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# **Mentoring strategy as catalyst for achieving survival of transport companies in south-east Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

Succession planning is an amalgamated strategic management component put in place to ensure the continued survivability of the entire organization, division, department, or work group by making insightful provisions for the development, advancement, replacement and strategic application of key people for successful trans-generational transition. The study sought to ascertain how mentoring strategy could influence organizational sustainability in selected motor transport companies in south East Nigeria. The data collected through the closed ended questionnaires were tested with linear regression at 0.05 significance level. In conclusion, an effective employee mentoring process is the catalyst to ensure that the organization has the potential successors with the right skills and attributes it requires to meet future business needs.

**Keywords:** Succession planning, Survivability, Mentoring, Employee loyalty, Productivity.

# Estrategia de tutoría como catalizador para lograr la supervivencia de las empresas de transporte en el sureste de Nigeria

## Resumen

La planificación de la sucesión es un componente de gestión estratégica amalgamado implementado para garantizar la capacidad de supervivencia continua de toda la organización, división, departamento o grupo de trabajo al hacer provisiones perspicaces para el desarrollo, avance, reemplazo y aplicación estratégica de personas clave para el éxito transgeneracional transición. El estudio buscó determinar cómo la estrategia de tutoría podría influir en la sostenibilidad de la organización en empresas de transporte motorizado seleccionadas en el sudeste de Nigeria. Los datos recopilados a través de los cuestionarios cerrados se probaron con regresión lineal al nivel de significancia de 0.05. En conclusión, un proceso eficaz de tutoría de empleados es el catalizador para garantizar que la organización tenga los sucesores potenciales con las habilidades y atributos correctos que requiere para satisfacer las necesidades comerciales futuras.

**Palabras clave:** Planificación de sucesión, Supervivencia, Tutoría, Lealtad de empleados, Productividad.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Globally Succession planning process has taken a new dimension and received considerable interest in recent time due to the shortage of top talents in organizations. A human age has emerged where talent has become a new differentiator among organizational assets (MANPOWERGROUP, 2015). Succession planning has received greater focus and highly celebrated as catalysts strategy worldwide; not only as a consideration for the management of human resources, but also as a strategic management component for ensuring

accelerated performance and growth. And also forestalling loss of organizational memory, decreased employee loyalty that leads to increased turnover, challenge in retaining existing talent, and yearning to different generational needs as well as retiring of aged workers (GONZALEZ, 2010). (DURST & WILHELM, 2012) in the world today, succession plan has become the concern for all corporations. Researches by (HALL, 1988) have confirmed that effective succession planning gives assurance of organizational survival.

However, in developing nation like Nigeria Succession Planning is an emerging concept not only in motor transport industry but in other industries as well and it is considered an essential tool in Human Resource Management (GREER, 2017). From various studies conducted around the globe, it is evident that future leadership of organization is probably the most crucial aspect of its potential that ensures continuing viability and growth. It is therefore suggested that an effective and unique succession planning be considered and implemented in order to ensure that the organization has the potential successors with the right skills and attributes it requires to meet future business needs. However, succession planning concepts is essential to not only motor transport company in Nigeria but to any other organizations, and it has been argued that organization that neglects this activity exposes itself to severe complications regarding human resource management (SMITH, ET AL.,2012).

Today's businesses require as a matter of necessity, the right people with the right skills in the right positions at the right time, who

can quickly replace a key role that could become vacant, if they must flourish, survive and remain competitive. It is therefore imperative for organizations to strategize to build nonsubstitutable committed employees in order to create competitive advantage and achieve her profitability. Business entities especially motor transport firms need considering methods like mentoring as a tool to develop their workforce' knowledge, skills, talents, and capabilities to handle challenges emanated from the challenging business environments.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *2.1. Concept of Succession planning*

