



Shipyard Industry Succession: A Case Study Analyzing Supervisor Developmental Programs

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The purpose of this case study is to explore the organizational phenomenon of leadership development. It is important to note that this case study is specific to GC1's leadership development program and the work environment it has been designed around. This research is a qualitative phenomenological study that analyzed the data collected from the interviews of three participants; 1) one who completed the program, 2) one who is currently active in the program, and 3) one who just started the program. Data were analyzed utilizing the descriptive coding technique. This case should only be viewed as a preliminary study designed to answer the question- what are private sector organizational developmental programs producing? More managers or leaders for the shipyard industry?

Keywords: Descriptive Analysis, Leadership, Ship Building, Ship Repair, Succession

The United States shipbuilding and repair community has been in business and has maintained a commanding role in the industry since 1930 (Walters, 2000). According to World IBIS (2018), the Hampton Roads (HR) geographic area alone is home to one of the industry's most giant shipbuilding/ ship repair footprints. Within the area's 3,700 square mile radius, there are three major ship repair facilities, three to four smaller ship repair facilities, and at least four ship repair contractors (VSRA, 2019). These numbers make the ship repair and shipbuilding private sector one of the largest employers in the HR region, employing more than 36,000 people a year (Filer, 2016). As good as the industry may appear, competition exists among the different private organizations, including competing employee retention.

According to the CEO of Government Contracting 1 (not the company's real name), a private ship repair government contractor, competition goes beyond bidding for contracts. It extends to employee retention and leadership growth. Companies will lure employees away from other companies to gain a competitive edge over the competition. The concern is that those who leave company A for company B are not only leaving

with the skills and knowledge gained from company A, but also potentially restricting the succession of company A. Succession has become a growing concern for Government Contracting 1 (GC1), to the point that the executive team developed a management program to develop GC1's future leaders.

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Literature Review

The Ship Building and Repair Industry has had a long business cycle whose foundation can be traced back to the start of the Civil War (Walters, 2000). Throughout the years, the purpose of the industry has been to provide technical maintenance services to naval ships in ways that enable them to meet the requirements and regulations of the Department of Defense (Bozorgpour et al., 2017). It was not until World War II that the United States Department of Defense saw the value of having shipbuilding/repair facilities that met naval mission requirements and provided access to specialized knowledge that private sector ship repair organizations could provide (Martin et al., 2017). This specialized knowledge continues to provide the Department of Defense with vessels maintained at a high technical standard while ensuring the craft's seaworthy condition is sound (Bozorgpour et al., 2017). One problem private sector organizations are beginning to confront is retaining that specialized knowledge.

The Ship Repair Industry relies on unique repair schedules intended to help extend the lifecycle of a particular vessel so that the mission can still be met. Once a craft is completed and returned to the fleet, there is a potential gap between availabilities which requires employers to engage with employees and manage employee retention. Rothwell (2016) defined employee retention as the ability to maintain the stability of a workforce. This schedule instability and the internal industrial competition between local ship repair organizations make it more difficult for organizations to find or retain experienced employees (Martin et al., 2017). Companies that cannot find or maintain an effective workforce may see signs of instability regarding their longevity as a company, hence the need for a succession plan.

Succession Planning

Succession planning is no longer considered a new concept when ensuring the longevity of an organization. Research has found that those organizations that fail to plan for leadership succession and employee retention will begin to encounter significant struggles, resulting in eventual organizational collapse (Santora & Sarros, 2012). Succession processes that flounder not only have the potential of destroying any legacy created by the organization's founders but also limit the potential of contract work the organization may receive. Naval ship repair contracts are crucial for the private sector ship repair organizations because if the Department of Defense is unsatisfied with the performance organization, then there is the possibility that the organization will no longer be awarded future contract awards. This suggestion is just one example of a succession plan's benefit. Organizations miss the mark when developing their version of a succession plan by not clearly understanding the plan and what it is not.

Yukl (2013) states that succession planning combines formal training, self-help, and developmental activities. The purpose is to create a pool of individuals available for selection to fill future senior positions, incredibly when those positions open at a moment's notice. However, the concept of a succession plan has frequently been misinterpreted, fostering the idea that if the organization has created a replica of the senior individual leaving, it maintains its longevity (Rothwell, 2016). Succession planning is a far more extensive process. Thus, senior organizational leaders should view succession as an intricate portion of the organization's leadership development and the company's overall mission.

