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An examination of talent management strategies for a large investor-owned utility company: facing the market pressures of the 21st Century

Jeffrey Thrift

Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

AN EXAMINATION OF TALENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

FOR A LARGE INVESTOR-OWNED UTILITY COMPANY:

FACING THE MARKET PRESSURES OF THE 21$^{\text{ST}}$ CENTURY

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by

Jeffrey Thrift

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Mark Allen, Ph.D – Dissertation Chair

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Jeffrey Thrift

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Doctoral Committee:

Mark Allen, Ph.D, Chairperson

June Schmieder-Ramirez, Ph.D, Committee Member

Thomas Cohenno, Ed.D, Committee Member

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife, Marsi, my four daughters, Breelyn, Elise, Jacinda, Aubrey, my mother Ozeal and family members.

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Education

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Doctoral Dissertation: *An Examination of Talent Management Strategies For a Large Investor-Owned Utility Company: Facing the Market Pressures of the 21st Century*

MBA 2006 National University, San Diego, California
BA 2004 San Diego State University

Employment

2006 to present Southern California Edison (SCE), Rosemead, CA

Publications

N/A

Listings and Affiliations

William E. Nesbitt Mentorship: SCE

ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study focuses on the talent management strategies being administered by a large investor-owned utility company based out of Southern California. Talent management is linked to a host of activities involving planning for key leadership transitions within an organization. Talent is the force that drives business success and brings value to an organization.

This study examines the workforce challenges facing this large investor-owned utility company, to determine how talent management strategies are being developed and deployed, in the wake of new market forces, shifting demographics, and the anticipated loss of institutional knowledge from the baby-boomer generation, the largest segment of the current U.S. workforce.

Three research questions are addressed in the study:

1. What are the *lived perceptions* of the HR professionals who create talent management strategies; senior executives and managers who support these strategies; and managers who have been identified in the succession planning pipeline at this large investor-owned utility company?

2. Are the current programs satisfying the need and demand for developing a pipeline of talent?

3. Are the current programs in place delivering on its promises in preparing candidates in assuming higher level positions?

Through the process of data collection, answers to those questions provides insight into the lived perceptions of talent management strategies being developed and deployed to confront a changing landscape of the 21st Century being experienced by this large investor-owned utility company.

The essential recommendations that come from the analysis of the data are to:

1. Motivate, develop and mentor high potential employees to build a healthy talent pipeline.

2. Integrate and collapse talent management strategies at all levels.

3. Build a talent management competency to target managers for value added training to aid the department in meeting its challenges in learning how to effectively navigate through a new utility landscape of the 21st Century.

4. Establish effective communication channels with a simple and repeatable message that is:

    a. Effective

    b. Strategic

    c. Integrated

5. Engage in the war for talent and devise effective tactics to compete in the 21st Century.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction and Background

The utility industry and particularly, the electric utility industry is experiencing a fast trending shift in its workforce that will require strategic planning to confront this growing concern.   There are numerous market forces that can potentially impact the ability for the electric utility industry to remain competitive. Utilities are vigorously attempting to create operating efficiencies in order to provide affordable electric service to its customers. These market demands are requiring the industry to take a critical look at the tacit knowledge as well as mission-critical knowledge that is soon to escape the industry. This sector of business is concerned with keeping the competitive advantage, by acquiring, developing and retaining talented individuals to achieve the many goals and objectives of the company. An imminent threat that is currently challenging the utility industry is the ability to capture and transfer knowledge prior to it escaping from the institution. This knowledge drain will come from a large portion of the baby-boomer generation.

A goal of the electric utility industry is to establish highly qualified, well-defined and readily available candidates to be placed into leadership and critical positions that will contribute to an energy company's success in achieving their mission. A significant emphasis will be to establish talent management strategies and align them with business strategies. Some of these strategies will include workforce planning, selection processes, performance management, and succession planning, with a focus on internal mobility. "Recruiting, motivating, and retaining a talented workforce are not short-term problems or passing fads; they are systemic, protracted, and chronic problems that organizations will face for the foreseeable future" (Calo, 2008, p. 404). The electric utility industry is

faced with the many challenges, calling for skilled employees and leaders within all ranks to be prepared to meet future demands.