Modern succession planning is not only about finding replacement for top-level managerial roles, but it is also about finding the right talent at all levels of management and preparing them for the next role at all strategic areas in the organization (DESHWAL, 2015). WHITE, (2018) asserts that Succession planning helps businesses cultivate a pool of talented workers who are poised to take over leadership roles as the business grows, changes and develops. He further states that succession planning is as important in small organizations as it is in large organizations. For smaller companies, with lesser resources, smaller budgets and fewer employees, succession planning helps forestall disruptions in workflow. Succession planning is also very crucial in large organization as it plays safety-net roles and averts great loss that could jeopardize

continuous existence of any organization. With a complex organizational structure, there is need to have enough talented employees in the organization so that leadership and management changes can be automatically addressed (WHITE, 2018).

Succession planning is one of the most important ingredients lacking in the private businesses transition route especially motor transport business anywhere in the world; simply because it is quite difficult for the owners to entrust the management of the company's finance with anybody as well as the quantum of the business for proper accountability and profitability. According to SHAILER (2016), fear of embezzlement, maladministration and favoritism among others has grossly affected most transport businesses in the Eastern part of Nigeria despite the business acumen of the people in that region. Many reasons could be adduced to which may include: lack of effective succession planning to outlive the owner, structure composition, quality of personnel, favouristic appointments, fear of embezzlement, thuggery, secret cultism and unfaithfulness. MERCK (2017) argues that a "talent mindset" must be part of the leadership culture and philosophy for these practices to be effective.

Succession planning is the process of identifying and developing new leaders, who can replace old leaders when they leave, retire or die (ZELENYUK & ZHEKA, 2016). YIFTACHEL (2016), defines succession planning as the process of identifying the critical positions within an organization and developing action plans for individuals to assume those positions. Taking holistic view of current

and future goals, it ensures that the organization has right people in the right jobs at any point in time. Succession planning increases the availability of idiosyncratic strategic resources, experienced and capable employees fully ready to assume the crucial roles as they become vacant (AHMAD & SAHAR, 2019). It is the process of locating and grooming new leaders who are capable of replacing older ones when they relocate, retire or lose their lives. Succession planning makes it possible for knowledgeable and experienced employees that are ready to take over incumbents' roles to be prepared as the roles become available. It focuses on manpower planning activities involving identifying and developing people to take up key positions when the positions become available.

## *2.2. Mentoring*

Mentoring is a special type of relationship between 2 people—1 senior and 1 more junior—where there is both a personal and professional bond. Its primary purpose is to advance the career of the more junior person and to help that person realize his or her career goals. But, just like in any other human relationship, we have our cherish and deeper levels of need which includes fulfillment, trust, and expectation, that are very crucial to the success of that relationship. Today mentoring is commonly used in professional and managerial learning, but is relatively new as a means of supporting low-paid trainees and apprentices doing certificate-level qualifications. Mentoring is a conscious or unconscious relationship (formal or



informal) between two parties (a mentor and a protégé or mentee), an interaction (official or unofficial), and the transfer of skills, knowledge, technical know-how, and capabilities with the aim of empowerment and development of the mentee (EMELO, 2015). Mentoring is also seen as a one-to-one relationship whereby an expert or a superior person voluntarily makes out time to coach, develop, empower and encourage another. Employee Mentoring is a conscious planned early intervention designed to provide timely instruction to mentees or protégés throughout their learning period, to shorten the learning curve, reinforce positive work ethics and attitudes, and provide mentees with role models for the betterment of mentees and mentor as well as the organization. PEMBRIDGE AND PARETTI (2011) define mentoring as a strategic management component in which a more superior person acts as a mentor to make available a variety of functions that support, guide, protect, expose and counsel the young adults to achieve operational effectiveness and efficiency. EMELO (2015) defines mentoring as ‘offline help by one person or another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking’ (EMELO, 2015). The role of mentor is usually undertaken by someone in a more senior position than the mentee, with the aim of creating competitive advantage by supporting the professional advancement and development of a less experienced mentee.