Leadership Development Programs

Research supports the notion that developing leadership programs positively impacts an organization's success (Riggio, 2008). However, this positive impact is only achieved when the program is aligned with the company's mission, vision, and values (Avolio, 2011). According to Lynton and Pareek (2011), when viewing development as a training opportunity, vice a forced requirement, the organization increases the participant's confidence, inventiveness, initiative, and ability to make decisions that will benefit the organization. Much like with succession planning, organizations often miss the mark. Senior management is under the impression that their leadership development program can be copied from generalized templates showing success elsewhere and present as a mandatory requirement.

The Six Sigma program is a classic example of a failed organization that viewed it as a universal leadership development program. According to Bass and Bass (2009), the success behind the Lean Six Sigma program is a quality program centered on improving processes, not behavior, which should be the focus of a leadership development program. Although a quality program like Lean Six Sigma may prove beneficial for a

private sector ship repair contractor, it should not be considered a supplement option for an organization's succession plan or leadership development program (George & George, 2003).

To summarize, senior executives must view leadership development as a training tool that creates a pool of future leaders whose behaviors and values align with the organization. Such programs should be tailored to the unique mission, culture, and positive behavioral values the organization wishes to see in its leaders. This case study aims to provide a snapshot evaluation of one company's developmental program from the perspective of those who have completed or are currently participating in it.

Research Method

The research presented in the literature review informed this preliminary qualitative exploratory case study. According to Yin (2018), the exploratory case study approach allows the researcher to identify the phenomenon and answer a research question that could later be beneficial for future research studies on the phenomenon.

Phenomenological studies capture the participant's lived experience, where the analysis generates common themes from those experiences (Padgett, 2017). This case study will focus on leadership development and what one organization's program produces based on the interviews conducted with the three participants.

Research Setting and Participants

The participants were purposefully selected based on their standing within GC1's developmental program (Creswell, 2014). The sample consisted of one employee who completed the program, one who was currently active, and one who had just started the program. Based on the data collected, there are currently eight participants actively in the program at the time of the study. It is presumed that the sample size interviewed represented a quarter of GC1's active population. The total tenure of those who participated in the study was 7.25 years.

Data Collection

The data was collected during the interviews with the selected participants in the GC1 developmental program. Questions asked during the interview were designed from a generalized interview guide developed by Dr. Darin Eich (2012). All interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis in an area determined to be, by the participant, free of external distractions, such as excessive noise or external interruptions by coworkers entering the interviewing area (Patton, 2015). All interviews were recorded with the participant's approval, so the data could be transcribed accurately later (Seidman, 2013).

Data Analysis

The transcript of each recorded interview was analyzed using the description coding technique described by Saldaña (2016). The analysis involved several times reading the transcripts, becoming familiar with the data, and summarizing words or phrases that would later be interpreted into codes. Using a coded matrix (see Appendix A), the codes were then categorized and themed relevant to the research question. The three themes generated and deemed relevant were: 1) Leader vs. Manager, 2) The Defining Success, and 3) Program Design.

Findings - Themes

Findings were summarized and categorized into three main themes. Due to the project's time constraints, additional themes were identified, but no further analysis was conducted on them.

Theme 1 – Leader vs. Manager

When asked how each individual would define leadership, the data revealed that the three participants collectively saw leadership as influential, relational, and requiring vision and that the vision should be aligned with the organization's vision. In addition, the participants said that a leader should have the ability to empower their follower's strengths and develop any weaknesses the follower may have when completing tasks. When asked to define the characteristics of a good leader, they collectively found that good leaders show humility, are balanced, show respect, are empathetic, listen, make sound decisions, and are accountable. When asked how that compared to managers, their collective response was that managers are typically non-relational and process-oriented and that the manager speaks more than listens. The leadership styles revealed from the behaviors described were transactional, authentic, and leader/member exchange. The data analysis revealed that the three participants agreed that there is a clear distinction between what determines a person as a leader and what makes them a manager.

Theme 2 – The Defining of Success

When asked how each individual would define success, the data revealed that collectively the three participants view success as being goal-oriented. Meaning that the goal is achieved but only in a manner that benefits the organization without harm, is mindful of all parties involved with the task, and when company policy was followed ethically. The data analysis revealed that success could be achieved through a managerial process. However, the analysis also revealed that leaders who can build relationships and empower their subordinates have tremendous potential for organizational success.

Theme 3 – Program Design

When asked to describe the GC1s developmental program, the data revealed that collectively the group determined the overall program to be beneficial and suitable for the participants. In addition, the program was described as providing each participant a diverse exposure to the company, developing to fill potential gaps with middle management, providing an overall big picture of the company, and being overseen by the executive management team. When asked their expectations from the program, the majority consensus was to gain a career position with GC1. Other expectations included: 1) knowledge sharing, 2) networking relationships with other divisions, 3) being a change maker, 4) understanding the inner workings of GC1, and 5) gaining a more robust understanding of the ship repair industry.

