EXPLORING THE APPROACHES TOWARD
AN EFFECTIVE SUCCESSION SYSTEM FOR MANAGERS IN
THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT SARAWAK:
AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

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DEDICATION

"The One who grants succession will set him in authority"
Psalm 110:7

The Lord God Almighty has placed some very special and caring people in my life.

To my wife Irene Beow Hun, from whom no good thing has our Lord Jesus Christ withheld, to whom he has always dealt with grace and softness and in whom I have found what is good from the Lord.

To my children Jeshurun, Josiah, Jerusha and Jemimah Elizabeth who are a heritage and a reward from the Lord.

To my mother Elizabeth Siok Yan, whose life and passing has taught us the truth of looking forward to the Day of the Great Reunion.

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To my sister Mary, a vessel of honour for noble purposes in the Lord’s household.

To Peter, my brother and Norma, confident that the Lord who began will also bring to completion.

To Teo Siok Noi, a testimony of God’s faithfulness and unfailing grace.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The researcher was previously attached to the Roads and Airfields Branch of PWD as a civil engineer at the middle management level, responsible for road planning, design and construction monitoring. A graduate of the University of New South Wales, Australia in Civil Engineering, the researcher undertook a Master of Science programme in Human Resource Development under the auspices of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) and the Centre for Modern Management (CMM) on a one year Sarawak State Government scholarship.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

I.&D., Investigations and Design Branch

KPA, Kuching Port Authority

JKR, Jabatan Kerja Raya (Malay language for PWD)

PWD, Public Works Department

ADE, Assistant Divisional Engineer

DE, Divisional Engineer

AD, Assistant Director

Dy.DPW, Deputy Director of Public Works

JPA, Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (Malay language for Public Services Department)

SEE, Senior Executive Engineer

SS, State Secretary

SSB, Sistem Sanaan Baru (Malay language for New Remuneration System)

UNIMAS, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the approaches toward an effective succession system for managers in the Public Works Department, Sarawak using action research. This exploratory study was aimed at identifying the various models of succession approaches and systems available. This could then form a starting point for an integrated approach to developing an effective succession system for managers in PWD.

The site for this study was the Public Works Department of Sarawak (PWD) with supplementary sites at the Kuching Port Authority, Bank Utama, UNIMAS, Shell Berhad and Taiyo Uden.

A review of the current literature on succession systems and planning, action research and action learning was also undertaken.

The following research questions formed the basis of this study:

1. What were the current practices of managerial succession and the related problems within PWD?
2. What other systems of managerial succession were currently in practice in the public and private sectors elsewhere?
3. What were the various types of succession planning or related programmes available within the framework of a succession system?

To answer the above questions, an action research methodology was used involving a spiral of cycles of planning, action, observation and reflection. Data was collected by interview questionnaire, structured and semi-structured interviews. Evaluation and implementation was undertaken using triangulation and a focus group.

The findings from the study showed that there was no formal, written procedures for succession planning within PWD. The associated problems were the lack of continuity of policies and procedures as well as a sense of uncertainty when leadership changed. These were perceived to have a negative impact on staff morale and motivation. It was found that there was a readiness and desire to have a fair and transparent succession system in place in PWD. Three generic systems were distilled from the study of the five external organizations: Performance plus Potential-Based, Career-Based and Performance-Based. The study also identified the use of personal one to one time with exposure to leadership situations, cross-functional and cross-cultural job attachments, assessment centres and psychometric testing within the overall succession planning framework of the external supplementary organizational sites. The study concluded there was a strong need for a systematic succession planning to be incorporated into the human resource planning sector of PWD. The study recommended that an action research group continue with the detailed implementation phase constituting the second and subsequent action research cycles.
ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki pendekatan-pendekatan merangkakan suatu sistem penggantian yang berkesan bagi pengurus-pengurus di Jabatan Kerja Raya Sarawak dengan menggunakan kaedah kajian tindakan. Ia bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti pelbagai model pendekatan serta sistem penggantian yang sedia ada supaya menjadikan suatu asas permuatan bagi menggunakan pendekatan yang bersepadu untuk merangkakan suatu sistem penggantian yang berkesan bagi pengurus-pengurus di JKR.