One of the surest avenues of carrying out an effective succession plan is through mentorship. Mentoring has significant and commendable effect in the positive performance and survival of organization not only in Nigeria but in global environment. THOMAS

(1990) in EGWU (2012) all have positive reports from their different studies conducted at different time in different environment. He posits that effective mentoring has been identified as possible panacea to global economic distress, organizational failure and poor business leadership succession plan while he strongly believes that effective mentoring can be a possible foundation to increase in competitiveness of sub Sahara nations in global economy. On the merits of mentoring, EGWU (2012) maintains that mentoring has positive implication for those being mentored, mentors and the organization. According to him, it enables the positive transmission of organizational values, culture, goals and vision. NWOGWUGWU (2012) agrees with EGWU (2012) by positing that adequate mentorship enables the mentored to aspire to the heights of their mentors to be like them, and even in some cases perform better than them. In addition, HALL AND SMITH (2009) in EGWU (2012) concludes that mentoring unlike apprenticeship and coaching increases the skills, abilities and talents of one being mentored.

Since mentoring involves direct relationship with the mentor and the mentored, there is face to face contact which offers a fertilizing opportunity for the growth of trust and confidence in the parties. This provides room for both the mentor and the mentee to create opportunities for the development of competence, capabilities, productivity and performance. According to DARWIN (2000) mentoring is presently ranked number one among the strategies that help to improve workplace learning. HARRIS (2001) argues that “workplace mentoring is the most important factor in worksite

learning” (HARRIS, 2001). Various researchers have identified different types of mentoring functions, namely, career and psychosocial functions (AHMAD & AHMAD, 2018). Mentoring leverages strategic knowledge and skill throughout the length and breadth of organization through effective sharing and spreading, acquired learned skills and technical know-how; it provides an avenue for the learner to learn new skills, capabilities, abilities as well as knowledge that enhance competences and improve career development to achieve sustainability (JYOTI & SHARMA, 2016). According to HARRIS, (2001) mentoring primary aim is to transfer knowledge of work or vocation or profession, encourages personal development, enhances wise decisions, and helps the protégé to achieve successful transitions.

By virtue of organizational structural position or office, a mentor is assigned power and status, which helps to keep things on track and ensures judicious use of resources (JYOTI & SHARMA, 2016). The importance of structural process in achieving employee’s career advancement and development cannot be over emphasized. Mentoring process yields greater results when organizational structure and culture are taken into consideration. Mentoring culture is an environment of learning which provides opportunity for a mentee to learn by simply observing or watching others’ behaviours. It is an environment which systematically carried out mentoring process in a dynamic, complete, sound and careful way. It empowers mentor with necessary communicating network equipment as well as training facilities to promote effective mentoring relationships. AHMAD &

AHMAD, (2019) highlighted four traits necessary for successful implementation of mentoring culture in an organization, namely, flexibility, ownership, clarity and feedback. Further, it supports mentoring and provides records for evaluation and benchmarking. It also provides means for feedback and clarifies roles, goals and responsibilities, as well as expectations and accountability. Mentoring structure helps to link personal, career and reward-related Human Resource processes.

Organizations benefit from mentoring through improved employee retention, enhanced organizational commitment, reduced turnover, enhanced job commitment, job efficiency and job performance (CHEW & WONG, 2008). Mentors benefit through efficient job performance, social status, personal learning, team cohesiveness, accelerated promotion and increased allowances and compensation (REKHA & GANESH, 2012). Mentoring gives positive reissuance for protégés in the form of increased employees satisfaction, role clarity, self-efficacy, personal learning, professional development and career satisfaction (MURPHY & ENSHER, 2001). Some of the core characteristics of mentoring are (REKHA & GANESH, 2012). It can have both personal and organizational focuses; Provision of guidance, feedback and confidential discussion to raise self-awareness and develop potential; Focuses on future career management and development offering information and signposting.

