

The Impact of Organizational Culture and Management Commitment on Strategic Succession Planning in Law Enforcement Agencies

Nicola Denise Kendall

Guyana Police Force Academy, Police Headquarters, Eve Leary, Guyana, South America

Abstract

The successful implementation of succession planning in public law enforcement agencies depends heavily on organizational culture and management support. This qualitative case study investigates the relationship between these two factors in the Guyana Police Force while identifying obstacles such as entrenched patronage and unclear promotion systems. The analysis of interview data from senior, middle, and supervisory staff, along with archival information, reveals that transparent and meritocratic cultures create strong leadership development systems. Strategic sponsorship, combined with resource allocation from management, remains vital; however, cultural transformations are necessary for sustaining lasting effects. The research introduces a combined framework that embeds succession planning throughout both cultural and operational aspects of an organization. The proposed approach will boost leadership resilience and talent retention while building public trust in modern policing practices to create agile, strategically modernized law enforcement agencies for the 21st century.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Law Enforcement Leadership, Management Commitment, Organizational Culture, Succession Planning.

Introduction

Police organizations worldwide are increasingly confronted with the daunting task of addressing leadership continuity due to outdated or existing promotion policies, autocratic hierarchical arrangements, and reactive succession planning processes [35]. The increasing retirement rate of senior officers, evolving social expectations regarding policing, heightened emphasis on accountability and transparency, and the growing complexity of crime — encompassing cybercrime, transnational organized crime, and domestic terrorism — further exacerbate these challenges [6]. This change mandates agile, visionary, and resilient forms of leadership [3].

Amid this global context, the Guyana Police Force (GPF) demonstrates many of these structural deficiencies. Although several measures have been instigated to modernize the

organization, including the introduction of technology and community policing concepts, the GPF still operates under an outdated promotion pattern that prioritizes tenure and time-bound service over competence, leadership, and visionary knowledge. The abolition of the Thirty-Three-Year Rule has led to the implementation of a tenure-based successor recruitment rule, resulting in leadership voids, organizational sluggishness, and an archaic resistance to adapting to modern policing [12].

Furthermore, the lack of transition planning by the GPF is not just a procedural issue but also points to a deeper-seated cultural dynamic. It highlights factors such as resistance to change, favoritism at work, the absence of formal mentoring processes, and limited investment in leader and professional development [2]. As Sharma and Singh [27]

highlight, organizational culture plays a critical role in determining whether succession planning is viewed as a strategic necessity or an administrative necessity. Identifying future leaders and preparing them for leadership in non-transparent, non-meritocratic, non-knowledge-sharing, and innovation-hostile environments is a marginal, if not a sidelined, effort [19].

Corporate cultures that do not focus on strategic leadership development often stagnate, are plagued by inefficiencies, and suffer from a lack of public confidence [21]. In contrast, learning, inclusiveness, and future-thinking leadership are essential aspects of organizational culture that thrive in volatile environments [36].

The other equally important factor is management commitment. Senior leaders' support for succession planning—shown through a clear vision for leadership continuity, providing necessary resources, creating structured talent development programs, and holding leaders accountable—greatly influences the long-term success of leadership pipelines. If top management does not show strong, clear, and ongoing support, succession planning efforts can become formalities that follow the rules instead of meaningful actions that address future strategic needs [17].

Recent empirical evidence [31] highlights the importance of executive sponsorship, in which senior leaders personally coach and monitor the advancement of next-generation leaders in driving successful succession outcomes. Executives are also held accountable for leadership performance by incorporating succession results into performance assessments of top leaders, a best global practice that ensures accountability for leadership [22].

In this context, the current study focuses on the GPF as a case study to examine the impact of organizational culture and leadership commitment on structured leadership development and succession programs within

the public sector law enforcement environment. The study aims to identify cultural and leadership challenges that hinder successful succession by analyzing stories from senior, middle, and supervisory officers, as well as reviewing historical organizational documents and promotion policies. It highlights the urgent need to change the culture to focus on fairness and learning, hold leaders accountable, and invest in leadership training systems to build a strong leadership pipeline that can handle the challenges of modern policing.

Ultimately, the findings help shape broader recommendations for GPF and similar law enforcement agencies and security institutions in similar contexts of development and transition, which struggle to maintain leadership continuity, modernize their organizations, and improve public trust and legitimacy.