Hoffman and Kellogg (2006) state "More than ever before, utilities need employees with greater skills to meet the demands of regulatory compliance, safety and reliability, technological, optimization, community expectations, and loss of workforce due to retirements" (p. 2370). It is said that all sectors of utilities will be faced with this challenge; to include both private and investor-owned utilities, in the foreseeable future. Hence, these challenges require such industries to establish the appropriate talent management strategies to address the growing need to develop and retain individuals that will be tasked to address the utility challenges of tomorrow.

The utilities industry is no different than other industries, being that it requires leaders to make key decisions and lead teams in achieving the mission set forth. For instance, the energy sector, a segment of the larger utilities industry, requires a host of skills and abilities of its employees to occupy key positions. "Key positions might include leadership positions or specialized positions and roles that may be technical, content-specific, or otherwise hard to replace. They may require particular training, licensure, or background that is difficult to replicate" (Vermont Department of Human Resources, n.d., ¶2). With the baby-boomer generation preparing to exit the job market and turning over the keys to the next generation of workers, it is paramount for the energy industry to take preemptive steps and become proactive in "preparing suitable employees through mentoring, training and job rotation, to replace key players within an organization, as those key players leave their positions for whatever reasons – retirement, advancement, attrition, etc." (Vermont Department of Human Resources, n.d., ¶3).

Companies will need to develop specific talent management strategies to help prepare for:

- Assessing its leadership needs. This leads to formal evaluation of the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) needed for key roles.

- Leaders identify key people, and the organization creates and implements the means of training them for leadership. This involves identifying the work functions critical leadership and other key positions of the organization.

- Succession planning provides a comprehensive inventory of the knowledge, skills and abilities that will be needed to sustain effective leadership in the future (Vermont Department of Human Resources, n.d., ¶4).

The increasing need for energy worldwide is the driving force behind the investment in alternatives in energy to include, renewables and other sources of power. These demands will require the industry to look at its people investment. Running parallel to the growing need for energy on a global scale, an article published by the American Public Power Association ([APPA]; 2005) *Work Force Planning for Public Power Utilities,* states that new challenges for public power would affect the electric industry in general and public power specifically. The report and survey showed that:

1. A significant portion of the public power workforce will be eligible to retire during the next 5 to 7 years;

2. The positions that will experience the most retirements may also be the most difficult to replace; first line supervisors, senior managers, and general managers/CEOs;

3. The loss of critical knowledge and the inability to find replacements with utility-specific skills are the two biggest challenges that public power utilities face as a result of the aging work force; and

4. Public power utilities need to do more to plan for their future work force needs.

(p. 1)

This report revealed that:

> The energy industry is one area that is being significantly impacted due to retirements. According to the US Department of Labor (DOL), the median age for workers in the utilities industry, is 3.3 years higher than the national average. And during the last 9 years, the median age of utilities employees has risen from 41.1 years to 43.7 years. For utilities as a whole, that means "now that around 150,000 employees fall in the 55–64 age group, with another 25,000 or so over the age of 65 – about 15% of the workforce – eligible for retirement. (Anonymous, n.d., p. 17)

These statistics are alarming, thus creating the sense of urgency to confront this rising issue within the utilities industry. Moreover, a more in-depth report indicate the types of positions that are in demand for this sector; current assessments reveal, "22-33% of staff will retire who hold positions as electric power linemen, nuclear engineers, reactor operators, nuclear technicians, power plant operators, first-line supervisors, mechanical technicians, pipefitters, plumbers, maintenance technicians, and electrical technicians" (Anonymous, n.d., p. 17). Ultimately, there will be changing demographics within the industry and proper planning must be made to ensure a stable workforce. The changing demographics that this industry will face will be far reaching and have long-lasting implications if strategic plans are not being established for the imminent future.

Kiyonaga (2004), states "the aging of the largest generation the United States has ever known will affect every social institution from employment to health care. What the impact will be is, like all future events, still a matter of prediction" (p. 357). The baby

boom generation will have a significant impact on the utility industry when the exodus begins, which the magnitude of such impact is unknown.

