included the following questions/statements for employees to contemplate and to which they could provide feedback. These processes were all engaged in order to first take the temperature of the organization regarding the idea of

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BBS©. A brief presentation was given by Dr. Brenda Wagenknecht-Ivey along with an opportunity for Judges and staff members to ask questions and offer ideas to Dr.

Wagenknecht-Ivey and the Circuit/Probate Court Leadership Team.

The following questions were posed to judges and Court staff – (Appendix 1 A-E):

- What questions do you have about the BBS© programs or for the leadership team?
- What do you like/are you intrigued by?
- Why don't you like/concerns do you have?
- Things you would like the BBS© program to include.
- List suggestions for making the BBS© program appealing, fair and inclusive.
- What's in it for me? – Staff - as compared to - What's in it for me? – Courts

The responses were overwhelming and candid. Many employees spoke out against any contemplation of succession planning, inveighing their fears from previously failed attempts to offer succession planning to court employees. However, many of the questions and concerns raised had been contemplated by the Leadership Team and were expected.

One of the greatest challenges the Leadership Team will face in implementing BBS© is the changing societal expectations. Today's workplace is increasingly diverse, characterized by more women, more minorities, and age groups. What is expected of the new generation, Generation Z, is much different than that which was expected by previous generations. Today's workers tend to move from organization to organization much more than their older co-workers. This reality, too, will play an integral part in

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BBS© as the court will need to pay close attention to changing trends in the workforce and their needs and expectations of their employers.

To assist employees in their BBS© planning, a matrix of local and State colleges and universities, along with a matrix is provided to employees listing several education mediums at little or no cost, as well as Nationally recognized programs which are mandatory for Phase II and Phase III of Building Bench Strength© (Appendix 13).

FINDINGS

In order for any organization to be fiscally responsible and to properly plan for the future, there must be a plan for the future in place. How will the organization adapt to changes in the workforce? How will the economy affect the organization? How will social trends impact current operations and how will the needs of employees' changes in the future? Until now, the Courts have not had a written, formal plan by which Leadership can manage and guide the organization in the future. Likewise, there has not been a plan in place to navigate the Courts through changing economic and social trends.

Succession planning is necessary in order to regenerate the Courts' Leadership. There are several causes between the promise of BBS© or any other succession plan, and what has actually been delivered in the past. Most importantly, staff must be involved and invested in the program. Their investment may include their money, their time, but must include their loyalty to the Courts as well as to their personal professional development. Court Leadership envisions BBS© providing the Courts with trained leaders who will be prepared to apply for new positions when career opportunities are presented. Properly implemented, BBS© will provide individual employees opportunities to grow personally, as well. An opportunity may become available outside of the Courts for which the employee is prepared to fill through the assistance of BBS©. This reality is recognized by the Leadership Team and is embraced by the same.

The need for a succession plan in the Courts was recognized but kept on the back burner of the Courts' Leadership's agenda. Due to the negative impact that a past failed attempt toward initiating a succession plan in the Courts had on employees and Leadership, the idea of succession planning was not embraced though the need for future

preparedness was recognized by the judges and the Courts' Leadership Team as a necessary practice. In 2004, the Courts embarked on a joint strategic planning process. Through this process the Courts' Judges and employees identified key issues facing the Courts. These key issues covered a wide range concerns identified by the public, stakeholders, and employees of the Courts. Five strategic issues areas were identified and Strategic Planning Action Teams organized to address those areas. The identified strategic issues are:

- Team #1 - Resources
- Team #2 - Access to Courts
- Team #3 - Efficient & Effective Services and Operations
- Team #4 - Positive External Relations
- Team # 5 - Employee Opportunities and Satisfaction

Throughout the past seven years of the Courts' ongoing strategic planning process, the Leadership Team has become more and more cognizant of some of the Courts' fragile circumstances. During bi-weekly discussions the Leadership Team identified positions (Key Positions) which were essential to the Courts' day-to-day operation but for which only one person was trained. It quickly became apparent to the Leadership Team that corrective action needed to be taken in order to remove the fragility of those circumstances from the Courts' operation. Once the Leadership Team began to delve into the need for training and future preparedness, other issues began to unfold surrounding the Courts' future needs. Leadership began to analyze the ages of employees – those in supervision and management positions, as well as the five administrative positions held by the Leadership Team members. No longer could we continue to hide behind the veil of “what was tried in the past.” Corrective and prompt action was needed in order to secure the Courts' future sustainability.

Short of a having a comprehensive succession plan in place, through which qualified successors have been trained and identified, key positions take too long to fill, and, as a result, often times production and daily operations suffer. By planning for the future and having the right people trained for the right positions, with the right skills, at the right time, any organization can be prepared for future vacancies they may face and provide a smooth transition as trained, competent employees take over new responsibilities.

To begin with a point of references, the Courts' employee composition was examined and key positions within the Courts were identified - (see Table 2). During the process of identifying key positions, this researcher uncovered several problems existing in the private and public sector organizations. Through this study, it became clear that, often times, advancement is made on a personal, subjective basis rather than on objective criteria of who is best qualified for the positions. Longevity has measured an employee's "worth" to the Courts or other organizations and qualifications secondary, if considered at all. The BBS© program provides a comprehensive plan for training and preparation for advanced positions within the Courts. While several positions were identified as necessary and critical, a total of 27 positions were identified as current, key positions which need to be addressed at the onset of the BBS© program.

SURVEYS

Of the 25 administrators who responded to this on-line survey, only one court had a "succession plan" and that "plan" was not written or evaluated. Yet, each of the responding administrators saw the importance of succession planning and supported the idea of BBS©. These results are more than startling as the MACCA membership ages; it

seems obvious to this researcher that succession planning is essential to continue the smooth operation of courts, not only in Ottawa County, but across the State of Michigan. The results were disappointing in that no concrete ends could be ascertained due to the lack of succession planning programs currently in place in Michigan courts.

Specific BBS©-related questions were posed to employees at the 2010 Annual All-Staff meeting. The questions and results of those questions are found in charts located in Appendices 1(A) - (E) and Table 3. Appendix 1(A) – (E), 2010 Annual All-Staff Meeting Questions of Employees, proposed several questions to employees and provided them the opportunity to respond in an unrestricted format. Appendices 1(A) – (E) and Table 3 also provide the Courts’ Leadership Team’s responses to the employee questions, which were then shared with staff at divisional staff meetings. A deliberate question presented to the Courts’ staff was asked to obtain staff perception as to how employees can benefit from BBS© in addition to what BBS© offers the Courts. This calculated question presented the opportunity for employees to consider the benefits to them and the Courts and to present their concerns, side-by-side, for Leadership to consider.

Employee Input

Employees tend to feel invested and devoted to a program in which they have input and contribution. By requesting feedback from employees, several factors were considered:

- Is BBS© a self-serving program to Leadership or does it provide growth opportunities to employees as suggested?
- Is Leadership committed to the BBS© program?

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- Does BBS© empower the employee in developing his/her own professional future?

Remarkably, in the wake of a past failed attempt toward succession planning, the overall replies from employees were positive and optimistic. Employees expressed concern over historical perceptions – favoritism, fear of staff reduction – but the global reaction to the program was upbeat and one of encouragement of the BBS© program – (see Appendix 1 A-E).

Results

Until 2007, the Ottawa County provided a Tuition Reimbursement benefit for its full-time employees. Due to current economic circumstances, Tuition Reimbursement has been suspended indefinitely. Realizing the financial burden that further education can have on an employee's personal finances, Leadership has made the commitment to assist employees in obtaining scholarships and researching grant opportunities which offer tuition assistance where needed.

In the same way, employees expressed a keen difference of opinion as to whether or not limited resources should be offered to high potential/high performing employees over others. The opinions related to this topic varied significantly. On one hand, “this may not be a popular things to do, but administrators must deal openly with budget limitations and do what is in the best interest of the Courts,” while on the other hand, “determining whether or not an employee is high p/high/p” is subjective and could result in an employee not having the opportunity to shine in a training.”

There are several ways in which the Courts can provide professional development to all staff, even with limited resources, e.g., online courses, Michigan Judicial Institution, in-house training, etc. In a strength-based organization it is important to

allow all employee access to training and professional development opportunities, to share those strengths among other employees, all while developing new strengths within the Courts.

Appendix 11, Interview Questions for Judges, provides insight to the BBS© program from the Judges' perspectives. Unanimously, the Judges assert that there is a certain level of sophistication to be exhibited by Court professionals, that BBS© is an essential part of strategic planning, while agreeing that BBS© is consistent with keeping high standards a priority in the Courts.

The final "questions" posed to employees at the 2010 Annual All-Staff meeting were designed to gain insight regarding their initial perception of "what's in it for me" and "what's in it for the Courts." The following chart lists the employee responses received. Responses to both questions mimic the intent of the program as set forth by the Leadership Team. This is a huge hurdle conquered in the past ten to twelve years since the original succession planning effort was set into motion and ultimately discontinued. Not only did this change occur with the succession of new leadership, it also shows a change in the attitude of employees, including deepened employee trust and confidence in the Leadership Team.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

Table 3 confirms views and opinions of staff regarding the differences between what the benefits of BBS© are to them as and what staff considers to be benefits of BBS© to the Courts. These data were collected to provide Leadership insight into whether or not employees feel BBS© is a program provided for employee growth and the

Court’s sustainability, or whether it was viewed as a self-serving program to the Leadership Team.

Table 3. What’s in it for me?

What’s in it for Staff?	What’s in it for Courts?
Trial/Deliberate Staff	Increase/Builds Efficiency
Builds Confidence	Makes Change Beneficial
Increase Visibility	Employees Feel Appreciated/Work Better
Increases Hope/Advancement	Helps Court be a Strength Based Organization
Prospect of Increase of Money	Increased Cost Savings
Increase Job Satisfaction/Variety	See True Talent Pool
Increase Understanding Big Picture	Seamless Service to Public
Increase Marketability	Increase Service
Increase Awareness Skills/Areas for Improvement	Less Anxiety for Other Supervisors

Several noteworthy outcomes materialized from the surveys this author implemented during this research. The overwhelming response was that, yes, the Courts need to prepare for the future and that BBS© seems to be the right path to take. Similarly, an overwhelming number of responses leaned toward the failure of the past succession plan attempt. Other significant results include:

- 95% of Judges and Management surveyed strongly agree that it is important to develop/maintain high performance trial courts in Ottawa County. The remaining 5% agreed;
- 90% of Judges and Management surveyed strongly agree that Ottawa County trial courts should have the best qualified/trained staff in all key positions. The remaining 10% agreed;
- 65% of Judges and Management surveyed strongly agree that it is important for the Courts to develop and maintain a reputation as an employer of choice. The remaining 35% agreed.

Significantly, employees responded by stating the need for qualified, trained staff, the development of high performance courts, excellent development opportunities for

staff, and the importance of maintaining a reputation as an employer of choice for the Ottawa County Courts – (Appendix 1). However, just as pointed are the responses regarding the Courts’ adequate resources needed to train and develop current staff as well as the difference in opinion regarding to whom limited resources for employee development should be offered – (Appendix 1).

It is important to include the organization as a whole in order to assess organizational readiness and willingness to participate in a succession plan of any kind. It is equally important to allow employees to have a voice in the process – from program inception through program implementation in order to foster a relationship of connectedness between organization leaders and employees.

THE THREE PHASES OF BBS©

Succession planning, sometimes called succession management to emphasize the active and continuous nature of the effort is a process for preparing people to meet an organization’s needs for talent over time. As Rothwell defines in his book Effective Succession Planning, succession planning “is perhaps best understood as my 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.” (Rothwell, 2005, pg 10). Geared toward the development of internal bench strength of an organization, succession planning is usually part of a larger program, organizational strategic planning.