Suatu sorotan kajian lepas dibuat mengenai sistem dan perancang penggantian, kajian tindakan serta pembelajaran tindakan.

Kajian ini berteraskan kepada soalan-soalan penyelidikan yang disenaraikan di bawah:
1. Apakah amalan-amalan penggantian pengurusan yang sedia ada serta masalah-masalah berkaitan di JKR?
2. Apakah sistem-sistem penggantian pengurusan lain yang kini diamalkan di kalangan sektor awam dan sektor swasta?
3. Apakah jenis-jenis program perancang penggantian atau program-program berkaitan yang sedia ada dalam rangka kerja sistem penggantian?

Untuk menjawab soalan-soalan tersebut maka suatu kaedah kajian tindakan digunakan yang melibatkan suatu proses kita berbilin yang merangkumi aktiviti-aktiviti perancang, tindakan, cerapan dan pertimbangan. Pengumpulan data dilaksanakan dengan menggunakan borang soal sedikit, temuduga bersifat dan temuduga seaparuh bersifat. Penganalisisan dan pelaksanaan dilakukan dengan menggunakan ‘triangulation’ (process bersegi tiga) dan kumpulan fokus.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Malaysian Civil Service in general, and the Sarawak Civil Service in particular, are currently undergoing fundamental transformations and being updated and equipped for service to the nation and state in an increasingly competitive, quality-centred and borderless world. To be ‘world class’ is the current catch cry and this is taken to mean fast, cost effective and high quality service. Of crucial importance to the attainment of these goals is the emergence and development of good leadership.

Background of the Study

As the largest single multi-disciplinary technical organization existing in Sarawak, the Public Works Department of Sarawak (PWD) comprises the largest pool of professional, managerial and technical expertise in the form of engineers, architects, quantity surveyors and accountants within the Government of Sarawak. It represents a human capital asset with the potential to yield high returns to the government if properly invested and managed.

PWD was facing pressure from the rising expectations of the people of Sarawak, of the political leadership and of the rapidly changing scenarios that took place within the context of the infrastructural development of Sarawak. The people and the government were expecting the performance of PWD to provide for timeliness of completion, economy and quality in the design and construction of infrastructure projects. The pressure was for PWD to perform as efficiently and as effectively as private sector organizations in terms of greater cost-effectiveness yet with the reduced levels of manpower and resources that existed.

Besides a high degree of professionalism, a strong moral calibre was also expected of PWD staff in the course of their carrying out their duties.

To meet these challenges, it was important that PWD took steps to minimize the negative impacts of such eventualities. Efforts were needed to strengthen and build the capabilities needed to create and retain a pool of first-rate and highly qualified professionals and managers to provide quality leadership within PWD in a rapidly changing environment. This talent pool of professionals and managers would form a strategic driving force for change in re-vitalizing PWD to perform above and beyond the expectations of the people and government.

Statement of the Problem

Currently succession to vacant managerial positions within PWD is determined almost solely by seniority. There is no systematic process to identify high-potential candidates nor the means to develop people based on the gap between the candidate’s current strengths, developmental needs and the quality of skills required for the positions.

In addition to natural attrition through retirement, experienced staff were being attracted to the private sector with lucrative offers in salary and benefits. The unanticipated loss of experienced staff constituted a serious threat to the organization resulting in a diminishing skills base which affected the quality of professional and managerial staff available.
Introduction

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the approaches toward an effective succession system for managers in PWD using action research.

The approach taken was an exploratory study aimed at identifying the various models of succession approaches and systems available. This could then form a starting point for an integrated approach to developing an effective succession system for managers in PWD. As the nature of this study was exploratory, the following research questions formed the basis of this study:

1. What were the current practices of managerial succession and the related problems within PWD?
2. What other systems of managerial succession were currently in practice in the public and private sectors elsewhere?
3. What were the various types of succession planning or related programmes available within the framework of a succession system?

To answer the above questions, an action research methodology was used. The action research methodology involved a spiral of cycles of planning, action, observation and reflection.