> The aging of the baby boom generation has been a topic of both speculation and serious research for some time now. The "brain drain," "the pipeline problem," even the terms "workforce planning" and "succession planning" have become topics not just for academics and human resources practitioners but also are readily found in the popular media. Many are the predictions about the impact that the "mass exodus" of this generation from the workplace will have. But events yet unknown may change today's predictions. Certainly, the impact of the "aging-out" of the baby boom workforce may be affected by economic, social and political events. (Kiyonaga, 2004, p. 357)

In times of economic uncertainty, organizations must be dynamic. This requires organizations to understand the differing needs of each generation in the workplace. Reisenwitz and Iyer (2009) claim that "organizations must be cognizant of the characteristics of entry level recruits in order to prepare them to better meet the organization's goals and objectives" (p. 91). Pitt-Catsouphes, Matz-Costa and Besen (2009), define generation as, "a group of people who are approximately the same age" (p. 4). There are six age groups that comprise the generations within the workforce:

- Generation Y/Millennials: born after 1980
- Younger Genertion X'ers: born 1972 to 1980
- Older Generation X'ers: born 1965 to 1971
- Younger Boomers: born 1946 to 1954
- Older Boomers: born 1946 to 1954
- Traditionalists: born before 1946

Talent management must consider the generations that comprise the workforce. In addition, organizations must understand the differences of these generations and seek to customize developmental plans to meet not only the needs of the business but also the needs for each generation. Gesell (2010) states, "what we have in American organizations today is a diverse group of workers with differences in attitude affecting everything from recruiting, building teams, dealing with change, motivating, managing,

maintaining, and increasing productivity" (p. 21). It is said that attitudes can be reflective in each generation. Not only is attitude a variable an organization must contend with, it must also factor in such things as values and mind-sets. Another consideration is how leadership is becoming so complex due to the mix of generational differences. These generational differences are causing leaders to become more adaptable, particularly on how to create more harmony and more cohesion within the team environment.

Gesell (2010) makes a compelling statement by expressing, "the most challenging age group for current leaders is the Millennials, who also are referred to as 'Gen Y' because of how often they want to know, 'Why?'" (p. 21). This generation is clearly different from other generations and with that, it makes it hard to successfully lead this particular group. By sure design, leaders would be smart to assess their personal leadership style as well as the generational differences, personalities and or attitudes of the individuals which make up the composition of the organization. Gesell's article *How to Lead When the Generation Gap Becomes Your Everyday Reality* posed several questions as to formulate the basis for evaluating the personal perspectives and approaches pertaining to the differing generations within an organization:

- What differentiates each generation?
- Which generations are you responsible for leading?
- How do generational differences impact your perceptions and leadership style?
- How do those differences manifest themselves in the organization?
- How can you lead intra-generational and intergenerational groups?
- What can you do as a leader to foster mixed-generational dialogue and problem solving?

- Which generation has the strongest impact on your organization?

- How do the major aspects of an organization's culture ("generation-bias") align more with one generation than the others?

Statement of the Problem

Energy companies are not immune to the workforce challenges many other U.S. industries are experiencing but the challenges are more severe than in other sectors. Gross, Hanes and Ayres (2003) state "societal, demographic, and market forces have brought recent and ongoing changes to the workforce in the U.S. energy industry. Workforces are aging, expert knowledge and skills are being lost, and qualified replacements are increasingly difficult to find and retain" (p. 1). van Horn, Heldrich and Bloustein (2007) outline three critical areas where workforce challenges are being felt:

1. Rising demand for well-educated and skilled workers, and

2. Insufficient supply of qualified workers

3. Preparing workers for current and developing energy industries

Rising Demand

- The average age for workers in the energy industry is near 50, whereas the average age of all U.S. workers is just above 40.

- At least half of electric utilities' technical workforce may retire in the next 5 to 10 years.

- America's oil and gas workers average 50 years in age. Half are likely to retire by 2010. Retirements will occur at all skill levels – from equipment operators and truck drivers to scientists and engineers. There is an inadequate supply of

qualified replacement workers. For example, enrollment in U.S. undergraduate petroleum engineering programs fell 79% between 1982 and 2004.

- Demand for 250,000 replacement workers in the energy utility field (2007 – 2017) is projected to far exceed current supply; not including thousands more needed to fill related construction jobs.

- By 2010, the shortfall in the supply of electric line workers may be as high as 10,000 – 20% of the current number working for utilities or outsourcing companies.

Insufficient Supply

van Horn et al. (2007) state "Energy production and distribution companies are concerned that younger workers will not have the skills or experience needed to successfully replace retiring workers" (p. 2). Some of the concerns are:

- Utility employers report that their pre-employment tests reveal dismal performance by job applicants and an absence of skills essential to understanding energy technology and innovation.