Extensive discussion was had by the Court’s Leadership Team regarding the process of an employee navigating the BBS© program and, equally important, if an employee who wishes to participate is required to compete all three Phases of the

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program. BBS© provides an opportunity to an employee to further his/her KSA's. Such proficiencies provide both the background for further growth within the organization and for further personal growth as well. In order to accommodate employees who wish to move through the organization and prepare for future promotion opportunities as well as to provide personal growth opportunities for those employees not wishing to move to another position, three Phases of BBS© were developed - (Figure 1).

As the Courts' organizational make-up was studied it became clear that more than one phase was needed to fit the needs of the Courts' current organizational composition as well as future compositions of the Courts. To meet the needs and anticipated aspirations of current and future employees, three Phases of the BBS© program were developed. Each Phase covers a specific knowledge base and provides development prospects for employees. If an employee chooses to advance through the three Phase of BBS©, the requirements and curriculum become more advanced and challenging. This is designed in an effort to provide increasingly specialized skills to BBS© participants. Such proficiencies provide both the background for further growth within the Courts along with preparing the employee with experience, accomplishment and an established, well-versed KSA portfolio.

BBS© Phase I

During Phase I of BBS© leaders should informally observe employees. Current leaders should "shadow" employees which allows for a first-hand observation of the employee's progress. Phase I allows management to align their people strategy with their business strategy. BBS© is most successful when employees are given the opportunity to "self-nominate" for Phase I. This element provides the employee with a sense of

empowerment over his/her future with the organization. Employees are able to review their current knowledge, skills and abilities and to learn what is needed of them in order to be prepared to make application for a higher level position in the future.

However, it is noted that although succession planning is essential to an organization's growth, it is only the first step. Equally important is the development of current leaders so they can execute the strategic plan (or business strategy) and deliver positive results. Properly executed, a succession plan will allow the high potential/high performers to rise to the top and become accountable for their own success in the program.

BBS© Phase II

Subsequent to Phase I, the plan should become more "job specific" as the employee moves to become familiar with and competent in more challenging duties. This is Phase II. Systems for evaluating and measuring results are an essential part of a succession plan and allow for measurement of success and proof the plan is viable for your court. More specifically, it is a good idea to create periodic review procedures at several stages of each phase to gather a complete picture of each employee and his/her diverse perspectives.

Employees must be able to continue to perform the duties of their current position while engaging in stretch assignments, job shadowing, pertinent regional conferences, mentoring, and college/certificate programs. This job-specific Phase includes several levels of training and development. Entry into Phase II requires support and approval of the Leadership Team. When creating an individual's succession plan it is important to take into account the following "types" of training: career development, employee

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orientation, leadership development, personal development and, supervisorial development and training. By looking at each of these types of training and development opportunities, leaders will begin to create a talent pool of people being prepared for more challenging responsibilities. High potential employees being prepared for possible promotion are placed in talent pools. Of course, no promises are made to people who enter talent pools that they will actually receive promotions. BBS© is the creation of a plan to prepare and train them in the event of a vacancy so they may make have the KSA's to perform and make application for a higher-level position. Successfully implemented, when a vacancy occurs, the organization will have a pool of internal talent ready to meet the challenge.

BBS© Phase III

The final phase, Phase III, of BBS©, also requires support and approval of the Leadership Team as well as approval from the Courts' Chief Judges. In addition to their current work assignments, Phase I and Phase II requirements, Phase III candidates must demonstrate successful project management, perform advanced learning assignments and attend state and national conferences in order to sharpen leadership skills. During Phase III, participants are expected to make presentations, complete applicable college and/or certificate programs, human resources training and other defined training at management and administrative levels. The final aspect of Phase III is a written essay, demonstrating mastery of a subject of value to the employee and the Courts. This assignment allows Leadership and the employee to identify whether or not the employee completely comprehends the subject at hand.

ASSESSING THE BBS© PROGRAM

Organizations which succeed best in their implementation of succession planning ensure wide participation and buy-in, particularly from top management, align common practices with succession planning, specify criteria by which to measure success in the succession planning process, and closely link succession planning to their strategic plan. A key note is that it is important that a succession plan not be driven by rigid training curricula. Compulsory competency models and 360° assessments tend to stifle the goal of the program and simply becomes process dominated. Keeping the process simple with an emphasis on on-the-job development allows employees to internalize what they have learned from real-life experience. However, having presented that caution, it is also necessary to carefully monitor the BBS© program by attaining critical feedback from those affected by or immersed in the program. Colleague-based feedback can be tricky as most people possess an uneasiness about exercising any type of influence over a peer's performance, yet it is an essential component of the assessment of the BBS© program. Implemented with care, 360° assessments provide a positive addition to performance management. This tool provides each employee the opportunity to receive performance feedback from not only his or her supervisor, but also from a designated number of peers, coworkers and customers. This feedback provides insight about the skills, strengths and weaknesses of the employee, as well as to contribute insights into aspect of his or her work needing professional development.

While traditional cross –training has its place among almost every organization, practiced job rotation can often be a dysfunctional approach to succession planning. Few people have the ability to excel in all areas. By focusing on the employee's KSA's and

building upon that foundation, an employee is offered the opportunity to learn how to overcome challenges they may face in their area of expertise. This also provides the employee with the opportunity to take an honest assessment of his/her skills and employment goals. A successful plan is not be a one-size-fits-all plan. Rather, the plan should be designed with flexibility to meet each individual's goals along with the goals of the Court.

Author Jim Collins states in his book, *Good to Great*, that several factors need to be considered when grooming the next generation of leaders. Every employee has his or her particular skills that make him or her unique. Court leaders must assess employees and determine who is believed to have the best potential to become the courts future leaders. Assessing employees' strengths, knowledge, skills and ability allows management to recognize high-potential and high-performing employees. Some key points to remember along with setting forth an individual succession plan is that current leaders need to be brutally honest and ask questions of employees rather than to lead conversations with answers. The process needs to be as transparent as possible and provide mechanisms for recognizing red flags and "performing autopsies" on issues whenever necessary (Collins, 2001). During the process of BBS©, leaders may discover their employees fall into two very different, yet equally important categories – high-performing employees and high-potential employees.

It is critically important to differentiate between high –performing and high-potential employees. Most high performers are not high potential; however, high potentials are high performers.

Table 4 identifies the differences between high-potential and high-performing employees. While subtle, the differences between high-potential and high-performing employees are clear. High-performers provide a much higher percentage of productivity over average performers. High-potentials are those who exhibit leadership potential and are also high-performers.

Table 4. High Potential Employees	High Performing Employees
Produce Outstanding Results Consistently	Produce Immediate Results
Model Organizational Values Driven to Accept More Responsibility	Provide Immediate Return on Investment
Quick Learner/take Initiative to Learn	Dependable and Exceed Expectations
Crave Feedback	May Not Fully Believe in Organization
	Lack Drive/Ambition for Success at Next Level

Once leaders are able to determine which employees are high-potential vs. high-performing, the art of talent management can be employed. Talent management refers to the activities to attract, develop and train employees.

Figure 1 – Building Bench Strength© Resource Guide

Building Bench Strength© Resource Guide PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Phase I

Employee Self-Nomination

Participation on Strategic Planning Action Team

- Education (Seminars; Webinars; Topic-Specific General Knowledge)



Phase II (2 Tracks) – Professional or Management

Application to Supervisor & Leadership Team

- Must be in Good Standing (off probation period; no current disciplinary issues)
- Completion of BBS Phase I



Phase II – Track 1 (Professional)

- Professional Organizations-State, Regional
- Presentation Skills

- OR -



Phase II – Track 2 (Management)

- Professional Organizations-State, Regional
- GOLD Training
- Human Resource Training
- Presentation Skills



Phase III – Administrative(Ct.Administrator,
Divisional Director, Asst. Director)

- Application to Leadership Team – Essay
- Chief Judge Review
- Must Complete Phase I & Phase II, Track2
- Graduate or Professional Degree
- Professional Organizations – National

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For each phase of BBS©, (Phase I, Phase II Track 1, Phase II Track 2, and Phase III) in addition to the pan set forth in the Building Bench Strength© Resource Guide (Figure 1), employees making application to participate in the BBS© program must:

- A. Complete Application
- B. Connect with Supervisor for Performance Review or Performance Review Update
- C. Set goals. The four goals of BBS© include:
 - 1. Strategic Planning (Team Participation)
 - 2. Education Plan for Further Education (Seminars, Webinars, Self-Study, etc.)
 - 3. Experience (Job Shadowing, Stretch Assignments, Special Projects, etc.)
 - 4. Application of Knowledge (Written paper demonstrating mastery of subject of value to both the employee and the Courts - essay)
- D. Prepare a Personal Development Plan
- E. Actively Participate in the Courts' Strategic Planning Process
- F. Create an Experience Plan

As an employee travels though each Phase of the BBS© program, additional requirements are added (see Appendices 3 - 6). These additional requirements include becoming a member of court-related professional organizations, demonstrating good presentation skills, successfully completing specified training, and completing minimum degree requirements.

Developing a Professional Development Plan (PDP)

A professional development plan (PDP) is a concept that emphasizes gathering input from many sources. First, self-analysis on aspects of work that brings an employee both satisfaction and dissatisfaction is necessary. This author suggests that employees analyze aspects which they wish to emphasize in their career. Thinking or writing about

life events that have been enjoyable such as community volunteering or coaching, may offer some insight to an employee's true career goals.

It is also important for employees to gain information from others in order to have the full picture about them. Talking with supervisors, mentors or coaches at work and peers may provide helpful information. A true self-assessment is necessary in order to develop a plan which is a true and honest assessment.

Some important questions for employees to consider are as follows: How do I go from where I am to where I'd like to be within the organization? How can I improve my satisfaction with my career? Once the employee can answer even one of these questions, s/he is able to move toward developing a PDP.

It is important to note that while administration plays an important role in the development of its employees, the employee him/herself plays the biggest role in their own development. Administration can offer classes; provide learning tools such as books, articles and webinars; but unless the employee has a personal commitment and takes responsibilities for his/her own growth both personally and within the organization, the PDP is nothing more than words on a page. The employee must take the first action steps. Perhaps an employee needs further education in order to meet PDP goals and funding for college or university classes are not available through the organization. If this is the case, there are several means through which tuition is paid for. Employees considering tuition assistance should consider the following:

- 1) Contact local community foundations regarding scholarship programs;
- 2) Contact local men's and women's groups regarding scholarships and grant opportunities (e.g., Rotary, Masons, PSW Women's Group, Excelle for Women);

3) Contact state, regional and national associations regarding scholarship and grant opportunities (e.g., State Justice Institute, National Center for Court Management, Pell Grants) and;

4) Contact local worship organizations. These organizations require application and most have strict qualification guidelines. When the employee has an investment in the PDP process – financial or personal – it is more beneficial to both them and the employer as this investment often times makes the employee feel more responsible and embraces the future benefits of the succession planning process.

A Personal Development Plan (PDP) is a vital part of planning for one's employment future. The PDP provides a roadmap by which the employee and organizational leaders can develop and monitor employee development and progress. Absent a plan, neither the employee nor leadership can expect to properly monitor employee progress and the needs of the organization.