Significance of the Study

A study on the current practices of managerial succession within PWD Sarawak will provide information on the existing system of filling managerial positions in the organization. The study can be useful to the management of PWD in establishing a strategy for the best use of existing resources and personnel, justifying new resources and contending with organizational changes.

The results of this study can provide a general framework for the systematic succession of first-rate managers throughout PWD through planning, challenging, assessing and grooming a steady flow of internal talent so as to ensure greater continuity of operations and better qualified incumbents.

The accurate and systematic assessment of both the critical success factors required of key professional and key managerial jobs and the evaluation and monitoring of the best person-job fit against these factors would enable the creation of a pool of first-rate and highly qualified professionals and managers to meet the future needs of PWD.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the various key elements associated with the issue of succession systems within an organization. The framework shows how the various elements are related to each other.

Management Structure & Functions

An organizational structure is the primary means of organizing the many activities and people in order to get work done. Key organizational positions within the context of succession planning refer to positions that provide significant importance in the strategic and operational decisions that affect organizational success.
Assessment
This involves a system of providing periodic review and evaluation or appraisal of an individual's or group's job performance with the objective of improving organizational effectiveness. It is also used to identify potential and developmental needs in employees as well as selecting employees to fill positions.

![Diagram of Succession Systems]

**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework for succession systems.

Selection
This is a process of choosing from a group of applicants those individuals best suited for a particular position.

Grooming/Training & Development
This is a planned, continuous effort by management to improve employee competency levels and organizational performance through training and development programmes. Within a succession planning context, it also involves learning experiences resulting in an upgrading of skills and knowledge required in current and future positions.

Compensation/Reward/Incentive
Compensation refers to the rewards that individuals receive in return for their labour.

Assumptions

An assumption was defined as "any statement in this form: if A holds true and I assume it does then Z will happen" (Simon, 1969 cited by Abraham, 1997, p. 7).
Introduction

It is assumed that all the data collected were accurate and reliable. Data triangulation was carried out in this study by the bringing together of data from a variety of sources for comparison. The study found that there was good agreement between the data from the various sources thus providing support for each source.

As this study relied heavily on what people said or wrote, it is assumed that the individuals who contributed were honest in what they stated.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study was framed within the action research component of the UNIMAS-CMM MSc (HRD) programme of one year duration which consisted of both coursework and work-based action research. The programme had defined timetable completion schedules.

In preparation for the research project, coursework relating to traditional literature-based and empirical research was introduced. The initial ideas concerning this study were framed within that traditional framework.

This initial preparation was subsequently discarded during the learning period at the Gibaran Action Research Management Institute in Australia which was commissioned to impart knowledge relating to action research.

Therefore time was a critical limiting factor in this study with the effective time frame for research reduced to a mere five months. This time frame was slotted within the second half of the overall 12 months course schedule.

As the strategic nature of this action research project is focused on bringing about real changes at the workplace, the project is expected to continue in its action research cycle after the completion of the MSc programme.

The severe time constraint as well as the earlier knowledge constraint on action research prescribed an exploratory approach to the study. The term exploratory research is frequently used when the researcher is on a ‘fishing expedition’ (Hartman and Hedblom, 1979 cited by Abraham, 1997, p. 83). As such, this study is a good starting point for gaining insight into the thinking and working of the senior management of PWD and other organizations concerning succession and succession planning.

In view of the above factors, this submission will not cover a full implementation and evaluation of change. It will cover only the initial exploratory phase of the project.

The focus of the study is on the management level of PWD and not the total organization.

The perceptions of a number of individuals formed the basis for the answers to some of the research questions and this in itself is acknowledged as a limiting factor.

As this was an exploratory study, there was no attempt to use a control group for experimental hypotheses testing.

Definition of Terms

The following terms will be used frequently throughout the study:

Action Research Methodology
A research methodology, first developed by American social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1946), through which change can be introduced into organizations. It involves spiral cycles of planning, action, observation, reflection and evaluation.

Action Research Group
A voluntary group of people employing the Action Research Methodology to initiate change in an area of common concern.