Outside of the line management relationship, mentoring can be a formal matching arrangement, like coaching, or more informal and

organic, such as when a mentee seeks out a mentor, a mentor seeks out a protégé or vice versa (MUNDIA & IRAVO, 2014). There are different categories of mentoring according to the nature of the mentoring relationship, which include (MUNDIA & IRAVO, 2014): One-on-one mentoring where the mentor works with one mentee over a sustained period of time. Team mentoring is when one mentee has team mentors who meet collectively to provide mentorship to a mentee. This approach is helpful for eliciting multiple perspectives and availing of a more diverse skill set. Likewise, a mentee can have numerous mentors who he/she meets with individually. Peer mentoring is another approach where colleagues, who are at similar stages in their career, mentor each other. Functional mentoring is a more specific and structured type of mentoring relationship, to assist a mentee complete a particular project or assignment sometime as part of an educational or professional development programme.

MILLER (2011) outlines some of the importance of mentoring in an organization in relation to succession planning:

### **i Mentoring develops leaders**

Mentoring directly affects an individual's ability to succeed as a leader. Both mentees (proteges) and mentors benefit from the mentoring partnership and increase their leadership skills. "86% of companies using mentoring programs found that they created new leaders and fostered new career development." (Goldstein, Seth. "Company Finds Working Together Helps Productivity.").

## **ii Mentoring retains key talent**

Mentoring, when associated with other strategies meant to improve retention, has a long-term and significant positive impact on talented employees' retention.

The loss of a single professional employee can cost a company between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Losing key talent often costs significantly more, since these employees contribute a disproportionate amount of the organization's intellectual capital.

“77% of all companies surveyed state that mentoring is an effective tool to increase the retention of highly talented, valued, and experienced employees.”

## **iii Mentoring supports diversity strategies**

Results from a study conducted by sociologists from Harvard, UC-Berkeley, and the University of Minnesota concluded that mentoring worked better than diversity training and networking in increasing the number of women and minority leaders in management.

## **iv Mentoring teaches and encourages knowledge sharing**

Mentoring, when broadly deployed, builds a learning environment, encourages knowledge sharing, and helps build

productive internal networks. This reality becomes more acute when we consider the labor market demographics over the next ten years.

FRENTROP (2016) submits that mentoring programs provide employees with structured opportunities to learn from more experienced members of the organization. A mentoring program facilitates leadership development by matching talented mentees with experienced mentors in leadership positions who can offer guidance and expertise to suitable succession candidates. Mentoring also helps improve employee retention by providing talented employees with the guidance and support they need to navigate and integrate with the organization's culture (FRENTROP, 2016). Additionally, mentors may take notice of talented mentees and provide employers with insight in identifying candidates for succession. Hence, the study hypothesized that:

*HA: employee mentoring would positively affect the sustainability of transport companies in Nigeria*

### **Theoretical Framework: Scharmer's Theory U Model**

Otto SCHARMER (2007) came up with a succession theory which is referred to as Scharmer's Theory U Model. Scharmer argues that the top management team should embrace and act in order to implement an effective and unique succession planning contingent on

organizational culture and philosophy. In the first instance, this model views succession planning as beginning from the immediate future and supports a concept of a U process of five movements that can make change possible. These movements are; Co-initiating, Co-sensing, Pre-sensing, co-creating and co-evolving. The first movement is co-initiating. In the words of Scharmer, at this stage the organization establishes a common purpose with all stakeholders about a future event. Co-sensing is the second movement stage in which an organization sees the need at hand collectively across boundaries. Also, at this stage new ideas and innovation occur through collective input. The third stage is Pre-sensing, whereby the leadership of organization begins to see the future they envisage in terms of succession planning of which mentoring is key. This futuristic plan establishes a foundation for change, thereby spurs an organization to an expected end. Further, at this stage, it is observed that the leadership lets go off unresolved past issues and forges ahead to a more realistic future. The fourth in this model is co-creating. SCHARMER (2007) argues that at this stage, the leadership of the organization explores the future and prototypes what the future might look like. He goes further to suggest that leadership should make succession planning a long-term concept rather than working on organizational immediate requirements. KARTZ (2006) argues further that there is need to assess company's strategy and policy that highlight the required qualifications of the successor in order to have a sustainable and dynamic succession plan in place. The Scharmer's fifth movement in Theory U is co-evolving which can help an organization to embrace