- In a 2005 survey, U.S. power companies indicated that the leading skill deficiencies among energy sector job applicants were technical knowledge, math ability and communication skills.

Preparing Workers

van Horn et al. (2007) state "In diversifying energy supply from oil, gas, and coal to renewable energy alternatives, the U.S. energy sector and the nation must address two critical challenges" (p. 3):

1. Recruiting and adequate supply of workers to sustain the current energy

   infrastructure, and

2. Recruiting employees with the skills demanded by renewable energy

   alternatives. (p. 3)

Strauss, Schwarz and Lippmann (2010) pose a significant question in their article

Are Utility Workforces Prepared for New Demands? As it is only a matter of time that

many U.S. firms will be faced with the Baby Boomer exodus, are energy companies

really prepared to face this reality in the coming years?

> The energy industry is facing an impending workforce shortage. The shortage
> reflects an unprecedented number of retirements expected to occur in the next
> decade, coupled with increasing energy demand and changes in the skill sets
> needed to support shifts toward "greener" energy technologies. The U.S.
> Department of Labor predicts that 500,000 energy industry workers will retire
> over the next five to ten years, a turnover rate of 50 percent. Both the Department
> and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) have expressed
> concerns that the anticipated workforce shortfall threatens the reliability,
> efficiency, and security of utility services. This so-called "graying of the
> workforce" suggests that state commissions should allocate resources to
> investigate the current and future staffing of the utilities they regulate, and should
> be prepared to encourage solutions where appropriate and mandate them where
> necessary (p. iii).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate and benchmark the talent management

strategies being administered by a large investor-owned utility company based out of

Southern California, Southern California Edison (SCE). Talent management has been

linked to a host of activities involving the planning for key leadership transitions within

an organization and the workforce as a whole. Talent is the force that drives business

success and brings value to an organization. This study examined the workforce

challenges facing the utility industry, and see how talent management strategies are being

deployed by a large investor-owned utility company, in the wake of new market forces, shifting demographics, and the anticipated loss of institutional knowledge from the baby-boomer generation, the largest segment of the current U.S. workforce. To ensure a ready workforce in a changing energy market, a mix of talent management strategies must be deployed to remain competitive in the face of volatile market forces. By examining the strategies of a large investor-owned utility company, the research has helped the larger utility industry to better prepare for its talent management efforts.

Naturally, SCE is not immune to this systemic problem and the research intends to study the actions taken by SCE. In the Journal of College and University Professional Association for Human Resources, Butterfield's article (2008) *Talent Management Strategies for Attracting and Retaining the Best and the Brightest*, outlines seven initiatives:

> retention strategies, succession planning, knowledge transfer, internally driven performers, high performance teams, self-organizing success, leadership investment, onboarding and transition support, all which can move an organization beyond traditional functional boundaries to contribute value on the action side of talent management. (p. 35)

The outcome of such investment "would be evidence and measurement of the degree to which the organization is resilient, dynamic and flexible, and that it is optimistic about its fitness for the future" (Butterfield, 2008, p. 35).

Research has allowed for a better understanding of the company's position on:

- Talent Assessment – this examined the workforce planning efforts being deployed.

- Talent Acquisition – this examined the efforts being made for talent searching, selection process, and onboarding practices.

- Talent Alignment – this examined the alignment of business strategies with talent management strategies.

- Talent Development – this examined the leadership and succession planning efforts being deployed.

Research Questions

There were three questions posed in this study to provide an in-depth understanding of:

1. What are the *lived perceptions* of the HR professionals who create talent management strategies; senior executives and managers who support these strategies; and managers who have been identified in the succession planning pipeline at Southern California Edison.

2. Are the current programs satisfying the need and demand for developing a pipeline of talent?

3. Are the current programs in place delivering on its promises in preparing candidates in assuming higher level positions?

With the staggering percentage of Baby Boomers currently in the workforce and soon to retire in the near future, it was imperative for this research to be conducted to understand the course of action SCE will need to take to combat this threat to its internal stability. Gross et al. (2003) express:

> workforces are aging, expert knowledge and skills are being lost, and qualified replacements are increasingly difficult to find and retain. The loss or departure of undocumented knowledge associated with this situation can be particularly problematic with complex systems that have been in place for many years. (p. 1)

Key Terms and Definitions

Talent management – Talent management is a complex collection of connected HR processes that delivers a simple fundamental benefit for any organization.