Bank Utama
A Sarawak-based bank incorporated in Malaysia with operations in West Malaysia.

Concept
A regularity in events or objects designated by some label.

Concept Mapping
A technique for externalizing a regularity in events, objects or propositions designated by some label as well as representing the range of relationships between them in a framework.

Descriptive Account
A process of analysing interview records to uncover key elements or essential meanings and its context. The process involves describing the key elements and the context, locating key phrases and statements, identifying recurrent or essential features and interpreting the meaning of the phrases and statements. The elements are then integrated into a descriptive account that details the essence of the content and other relevant features of the context.

Focus Group
A technique involving interviewing a group of participants to obtain information on their reactions and ideas on products and concepts presented to them.

Kuching Port Authority (KPA)
A statutory agency of the Sarawak State Government which is autonomous in its operation of the Kuching Port complex.

Management
The process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the affairs of an organization.

Planning
The process of establishing objectives and choosing the most suitable means for achieving the objectives.

Public Works Department (PWD)
An organization owned by the Sarawak State Government charged with implementing both State and Federal Government public works involving the design, contract management of construction, maintenance of buildings, roads, bridges and water
Introduction

supply. The Malay language term used for Public Works Department is "Jabatan Kerja Raya" with the initials "JKR".

Reflective thinking
A controlled action of pushing and pulling of concepts, putting them together and separating them again.

Sarawak Shell Berhad
A subsidiary company of the multi-national Royal Dutch Shell group based in Malaysia undertaking Oil and Gas Exploration activities.

Sarawak State Civil Service
The administrative arm of the Sarawak State Government comprising over 160 agencies and a total permanent staff strength of over 30,000.

Succession system
A systematic way of building from within an organization, a management talent pool, through the process of identifying, grooming and selecting staff to fill any key position opening that might occur so as to ensure leadership continuity.

Taiyo Uden
A Japanese electronic firm set up in the Sama Jaya Industrial Zone in Kuching.

Triangulation
Triangulation in this study refers to the search for consistency of findings of different observers, different observing instruments, materials of observation, times, place and the use of simple events, either from different participants or observers, or from the same person at different times.

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
The first university to be fully set up in Sarawak. It is run by the Government and is located in Kota Samarahan about 30 km from Kuching.

Other assumptions, limitations and definitions are stated in the text where appropriate.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the approaches toward an effective succession system for managers in PWD using action research. The aim was to identify the various models of succession approaches and systems available which could then form the basis for an integrated approach to developing an effective succession system for managers in PWD.

This chapter reviews the literature on succession and succession planning in terms of the degree of attention that had been given to it, its importance to organizations strategically as well as the approaches available in framing a succession planning system. It will be seen that such shifts are taking place in the various approaches toward a holistic and integrated framework for succession and succession planning within the ambit of human resource management. A look from the public sector perspective is also included in view of this study being carried out within a public sector organization.

Succession and Succession Planning

Schall (1997) in her literature review on succession and succession planning highlighted the lack of attention on executive level transition in the available literature. She noted this lack was even more pronounced in the public sector side with very few authors addressing the issue. Researchers from the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) also reported this “lack of attention to public sector transitions” (cited by Schall, p. 5). Gilmore (1988) concurred that “we have paid too little attention to leadership succession issues” (p. 3).

Farquhar (1995) in her editorial noted that the term ‘transition’ had overtaken the use of the term ‘succession’ in current literature. The change in terminology had reflected the dramatic change in climate in which the managerial and professional groups operate. Farquhar also commented that the word succession connoted “the orderly sequence through which new leadership replaces the old” (p. 3). In the case of the transition process, this was “longer in duration and less orderly than the word succession implies” (p. 3).

With the limited availability of literature on succession and succession planning, the outlook for research literature on succession and succession planning from the action research perspective was even more bleak. Eventually literature on succession and succession planning related to the action research approach could not be found.