change and implement succession planning strategies in the context of an emerging future (SCHARMER, 2007).

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a survey method. The population of the study consists of all transport companies in South-East of Nigeria. The target population understudy was therefore two thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine (2779) transport companies in South-East of Nigeria. The target respondents were the owners and senior management staff of the selected firms. Systematic random sampling technique was employed in the selection of four hundred and ninety-four (494) from the total firms' population. Data for the study was collected from the primary source through questionnaires that were self-administered to the owners and senior staff of the selected firms. All the four hundred and ninety-four (494) questionnaires administered were returned and used for the data analysis. Information collected through the questionnaire was analyzed with frequency distribution and percentage table. Test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument while Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the Coefficient of the reliability of the instrument. The result ( $r$ ) is 0.87 which indicate that the research instrument (questionnaire) in this study is very reliable.

#### 4. RESULTS

A total of four hundred and ninety-four (494) copies of questionnaire were distributed to prospective respondents of the selected transport companies in South-East of Nigeria and all were returned; and used for data analysis.

Table 1 shows that 494 (100%) of the distributed copies of the questionnaire were returned and used.

Table 1: Bio data of Respondents

Age Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20 years	2	1
21 - 30 years	93	19
31 - 40 years	127	26
41 – 50 years	214	42
Above 51 years	58	12
Total	494	100
Gender Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
Female	81	16
Male	413	84
Total	494	100
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
O'Level	130	26
OND/NCE	154	31
B.Sc./HND	170	35
Higher Degree	40	8
Total	494	100
Staff Category	Frequency	Percentage
Senior	46	9
Junior	448	91
Total	494	100
Work Experience	Frequency	Percentage

Less than 5 years	50	10
6 - 10 years	177	36
11 - 15 years	172	35
16 – 20 years	70	14
Above 20 years	25	5
Total	494	100

Source: FIELD SURVEY (2019)

Table 1 indicates that 2 (1%) of the respondents are below 20 years, 93 (19%) are between 21-30 years, 127 (26%) are between 31 – 40 years, 214 (42%) are between 41-50 years while 58 (12%) are above 50 years. This implies that majority of the respondents are between 41-50 years. The table also shows that 81 (16%) of the respondents are female while 413 (84%) are male. Clearly, the majority of the respondents are male. Furthermore, the data contained in the table reveals that 130 (26%) have O’Level qualification, 154 (31%) of the respondents have OND/NCE, 170 (35%) have B.Sc./HND or its equivalent, while 40 (8%) of the respondents have higher degree qualification. Thus, the majority of the respondents possess B.Sc./HND, closely followed by OND/NCE. Staff category data indicates that 46 (9%) of the respondents are senior staff while 448 (91%) are junior staff. It is deduced that majority of the respondents are members of junior staff category. Lastly, it can be observed from table 1 that 50 (10%) of the respondents have less than 5 years’ work experience, 177 (36%) have 6-10 years’ work experience, 172 (35%) of the respondents have 11-15 years’ work experience, 70 (14%) of the respondents have 16-20 years’ work experience while 25 (5%) have above 20 years’ work experience. This implies that majority of the respondents have 6-10 years’ work

experience closely followed by respondents with 11-15 years’ work experience who are qualified to give informed opinion on the research objectives.