Literature Review

Organizational Culture and Succession Planning

Succession planning within organizational culture focuses on preparing enough potential successors for higher-level positions [39]. Another key individual characteristic is organizational culture, which is defined as “the patterns of values, norms, symbols, rituals, and assumptions that people follow to coordinate what they do in the organization” [37, p. 474] and significantly affects succession planning. Organizational culture influences the perception of succession planning as a crucial strategy rather than a burdensome bureaucratic process. Institutions that cultivate a culture of transparency, reflective learning, and an innovative approach to awarding based on merit demonstrate a strong leadership pipeline [18].

Keller and Meaney [14] found that companies with a growth culture are 1.8 times more likely to successfully prepare new leaders than organizations with change and compliance cultures. Similarly, Obeidat et al. [21] state that “dynamic” cultures are characterized by the

institutionalization of knowledge reuse and a cross-functional engagement that enables leadership potential to be identified early on and systematically developed. In contrast, inflexible, hierarchical, and closed cultures are not open to change and may view leadership development as a challenge to established power structures [38]. In those environments, succession plans can be politically driven or considered second-rate, undermining organizational resilience.

Houmanfar and Mattaini [39] were among the first researchers to notice that when succession planning is a regular part of an organization's culture and is incorporated into daily discussions, leadership reviews, organizational standards, and performance evaluations, it creates a system where developing leaders become standard practice rather than something unusual. Al-Swidi et al. [2] extended this perception, indicating that inclusive cultures based on open communication, diversity, and psychological safety have a considerable impact on potential leaders' engagement in succession planning. Recently, Park and Kim [22] emphasized the importance of digital organizational culture (i.e., cultures that adjust to technological change) in succession planning. Organizations that develop “digital-ready” skills can also better recognize and cultivate future-ready leaders.

Key Point 1: Succession planning can only be effectively maintained in an ecosystem characterized by transparency, adaptability, inclusivity, and the development of a learning institution. In contrast, a culture that is difficult to navigate and opaque hinders continuity in leadership.

Commitment of Management and Continuity of Leadership

Management commitment is the extent to which senior management actively endorses, supports, and promotes succession planning [29]. It is believed to be the most critical factor

in determining the effectiveness of succession planning. Research by Yusliza et al. [34] supports the idea that direct support by top executives is essential; the degree to which top management openly supports and mentors their successor and allocates resources for leadership development is significantly related to overall leadership continuity. In contrast, those firms that delegate succession planning to HR as a task do not exhibit this relationship.

Committed Management Ensures:

1. Align succession activities to the organization's mission and vision [12].
2. Regular investment in leadership development programs [29].
3. Performance criteria that track leadership development outcomes and the efficiency of succession implementation [24].
4. Mentorship and sponsorship that foster executives' mentoring of newer leaders [31].

Patel and Desai [22] note that succession planning, embedded within senior leadership KPIs (Key Performance Indicators), is now a global best practice. Leaders are judged not only by the operational results they achieve but also by the leaders they develop for the future, a mindset essential for developing stable leadership pipelines.

In the absence of management support, succession initiatives are typically

1. Ad hoc and non-sustainable [19].
2. The underfunded project was considered low priority during resource allocation [17].
3. Susceptible to derailment by leadership turnover or political turn [14].

Moreover, a commitment to inclusive leadership, where leaders visibly advocate for gender and diversity in leadership pipelines, has been associated with greater organizational agility and innovation, underscoring the importance of company-wide management involvement [30].

Key Takeaway: Management involvement – in the form of strategic fit, resource shortlists,

hands-on coaching, and executive follow-up) – is also crucial to ensure a smooth and widespread approach to succession planning.

Methodology

This research employed a qualitative case study to examine the intersection of organizational culture and managerial support in implementing succession planning within the Guyana Police Force (GPF) [9]. A case study was selected as a qualitative method because it provides a detailed understanding of the complex issues within organizations, particularly in public sector organizations where leadership is closely tied to culture [33].

The participants were 23 serving police officers, assessed through semi-structured interviews, and consisted of senior officers (including Assistant Commissioners and Superintendents), middle-ranking officers (such as closure authorities and Sergeants), and supervisory officers (Constables). This sample was drawn purposively, favoring those who had served for more than five years and demonstrated knowledge of management or facilitation in leadership development for Filipina females involved in the GPF. The interviews, which took place over three months, explored participants' beliefs about succession planning processes, cultures that enable or impede these processes, and the influence of management on leadership stability.