Succession planning – Leibman, Bruer and Maki (n.d.) claim succession planning helps a company to:

- Assure the continuity of prepared leaders for key positions

- Engage the senior management team in a disciplined process of reviewing the corporation's leadership talent

- Put the diversity issue on the corporate agenda

- Guide the development activities of key personnel

- Re-examine corporate and business unit structure, processes, and systems

- Align with other HR that support the leadership renewal process (e.g., selection systems, rewards)

- Contribute to the shareholder value

Non-discretionary spending – Typically not subject to or influenced by someone's discretion, judgment, or preference. Non-discretionary spending is spending that is required by a budget, contract, or other commitment. A non-discretionary law is one that is enforced absolutely, and not at the discretion of authorities.

Knowledge transfer – The transfer of knowledge before it escapes the organization is extremely important to maintaining continued success and a competitive advantage in any industry. Watson and Hewett (2006) claims that knowledge transfer "involves the codification and storage of existing knowledge into knowledge repositories or databases such that it can be accessed and reused by other individuals within the firm"

(p. 143). Though, having such a knowledge repository is important, it only reflects one aspect of knowledge management in its entirety. Ensuring the intellectual capital remains in an organization is critical for the generations who will be called on to lead.

Lived perception – Lived perception often refers to our experience to and relationship with objects, events, time, one's self, as these things are experienced in the environment and or world. Though studied for centuries, in the early 20th century, Mereau-Ponty and other philosophers provided meaning to the term phenomenology, often coined *phenomena* – things that appear in one's experience. This term is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view.

Multigenerational workforce – For the first time in our U.S. history, workplace demographics span four generations, working side-by-side. This can mean a new college graduate could be working with a person that could actually be three times their age. An article published by AARP (2007), *Leading a Multigenerational Workforce,* best describes this growing sensation thusly:

> Baby Boomers attempt to develop a spirit of camaraderie with team members whose on-the-job experience amounts to a semester internship. Generation Xers craft policies that will affect quality of life for colleagues old enough to be their grandparents. Members of the World War II Generation find themselves taking orders from new managers who are literally young enough to be their great-grandchildren. (p. 1)

To gain a full perspective and reveal into these generational differences, it's necessary to provide the definition for each generation, thus, helping to create a theoretical framework to this study. At times, it is easy to stereotype the generations, but the following provide definitions for and characteristics into the four generations in the work force.

Traditionalist – The oldest generational group, born between 1925 and 1945. Also coined the term the *Silent Generation, Seniors and Veterans*. This group values hard work, conformity, dedication, sacrifice, and patience. Members of this generation are comfortable with delayed recognition and reward.

Baby boomers **–** The largest group in the work force. *Baby Boom Generation* is a term that portrays those born in Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America after the Second World War. Born between 1946 and 1964, Boomers are characteristically optimistic and team oriented. They place a high value on their work ethic while also seeking personal gratification and growth.

Generation X **–** The smallest group in size is Generation X, which also is known as the Sandwich Generation because of its position between the two largest groups. These individuals were born between 1965 and 1980 and were the first *latchkey* kids. They are self-reliant, global thinkers who value balance, fun, and informality.

Millennials **–** These individuals were born between 1981 and 2000, and ultimately will become the largest group. Even though less than half of them are presently in the work force, they already are having a significant on organizational leadership. Members of this generation exhibit confidence, optimism, civic duty, sociability, street smarts, inclusivity, collaboration, and open-mindedness. They tend to be goal oriented (Gesell, 2010).

Significance of the Study

To include a host of other challenges, the changing market forces in the electric utility industry has created the sense of urgency to begin looking at the talent management strategies needed to meet the shifting demands currently being experienced

for utilities. Less than robust, and lack of talent management planning in times of

volatile market forces are problematic for utility companies.

> Fifty seven percent of the US GDP is spent on workforce related expenditures. Workforce related expenditures are the most significant portion of spend for most organizations, so understanding where the investments are made, what form the investments take, the economics of their impact and how to best optimize these resources are the keys to unlock hidden value. (Taleo Research, 2006, p. 1)

As this industry fails to plan for the next generation of leaders and finding a

balanced alignment between talent management strategies with business strategies,

failure to meet the many objectives and overall mission is likely.