The PDP is a written document that an employee creates for his/her personal reference. It is a tool that the employee can use to focus, evaluate and prioritize professional development activities. The PDP also becomes a valuable resource at the time of employee performance evaluations and when applying to the organization's BBS© program or for a new position within the Courts. A personal development plan may include the following elements:

- A description or listing of professional aspirations or goals
- A description or listing of professional interests and activities
- A history of previously completed professional development activities in order to keep information in one place
- A timeline for several years' worth of future activities or interests

To gain a better understanding of one's self, employees should commit to answering the following questions:

- Of the new and recent developments in my organization or field, what interests me the most?
- What are my current skills and strengths for pursuing these interests?
- What do I need to do to reposition my career so that I can get involved in these new areas?
- What is most important to me in my work?
- Of the new and recent developments in my organization or field, what interests me the most?
- What are my current skills and strengths for pursuing these interests?
- What do I need to do to reposition my career so that I can get involved in these new areas?
- What is most important to me in my work?
- What values guide the kind of work I want to do? Examples of guiding principles might include: must agree with the organizational mission, must be allowed innovation and risk taking, and must honor family for a balanced life.
- What things are “must haves” for me in a job? Examples might be flex time, on-site day care, etc.
- What are my limiting factors? Examples could be health concerns, geography, not willing to move, must not involve extensive travel, family issues, the need for advanced degree.
- Is it time for me to consider working outside of my institution? If considering a complete career change, what experiences and learning would help reposition my career in the direction of my goals?

Next, employees should list initial steps to move from where they are now and where they wish to be in the future, categorizing necessary steps as immediate, medium-

term or long-term actions. Once these questions are answered next step is to seek input from the employee's supervisor or mentor and to answer the following questions:

- How is the mission of the organization changing?
- What other changes are occurring regarding trends, work processes, customer base, organizational structure, and personnel?
- How might individual employee roles change in the organization and how can the employee prepare for these changes?
- What are the organizations changing needs regarding the workforce, and what new expertise and skills will be required or desirable to manage those changes.
- What opportunities are available for developing this new expertise and skills? (work experiences, training, stretch assignments, professional conferences, mentoring?)
- How might individual employee roles change in the organization and how can the employee prepare for these changes?
- What are the organization's future needs?
- What kinds of development activities would help position an employee for participation in another work project?
- In what area so the employee's interests and personal plans overlap with the changing needs of the organization?
- What knowledge, skills, or abilities are important for increasing or maintaining the quality of work performance in the employee's present assignment(s)?
- What knowledge, skills, or abilities would help prepare the employee for opportunities or roles available in the future?

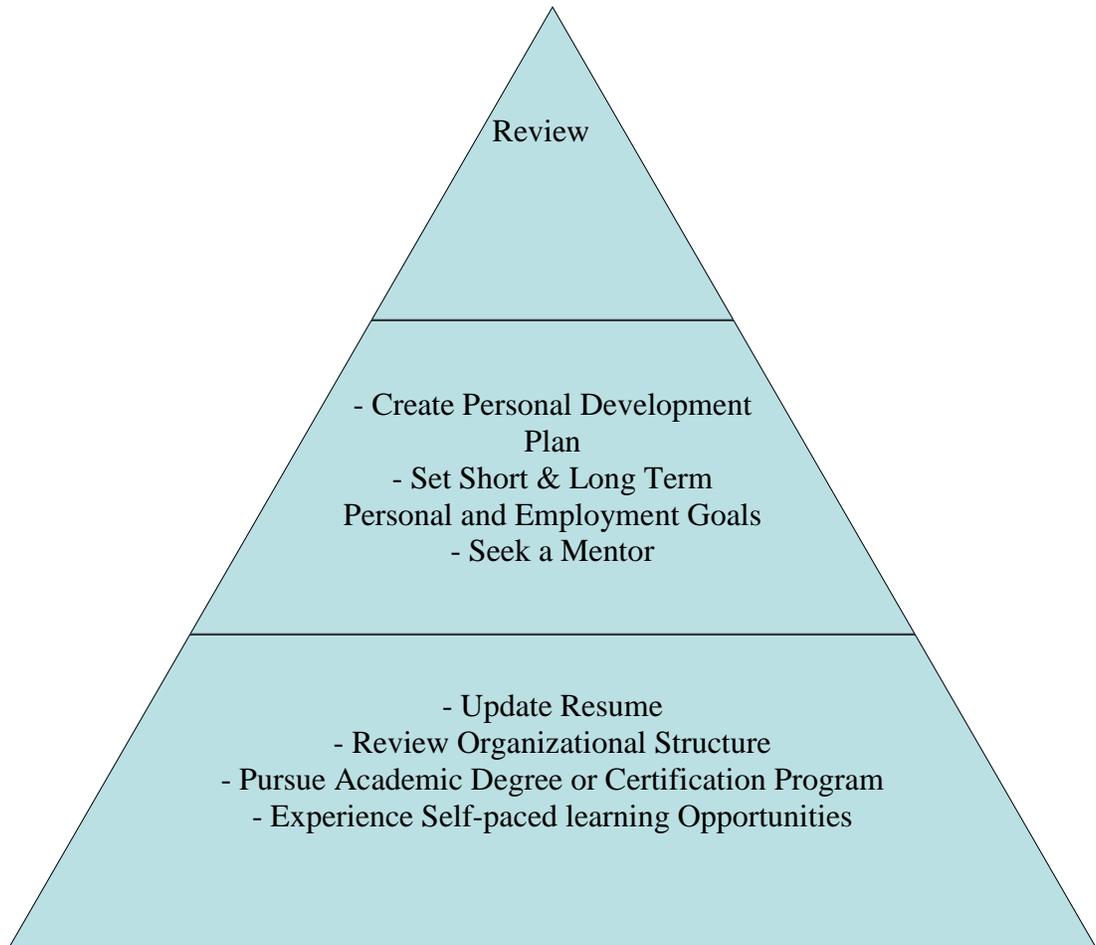
A Personal Development Plan should also include the goals of the employee and a goal statement. A goal is a statement of a desired outcome or accomplishment that is specific, observable and realistic. The key is for the employee to be realistic. In order for an employee to track progress and successes as well as identified issue areas along the way, a PDP journal is essential. A PDP journal assists both the employee and supervisors

in tracking targeted goals and accomplishments. These journals should become an important piece of an employee performance evaluation and can be used if a discrepancy arises and also for Leadership Team review when considering an employee application to move to the next Phase of BBS©.

Questions to consider in journaling are as follows:

- What the employee wishes to accomplish and the knowledge and skills needed to acquire or improve by:
 - this time next year are:
 - the end of the second year are:
 - the end of the third year are:
- What barriers or obstacles might prevent the employee from accomplishing his/her goals on time?
- What can the employee do to overcome those barriers?
- What resources are available to assist the employee in overcoming those barriers?

Figure 2- Personal Development Plan – Action Steps



Why Planning is Important Now?

The National Agenda

The National Association for Court Management has published six priorities which encompass their National Agenda for years 2010-2015. The six National Agenda Priorities are:

- Emphasizing Caseflow Management improvements;
- Sustaining Excellence in Difficult Budget times;
- Enhancing Public Perceptions of the Courts and Increasing Community Collaboration;
- Promoting Improved Court Leadership and Governance;
- Preparing for and Responding to Trends; and
- Supporting Professional Court Management Education.

These six priorities are critical management criteria. Lacking a succession plan with trained, competent employees to staff the organization, public percepts and community collaboration will suffer, the Courts will not be prepared to respond to current and future trends, and professional court management education will be pushed to the wayside, making room for more urgent matters.

Successful court leaders agree that their most valuable asset is their people, it is also true that those best-fit employees are key to successful management. People must be top priority. Proper BBS© implementation will prompt efforts by management to find flexible strategies to address future organizational talent needs, lead to integrated retention policies and procedures that are intended to identify high-potential talent early

on, while providing an avenue to retain that talent into the future by providing continuous education and growth.

This process depends on rigorous and comprehensive analysis of the organization's work, workforce, and strategic direction. Workforce planning requires strong management leadership along with a clearly articulate vision, mission and individual strategic objectives. Workforce planning also requires management and employees to step away from preconceived notions and to seriously consider change. It requires a vision of what is to be accomplished and what changes may be needed to achieve those goals.

Consider the following projections from the U.S. Department of Labor:

Figure 3 – U.S. Department of Labor Projections (<http://www.insala.com>, February 1, 2006):

- By 2010, the U.S. Labor force will have a shortage of 10 million workers;
- By 2012, 162.3 million people will be in the workforce;
- The 55-and-older segment of the workforce will have increased to 19.1% due to an annual growth rate of .1% - almost four times the rate of growth of the overall labor force;
 - 57% of executives are in transition, and the ranks of executives who are employed and actively in a job search increased to 28% - up from 24% in 2004;
 - 67% of organizations do not currently have any formal succession planning process;
 - 24% of organizations are confident in their ability to staff leadership positions during the next five years.

Building Bench Strength© creates capable people. Capable people take the

weight from management who can then focus on bigger picture issues. Capable people can continue to learn, with the right tools and a plan in place, helping to build a healthy organizational future for the organization.

Management should also recognize the powerful elements of an employee's participation in the BBS© program. There are several key benefits that provide balance and the will to contribute with most workers.

- Reward. Often time's performance improves earnings. Improved performance also is personally satisfying
- Recognition. Making a difference above and beyond gets seen to be a valuable quality. The BBS© plan facilitates the delivery of excellent performance.
- Prospecting. With the BBS© plan in place management can become more aware of future possibilities and track future trends. New skills in existing employees will show through as they proceed through the plan.
- Preparation. As the program unfolds, gaps and opportunities will appear. This will allow leaders to take steps to create development which are vitally important and enables much smoother future transitions.

The overall benefits of Building Bench Strength© is its ability to manage programs more effectively. By identifying future needs and skilled employees organizations can begin to prepare for the future while matching training to program planning. Thinking for the long term and planning for the future is necessary and allows leaders to become connected with employees rather than being simply acquainted with management succession.

Throughout the course of this research, this author gleaned information from several local colleges and universities to provide information to employees regarding the cost of obtaining higher education. The means by which employees can enroll are also listed, including the level of education available at those listed institutions (Appendix 13).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The incipient cause for this research was to take steps to ensure the Courts' future sustainability. Secondly, this research was initiated based on findings when looking into the Courts' future and employee succession planning. One question which continued to resound in the forefront was, "If we offer Succession Planning to employees, what will it look like and how will it be implemented?" When researching the needs of the Courts and realistically looking at the prospective organizational make up in the near future, the resounding word that kept appearing to the Leadership Team was "strength." We needed to "build organizational strength." Thus, BBS© was developed.

A disturbing, but often realistic discovery is that people are often trained after they are promoted. Until now, the Courts have not had a formal succession/training plan in place. Individual court divisions have provided some stretch assignments and job-shadowing opportunities when applicable, but there has not been a formal plan which allows an employee to concentrate on the goals and objectives needed to attain in order to advance to another position within the Courts should it become available. This type of training process holds back the employee and the organization's progress during this critical time of change. While there are times when this may not be able to be avoided completely, a comprehensive succession plan such as BBS© provides the opportunity for organizations to weather organizational changes without the ill-effects of unprepared staff. Employers can no longer simply follow the process of "hire and wait for them to retire" as has been done in the past. BBS©, succession planning, talent management, all refer to the process of attracting high potential/high performing skilled employees while developing new employees and retaining current high potential/high performing

employees.

Thorough, careful interpretation is needed for all organizations to properly utilize aspects of BBS©. For the purposes of this research, this author makes the following recommendations specifically to the Courts, while realizing these recommendations may be universally implemented by organizations across the nation, to initiate BBS©.

CONCLUSION 1. BBS© is necessary in order to secure the Court's future sustainability.

Analysis of employees in supervision and management position, as well as the five administrative positions held by the Leadership Team, uncovered that 75% of the employees currently holding those positions will be eligible to retire within the next five years. To secure the Courts' needs of highly skilled, educated employees, the Courts must now focus on BBS© to maintain the integrity of the Courts and to ensure the Courts will continue to run efficiently in the absence of current leaders.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Implementation of BBS© is timely and should be fulfilled immediately.