Historical data on promotion policies, training programs, succession plans, and internal strategic reports were used for triangulation, which strengthened the validity and rigor of the results [23]. The researcher organized a symposium on thematic coding with the assistance of NVivo 14 qualitative analysis software. Interpretation Thematic analysis, using Braun and Clarke's [5] framework, included open coding, grouping codes into themes, and refining through successive iterations. The emerging themes included organizational culture characteristics, leadership commitment patterns, and

perceptions of career progression options. For trustworthiness, the research included member checking and peer debriefing and kept an open audit trail of analytic decisions [20].

Key Message: The qualitative case study method, employing triangulation and thematic analysis techniques, enabled us to understand the cultural and leadership factors that influence succession planning practices within the GPF.

Findings

Organizational Culture: Enabler or Exhibitor of Succession Planning

Categoric, however, participants concluded that there needs to be a genuine change in the institutional culture of the Guyana Police Force (GPF) if the country is to embrace succession planning. Culture, under the present circumstances, works more like an obstacle than an enabler due to established biases, political patronage, knowledge monopolies, and murky promotion guidelines.

Several interviewees discussed a workplace where success was sometimes the result of whom you knew rather than what you knew.

Participant P5 stated:

"It is not based on skills but whom you know."

This view was also expressed more widely, as Participant P7 observed:

"There is also no clear career path here – people do not know what to do to grow, so they feel frustrated and demotivated."

These findings are consistent with those of Mughal et al. [19], who argue that if the cultural advancement path is not transparent, it will demotivate and lead to talent attrition. Indeed, the lack of well-defined succession policies sustains informal politics [17].

Compounding the problem, several participants mentioned that this atmosphere of vagueness is driving competent individuals to leave the GPF. As Participant P11 explained:

When you feel that you don't have a fair chance at promotions, you should consider looking elsewhere.

Sims et al. [28] also noted that perceptions of unfairness and favoritism weaken talent retention, particularly in public-sector organizations.

Nevertheless, participants identified the possibility of cultural change. They have forcefully recommended institutionalizing elements of transparency, meritocracy, and perpetual leadership development in the daily routine rather than dealing with succession planning as a stand-alone HR exercise. Participant P3 argued:

“We must groom future leaders as part of our DNA here.”

This aligns with the studies of Kendall [16] and Alam and Omar [3], which emphasize that succession planning should be integrated into the organizational culture through methods such as mentoring, job rotation, and knowledge transfer [32].

Additional Themes Identified:

1. **Unstructured Talent Identification:** No framework or process exists to identify high-potential officers [4] quickly.
2. **Knowledge Hoard:** The lack of motivation to share knowledge creates a leadership gap [37]
3. **Generational Clash:** “Meritocratic promotions” sought by juniors instead of moving ahead on a traditional seniority basis has led to friction between juniors and seniors [25].

The results demonstrate that it is crucial to transform the mindset of GPF members, shifting from favoritism to a merit-based system, where fairness, ongoing growth, and proactive leadership training are integral to the organization.

Support for Succession Planning from the Top

“Management insistence” is a key factor in planning success. Participants underscored that succession efforts would be worthless without demonstrated long-term leadership involvement.

Participant P10 remarked:

“The administration will not be successful unless it is a full partner and driving the process.”

Although the issue of succession planning is mentioned in some of the policies, P8, among others, makes clear that there is no action:

“There is no emphasis from our leadership on planning for success now.”

This hypothesis is consistent with Sturman and Fink [11] and Yusliza et al. [34], who argue that leadership failure renders succession planning symbolic rather than power/knowledge-based organizational practice.

Participants suggested that strong involvement of management commitment should include

1. **Establish KPIs Measures of Succession:** Articulating measurable accounting results [24].
2. An investment in purchasing or providing leadership academies, job rotation, coaching, and mentoring [30].
3. **Active Talent Sponsorship:** Senior leaders mentoring high-potential officers [8].

Participant P15 suggested:

“Management at the top needs to set explicit targets and timetables for preparing successors and then hold us to those targets.”

Furthermore, ethical leadership was considered imperative to ensure the implementation of merit-based promotions and fair opportunity policies.

As Participant P12 asserted:

“Leadership has to be able to provide everyone an equal opportunity to advance based on hard work.”

Khan and Anwar [15] also share this view, emphasizing the importance of ethical leadership behavior in building trust and stabilizing the succession process.

Additional Themes Identified:

1. **Symbolic versus Substance Commitment:** There is a difference between policies on paper and leadership action [24].
2. **Incongruent Communication from Leadership:** Torn career communication confuses the organization [27].