If Southern California Edison (SCE) established the right mix of talent

management strategies to ensure the identification of candidates are developed to take on

mission-critical and leadership roles, the business will be able to meet its mission of

operational efficiency to ensure reliable and affordable energy to its customers. This

study provided an in-depth study of the effectiveness of developing talent management

strategies during a period of shifting market demands, which will have strong

implications for the vitality of the power generation business, required of SCE.

It was important for this research to be conducted, to determine how the following

talent management strategies were being deployed amongst a multi-generational

workforce for a utility company such as SCE:

1. Determine the strategic change required for SCE to effectively deploy talent

    management tactics within its organization; a utility company serving a 55,000

    square mile service territory within Southern California.

2. Determine the position-specific competencies amongst the multi-generational workforce, to ensure a pool of talent is developed for a host of critical leadership positions.

3. Identifying professional development toward a "ready now" workforce to include rotational assignments.

Limitations of the Study

As in other industries, talent management is a necessary endeavor an organization must plan for to keep the competitive edge. It's imperative that the energy industry act with a sense of urgency, as there is a serious threat mounting, causing a direct impact to the transference of knowledge for when the baby-boomer generation retires from the workforce. This research employed the use of interviews to measure the lived perceptions of talent management deployment for a multi-generational workforce, SCE. The questions used in this research were administered to key stakeholders and employees who provided insight into the talent management strategies being developed and deployed by the company. There may be limitations to this research to understand this area, as it will not include the larger employee base comprised of Edison International (EIX) and Edison Mission Group (EMG) employees. In addition, this study was limited to the extent to which one can generalize about the industry from a study of one company. This may have impeded the holistic understanding of talent management strategies needing to be developed for the entire company and utility community.

Assumptions

There were a number of assumptions were made for the study of talent management for a utility industry. First, there were current talent management programs

and processes established for a large investor-owned utility company. Secondly, when Baby Boomers retire, they will leave with them the critical knowledge required for the company to maintain its competitive advantage and long-term stability. Third, market forces will catapult utilities to look at its talent management processes to ensure a pipeline of talent is continuously being developed for future changes and business needs. Lastly, is that the people who participated in the study, would answer the questions truthfully?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This study sought to understand the talent management strategies established for a

large investor-owned utility company that will soon experience an exodus of critical

positions from its rank and file. The chapter starts out with a framework that outline the

challenges and issues facing the utility industry, which allowed for a grounded

understanding for the immediacy and sense of urgency a large investor-owned utility

company's must focus on in developing and executing on its talent management

strategies. The development and deployment of effective talent management strategies

ensures a competitive edge in a changing energy market. This chapter will provide

literature review for the current state of affairs for the electric power utility industry and

then lead into six distinct areas addressing talent management strategies:

1. Talent Management Processes

2. Talent Assessment

3. Talent Acquisition and Recruitment

4. Aligning Business Objectives with Performance

5. Talent Development

6. Knowledge Management

The utility industry throughout the United States is experiencing major changes in

its workforce. There are several factors that lead to these significant changes such as: an

aging workforce and demographic shifts within the industry, contributing to cultural

changes that must plan for a multigenerational workforce. Not only does the utility

industry have to focus on human capital strategies but the business issues that will plague

the next generation if plans are not established to confront aging infrastructure, advanced

technologies, regulatory and the public policy push to increase renewable energy sources.

This will require utilities to focus on aligning business strategies with their talent

management strategies.

It is important for utilities to look at how best to support the business strategy

when looking at succession management and succession planning efforts. Like many

other industries, the utility industry has unique business goals and objectives to remain

successful and stay competitive in a global energy market. It is imperative that utilities

align their talent management strategy to the business strategy so the right identification

and investments are made for the pivotal positions and talent that are critical to the

mission.

Theoretical Framework

Bolman and Deal (2003) discus the use of frames to view and study organizations.

The four-frame model they discuss consists of (a) structural (b) human resource (c)

political, and (d) symbolic. These frames provide context to how to navigate the many

challenges an organization may contend with. Bolman and Deal (2003) state "A good

frame makes it easier to know what you are up against and what you can do about it" (p.

13). Frames are considered "windows on the world of leadership and management." By

utilizing the four frame model, it will allow the researcher to gaze into the window for the

talent management strategies being developed and deployed for this large investor-owned

utility.