As the Courts are faced with an aging population in supervisory and management positions, the implementation of BBS© is imperative. The Courts' Leadership Team has chosen the date of May 1, 2011 as the implementation date of BBS©. Surprisingly, 99% of the Court Administrators across the State of Michigan recognized the need and urgency for all courts to have a comprehensive succession plan in place. However, having recognized the need, few courts (.25%) have planned or implemented such a plan leaving their organization in a precarious situation of unpreparedness for the future.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The BBS© program must become a part of the Courts' annual strategic planning review.

As part of the Courts' strategic planning process, a Strategic Planning Oversight Team (SPOT) has been formed. SPOT meets on a quarterly basis to discuss and review the strategic planning process. As employees progress, the needs of the Courts change, and other influences affect the Courts, it is necessary for BBS© to be reviewed and monitored along with all other Court programs. The effectiveness of succession planning can only be assessed upon overall review of each of its elements, including BBS©.

From the initial integration into the organization, to employee PDP's, to successful completion of BBS© phases, careful planning and attention to detail is vital to the integrity and soundness of the program. By failing to plan each stage and how employee's progress through the phases, the Courts may overlook important elements in employee development.

CONCLUSION 2. In the past, employee advancement was made on a personal, subjective basis rather than on objective criteria of who is best qualified for the positions. BBS© provides an objective set of criteria upon which employees performance can be evaluated. By planning and setting forth specific means of advancement through a strategic plan, as well as through an ongoing evaluation plan, employers and employees can all look to the same documents to review progress and make changes to PDP's as needed.

For years, longevity has measured an employee's worth to the Courts while qualifications were a secondary consideration, at best.

RECOMMENATION 1: The Courts' Leadership should review BBS© participants' Personal Development Plans (PDP) as they are updated.

By reviewing PDP's and providing feedback to the employee and his/her supervisor on BBS© progress, both the employee and the Court's Leadership can maintain a level of transparency regarding the program as well as making revisions to the PDP as necessary.

RECOMMENATION 2: The Court's Leadership Team should be engaged in the process so that they may offer ideas and suggestions to employees as they progress through the phases of BBS© or if they see gaps in the progress of the employee.

The BBS© program is designed to educate employees and assist in future goals and preparation for further growth in the Courts as well as employee personal growth. Leadership should be engaged with the employees participating in the program as well. The issue of transparency was brought to light over and over in this research and Leadership should take the opportunity to truly embrace transparency to its fullest by becoming involved in the BBS© progression of the Courts' employees. It is also designed for employees to enjoy and as a program in which they can be truly engaged. Leadership should organize staff gathering to share it the successes of BBS© participants.

CONCLUSION 3. BBS© allows the Courts to monitor and develop its current talent pool and to respond to organizational workforce gaps and needs as they are identified through the BBS© planning process.

The process of talent management or employee growth is a fluid process and changes with the current trends, including economic and social impacts on the Courts' community. The three phases of BBS©, performance evaluations, on-the-job training,

and 360° feedback, provide information to the Courts' Leadership and the employee which will assist in making informed decisions regarding the needs of the Courts.

RECOMMENDATION 1: The Courts' Leadership Team should continue to review organizational structure and monitor changes in staffing competencies.

As the Courts are faced with increasing budget cuts and eliminated expenditures, it is incumbent upon the Leadership Team to continue to monitor the effectiveness of the Courts' staff. The Courts' mission: "To administer justice and restore wholeness in a matter that inspires public trust," dictates the need to maintain quality services to the Courts' users, while ensuring the Courts will have well-trained, competent staff to secure identified key position roles in the future. It is also important to monitor current employee competencies to ensure that there are people who are either trained or in the process of becoming trained who will meet the requirements of identified key position roles as these roles are vacated. Absent continuous monitoring of employee progress and competencies, the Courts may find that they are in a precarious situation when positions become vacant if an absent role is taken in this regard.

CONCLUSION 4. It is critical for the Courts' Leadership to carefully monitor the BBS© program by obtaining critical feedback from those affected by or immersed in the program.

Absent feedback, the Courts' Leadership will not be able to adequately evaluate BBS©.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Continue the implementation of the bi-annual employee satisfaction survey.

Historically, the bi-annual employee satisfaction survey has provided significant insight into the Courts' operation, programs, and general management of the Courts. This practice should be continued and include questions regarding BBS© and its implementation so that Leadership can receive anonymous feedback in addition to information contained in employee performance evaluations and PDP updates.

Additionally, an organizational BBS© program should be flexible enough to bend with changes that the Courts may face. These changes may include employee diversity, employee educational background, organizational mission, goals and core values.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Continue the implementation of the bi-annual court users' survey.

Similar to the bi-annual employee satisfaction survey results, the bi-annual court users' survey has provided the Courts with a wealth of information over the past six years that it has been implemented. This survey is given to members of the public, attorneys, and collaborative partners of the Courts. The information received over the years has often been raw and brutal. Yet, this is the information that is fundamental to the success of any program. By obtaining feedback from court users on the performance of employees, the success and growth of those who are participating in BBS© can be monitored.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The Courts should implement a 360 ° feedback evaluation of employees by their peers.

360° feedback is tricky and must be weighed carefully. Often times, employees are uncomfortable "judging" their peers; other times, there may be some who appear to be too eager to do so. Peer consideration can provide intimate information regarding

day-to-day operations, on-the-job trainings, stretch assignments, and job shadowing.

While it should only be viewed as one piece of performance and progress monitoring,

360° feedback is an essential component of BBS© regarding employee progress.

CONCLUSION 5. An important element of BBS© for employees is the Personal Development Plan.

In the course of their daily responsibilities, supervisors often find alternate means of training and employee development. Employee PDP's should be updated to reflect such training and development opportunities. Offering such possibilities to staff will allow flexibility in the planning process and ultimately in the completion of BBS© phases. It is imperative that employees be fully engaged and informed in the succession planning process. Just as important as it is for the Courts' Leadership to provide a transparent process for employees, the Personal Development Plan assists the employee in creating a map to reach their goals in their professional growth and employment potential with the Courts.

RECOMMENDATION 1: The PDP should be reviewed on a regularly calendared basis by the employee and his/her supervisor.

As an important element of BBS©, the PDP provides the plan by which the employee will navigate each phase of BBS©. As the employee progresses, supervisors must review the PDP with the employee to ensure s/he is on the right path to reach the goals set forth in the PDP. This should be done on a calendar basis or as the employees' BBS© progression dictates.

RECOMMENATION 2: Employee PDP's should be submitted to the Courts' Leadership Team as they are updated.

Review of each employee's PDP by the Court's Leadership Team provides a snapshot in time of each employee's progress and allows Leadership to view successes, needs, potential gaps in the program, along with restraints and/or resources needed by the employee.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1(A) – (E)

Employee Questions About the BBS© Program

Appendix 2

List of Employees – by position – who participated in completing employee survey

Appendix 3

Building Bench Strength© Employee Application

Appendix 4

Building Bench Strength© Employee Checklist - Phase I – Self-Nomination

Appendix 5

Building Bench Strength© Employee Checklist - Phase II – Track 1 - Professional

Appendix 6

Building Bench Strength© Employee Checklist - Phase II – Track 2 - Management

Appendix 7

Building Bench Strength© Employee Checklist - Phase III – Administrative

Appendix 8

Personal Development Plan

Appendix 9

Employee Survey

Appendix 10

Interview of Current Circuit Court Trial Division Staff

Appendix 11

Interview of Circuit Court Trial Division Judges

Appendix 12

Survey of Michigan Association of Circuit Court Administrators Membership

Appendix 13

Matrix of Local Colleges & Universities/Cost Per Credit Hour/Degrees Available

Appendix 14

20th Circuit/Ottawa County Probate Court Employee Training Opportunity Matrix

Appendix 15

Ottawa County Employee Training Matrix

BUILDING BENCH STRENGTH@SUCCESSION PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

Appendix 1 (A) Questions about the BBS@ Program

EMPLOYEE QUESTIONS/CONCERNS	LEADERSHIP TEAM RESPONSES
How is BBS different from succession planning?	BBS@ is a comprehensive plan designed to strengthen the organization – not an heir apparent program
Employees feel that prior succession planning did not help as open positions filled from outside	Research position filled within the past six years shows more position filled with existing staff than from outside applicants
Is this tied to my performance evaluations?	Yes. Job performance and evaluations will dictate when a participating employee is ready to move forward in the program
Should supervisors tell employees that even though the employee is doing the work, the employee will never get promoted-not a good fit?	Yes. BBS@ is a transparent program designed to promote high performing employees
Do not give false hope, how do you balance?	Encouragement is not false hope. Employees must make an honest assessment of their capabilities. Supervisors and the Leadership Team will assist in this assessment
Application progress? What is the process for selection & is it appropriate? Who makes the decisions and standards about who can apply? How transparent is the selection process?	The BBS@ program application process is set forth, step-by-step in Figure 1
How do we engender cross-training?	Cross-training is designed by each individual supervisor in conjunction with the Leadership Team
What happens to people who don't have the skills to apply?	All employees are encouraged to continue their education and to grow within the organization whether or not they are eligible or wish to participate in the BBS@ program
What's the risk of a 2 tiered work force?	Competent employees are needed at all levels of the organization. It is necessary for the Leadership Team to continuously monitor this as aspect of the organizational make-up
Is it a roadmap to be able to advance? How do you decide who is highly talented?	Yes. Employee success will be monitored through performance evaluations
Can applicants be denied?	Yes. If the applicant does not meet the minimum requirements of the program
How do you encourage younger workers to see future in this?	All workers are encouraged to create a Personal Development Plan (PDP). By

BUILDING BENCH STRENGTH©SUCCESSION PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

	doing so, s/he will have a detailed plan for advancement and further education and knowledge
How to encourage advanced education	See Appendices 13 - 15
What is the incentive to participate?	Personal growth and development
What happens if you don't get in and want to?	Employees will be encouraged to continue to work toward the minimum application requirements in order to meet his/her PDP
How will people who don't have a degree benefit?	There are several different avenues available through the BBS© program for degreed and non-degreed employees
How do you plan to invest in employees with training knowledge when budget decreases? And decrease in tuition reimbursement?	Many options are available for employees seeking tuition assistance. Employees are encouraged to research opportunities available to them
Does this really apply to all staff or only the "important" higher up supervisors?	The BBS© program is available to all employees who meet the minimum application requirements
Is the County really committed to doing this?	The BBS© program is a 20 th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Court program. The Courts are committed to the process
Would this be used to cut staff?	No. The BBS© program is intended to enhance staff and encourage employees to grow within the organization
What does this do to hiring outside the organization?	The BBS© program is designed to prepare current employees for positions as they become available in the future
What opportunities will be available to those who do not opt to participate?	Phase I of the BBS© program provides opportunities for employees to grow within their current position and who are not interested in moving to other positions within the organization

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Appendix 1 (B) What do you like/are you intrigued by?

EMPLOYEE LIKES/INTRIGUES

**LEADERSHIP TEAM
RESPONSES**

Professional development	Positive impact on employees
Increase Skills	Positive impact on employees and the organization
Thinking ahead to groom staff	Proactive – future planning
Foresight	Future planning
May show willingness to go the extra mile	Employee engagement/Organizations commitment to employee development
Think outside the box	Developing new ideas
Be creative	Developing new ideas
County looking at cuts, but we (Court) will be spending money-security, invest	Employee development/grants and scholarship opportunities
Working hard to show loyalty	Employee development/investment in staff
Control our future	Preparedness
Provides more objective measures for considering advancement	Employee development/Providing opportunities
Gives individuals goals to work toward	Employee investment in their future and the future of the organization
Hiring within the organization	Investment in employees
Opportunity for advancement	Investment in employees
Potential for personal growth (training)	Employee investment/security
Intrigued by new challenges	Employee productivity
Better trained people could led to re-organization	Strengthened organization

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Appendix 1 (C) What don't you like/concerns you have?