Interaction Between Organizational Culture and Commitment of Management

One of the study's key findings is the interactive and dynamic relationship between organizational culture and managerial involvement. People have told us that goodwill and the bones of succession planning are two parts of the same body.

Participant P6 noted:

"It has to come from the top. Nothing will improve here if the senior leaders do not model mentorship and fairness."

Leadership behavior — promoting on merit, mentoring subordinates, and conducting fair promotion boards — directly shapes the broader culture and strengthens positive norms. However, Participant P4 states the contrary:

"When they are still looking at promotion based on alignment, people recognize that what drives things is the old way," he said.

According to Schein and Schein [26] and Wilson [32], leaders are the most significant cultural determinants and can even precipitate cultural change.

In addition, participants noted that changing cultural norms — particularly among younger, qualification-obsessed officers — mean that bottom-up pressure is being exerted on those in leadership to align with succession practices. Participant P11 explained:

"The young officers now want training and criteria. That forces our leaders to evolve."

This ground-up effect is consistent with Cameron and Quinn [7], who posit generational shifts as key drivers toward a more transparent and competency-based system.

Additional Themes Identified:

1. **Culture as a Feedback Mechanism:** Negative cultures hinder succession processes [39].
2. **Management-Supported Cultural Change:** Leaders must nurture and maintain a changing culture [32].
3. **Resistance to Cultural Change:** If we change the culture, we must abandon our tradition of overly respecting those with long service and patronage [40].

Other New Themes that are Crucial for succession Planning

Other elements outside of culture and leadership were shown to be crucial to succession planning success:

KM Institutionalization

Respondents expressed significant concerns about losing operational knowledge during leadership changes.

Participant P14 noted:

"So much history is lost when leaders depart without passing on what they have learned."

This viewpoint is consistent with the work of Liu and Li [1], who argue in favor of adopting knowledge management (KM) systems, including electronic knowledge repositories and structured mentorship archives, to retain an organization's memory.

Competency-Based Leadership Frameworks

There was broad agreement that institutions should move away from tenure-based systems of promotion and toward more flexible approaches.

Participant P9 emphasized:

"You should be promoted on skills, not on time."

The editorial [13] also argues for performance-based promotions to promote excellent leadership.

Succession Planning: Measurement and Evaluation

Participants emphasized the need to monitor the success of succession.

Participant P13 suggested:

“We need to measure how many trained people are promoted and how widely successful they are.”

Reilly [24] proposes durable succession plans that monitor readiness, promotion success, and leadership post-promotion.

Psychological Safety for Leadership Development

Most significantly, respondents emphasized the importance of a trusting environment in which up-and-coming leaders can grow without concern for the potential consequences that may arise.

Participant P1 explained:

“You should feel safe asking for mentoring or training without being perceived as disloyal.”

This observation is consistent with Edmondson [10], who emphasizes that developing leadership potential depends on the presence of psychological safety.

Based on both participants’ responses and academic literature, a summary of findings is hereby shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Key Insights Pivotal for Enhancing Succession Planning in Law Enforcement.

Themes	Key Insights
Organizational Culture [28]	The practice of favoritism combined with unclear career advancement systems prevents succession; a transition to a meritocratic system is required [Participants 3, 5, 7, and 11; 28].
Management Commitment [22]	A succession strategy requires active leadership involvement to achieve success [Participants 8, 10, 12, and 15; 22].
Culture–Leadership Interplay [2]	The development of succession practices requires leadership and cultural elements to work together as a system [Participants 4, 6, and 11; 2].
Knowledge Management [21]	The process of institutionalizing knowledge transfer helps maintain leadership continuity [Participant 14; 21].
Competency-Based Leadership [13]	The system should move away from using tenure as the basis for promotions and instead use competency-based promotions [Participant 9;13].
Succession Metrics [24]	KPIs and metrics are essential for evaluating leadership development [Participant 13; 24].
Psychological Safety [10]	Leaders need to establish safe environments for future growth [Participant 1;10].

The key insights from the themes, collectively gathered as shown in Table 1, underscore the importance of strategic reforms

in organizational culture, leadership practices, and knowledge management to strengthen

succession planning within law enforcement agencies.

Discussion

This study demonstrates that culture and management commitment must work in tandem to ensure that succession planning becomes an integral part of the operational DNA of the GPF and other sister law enforcement authorities. Succession planning will not be successful as a standalone technical intervention but only through an explicit, linked change in leadership behavior and institutional values. The researcher interprets the results by considering the broader literature and comparing participant experiences with academic knowledge.