However, it was interesting to observe the perspective of Gilmore (1988) who saw the transition or succession event from Kurt Lewin’s framework of organizational change. Through Lewin’s framework an opportunity arose for an organization “to rethink the commitment to the present agenda, to reflect on roads not taken in the past, and to review future choices” (p. 10). In effect, the succession event presented itself as an occasion in which organizational leadership could engage in the action research spiral of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-planning.

From the literature reviewed, it seemed that there was a growing recognition in recent years of the strategic importance of succession and succession planning within organizations. Apparently this had not been properly addressed judging from the literature available. Schall (1997) noted that the research frameworks available failed “to capture the opportunity for a strategic view of this moment” (p. 5). Whereas there was a realization of succession as a major strategy-influencing event, Schall critiqued research authors for
stopping “short of grasping transition’s full potential to make, not just influence, strategy” (p. 5)

Strategic Perspective

Strategy consists of goals, policies and plans (Dess and Miller, 1993). It has to do with the long term direction and future as well as the allocation of resources to achieve the goals set to fulfill a mission (Hunger and Wheelen, 1996).

Schall (1997) pointed out that there was a missing link between succession within an organization and the strategic needs of the organization. Too often it was seen as simply a replacement issue whereby the incumbent was replaced by another with similar skills and training. Worst still would be what a founder of the largest recruiting agency in the United States (U.S.) termed as “longevity, luck, and just being in the right place at the right time” (Cowherd, 1986 cited by Gilmore, 1988).

McElwain (1991) emphasized that “bringing people up through the ranks is a difficult process requiring care and hard work. It’s also far too important to be left to chance” (p. 71).

John Isaacson, the director of one of the largest executive recruiting firm in the U.S., commenting on whether organizations were headed in the right direction in terms of managing their executive transitions orsuccessions, said, “... there is a tendency to use abstract criteria, followed by intuition to make a decision about the future. Left to their own devices, that’s how most people do it” (Altman, 1995). On the other hand, determining the strategic needs of an organization required careful consideration of the past and of the future of the organization - including what would be the threats and opportunities posed by the wider environment (Gilmore, 1988).

What had brought about this shift towards a strategic perspective for succession and succession planning?

Rapid change and turbulence.

Schall (1997) observed that the one distinctive constant in both the public and private sectors in the U.S. was the demand for change. In writing about executive searches, Hall (1995) predicted that “as the rate of change increases in today’s organizations, the need for an equally rapid transition becomes even more critical” (p. 88). As Gilmore (1988) pointed out, “the rate of change in the wider society is accelerating” (p. 3). He postulated that such accelerating changes arose from “rapidly changing technologies, deregulation, or other environmental changes” (p. 5) and warned of the impending approach towards “adhocracy” (Toffler, 1971 cited by Gilmore). Gilmore argued that there is therefore a critical need to learn to manage leadership succession more systematically, in view of the change in environment to what Peter Vaill termed “permanent whitewater” (cited by Gilmore) - a term associated with going through the turbulent waters of rapids in rivers. As organizations underwent increasing pressures to implement strategies in turbulent times and as these pressures exceeded a certain threshold, succession and succession planning to ensure availability of talented human resource to lead and operate businesses and agencies no longer remained in the realm of mere manpower planning. It began to take on strategic dimensions (Carretta, 1992).

Carretta (1992) presented a persuasive scenario of changes whereby traditional manpower planning technology and career models involving vertical movements along hierarchical, pyramidal organizational structures were in the process of being stripped away by new corporate realities. Such realities included down-sizing, outplacement, flattening of
organizational structures, growth of entrepreneurship and total quality awareness. These were matched by a greater concern with flexibility, challenge and individual lifestyle as benchmarks to be sought for in the quality of work life in organizations.

Carretta (1992) also traced other emergent trends which included the multichanneling of career paths laterally as well as downwards. These afforded individuals the opportunities to gain new knowledge, develop personally and to exercise their freedom of choice. In line with this was the appearance of "the 'self-designing organization', defined as one facing rapidly changing environments by means of improvisation, continued adaptation, generalist managers (rather than specialists) and networks. These organizations focus on skills, metaskills and behaviours, ie competencies, that individuals are expected to acquire and master, to deal with change" (p. 48).