EMPLOYEE DISLIKES/CONCERNS	LEADERSHIP TEAM RESPONSES
History has shown open positions filled from outside	This is a misconception. Research shows that more positions are filled by current employees than by applicants outside of the organization
Not a lot of management positions	There are more positions available than just management. This may include supervisory positions or cross-training between divisions
Those who may not want to move	It is important for employees to know that the BBS© program is not designed to mandate employee participation. Employees who do not wish to move to a new position are still encouraged to participate in gaining knowledge but will not be penalized for not participation in the formal BBS© program
No tuition reimbursement	Tuition assistance options are available. See pg. 37
Balance	The Leadership Team is committed to continuously evaluating the program and the organizational make-up in order to maintain balance within the organizational structure
How to protect job satisfaction & fulfillment for those not "turbo charged"	Phase I of the BBS© program provides continuing education for all employees
How to manage expectations of individuals	Through performance evaluations, employees and supervisors will update PDP's and employee progress
Need talent at front lines, not just at management. No guarantees. Some positions don't allow for opportunities.	The BBS© program includes all positions in all divisions of the court. BBS© is designed to prepare employees to apply for future positions. BBS© participation does not guarantee future positions
How long will someone be at Phase I before Phase II?	Advancement through the BBS© program is determined by performance evaluation and individual progress
Creates unhealthy competition among co-workers & increase office politics	This is speculation. Unhealthy competition and office politics will be monitored by supervisors and the Leadership Team as is the current practice
Favoritism would be involved	Each employee who wishes to participate in the BBS© program is required to make

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	application through the defined application process. The BBS© program application process is set forth, step-by-step in Appendix 3
Very time consuming for management to have people shadowing	Job shadowing is an extra effort on everyone involved. Management, supervisors and the Leadership Team will monitor this process to endure its success
Training not funded by State	Many training opportunities are at little or no cost to employees and are offered by the Michigan Judicial Institute or by the County

BUILDING BENCH STRENGTH@SUCCESSION PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

Appendix 1 (D) Things you would like the BBS© program to include

EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS	LEADERSHIP TEAM RESPONSES
Clear and defined objectives. Transparency (completely)	The BBS© program is designed to be completely transparent. Participation requirements at the onset of the program
Strengths for different positions	The BBS© program relies on the current position descriptions and minimum requirements
Checklists of things completed	PDP’s updated through employee performance evaluations
Open it up more for classes	See Appendices 14 & 15
Make sure training is long term	Training will promote personal and organizational growth
Tuition Support	See pg. 37
Peer evaluation as part of process	Evaluation will be provided through employee performance evaluations
Continuous, honest feedback	360° feedback is encouraged for all employees through employee performance evaluations
Identify how this will improve the Courts and what we do	This CEDP Project, in tandem with the Organizational Readiness Component and the Workforce Analysis Component, provides comprehensive data identifying the need for and implementation of the BBS© program
Appeal process if not selected	The BBS© program selection process is set forth on application –Appendix 3
Annual review	Evaluation will be provided through employee performance evaluations
Ability to shadow & learn other positions	Job shadowing is a component of Phase II and Phase III of the BBS© program
Recognize employees who are not participating	Participation in the BBS© program is not mandatory. Each employee’s strength contributes to the strength of the organization. Employee performance evaluations will address individual contributions to the organization

Appendix 1 (E) Employee Suggestions for making the BBS Program appealing, fair and inclusive

EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS

**LEADERSHIP TEAM
RESPONSES**

Interview staff to see who is interested in what	Evaluation will be provided through employee performance evaluations
Document stretch assignments	Evaluation will be provided through employee performance evaluations
Must be open to everyone; Transparent Selection; Completely unbiased process; Open; Forthcoming	The BBS© program is available to all employees who meet the minimum application requirements
Realistic minimum expectations	Minimum expectations mimic minimum requirements listed in individual job descriptions
Not limited to management positions	The BBS© program is available to all employees who meet the minimum application requirements and includes all positions
Consider seniority factors	The BBS© program is available to all employees who meet the minimum application requirements and considers employee performance evaluations. Seniority is not a factor
Set forth the BBS standards	See Figure 1
Employee appreciation	Employee performance will be evaluated through performance evaluations
Specify job definitions	Job descriptions, including minimum requirements are listed on the organization data base and available to all employees for review

Appendix 2 – List of those Judges & Management Positions Participating in Survey

A survey of the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Court Judges, Administrators Directors and Supervisors was conducted which encompasses questions from all three phases of the Building Bench Strength© process: Organizational Readiness; Current Workforce Analysis; and BBS Implementation. The first chart is a list of those who participated in the survey and his/her current position within the courts.

Position

Director Of Juvenile Services
Trial Court Director
Circuit Court Administrator
Chief Probate Judge
Circuit Court Judge
Circuit Court Judge
Chief Circuit Court Judge
Circuit Court Judge
Asst. Director Of Juvenile Services
Treatment Services Manager
Programs Supervisor/Foster Care Licensor
Casework Services Manager
Juvenile Register
Supt. Of Juvenile Detention
Asst. Supt. Of Juvenile Detention
Probate Register
Friend Of The Court
Assistant Friend Of The Court – Field
Services
Assistant Friend Of The Court –
Operations
Chief Deputy Probate Register

Appendix 3 – Building Bench Strength© Employee Application

I wish to be considered for participation in the BBS© Program as follows (check one):

- Phase I – Self Nomination**
- Phase II – Track 1 – Professional**
- Phase II – Track 2 – Management**
- Phase III – Administrative - Application and One-Page Essay Required**

Attach a copy of your most recent Performance Review or Performance Review Update to this application.

Name: _____

Current Position: _____

Level of Education: _____

Qualifications: _____

Professional Affiliations: _____

Community Service: _____

Supervisor’s Response:

APPROVED

DENIED

Supervisor’s Name: _____

Supervisor’s Signature: _____

Supervisor’s Comments: _____

Appendix 4 – Building Bench Strength© Employee Checklist

Phase I – Self Nomination

- Completed Application with Supervisor
- In Good Standing with Court
 - No current discipline action in place with action plan not yet met
 - Not on probationary status
- Performance Evaluation Updated with Goals Set
- Personal Development Plan Prepared
- Actively Participates in Strategic Planning
- Experience Plan in Place (Job Shadowing, Stretch Assignments, Special Projects)
- My Supervisor Has Submitted My Application to the Courts' Leadership Team

Appendix 5 – Building Bench Strength© Employee Checklist

Phase II – Track 1 – Professional

- Completed Application with Supervisor
- In Good Standing with Court
 - No current discipline action in place with action plan not yet met
 - Not on probationary status
- Performance Evaluation Updated with Goals Set
- Personal Development Plan Prepared
- Actively Participates in Strategic Planning
- Experience Plan in Place (Job Shadowing, Stretch Assignments, Special Projects)
- Member of a Court-Related Professional Organization – State, Regional
- Demonstrated Good Presentation Skills
- Completed BBS© Phase I
- My Supervisor Has Submitted My Application to the Courts’ Leadership Team

Appendix 6 – Building Bench Strength© Employee Checklist

Phase II – Track 2 – Management

- Completed Application with Supervisor
- In Good Standing with Court
 - No current discipline action in place with action plan not yet met
 - Not on probationary status
- Performance Evaluation Updated with Goals Set
- Personal Development Plan Prepared
- Actively Participates in Strategic Planning
- Experience Plan in Place (Job Shadowing, Stretch Assignments, Special Projects)
- Member of a Court-Related Professional Organization – State, Regional
- Demonstrated Good Presentation Skills
- Successfully Complete GOLD Training
- Successfully Completed Human Resources Training
- Completed BBS© Phase I
- My Supervisor Has Submitted My Application to the Courts’ Leadership Team

Appendix 7 – Building Bench Strength© Employee Checklist

Phase III – Administrative

- Completed Application with Supervisor
- In Good Standing with Court
 - No current discipline action in place with action plan not yet met
 - Not on probationary status
- Performance Evaluation Updated with Goals Set
- Personal Development Plan Prepared
- Actively Participates in Strategic Planning
- Experience Plan in Place (Job Shadowing, Stretch Assignments, Special Projects)
- Member of a Court-Related Professional Organization – National
- Demonstrated Good Presentation Skills
- Successfully Complete GOLD Training
- Successfully Completed Human Resources Training
- Completed BBS© Phase II, Track 2
- Completed Minimum Degree Requirements for Administrative Positions
- My Supervisor Has Submitted My Application to the Court’s Leadership Team
 - Including Essay
- Received Approval from the Courts’ Leadership Team
- Received Approval from the Chief Judge

Appendix 8 – Personal Development Plan

1 of 4

**BUILDING BENCH STRENGTH©
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
(Four Components)**

EMPLOYEE NAME: _____ **CURRENT POSITION:** _____
DATE: _____ **SUPERVISOR'S NAME:** _____

STRATEGIC PLANNING

(Participation)

Goal:

Steps:	
--------	--

Actions:	
----------	--

Constraints:	
--------------	--

Resources Needed:	
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Progress:	
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Completion:	
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2 of 4

EDUCATION

**(Seminars, Webinars, Self-Study, Professional Associations, Presentation Skills,
GOLD Standard Training, Human Resources Training, etc.)**

Goal:

Steps:	
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Actions:	
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Constraints:	
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Resources Needed:	
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Progress:	
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Completion:	
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3 of 4

EXPERIENCE

(Job Shadowing, Stretch Assignments, Special Projects, Professional Associations, etc.)

Goal:

Steps:	
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Actions:	
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Constraints:	
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Resources Needed:	
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Progress:	
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Completion:	
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4 of 4

APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

(Written essay demonstrating mastery of subject of value to employee and the Court)

Goal:

Steps:	
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Actions:	
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Constraints:	
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Resources Needed:	
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Progress:	
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Completion:	
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Appendix 9 – Building Bench Strength©: Judges and Employee Survey with Responses

The following survey instrument was designed to obtain perception from the Courts’ judges and administrative team members on all aspects of the succession planning process, including organizational readiness, workforce analysis, and BBS© implementation. The questions that pertain to implementation of the BBS© program are from question 22 through 34.

Introduction

Building Bench Strength (BBS) is an outgrowth of the 20th Circuit and Ottawa County Probate Courts’ strategic plan and is intended to assist the Courts in achieving their mission (i.e., “to administer justice, restore wholeness and inspire public trust”). To accomplish this and ensure the Courts have “the right staff in the right place at the right time” so they can be high performance courts, a sustainable succession plan is needed.

Bench strength is a measure of how deep management talent reaches in the organization. Measuring an organization’s bench strength allows court leadership to prepare and monitor the availability of future leaders.

Thank you for completing this brief survey. Your responses are important in determining the Courts’ readiness to proceed with Building Bench Strength.

Instructions

There are thirty four questions in this survey. For the first eight questions, please mark your response by selecting the answer which most closely represents your opinion: Strongly Agree; Agree; Neither Agree nor Disagree; Disagree; Strongly Disagree. Please answer the following twelve questions with a “yes”, “no” or

“don’t know” as appropriate. The remaining thirteen questions will follow the same format as the first eight questions. Question number 34 invites you to articulate your thoughts in narrative form. Additional comments will be very helpful in further understanding your response.

Key Position Term Definition

The term “key position” identifies the position as critical to the Courts’ functions on a day-to-day basis and/or a position that is statute-driven. The term does not suggest that other positions within the Courts are not “key” to the Courts, but rather, in the absence of the position, the Courts’ efficiency/effectiveness may be critically impaired.

Approximate Time to Take the Survey

Approximate time to complete the survey is 20 – 25 minutes. Your answers are saved so if you need to stop and restart, the survey will begin where you left-off upon clicking the link below.

Please note your responses are confidential and anonymous.