Leadership Cultural Change: A Reform in Name Only

The research demonstrated that leadership commitment is a prerequisite; however, without genuine cultural change, it remains cursory. Several participants, such as P5, P7, and P10, pointed out that even if leaders attempt to plan for future leaders by setting goals or initiating mentoring programs, these efforts will not succeed if significant issues, including favoritism, secrecy, and informal support networks, persist. Participant P5 insisted that:

"It is not by skills, it is by networking."

This shows a widespread belief that advancement depends on personal loyalty rather than merit. This mirrors Yusliza et al. [34], who theorize that succession plans deteriorate into mere symbolic, empty rituals without fundamentally dismantling cultural legacies cultivated by patronage. Mahapatra and Mishra [17] also underline that organizations that do not align their cultural assumptions with formal leadership pipelines will likely create a breeding ground for employee cynicism and disengagement. In addition, their experiences support Schein and Schein's [26] claim that if culture is not treated systemically, it will trump strategy. Leadership commitment may not be enough to make

sustainability happen if informal practices that invalidate formal succession frameworks are absent. So, as leaders, we must work not just on technical solutions (e.g., implementing succession KPIs) but also on the cultural storytelling, modeling, and reinforcement of these solutions. As Cameron and Quinn [7] warn, leadership should embody and promote meritocratic values by recognizing competency, fostering mentorship, and modeling ethical promotion processes.

Cultural Readiness Without Leadership Sponsorship: A Trip to the Dead

On the contrary, the results also indicated that cultural readiness alone is insufficient to propel succession planning without support from senior leadership. Employees such as P4 and P8 noted that although there are isolated islands of cultural health in GPF teams (e.g., casual mentoring, learning-based climates), they cannot sustain themselves without top management intervention. Participant P8 stated:

"Succession planning is not top of mind for senior management at the moment,"

Despite the grassroots willingness, the perils of leaders are no longer an issue. This aligns with Kendall's [16] assertion that the executive ruling authority must formalize and scale ground-up leadership development programs to prevent institutional immobilization. Similarly, Patel and Desai [22] argue that top-level support is necessary for middle-management changes to become routine at the organizational level. Bourne and Jenkins [4] also stress that succession plans commonly fail under the strain of everyday business operations without official support from management, resulting in rushed placements and leadership vacuum issues, as Participant P2 echoes. Accordingly, cultural preparedness without proactive leadership commitment fosters disillusionment, division, and loss of talent when young officers expect a career path [32].

Interconnection and the Loop of Cultural Leadership

The paper shows a dynamic and two-way relationship between leadership commitment and organizational culture and argues that each does not work well in divorce. Participants recounted an upward spiral whereby “management [ethics] visible signs—such as mentoring...transparency...and fair promotion – over time change the culture. Participant P11 observed:

“The younger, merit-driven officers want a career path and transparency.”

This validates Schein et al. [26] argument that organizational culture socializes and molds leaders. Leaders show behaviors that reinforce cultural beliefs, and culture pressures them to act in those ways. Likewise, the Cameron and Quinn [7] Competing Values Framework notes that organizational evolution is cyclical and that, to maintain change, leadership must once

again reaffirm emergent cultural values. These responses indicate changes in officers' expectations regarding fair treatment and professionalism, paralleling discussions in the literature on generational changes and cultural shifts in policing [27]. The recent generation of talent wants openness, career development, and meritocratic promotion, which complement the top-down reforms. Strong leadership commitment and cultural change must work together to create a positive cycle where ethical leadership drives cultural change, and this change also strengthens the ethical practices and policies of executives involved in succession planning [32].

A Dual Transformation Model of Succession Planning

Leveraging the empirical findings, *Table 2* maps out a Dual Transformation Model on how succession planning should be nested in law enforcement organizations such as the GPF:

Table 2. A Dual Transformation Model of Succession Planning for Law Enforcement Organizations.

Elements	Description	Critical Activities
Leadership Commitment [22, 34]	Senior management champions succession planning, models ethical leadership, and provides sustained sponsorship [Participants 8, 10, 12, and 15; 22; 34].	<p>Patel and Desai [22], Yusliza et al. [34], and participants 8, 10, 12, and 15 collectively emphasized the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leadership development requires organizations to define specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that align with their objectives. 2. Succession planning initiatives need specific resources that organizations should dedicate to their execution. 3. Leadership promotions should directly link to measurable succession outcomes. 4. The organization should establish formal procedures for mentorship programs and talent identification systems. 5. The organization needs to establish specific and clear management targets which detail succession planning requirements. 6. The organization should establish formal mentoring programs to provide continuous leadership development.