The rapidity of change with its attendant turbulence had resulted in the evolution of organizations from stable, rigid structures to organic, adaptable structures which were seen as providing continuity for the survival of the organizations.

Need for continuity and adaptability.

Gilmore (1988) argued that as the pace of change quickened in an increasingly complex, pluralistic and interdependent world, there was a need for what he termed "authentic leaders who can guide society's organizations through the adaptations that are needed to ensure continued vitality" (p. 3). There was a need for leaders to "think and act on behalf of future occupants" (p. 253) as well as seeking to "increase the authority and competence in the organization to match the ambiguities they face" (p. 254).

Despite the importance of such leadership, there was what Gilmore (1988) termed a dramatic underinvestment "in these high-leverage opportunities, relying on luck rather than intelligent strategies for success" (p. 8). Gilmore further elaborated that far too many succession or transition events were poorly thought through and managed. He further lamented that current leadership "placed little emphasis on succession planning" (p. 13) which seemed to have resulted from the way they themselves had gone through the mill. As such, why bother about their own successors?

In a similar vein, Schall (1997) argued strongly for the requirement of leadership to possess "future-oriented strategic thinking ... which must include attention to succession planning. Succession planning done well involves preparing the agency for a change in leadership, but it also includes assessing what has been valuable and how that can be preserved and transferred to the subsequent regime" (p. 5).

Hooghiemstra (1992) emphasized the need to ensure that organizations had managers "who can take up the proper leadership in these organisations, ... and that the competence needed for the success of the company is ensured in a structured and focused way" (p. 44).

In Westpac, Australia's oldest bank, the aim of its succession planning system was not only to provide future leaders but also for these future leaders to be "supported by sufficient reserves of talent developed across all functions of the business" (Gutteridge, Leibowitz and Shore, 1993, p. 183).

In the case of NCR, McElwain (1991) stated its goal "to develop a deep pool of management talent within the company. Then when an executive move occurs, the baton can pass smoothly. We want ... to manage change effectively" (p. 69).

Replacement versus Succession

Carretta (1992) further distinguished the difference between replacement planning and management succession planning in that the latter not only identified high-potential
candidates (as against those with similar skills and training to the incumbent) but also involved the development of those candidates. A proper succession system which incorporated the above factors would help "to ensure that the performance of these selected people will meet or exceed expectations when they are called upon to take up greater responsibility" (p. 59). Dalziel (1992) put it as "the concept of releasing value in their people" (p. 14) and talked about winning organizations which were able to "unlock the value that is theirs already - their people, their practices and their systems" (p. 12) as the primary means of keeping and developing their competitive advantage.

Table 1

Differences between Replacement Planning and Succession Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPARISON</th>
<th>Reactive</th>
<th>Succession Planning Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form of Risk Management</td>
<td>Planned Future</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substituting</td>
<td>Renewing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrow Approach</td>
<td>Organized Alignment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Although replacement and succession were seen as overlapping and complementary by Wolfe (1996), she provided a contrast between the replacement planning mode and the succession planning mode. The former mode was seen as focused on risk management and ideals for coping with crisis. The latter mode worked toward continued leadership and talent building within an organization. The differences are shown in Table 1.

Gutteridge et al. (1993) picked up a similar perspective from the succession planning system of Westpac. Replacement planning and succession planning in Westpac were seen as different aspects of the HR (Human Resources) planning continuum rather than as mutually exclusive events. The key distinguishing element here was the time frame. For Westpac, replacement planning focused on the coming 12 to 18 months whereas succession planning looked to the longer term by seeking to generate competencies across all levels of the organization.

Purposive and Inertial

Gilmore (1988) made the point that the succession or transition process "should be affirmatively chosen and not simply allowed to happen because of inertia" (p. 22). In other words, succession and succession planning should be purposive rather than inertial or reactive.

Within the context of an executive search for a successor, John Isaacson remarked that for his clients, he tried to,

make it a more rational and conscious process, less generalized, less unconscious, less intuitive. It's not that there isn't an intuitive leap, there always is. In the end the client has to make a leap of faith, but from a serious, conscious, rational