1. It is important to develop/maintain high performance trial courts in Ottawa County.

Strongly Agree	19
Agree	1
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

To provide the excellent service expected by the public, it is critical to operate high performance courts

2. Ottawa County trial courts should have the best qualified/trained staff in all key positions.

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Strongly Agree	18
Agree	2
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

We should have the best in all positions - not just key positions...

3. Vacant trial court positions should be filled by internal candidates, if well qualified (i.e., have the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform successfully).

Strongly Agree	8
Agree	9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

Whenever possible, internal candidates should be promoted. But it is not enough to be well qualified...high performers need the right attitude to help sustain excellence in service.

While qualifications are extremely essential, the "right fit" is also an important factor to consider when filling positions.

I think that internal and external candidates should be considered and then a decision made based on best fit—this may be an internal candidate

There are times when a person from the outside can provide a new, fresh perspective. The example I will cite is when the Circuit/Probate Court Administrator, Kevin Bowling, was hired.

4. Current recruitment and hiring practices are optimal (i.e., these practices ensure the best qualified candidate is hired/promoted).

Strongly Agree	2
Agree	11
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

BUILDING BENCH STRENGTH@SUCCESSION PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

Hiring practices seem routine and there is little creative recruitment currently being done. The process should be evaluated and updated.

Often times, Human Resources dictates the process. They should be held at arm's length when filling a COURT position

I think the current practices are adequate but the level of solicitation through HR for position recruitment is too limited, e.g. posting only in the local papers, etc. Internally, I think our process is adequate.

5. The trial courts should provide professional development opportunities for staff.

Opportunities related to current position	
Strongly Agree	15
Agree	5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments:

planning professional development should be part of every evaluation cycle

Opportunities related to possible promotions	
Strongly Agree	10
Agree	10
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments:

These promotions may not be within the County, but I believe that all employees should be positioned for a promotion even if they leave the County.

6. Judges, administrators and supervisors should support/assist with the professional development of employees.

Strongly Agree	16
Agree	4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

"support/assist" could include many things, e.g., mentoring, OTJT, informal training, organized education sessions, etc.

Although they do not always have the time to provide direct oversight, they need to be clear in their support and offering of information/assistance to the best of their ability.

7. If resources are limited, it is appropriate to offer professional development to high potential/high performance employees and not others.

Strongly Agree	1
Agree	8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3
Disagree	8
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

This may not be a popular thing to do, but administrators must deal openly with budget limitations and do what is in the best interest of the Courts

Determining whether or not an employee is "high p/high p" is subjective and could result in an employee not having the opportunity to shine in a training. Keeping trainings open to all helps reduce the effect of any possible bias of a supervisor.

I believe the systems should be built to offer everyone growth within the organization. Professional development should be an all-inclusive, daily model.

Who determines if an employee is high potential/high performance?

All staff needs the opportunity for professional development. It would be appropriate to be selective in what is approved based on what is needed for the organization.

With budgets being limited, all employees may be required to find their own resources to better themselves.

There are several ways in which the Courts can provide professional development to all staff, even with limited resources, e.g. online, MJI, etc. Thus, I disagree with the assertion that only the high potential/high performance employees should receive it. Some of the responsive attitudes are situational, as well. In a strength-based organization, people can turn from a low potential/low performance employee to a high potential/low performance employee when they are appropriately placed doing what they enjoy and are good doing. It is not always realistic, however.

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It is important to allow all employees access to opportunities.

8. Succession planning should be driven, in part, by recognition that employees have a stake in the organization and share its successes.

Strongly Agree	7
Agree	12
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

In the public sector it is difficult to find tangible ways for employees to share in successes - perhaps more recognition is a starting point...

S.P. should be: 1) hiring the best 2) providing outstanding training & educational opportunities, & 3) ensuring good supervision.

9. Based on the definition of key positions, should any existing positions be added to

the list?

Yes	3
No	11
Don't Know	6

Comments

I see positions here that do not meet the definition given. As an alternative, there are very few positions that didn't make this list.

I am unsure of the key positions outside my own department.

Chief Deputy Probate Register; it is an unclassified, supervisory position that requires filling in for the Probate Register in his/her absence.

Chief Deputy Probate Register, this position plays a much larger role as a key position than the Deputy Probate Register. Both the Probate Register and Chief Deputy Register would have to be absent before the Dep. Probate Register can exercise authority.

If the Court Reporter/Recorder position is to be classified as a key position, it should be a key position in all four circuit courts.

10. Referring to the list of key positions and respective job descriptions, do any job descriptions need modification to accurately reflect the position?

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Yes	2
No	14
Don't Know	4

Comments

Court Reporters should also be required to perform office duties when not in court; Trial Court Director description does not adequately reflect what is expected and required of that position; Felony Collections is no longer the ADR Clerk

Trial Division, FOC, Juv. Services *Don't know. Probate Court, Deputy Probate Register: Essential Functions: #13 Should be removed. No longer applies. #15 and #16 These are weekly reports run by the Chief Deputy Register. #23 should read Member of SPT and/or SPOT Under Contacts: #11 should be removed. "Fiduciaries" is covered under #10.

These job descriptions were recently revised and are probably fairly accurate now.

11. Should any key positions be consolidated?

Yes	8
No	5
Don't Know	7

Comments

The 2 assistant FOC positions should be considered for consolidation; the assistant juvenile services director and casework services manager should be considered for consolidation. The FOC office and Juvenile Services office seems "top heavy" compared to other divisions.

Casework Services Manager and Programs Supervisor should be combined. Programs fall under probation and should be maintained through probation. There is also plenty of time for more work for both positions.

Casework Services Manager and Program Supervisor/Foster Care Licensor or Caseworker and Program Supervisor/Foster Care Licensor

If being a "key position" means we will train an existing employee to fill the position one day, I do not believe the position of Court Reporter should be considered a key position. It is a technologically obsolete skill which should be sun-setted when existing employees retire. We should not pour resources into training someone else to do the job.

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Casework services manager and Programs supervisor/foster care Is there enough work to support both positions?

The Programs Supervisor/Foster Care Licensor could be consolidated with the Casework Services Manager or Asst. Juvenile Services Director. This position could also be moved to the Senior Caseworker position.

Program supervisor position could be split up between casework manager, treatment manager & reimbursement specialist/senior caseworker(victim support)

Based on declining case load, the consolidation of Casework services and Treatment services managers should be looked at for consolidation. Second, as a result of declining revenues, additional cuts must be made in government. As such, the assistant juv. services director may need to be eliminated as part of that process to reduce the size of government.

12. Should any key positions be eliminated within the Courts?

Yes	7
No	9
Don't Know	4

Comments

Programs Supervisor and Casework Services Manager should either be consolidated or one eliminated.

Programs Supervisor/Foster Care Licensor

FOC Investigator; Caseworker; Treatment Specialist. These are positions that have more than one employee in them with the knowledge to train new employees in these positions.

Upon retirement, the Programs Supervisor position could be eliminated but that would mean the position responsibilities as now known and performed need to be divided among the Sr. Caseworker, Casework Services Manager, Treatment Manager, JCJ Coordinator and Asst. Director positions.

Program supervisor under juvenile services

Court reporter/recorder. It appears if transcripts are needed, they could be contracted out. It appears there is other staff that could operate the recording devices in the courtroom. Hand dictation is no longer needed.

13. Should any key positions be privatized?

Yes	2
No	14
Don't Know	4

Comments

Custody investigations can be done externally for \$1000/case. If using external contractors can result in quality reports at lower cost, it should be considered.

It may be possible to privatize some of the treatment services in the Juvenile Division, but that would require some thought.

Court reporters/recorders. Perhaps collections on both the circuit court criminal side and juvenile side.

It would be inappropriate to delegate court duties to a profit oriented company. Currently, the court uses private companies to conduct drug testing, etc. This is appropriate.

.....
14. Is there adequate workload to justify each key position?

Yes	9
No	4
Don't Know	7

Comments

It seems juvenile caseworkers have very low caseloads - so personnel needs should be evaluated

Juvenile Services has 3 managers that discuss needing more work.

At times caseworkers have had low caseload numbers. Is this a continuing problem or just a point in time?

Program supervisor (juvenile services) seems to have duties that could be assigned to other positions, eliminating the need for the position

I can only speak with any certainty about my own department where the workload is tremendous. I don't have enough information to answer for others.

I question whether as a result of the declining case loads that we continue to need the number of managers (see prior question) that we currently have. In addition, we need to determine if all probation workers/support staff are required given shrinking number of cases and declining revenues.

15. Should any key position be reclassified?

Yes	5
No	8
Don't Know	7

Comments

With new court recording technology, the court reporter positions should be revised to video operators through attrition.

Court Reporter should be classified as Court Reporter/Court Clerk; Trial Court Director should be reclassified to adequately reflect the duties and responsibilities of that position

Treatment Manager that are the Assessment Unit Coordinator and Treatment Specialist in the Lighthouse Program

The Juvenile Services Director should be at the same classification level as the Friend of the Court due to the workload, double the staff, a 24/7 facility and three times the budget.

Senior DP Specialist title was changed with last wage study to "FOC Technical Support Specialist" - should be at higher grade given it's required IT knowledge

16. Are any job descriptions likely to change within the next year?

Yes	1
No	13
Don't Know	6

Comments

Court Reporter/Recorder, as all circuit courtrooms are equipped with video recording capability. The standardization of recording among all circuit courtrooms should be a goal.

Not in my department, there were changes in how some positions were used without changing the job description itself. The reallocation of responsibilities has streamlined processes.

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17. Is each key position consistent with the Courts' Strategic Plan and Mission Statement (i.e., "To administer justice and restore wholeness in a manner that inspires public trust")?

Yes	19
No	0
Don't Know	1

Comments

NO COMMENTS

18. Do current key positions match the future needs of the Court?

Yes	16
No	1
Don't Know	3

Comments

But I also think the court needs to take an honest look at workloads combined with needed services and see if there are areas we can consolidate and be more productive.

Although all the positions listed under juvenile services are valuable--I'm not sure they all need to be listed as key for future needs of the court.

It is hard to say what changes will be made at the State level that could impact operations in some area. More and more may become centralized.

The positions as described certainly meet the future needs of the court

19. Collectively, the key positions are intended to represent a full spectrum of services and functions of the Courts. Are there any gaps in services/functions not represented by the identified key positions?

Yes	2
No	14
Don't Know	4

Comments

Adoption/judicial bypass/emancipation specialist in Probate. Collections specialist in Juvenile.

20. Are any staff prepared to move into key positions as needed?

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Yes	11
No	1
Don't Know	8

Comments

For our department they are, not sure of different departments.

All

Caseworker

I am assuming that some are, but I don't know which ones.

There are some Treatment Specialist Assistant Superintendent Shift Supervisor

There are those in the Probate Court that have the degree to move into key positions, but perhaps not the experience. There are those that have the experience, but not the degree . . .

Chief Deputy Probate Register to Deputy Register.

The Assistant Detention Superintendent could possibly move into the Superintendent's position with some support. This is true of

internal staff "could" fill Asst. FOC positions, FOC Investigator position and Family Services Coordinator/Custody investigator position

There are several on staff with the requisite education who could move into an FOC Investigator spot. There may be one or two who could fill the Assistant FOC's positions.

21. Judges and Leadership Team members understand the need to identify and prepare successors for key positions.

Strongly Agree	2
Agree	15
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

Leadership discusses these issues regularly....judges may need some prompting

I'm not sure what judges and leadership team members "understand." I'm concerned that a focus on internal promotions may cause the Court to not consider great candidates from outside the Court—due to an unspoken "promise" of promotion.

I believe they do not have the necessary contact or relationship with staff to really know the skill level of possible successors for key positions.

22. Succession planning is guided by a philosophy that high potential staff should be developed while working rather than primarily by off –the-job experiences.

Strongly Agree	3
Agree	11
Neither Agree nor Disagree	5
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

I don't understand this statement, unless "on" was meant to be used rather than "off" the job. Almost all staff have high potential.