		7. The organization must establish accountability systems for leadership participation and succession planning outcomes to maintain stability and continuity.
Cultural Transformation [27, 32]	The organization should implement fairness, transparency, and leadership development as core operational values throughout the entire organization [Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 11; 27; 32].	<p>Sharma and Singh [27] and Wilson [32], along with participants 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 11, advocated for the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organization should establish formal mentorship programs across all departments. 2. The organization should establish promotional procedures that are both clear and based on competency and merit. 3. Foster a culture of psychological safety to promote open communication and leadership development. 4. The organization should identify and reward behaviors that promote knowledge-sharing and teamwork. 5. The organization should create a culture that supports succession planning through mutual reinforcement between leadership practices and organizational culture. 6. • Leadership development environments must prioritize psychological safety as their fundamental requirement.

This model, as shown in Table 2, aims to ensure that succession planning is not just an administrative task but a transformative process deeply embedded within both leadership actions and organizational culture.

Implications for the Guyana Police Force

Key Significance: The consequences of this discovery for the GPF are momentous:

1. **Changing leadership expectations:** Senior leaders should be judged by their performance in shaping the leadership environment and sustaining a pipeline of successors.
2. **Institutionalized Cultural Mechanism:** GPF would need to establish formal mentoring methods and practices, such as a program for rotating leadership roles and identifying talent, all following the

same guidelines and utilizing the same resources.

3. **Open Dialogue:** Regularly discussing promotional processes, succession criteria, and leadership pathways should be formalized to clarify how career paths can be developed, expectations managed, and trust built.
4. **Incorporating Succession KPIs:** Succession measures (such as ready-now-fill rates and successor pool diversity) must be included in the organization's performance management system so that someone is held accountable for them.
5. **Bolstering Psychological Safety:** Leaders must deliberately create spaces for officers to share their aspirations, access mentorship, and participate in

leadership development without fear of retribution.

Neglecting these factors risks perpetuating another round of patch-ups, politically driven succession, and checked-out talent. Therefore, we cannot graft succession planning onto the current GPF construct without first addressing the foundations of leadership support and culture change. These two elements must work together continually, re-enforcing the other to embed leadership development activities as part of the organizational DNA.

The results help confirm that GPF can continue building a sustainable next-generation leadership pipeline capable of meeting future demands only under conditions where ethical, transparent leadership behaviors become the norm and where the organization's culture values fairness, ongoing development, and meritocracy. Without this twin transformation, succession planning will be vulnerable to tactical disruption, shallow change, and a persistent leadership deficit. Consequently, future action should regard succession planning as a strategic, interconnected imperative with broader objectives to professionalize, modernize, and ethnically regenerate law enforcement leadership in Guyana and beyond.

Recommendations

Taking into consideration the research results and dialogue on the nexus of organizational culture and management commitment, the following holistic suggestions are presented to entrench sustainable succession planning within the Guyana Police Force (GPF) and other law enforcement organizations:

Embed Succession Planning as a Strategic Imperative

Succession planning is an ongoing strategic HR function, not an ad hoc or crisis event administrative project. To achieve this:

1. **Create a Formal Succession Planning Policy:** Outline the company's goals for

succession management, including company, regional, and market objectives, principles, and responsibilities.

2. **Integrate Succession Planning with Strategic Objectives:** Align the development of the leadership pipeline with GPF's broader modernization and reform initiatives to ensure seamless integration.
3. **Create a Talent Management Department:** You need HR individuals who manage succession and focus on talent identification, career pathing, and tracking leadership development.
4. **Embed Succession Planning into Organizational Reviews:** Succession readiness should be integrated into annual performance reviews and strategic planning.

The current finding aligns with the work of Alam and Omar Sturman [3] and Sturman and Fink [18], who have highlighted that institutionalizing succession planning enhances leadership resilience and minimizes sudden leadership breaks.

Develop a Leadership Development Culture

To integrate succession planning into our organizational culture, GPF must foster a culture that values leadership development, transparency, and meritocracy. This includes:

1. **Demystify Leadership Development:** Standardize leadership training, mentorship, and cross-functional job rotations in career development.
2. **Incentivize Knowledge Sharing:** Reward officers who take the time to teach and foster people who will advance their unit.
3. **Encourage Leadership by performance, not by seniority:** Promote individuals who demonstrate a set of leadership competencies and skills rather

than merely conforming to the status quo or avoiding conflict.