When asked if any improvements could be made to the program, the group unanimously agreed that the participant should have clear expectations as he or she moves between divisions. One example is when there were instances where the participant was unable to perform specific duties based on not having the required certifications that they have a goal to achieve still when working in that environment. Additional suggested improvements revealed by the data were to define the program so that it does not appear as a project management course and that those who carry industry certificates be considered for the program.

Discussion and Recommendation

The purpose of this case study was to provide an exploratory analysis of a developmental leadership program for an industry that is process-driven. The data revealed that the program participants could cognitively define leadership and the characteristics that align with good leaders. All agreed that the current design of GC1's developmental program was more aligned with a managerial approach but could include aspects of leadership. The group collectively found that the program's most significant benefit is the opportunity to work with each division of the company.

Limitations

Limitations identified during the study include the restricted timeframe the researcher was held to complete the project, not interviewing additional participants and access to documents that GC1 may have relevant to their program.

About the Author

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Appendix A

<p>Company Tenure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three years • Four years • Three months • Total – 7.25 years total 	<p>Selection Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview Process (X3) • HR Manually Reviews Resumes • Panel Board • Six-Month Process (X3)
<p>Leadership Defined</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence Others • Authentic – Actions meet Words • Positive Psychology • Born and Developed • Keeping People Informed (X2) • Values Match the Organization (Ethical) (X2) • Has Vision • Building Relationships • Empower • Know Follower Strengths • Develops Followers 	<p>Leadership Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being Authentic • Humility/Humble • Confidence • Respect • Balanced • Accountable • Level Headed • Empathetic • Emotional Intelligence • Willingness to Learn (X2) • Listen • Decision Making • Empowerment • Self-Develop • Vision • Open to Diverse Ways of Completing Tasks • Reward Followers • Committed
<p>Personal Leadership Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Reflection (X2) • Passion • Comfortable • Willingness to Learn • Intelligence • Motivation • Drive • Organizational Oriented • Vision • Empowerment 	<p>Program Defined</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseen by Executive Management • Diverse Exposure (X2) • Learn about the Company as a Whole (X2) • Gaps in Middle Management • Pooling the Younger Generation • External not Organic • Signs of Considering Organic • College Degree Required • Degree Equates to Achievement

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foot in the Door • Managerial and Leadership Development • Big Picture
<p>Leader vs. Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A leader sets the culture • A manager is Non-Relational (Current) • Leader earns respect • Leader has vision • Manager Process Oriented • Manager Speaks more than listens • Leaders Understandable • Uneducated Leader • Bad Leaders = Unwilling to Change 	<p>Program Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Sharing • Experience Diverse Scenarios Within the Company (X2) • Build Leadership/Managerial Skill Sets • Understand How the Process Works • Personal Growth (X3) • Networking (X3) • Professional Relationships (X2) • Changing of Roles
<p>Mentor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Formal Mentor Program (X3) • Participants Informally Find a Mentor (X2) • Supportive • Bounce Ideas • Building of a Collaboration • Venting • Problem Solving 	<p>Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal Achieved (X3) • Goal-Oriented (X3) • When it Beneficially and not Harmful • Mindful of all Parties • Company Policy is Followed (Ethical) • Often times Extrinsic Driven • Diverse Exposure • Lack of Relationship = Lack of Success • Having a Flexible Mindset
<p>Executive Management Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to Feedback • Monthly Meetings (Strength) • Open to New Ideas 	<p>New Leadership Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to Learn the Industry • What Not to Do • Leadership Analysis Tool • Interpreting Follower’s Needs •

<p>Expectations from Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Position • Knowledge Sharing • Voice • Dignity • Respect • Change Maker (X2) • Diverse Mindset • Organizational Commitment • Personal Growth (X3) • Networking (X3) • Better Understanding of the Industry 	<p>Program Design/Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearer Direction (X3) • No Clear Strategy – Participant Time (X3) • No Clear Strategy – Participant Expectation (X3) • Concept of Program is Good • Misleading – Project Management (X2) • Open-mindedness (X2) • Not Open to Just Experience • Internally Measure Success of Program • Needs Tweaking • Seek Diverse Thoughts and Values • Aligning Goals • Costly – Risk of Investment Loss • No Guarantee on Placement • Internal Communication on What the Program is • Align Skills with Company Needs • Not a Protégé Builder • More Managerial Program • Improve on the Leadership Aspect
<p>Company Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent with Knowledge Sharing • Abilene Paradox 	<p>Leadership Styles Revealed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transactional • Authentic • Leader/Member Exchange - Low
<p>Additional Leadership Behaviors Revealed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coercive Mindset 	