I think preparation comes from both on and off the job experiences.

However, excessive time away from the office is not good for the court in that service is compromised and morale is harmed. Care should be taken in scheduling training, and training should be strongly related to court activities.

Employees can be developed while working, but they should be developing themselves while not at work as well, such as by continuing their education by way of obtaining their degree or taking classes and obtaining certifications which will make them more valuable in the workplace. I believe there has to be a commitment outside of work, not just from 8-5.

There are times when bringing someone in from the outside is preferred. If the work environment is unhealthy for whatever reason, new blood can restore the balance. At the same time, well deserving employees with the required credentials should have the opportunity. Good talent could be lost if the sense is there is nowhere to go in the organization.

23. Succession planning has prompted the Courts to focus developmental programs on increasing the familiarity of high potential staff with who does what, when they do it, why they do it, and how they do it.

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Strongly Agree	5
Agree	9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

We are moving in this direction - but there is much more work to do.

Not yet. If the question is "...will prompt the Courts..." then it makes sense to answer "agree."

"has happened"--this has not yet happened, but is needed and the purpose of BBS

24. Succession planning is supported by career paths that move not only up a specialized ladder, but across a continuum of professional competence.

Strongly Agree	6
Agree	8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

This question makes no sense at all to me. Sorry! However, I believe training should focus on encouraging all staff to improve their work-related skills.

"but across a continuum of professional competence" - not sure what this means.

25. Technical competencies of staff are best identified through the recruitment and hiring process.

Strongly Agree	0
Agree	6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	6
Disagree	7
Strongly Disagree	1

Comments

Initial competency levels must be evaluated in the hiring process, but staff can also learn new skills after being hired

However, many staff improve their competencies through work experience as well as training and education while in a position. Sometimes bad employees are hired because they seem to have technical competencies, but (in reality) they lack creativity, self-motivation skills and drive.

I believe they are also identified through the working knowledge and execution of responsibilities of systems in place.

It is difficult to judge a person on paper. Many times an employee's technical competency manifests itself while on the job, not through recruitment or the hiring process. A person can tell you anything in an interview, but the truth comes out in the pudding when they can actually demonstrate what it is they can do.

Agree-if skill testing is involved in the hiring process

If technical competencies can be tested as part of the hiring process, it may be helpful. It's the behavioral aspects that are the most difficult to assess in the recruitment/hiring process.

26. In addition to technical competencies, behavioral competencies are important to court operations.

Strongly Agree	15
Agree	5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

Since we deal with people of all ages, backgrounds, and educational levels, staff must have great interpersonal skills

27. Performance reviews are helpful with identifying in-house talent (i.e., technical and behavioral competencies).

Strongly Agree	6
Agree	10
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

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Yes - regular reviews provide a systematic way of learning how staff are developing professionally.

A performance review can document competencies, but do not identify these. Day to day interactions between the employee and his/her supervisor is the best way talent is seen, encouraged and exploited (in a positive manner, of course).

But this does not mean just yearly performance reviews. Staff should be offered feedback on performance on a regular basis, as needed.

If evaluations are honest.

They are only as good as the supervisor or employee who remembers to add these to the performance review.

The evaluation form in use now is awful. You are asked to evaluate the same things over and over. If a person has one particular shortcoming, it should be addressed in only that area and not creep over into everything the employee does.

28. Performance reviews should include individual development plans aimed at improving current competencies.

Strongly Agree	10
Agree	9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

Development plans should include opportunities to move beyond their current assignment. It is helpful to discover what the employee has in mind for themselves within the court. Are they going to school with a goal in mind, or are they perfectly happy doing what they are doing and have no intention of moving beyond it.

29. Goals in individual development plans should be prioritized based on:

Individual career goals and development interests	
Strongly Agree	6
Agree	14
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	0

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Strongly Disagree 0

Comments:

As long as it is of benefit to the organization and not just the individual

Organizational needs to fill key positions

Strongly Agree	6
Agree	12
Neither Agree nor Disagree	1
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments:

I believe an organization should provide a structure of systems that allow each staff to grow for various reasons and positions.

connected to fit for the person

Available resources	
Strongly Agree	2
Agree	15
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments:

A motivated employee can work toward his/her goals without needing Court resources. In fact, seeking out resources (and finding them) could be an indicator of an employee who is of great value to the Court.

30. Employees seek careers with the Court for these reasons:

Passion for justice	
Strongly Agree	1
Agree	8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	0

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Desire to work for the Court	
Strongly Agree	2
Agree	11
Neither Agree nor Disagree	6
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0
Salary/Benefits	
Strongly Agree	10
Agree	8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Location/Community	
Strongly Agree	6
Agree	11
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Making a difference in client's lives	
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	10
Neither Agree nor Disagree	4
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments:

The "feel good" part of the job comes later, but is usually not the HONEST reason for seeking the job. People primarily want interesting work in a stable environment with good pay and benefits.

31. The Courts have adequate resources to train and develop current staff for promotion to key positions.

Strongly Agree	0
Agree	6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3
Disagree	11

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Strongly Disagree

0

Comments

In times of financial crisis, staff education has been significantly reduced

Distance travel to non internal training is discouraged due to limits in the mileage budget. The court should seek out state-wide opportunities for court staff and fund travel to these (e.g. JJAM or similar professional conferences, etc.)

Not providing tuition reimbursement could hinder staff who want to pursue their degree. There are no training dollars to spend on staff. Supervisors and employees alike are going to have to become creative in finding dollars to train staff. Team #5 also struggles with this.

Training and development of staff require time from administration at all levels. Currently, there is a strong need for clerical support within Juvenile Services to allow administration time to adequately be involved in staff training

As funding for training has been cut it ties our hands with getting staff the types of trainings that provide real in depth coverage of current issues

In the current economic climate, resources for training have really dried up. While grants are wonderful, they are not always there.

.....
32. Tuition reimbursement is an important component of an employee training and development program.

Strongly Agree	12
Agree	5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	3
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

But the training must be relevant.

If the court places a value on education--in particular for key positions--then we ought to provide some incentive for on-going education

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Several of my staff have depended on this resource to continue their education. Some staff won't be able to continue toward their goal without it due economic pressures at home.

33. It is important for the Court to develop and maintain a reputation as an employer of choice.

Strongly Agree	13
Agree	7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	0
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0

Comments

NO COMMENTS

.....
34. What concerns, if any, do you have about succession planning?

It is a difficult concept for staff to grasp and it requires significant work to be successful.

Succession Planning is important but we must be cognizant of our daily duties and not spend countless hours on SP and neglect our every day jobs.

I think it can discourage some employees because they will come to believe a position has been "promised" to them. The Court should hire the best, provide great training (including state-wide opportunities), support supervisors in methods to help individual staff grow, and encourage employees to be creative and to maximize their opportunities for growth. This can be done without any special programming or having to ID key positions.

I just hope it allows the court to develop systems that help all staff work successfully in the organization and not just those who might be chosen or find success in this planning.

In the past succession planning was perceived as administration subjectively selecting favored employees for positions. I'm in favor of succession planning and see the value of it as long as ALL employees are offered opportunities if they choose to participate. I'm concerned employees who do not identify themselves as wanting to seek a managerial position will be seen as unmotivated and not valued for what they are contributing to the organization.

The idea is good, on paper. I am concerned about unintended consequences, which have yet to be identified. Maintaining a positive workforce is a tricky undertaking. Careful planning and study will be necessary to develop the idea of succession training - but we can probably do it because we have good people working on the project.

That it will create consistency in the promotional process and that internal staff will be honored for their skills, abilities and drive.

1. Do we have the resources to pull this off? 2. Will some employees perceive unfairness in this process?

That the bad feelings of the past attempt will sabotage this honest and open effort to make it work.

Just the lack of resources to train and develop staff. In these hard economic times, it will certainly be a challenge for all of us.

There seem to be many assumptions made about level of staff knowledge as to the issues raised in this survey which limit the usefulness of the results.

I am aware of cross training of staff but don't know if there is specifically identifiable succession training or planning nor should there be any, if there is a difference, as a failure of success or opportunity is often met with a negative attitude which can be toxicity affecting all staff.

Organizational time on all levels of the administrative staff; sustainability; successful implementation that reaps positive outcomes; and effectively communicating the process to staff so the message can be understood and heard without a prejudicial, preconceived perspective.

It is important to me that we develop a process that encourages and supports all staff whether they choose to apply for advancement or not.

Sometimes it's a good decision to hire external people and that could be very disheartening to an internal candidate participating in succession planning.

I have no concerns as management is appropriately addressing this issue.

I am concerned about objectivity in selecting those who are seen as good candidates. We have staff who have the credentials, but politically can't cut it. At what point and how are they eliminated from consideration without collateral damage.

Appendix 10 – Interview of Current Circuit Court Trial Division Staff

The following 11 questions are tooled specifically for the 20th Judicial Circuit Court, Trial Division staff. Your responses will be included in the data collection of my CEDP project, Building Bench Strength©, Succession Planning Implementation. Please complete the questionnaire and submit it to me by October 15, 2010. Thank you for your participation.

This questionnaire was submitted to 24 staff members, all from the 20th Circuit Court Trial Division. Responses were received from all 24 staff members.

1. Are you familiar with the concept of succession planning?

Yes - 24

2. Are you interested in learning more about succession planning?

Yes - 24

3. Are you familiar with Building Bench Strength©?

Yes – 20

Yes – What I have learned from staff meetings

Yes – What we have talked about in meetings

Yes – From last year's all-staff meeting

Yes – both from you and from all-staff meeting

4. Have you given thought to your personal five-year employment plan?

Yes – retirement - 6

No – I have to keep working

No – 7

Yes – working toward my MBA

Yes – completing my BA currently

Yes - 8

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5. Are you currently enrolled in advanced education classes?

Yes – 2

No - 22

6. Did you complete the Institute for Court Management Course?

Yes – 1

No - 23

7. If not, are you interested in the Institute for Court Management Course?

Yes – 3

No - 21

8. Would you like to participate in the Courts' succession planning process?

Yes – 18

No – 3

No – Planning to retire- 2

No – too old - 1

9. I there a specific job(s) you are interested in learning more about?

Yes – Trial Court Director

Yes – Collections

Yes – Court Reporting

No - 21

10. Do you have reservations about Building Bench Strength© or the succession planning process in general?

No – 23

Yes - 1

11. If so, what are your concerns?

I hope teacher's pets aren't the only ones chosen

Appendix 11 – Interview Questions for Judges

A Comprehensive, Sustainable Succession Plan

This interview is scheduled to take place after surveys have been completed by Court leadership and supervisors and after key Building Bench Strength (succession planning) positions have been identified.

1. After reviewing the list of key positions to be included in Building Bench Strength, do you wish to add any key positions to the list?
 - The list appears to be complete
 - I rely on the Leadership Team to provide a comprehensive list of key positions
 - No
 - The list is complete (2)
2. Do the minimum knowledge requirements meet your expectation for key positions?
 - Yes. Requirements are set forth in job descriptions (3)
 - Job descriptions should be revisited every two years.
3. Do the minimum education requirements meet your expectations for key positions?
 - Same as above (4)
4. Do you see any gaps in current staffing competencies which need to be addressed?
 - Professionalism should be addressed from day one.
 - Court professionals must exhibit a certain level of sophistication.
5. How do you see identified Building Bench Strength positions within the Court fit the Court's strategic plan?
 - BBS fits the element of forward looking.
 - BBS is consistent with keeping high standards a priority (2)
 - BBS is an essential part of strategic planning.
6. Do you wish to be included in the recruitment and development of high potential/high performing employees for the Court?
 - No. This task is best kept with the professionals – the Leadership Team. (4)
7. Are there any other issues you would like to raise concerning Building Bench Strength?
 - We must keep the fact that there will be skeptics in mind at all times. (2)
 - It is important to emphasize there are no "heirs apparent." (2)

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Appendix 12 – Survey of the Michigan Association of Circuit Court Administrators

The following survey was presented to the Michigan Association of Circuit Court Administrators membership – 37 members. Responses were received from 25 members.