4. **Building Psychological Safety:** Encourage conditions where LEOs feel free to ask for opportunities to grow without fear of punishment.

According to Schein et al. [26], cultural reinforcement—through storytelling, rituals, and hero recognition—is essential if leadership development is to become the norm rather than the exception.

Empower Management Accountability for Succession Planning

Leadership commitment must be more than lip service - tangible mechanisms of accountability to deliver on succession planning outcomes are

1. **Define Leadership Development KPIs:** Set measurable objectives for succession readiness, such as the proportion of leadership roles with a ready successor identified or the development progress of successors.
2. **Link Manager Performance Evaluations to Succession Outcomes:** Senior officers' performance reviews should assess their contributions to building the leadership pipeline.
3. **Oversight and Reporting of Succession Metrics Regularly Monitor and Report Succession Metrics:** Establish a quarterly or biannual succession progress report for the commissioner and ELT to discuss.
4. **Hold Leaders to Ethical Leadership Standards:** Leaders must demonstrate fairness, transparency, and inclusiveness in all aspects of succession planning and management.

These suggestions align with those of Turner and Baker [30], who emphasize that making managers accountable for succession KPIs enhances the sustainability of the leadership pipeline and the trust invested in the institution.

Amend HRM Policies to Incorporate Succession Frameworks

Integrating succession planning into all HRM systems is not just essential, but it also promises a future of consistency, fairness, and strategic alignment.

1. When it comes to hiring, it is essential not only to assess a candidate's current skills but also their leadership potential. By incorporating succession planning into our hiring practices, we can ensure that we evaluate both technical skills and leadership potential.
2. **Relate promotion to developed leadership and structure:** Make it an organizational requirement for potential candidates to complete leadership development programs and demonstrate competencies aligned with their organization's strategic needs.
3. **Embed Leadership Development into Training Systems:** Develop and standardize a leadership curriculum that encompasses early, mid-career, and senior career paths.
4. Building bench strength for key roles is a crucial step, as it ensures that strong leaders are identified and prepared for current and future key roles, thereby guaranteeing a consistent pipeline of designated successors.
5. Introducing diversity and inclusion objectives in succession plans is not just a suggestion; it is a necessity. The GPF's leadership pipelines must reflect the diversity of its workforce in terms of gender, ethnicity, and regional representation, ensuring that everyone feels included and valued.

These suggestions align with the best practices observed by Sturman and Fink [11], who advocate comprehensive HRM systems that facilitate effective leadership succession throughout the entire employee life cycle.

Drawing from the research findings and discussions on the intersection of

organizational culture and management commitment, *Table 3* outlines recommendations for fostering sustainable

succession planning within the Guyana Police Force (GPF) and similar law enforcement agencies:

Table 3. A Summary of Recommendations, Key Actions and Expected Outcomes

Recommendations	Key Actions	Expected Outcomes
Institutionalizing Succession Planning [3, 11].	Develop policy, align with strategic plans, and establish a Talent Management Unit [Participants 3, 8, 10, and 15, 3, 11].	Succession planning becomes a permanent strategic organizational process that runs continuously [Participants 3, 8, 10, and 15; 3; 11].
Cultivate a Leadership Development Culture [26].	Normalize mentoring, reward development behaviors, and promote meritocracy [Participants 1, 3, 5, 6, and 11, 26].	The organization establishes leadership development as a standard practice that operates at every organizational level [Participants 1, 3, 5, 6, and 11, 26].
Strengthening Management Accountability [30].	Establish KPIs; integrate succession outcomes into manager evaluations [Participants 10, 12, 13, and 15, 30].	The organization maintains clear definitions of management succession responsibility, which receive tracking and enforcement [Participants 10, 12, 13, and 15, 30].
Revising HRM Policies [11].	Link recruitment, promotion, and training to leadership pipeline goals [Participants 3, 9, 11, and 13, 11].	The HRM systems fully incorporate succession planning practices, ensuring fair and transparent talent development processes [Participants 3, 9, 11, and 13, 11].

The proposed recommendations shown in *Table 3* aim to transform succession planning into a fundamental organizational practice, ensuring leadership continuity and fostering a culture of growth and fairness.

Succession planning in the GPF should shift from reactive or random approaches to a systemic process that is visible and reinforced by the culture. The GPF can develop a strong, diverse, and future-ready pool of leaders by institutionalizing succession processes, changing leadership behavior, updating cultural norms, revising HR policies, and implementing the above recommendations. However, this kind of holistic reform is more than just strategic; it is imperative to rebuild public confidence, enhance service excellence, and secure the organization's long-term future.