**Table 2: The relationship between mentoring and employees’ productivity**

S/N	Questionnaire items	SA	A	U	D	SD	TOTAL
1	We encourage and develop the ability to create and acquire the internal source of knowledge	220 (45%)	252 (51%)	10 (2%)	8 (2%)	4 (1%)	494
2	Top management is committed to an open, participatory process of continuous improvement, focused on the long term economic performance of the organization.	220 (44%)	240 (49%)	33 (7%)	1 (0%)	0 (0%)	494
3	Mentoring is a way the organization uses in helping employees to understand their roles.	205 (42%)	197 (40%)	60 (12%)	25 (5%)	7 (1%)	494
4	Mentoring is used in our organization as a useful way of building skills of employees	260 (53%)	129 (26%)	90 (18%)	10 (2%)	5 (1%)	494

5	Our employees are eager to learn on ways of making themselves more productive.	290 (59%)	145 (29%)	49 (10%)	9 (2%)	1 (0%)	494
6	Our employees are able to deliver under less than perfect conditions	286 (58%)	167 (34%)	20 (4%)	15 (3%)	6 (1%)	494
7	Our employees have steadily increased their personal output	215 (43%)	240 (49%)	20 (4%)	10 (2%)	9 (2%)	494
8	Our employees' quality of work improves overtime	181 (37%)	271 (55%)	23 (5%)	16 (3%)	3 (0%)	494
	Grand Total/ Percentage	3,518 (89%)		305(8%)	129 (3%)		3952

Source: Field Survey (2019)

Table 2 shows that 3,518 (89%) of the respondents are in agreement category. Thus, 129 (3%) of the respondents are in disagreement category while 305 (8%) of the respondents are in undecided category. This shows that there is positive relationship between mentoring and employees' productivity.

Hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>: Mentoring has significant relationship with employee productivity.

Table 3: Correlations

		EMPLOPROD	Mentoring
EMPLOPROD	Spearman's rho	1	.918*
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000
	N	494	494
Mentoring	Spearman's rho	.918*	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.
	N	494	494

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).  
EMPLOPROD = Employee Productivity

#### 4.1. INTERPRETATION OF RESULT

The Spearman’s bivariate correlation result in table 3 shows that mentoring has a positive and significant relationship with employee productivity;  $r(494) = .918^*$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ . Thus, the alternate hypothesis which states that mentoring has significant relationship with employee productivity is accepted and the null hypothesis rejected.

#### 5. DISCUSSION

The Hypothesis was tested with Spearman’s bivariate correlation to establish the extent of relationship between mentoring and employee’s productivity. The result revealed that there was a positive relationship between mentoring and employee productivity ( $r$

= .918\*,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). As a result, the alternative hypothesis which states that mentoring has significant relationship with employee productivity was accepted and the null hypothesis rejected. This is one of the findings of this study and it means that mentorship increases employee proficiency on their job and is needed to increase employee productivity and decrease the time needed to produce quality work. As leaders of motor transport firms encourage the mentoring of their employees the workers would be better placed to achieve their set targets. the mentoring process helps them felt nurtured, guided and integrated in the organization. It also enhanced job commitment, job efficiency and job performance (CHEW & WONG, 2008) This finding is in line with Neupane (2015) who found that coaching and mentoring are positively correlated to employee productivity and both factors have significant effect on employee performance.

## **6. CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The study concluded that one of the surest avenues of carrying out an effective succession plan is through mentorship. Mentoring skill has significant and commendable effect in the positive performance and survival of organization not only in Nigeria but in global environment. Organizations benefit from mentoring through improved employee productivity, talent retention, enhanced organizational commitment, reduced turnover, enhanced job commitment, job efficiency and job performance. It was further concluded that Business organizations especially motor transport firms should consider

methods like mentoring as a tool to promote their employees' knowledge, skills, talents, and capabilities to tackle problems created by the challenging business environments

Thinking is a symbolic process of finding possibilities and for learning future actions by providing alternatives and choosing one to do.

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