From: Kelly Aylsworth – CEDP Candidate – Trial Court Director

The results of this survey will be used along with other data collection means in the development of my Court Executive Development Program paper – Building Bench Strength@: A Comprehensive, Sustainable Succession Plan

Thank you for taking the time to participate. I appreciate your responses.

Please submit your responses by September 10, 2010.

1. Does your organization have an existing Succession Plan?

Answer Options	
Yes	1
No	24
Other (please specify)	

2. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization tied the succession planning program to individual career plans?

Answer Options	
Yes	1
No	
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable

3. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization tied the succession planning program to training programs?

Answer Options	
Yes	1
No	
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable

4. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization tied the succession planning program to your organizational strategic plan?

Answer Options	
Yes	
No	1 – No plan in place
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable

5. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization prepared a written program purpose statement?

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Answer Options	
Yes	
No	1
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable
6. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization established measureable objectives for program operation (such as number of positions replaced each year)?	
Answer Options	
Yes	
No	1
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable
7. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization identified what groups are to be served by the program, in priority order?	
Answer Options	
Yes	
No	1
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable
8. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization established a written policy statement to guide the program?	
Answer Options	
Yes	
No	1
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable
9. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization articulated a written philosophy about the program?	
Answer Options	
Yes	
No	1
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable
10. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization established a program action plan?	
Answer Options	
Yes	

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No	1
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable
11. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization established incentives/rewards for managers with identified successor candidates?	
Answer Options	
Yes	
No	1
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable
12. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization developed a means to budget for a succession planning program?	
Answer Options	
Yes	
No	1
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable
13. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization created workshops to train management employees about the succession planning program?	
Answer Options	
Yes	
No	1
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable
14. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization established a means to compare individual skills to the requirements of a future position?	
Answer Options	
Yes	
No	1
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable
15. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization established a way to review organizational talent at least annually?	
Answer Options	
Yes	1 – Annual Performance Review
No	Not Applicable
Other (please specify)	
16. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization established a plan for meeting succession planning needs through individual development plans?	

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Answer Options						
Yes	1 – Annual Performance Review/Plan Reviewed					
No	Not Applicable					
Other (please specify)						

17. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization established a means to track development activities to prepare successors for eventual advancement?

Answer Options						
Yes						
No	1					
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable					

18. For the Succession Planning program, has your organization established a means to evaluate the results of the succession planning program?

Answer Options						
Yes						
No	1					
Other (please specify)	Not Applicable					

19. How important do you believe succession planning is to your organization?

Answer Options	1 pt - not important 1	2 pts -somewhat important	3 pts – important 1	4 pts -very important 2	5 pts -extremely important - essential to the organization 20	Rating Average 4 – Very important
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20 – Very Important. However due to budget restraints and limited staff, the opportunity to “plan” has not been a priority.
 1 - There is no time to plan for succession.
 1 - We do not have the financial means to train staff.
 3 -It is up to the individual to be prepared for the future and any future opportunities with the court.

20. How important do you believe a succession planning written program purpose statement to be?

Answer Options	1 pt -not important	2 pts - somewhat important 2	3 pts - important 18	4 pts - very important 5	5 pts -extremely important - essential to the organization	Rating Average 3.1 = important
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21. How important do you believe a management training workshop is to the success of succession planning?

Answer Options	1 pt -not important 1	2 pts - somewhat important 2	3 pts - important 18	4 pts - very important 4	5 pts -extremely important - essential to the organization	Rating Average 3 – important
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22. How important do you believe it is to evaluate the results of a succession planning program?

Answer Options	1 pt -not important	2 pts - somewhat important 2	3 pts - important	4 pts - very important 23	5 pts - extremely important - essential to the organization	Rating Average 3.5 – important
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Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. I appreciate your participation.

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Appendix 13 – Matrix of College and Universities

The 20th Circuit Court supports every opportunity to staff to enrich their lives and further their education. The following graph provides information regarding availability, cost, and level of degree currently available through local college and universities.

NAME/ Course of Study	COST PER CREDIT HOUR	ON CAMPUS OR ON- LINE	ASSOCIATE DEGREE – AS	BACHELOR DEGREE – BS	MASTER DEGREE – MS	DOCTORAL PROGRAM- PhD
Baker College/ Paralegal; Criminal Justice	\$195	On Campus/On- Line	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Calvin College/ Criminal Justice/Sociology/ Psychology	\$24,645 Tuition	On Campus/On- Line	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ferris State University/Criminal Justice; Sociology; Psychology	\$331	On Campus/On- Line	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grand Rapids Community College/Paralegal; Criminal Justice	\$89.50	On Campus/On- Line	Yes	Yes	No	No
Grand Valley State University/Criminal Justice; Paralegal; Sociology; Psychology	\$395-\$414	On Campus/On- Line	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hope College/ Criminal Justice; Sociology; Psychology	\$405-\$910	On Campus/On- Line	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Michigan State University/ Criminal Justice; Sociology, Psychology, Court Administration	\$371.75 - \$531.75	On Campus/On- Line	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Muskegon Community College/ Criminal Justice; Sociology	\$38.50 - \$135	On Campus/On- Line	Yes	Yes	No	No
Western Michigan University/ Criminal Justice; Sociology; Psychology	\$282.92- \$694.04	On Campus/On- Line	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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Appendix 14 – Ottawa County Employee Training Opportunities

Likewise, the 20th Circuit Court and Ottawa county Probate Courts, County of Ottawa and State of Michigan participate in many programs recognized both locally and nationally. This graph highlights offerings which are court or management specific.

NAME	COST	MEDIA TYPE	COURSE INITIATIVE	CERTIFICATE	LENGTH OF PROGRAM
GOLD-Growth Opportunities in Learning and Development	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Leadership; Conflict Resolution; DiSC Styles; Motivation and Positive Feedback	Yes	2 Months/36.5 Hours
Time Management	No Cost To Employees	Classroom	Organization & Productivity	Yes	2 Hours
The Hiring Process	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Initial Job Posting; Interview Process; Orientation	Yes	4 Hours
Behavioral Interviewing Techniques	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Methods for Seeking out Quality Staff	Yes	4 Hours
Business Writing & Grammar	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Sharpen Writing Skills; Clarity; Pronouns; Plurals; Punctuation	Yes	2 Hours
Darkness to Light-Stewards of Children	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Child Sexual Abuse Training	Yes	2.5 Hours
Delegation	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Facets of Delegation	Yes	2.5 Hours
Documentation & Discipline	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Best Practices in Documenting Employee Behaviors	Yes	4 Hours
Effective Performance Evaluations	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Techniques for Completing and Delivering Effective	Yes	2 Hours

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			Performance Evaluations		
FMLA for Supervisors	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Understanding Family and Medical Leave Act	Yes	2 Hours
Generational Diversity	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Learn Key Characteristics of each Generation	Yes	2 Hours
Presentation Skills	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Provide Participants with useful tools to Effectively Deliver Messages	Yes	8 hours
Presentation Skills Practice	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Provides Practice in Presenting Before a Group	Yes	3 Hours
Project Management Fundamentals	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Understanding Project Management Methodology, Principles and Techniques	Yes	8 Hours
The Hiring Process	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Understanding The Process of Hiring	Yes	2 Hours
Time Management	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Organization and Efficiency	Yes	2 Hours
2010 Excel Introduction	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Beginning Skills to Create and Format a Spreadsheet	Yes	6 Hours
2010 Excel Intermediate	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Using Formulas in Excel	Yes	3 Hours
2010 Excel Charts	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Advanced Training in Creating and Manipulating Charts	Yes	2 Hours
2010 Database Functions	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	How to Create and Manage Lists in Excel	Yes	3 Hours
2010 Excel	No Cost to	Classroom	How to Analyze	Yes	2 Hours

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Pivot Tables	Employees		Large Amounts of Data		
2010 PowerPoint Introduction	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Beginning Skills to Create PowerPoint Presentations	Yes	4 Hours
2010 PowerPoint Intermediate	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Tables in PowerPoint; Creating Charts/Graphs	Yes	6 Hours
2010 Publisher Introduction	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Beginning Skills to Create Publications	Yes	6 Hours
2010 Publisher Intermediate	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Working with Lines & Shapes, Clipart, Pictures, Objects & Tables	Yes	6 Hours
2010 Word Introduction	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Create Documents	Yes	6 Hours
2010 Word Intermediate	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Advanced Saving & Viewing Options, Customized Toolbars	Yes	6 Hour
2010 Word Forms	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Create Forms	Yes	2 Hours
2010 Word Mail Merge	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Create Envelopes, Post cards, Labels	Yes	2 Hours
2010 Word Tables	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Create Tables	Yes	2 Hours
Spanish I	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Spanish Introduction	Yes	12 Hours
Spanish II	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Reading & Speaking Spanish	Yes	12 Hours
Spanish Review Session	No Cost to Employees	Classroom	Practice Spanish Skills	Yes	3 Hours
Michigan Judicial Institute – Professional Development Curricula	No Cost to Employees	Web – Based Training; Articles; Books; Class;	Active Learning; Adaptability; Communication; Constituent Service; Decision	Yes	30 Minutes to 6 Hours Depending on Media Type and Learning

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Consists of 220 Defined Resources Available to Court Employees		Podcast;	Making; Interpersonal Skills; Knowledge & Job Skills; Management & Leadership; Personal Initiative; Professionalism		Level (I, II or III)
National Center for State Courts	\$8630	Classroom	Court Management Program -10 Identified Core Competencies*	Yes	(9) 2.5 day classes + (1) 5 day concluding seminar [Must be completed w/i 7 yrs]
National Center For State Courts	\$5600 + travel exp	Classroom; Independent Study; 3 Week Residency	Court Executive Development Program	Yes	Phase I = Core Comp. 1 through 5; Phase II = 3 week residency program; Phase III = Research Project (10 months); Phase IV = 4 day program: 1 day educational program, 2 days of project presentation; 1 day Graduation at US Supreme Court
Michigan State University	\$665	Classroom; Independent Study	Judicial Administration Program	Yes	Must be completed within 5 yrs.

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* Ten Core Competencies as defined by the National Association for Court Management:
1) Purposes & Responsibilities of Courts; 2) Fundamental Issues of Case flow Management; 3) Managing Human Resources; 4) Managing Court Financial Resources; 5) Managing Technology Projects & Resources; 6) Essential Components; 7) Visioning & Strategic Planning; 8) Leadership; Education, training & Development; 9) Court Community Communication; 10) High Performance Court Framework

20TH CIRCUIT/OTTAWA COUNTY PROBATE COURT

**EMPLOYEE
TRAINING
OPPORTUNITIES**

JANUARY 3, 2011



20th Circuit/Ottawa County Probate Court Employee Training Opportunities

The Michigan Court Rules: A Desk Reference Guide for Court Support Personnel

Legal Advice for Court Employees Quick Reference

Employee Guide to Legal Advice

Workplace Coach: Change is coming – you need to change with it

The Ten Commandments of Great Customer Service

How to Gain Respect

How to Gain Respect from People

Ten Ways to Improve Your Interpersonal Skills

Ten Ways to Improve Your Interpersonal Skills (update)

Dale Carnegie's Gold Book

Work Etiquette

Women's Dress: Business Professional and Casual

Your Image is You

Tips for Professionalism in the Workplace

Professional Quick Test

Being a Leader

Here's Why "Attitude is Everything!"

<http://www.nacmnet.org>

<http://www.courts.mi.gov/MJI>

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