Conclusion

The implications of this study suggest that, in the case of public police organizations, such as the GPF, cultivating leadership resilience relies on two related imperatives: culturally shaping the organization and the unwavering public commitment of senior executives to succession planning. Culture and leadership are interdependent; they must work together to create an effective pipeline of leaders that provides the organization with stability, strategic flexibility, and public trust in the long run.

Redefining Organizational Culture

The research indicates that a GPF culture of nepotism, non-transparent methods of promotion, and friend system recruitment

hinder effective succession planning. Participants repeatedly emphasized that succession programs will fall short without changing their culture toward one characterized by fairness, transparency, ongoing learning, and meritocracy. A reformed culture should promote the development of leaders through, for example, mentoring, knowledge sharing, and competency-based advancement—as basic organizational skills. The environment must foster psychological safety, enabling officers to pursue leadership roles without fear of political witch-hunts and intimidation. This assertion is consistent with modern organizational theory by Schein et al. [26], which states that culture is not a mere curtain for strategic actions but has an effect and is a factor in succeeding or failing. Without changing cultural expectations and norms, even the best succession plans will not gain the necessary traction to be sustainable. So, culture change is not something we can achieve if we have time; instead, culture change underlies everything. Only when organizational life absorbs righteousness, ability, and training can succession planning become effective.

Securing Management Support

Equally important is ensuring senior management's sincere and ongoing support for the succession planning agenda. The research revealed that where leadership does not or inconsistently sponsor succession activities, momentum for these activities tends to stall, resulting in ad hoc promotions, leader gaps, and talent attrition. Executives must now show, sponsor, and systematize succession planning instead of claiming it is crucial. This involves clarifying success standards for succession, dedicating resources to leadership development and mentoring initiatives, and holding themselves and their subordinate managers accountable to measured KPIs. This commitment to leadership champions the technical processes signals cultural priorities and reinforces fairness, transparency, and leadership capability throughout the

organization. Leadership succession literature by Sturman & Fink [11] and Yusliza et al. [34] supports the argument, emphasizing that succession structures are susceptible to decay and ultimately become obsolete if they do not receive evidence of continuous executive leadership backing.

Necessity of Joint Task Execution

Therefore, the most essential message of this research is that organizational culture and commitment to leadership should develop in parallel. Neither alone is sufficient. Leadership buy-in was unaccompanied by cultural adherence alongside autonomous change, resulting in isolated change that can easily be sabotaged. In contrast, cultural readiness without leadership support generates preparedness that leads to cynicism and inaction. Instead, a two-sided transformation approach is necessary, in which dedicated leaders practice, enforce, and reinforce succession values and, in turn, change cultural standards to support and require ethical leadership behaviors. This virtuous cycle is key to the following:

1. Leadership continuity at senior positions.
2. Save those institutional memories for future generations.
3. Foster officer professional development and career advancement.
4. Enhance the legitimacy of the organization and improve public perception of law enforcement oversight.
5. Implement advanced strategic reforms that are essential to addressing the challenges of 21st-century policing.

In the context of GPF, succession planning should be viewed as a strategic and cultural process rather than a remedial activity.

Broader Implications

The findings of this study have implications for the GPF, law enforcement agencies elsewhere in the Caribbean, and similar governance structures in other countries

worldwide. Effective succession planning, grounded in transformational cultural change and leadership commitment, is a key to organizational resilience in sectors where public accountability, institutional integrity, and citizen confidence are critical. If our law enforcement agencies fail to focus on both these imperatives, the results can be leadership voids, faltering morale, talent drain, organizational instability, and lost public confidence, significantly undermining public safety and democratic legitimacy. In contrast, agencies that invest in creating leadership pipelines through culturally grounded, leader-initiated succession strategies are better positioned for operational effectiveness, innovation, legitimacy, and future success.

In summary, the GPF and similar organizations ensure the development of long-lasting leaders by seamlessly integrating succession planning into their daily operations.

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Only the deliberate, mutual promotion of culture and leadership commitment will enable the GPF to cultivate a leadership cadre that fosters operational excellence and instills the ethical, developmental, and strategic values necessary to lead Guyana's law enforcement beyond. That is why succession planning cannot be an event or a project; it must become "*how we do things around here*."

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Conflict of Interest

The author has no conflicts of interest regarding the authorship of this study.

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