
Discussion on Leadership Development and Succession Planning in Criminal Justice

The criminal justice system controls crime through the police department, prosecution, the court system, and correction. The weight of this objective, therefore, requires that its organizational structure is effective and can take on future changes that are bound to happen in this dynamic system. Leadership development and succession planning are some of the critical tools necessary in addressing this issue. Leadership development improves that the skills of managers and supervisor among other leaders in the criminal justice. It equips them with modern skills that will assist them to make the right decisions in future policing among other areas, which is even more critical because the skills gained through formal leadership training are not enough and require regular development. Succession planning focuses on retaining top talent and is beneficial to the organizational structure of a criminal system. It is useful in the form of avoiding the risk of losing the knowledge that is not documented when the employee having this knowledge leaves. It also protects information that is critical to the success of the criminal justice system while equipping the staff with further skills.

The criminal justice system is bound to experience changes and preparation for these changes should be done using strategic planning. Leadership development and succession planning are some of the strategic practices that reforms in criminal justice have its basis on. Leadership development refers to the activities aimed at improving the skills, the confidence of leadership in an organization while succession planning is the identification and development of new leaders to replace outgoing leaders internally. The purpose of this paper is to explore and discuss leadership development and succession planning in criminal justice.

Leadership Development in Criminal Justice

Criminal justice is a system made up of various components whose intention is to control, minimize, and take action on crimes that have been committed. These components consist of the police who make initial contact with criminal activities, legal prosecution, court system sentencing, and correction done through correctional officers (Schafer, 2007). Many variations have taken place in the public service related to criminal justice and are expected to keep changing over time. The changes affect technology as well as all other aspects of criminal justice. Achieving the objectives of criminal justice amidst all the changes, therefore, requires leaders who are effective and competent as part of the creative and innovative personnel needed for these changes (Berman & Fox, 2016).

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Leadership development is a necessary tool in ensuring that all the components of criminal justice function well with the changes and are prepared for future changes. The responsibilities of managers and supervisors in law enforcement affect citizens, officers, and agencies. Some of these leadership positions in public law enforcement are gained with little or no leadership training until at a certain level. Formal leadership training is not enough for effective leadership and requires continuous development of leadership skills, which makes the employment of leadership development critical in all the aspects of criminal justice (Schafer, 2007). Thus, through evaluation of the current state of leadership and that of criminal justice, the leaders identify and develop the skills that they are lacking or requiring improvement in.

One issue that is addressed through leadership development is outdated skills that do not suit the current situation. Leaders are trained on innovative ways of handling new situations caused by changes in the system and how to deal with future changes. Subordinate staff in the criminal justice system are also given an opportunity for formal leadership training. The law enforcement field of criminal justice is led by first-line supervisors and law enforcement managers who manage and direct personnel in their daily activities. Leadership development in this field will comprise of evaluating and training these leaders (Albanese, 2016). The police leaders in modern times require leadership skills that are broader than before, which is meant to deal with the current complex situations that involve more political interaction than before. It is achieved through programs of leadership development that develop competent skills through action learning, on the job experiences, and offering skills meant to deal with future challenges.

Succession Planning in Criminal Justice

Succession planning is significant not only for replacement of employees but also in preparation for organizational requirements that the company may have in future. The first step in succession planning is the identification of the positions, making it necessary for succession planning. This step is based on the importance of a certain position to the company's success, and lack of documentation for knowledge possessed only by some employees. Possible successors and their job requirements are later identified to assist in building the required competencies. The success of the process is evaluated to assess progress towards the final goal.

Leaders in criminal justice fall mainly in the public sector where research has shown that positions are a field for only a short period, which did not permit enough time for the planning of a succession program. Succession planning is, however, important for the effective flow of operations in law enforcement. A study carried out by university police departments in Florida found some of the succession planning practices to include on the job training and sponsored courses on leadership and management (Rothwell, 2010). Courses were also through leadership training and police academies. Mentoring was done at a personal level, and the

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pursuit of formal education encouraged. The study indicated that succession planning was not done systematically but was rather observed in the form of singular practices.

Potential successors are identified through performance reviews, supervisory experience, and self-initiated projects among other methods. Succession planning is beneficial to the organizations in criminal justice with an example of an agency that reported to have managed to push down some responsibilities through succession planning, which provided more time at the higher level that could be used to focus on other concepts that could bring success to the company. Other benefits reported by departments in criminal justice include performance, motivation through internal promotions, identification of areas requiring further training and reduction of necessary training when appointing supervisors eventually (Albanese, 2016).

The criminal justice system plays an important role in managing crime through all its components. The actions taken by this system also have a great impact on a country's citizens. For this reason, leadership development and succession planning are vital for the effective delivery of services in the criminal justice system. These two tools are also important in the dealing with the future changes bound to happen in policing among other aspects because they ensure that the staff is competent enough to come up with innovative solutions to face future challenges. It is, therefore, evident that leadership development and succession planning are necessary for proper management and performance in the criminal justice system.

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