Bolman and Deal's (2003) framework allowed the researcher to understand the

realities of organizational life for this large investor-owned utility company:

- *Structural frame* – focuses on the architecture of the organization.

- *Human resource frame* – emphasis on understanding of people, with their strengths and foibles, reason and emotion, desires and fears.

- *Political frame* – sees organizations as competitive arenas characterized by scarce resources, competing interests, and struggles for power and advantage.

- *Symbolic frame* – It puts ritual, ceremony, story, play, and culture at the heart of organizational life.

Challenges Facing the Utility Industry

Challenges facing the electric utility industry are numerous. As common in most industries, the workforce issues that plague other industries are also being felt in the energy industry. To add to the pressures being felt throughout this industry, the economic crisis of 2008 is now beginning to have a strong impact on the operation. These challenges go well beyond the common workforce issues a company faces but by closer examination of the underlying issues, will provide credence and specificity to why it is imperative that this industry must focus on talent management strategies and how the investments in people will play a significant role in combating the many challenges the industry has to contend with. The following are a few of the underlying issues the utility industry is facing:

- Customer expectations.

- Impact of the credit crisis and the collapse of the financial market.

- The environment and controlling the carbon footprint.

- The rise of renewable energy.

- Aging assets.

Customer Expectations

Small and Frantzis (2010) claim:

Today's electric utilities face unprecedented challenges. On top of traditional goals of safety, reliability, the modern utility must address global environmental issues such as climate change, national security issues surrounding dependence on foreign energy, and a growing desire by customers to have greater control over their energy use decisions to lower costs and decrease their environmental footprint. (p. iii)

In *Managing Customer Satisfaction in Energy Deliver*, leading global management consulting firm Oliver Wyman (2005) claims that "leading utilities understand the value of higher customer satisfaction":

- As a key element in broader corporate and regulatory strategies.

- To help prioritize system investments and better meet customer expectations.

- To rally the organization and take ownership of customer experiences.

- To improve overall performance and generate shareholder value. (p. 1)

Small and Frantzis (2010) said that:

the energy industry, like most others, will continue to experience an evolution in customer expectations, from information on demand to high degrees of control and engagement to the ability to create collaborative and personalized interaction channels with energy service providers. (p. 2).

To ensure customer satisfaction utilities must manage both performance and customer perception. Influencing the many stakeholders and environments requires a clearly defined process and broad organizational ownership.

Essentially, utilities will have to leverage customer expectation with internal performance to ensure there is a positive perception of the services being offered. To ensure customer satisfaction and expectations are being met and to close the customer gap and link satisfaction to business drivers, utilities must: manage both performance

and perception; understand the key drivers impacting customer satisfaction performance; develop strategies and initiatives designed to close the gaps; and prioritize efforts to ensure focus, allocated scarce resources, and demonstrate results.

Impact of the Credit Crisis

McMahon and Gumaledar (2009) wrote in *Strategic Issues Facing the Utility Industry*, that "the fall of 2008 brought the international credit crisis and concerns by many utilities over their liquidity, cash flows, and ability to finance large capital investments, including new power plants" (p. 2). The International Energy Agency ([IEA]; 2009) reported in a background paper for a G8 energy ministers' meeting, that "the energy sector, like all other economic sectors, is being profoundly affected by the worsening business climate and the credit crunch" (p. 7). In three particular areas, the credit crisis has a direct impact, (a) tighter credit, (b) lower profitability, and (c) less need for capacity.

Tighter credit. Due to the credit crisis issue, energy companies are experiencing difficulties in assuming credit since 2008. McMahon and Gumaledar (2009) conclude,

> Energy companies are finding it much harder than in the past to obtain credit for both ongoing operations and to raise fresh capital for new projects, because of paralyzed credit markets. In addition, plunging share prices are driving up gearing ratios and pressuring companies to cut absolute levels of debt. In some cases, the cost of capital has risen in absolute terms despite very substantial across-the-board cuts in central bank lending rates – especially for the riskiest projects – making marginal investments uneconomic. (p. 10)

Lower profitability. Since 2008, there has been a reduction in various forms of energy. "Weak demand, together with expectations of lower prices…has made new investments in production facilities generally less profitable, as costs (while starting to fall back) generally remain high" (IEA, 2009, p. 10).

Less need for capacity. Due to the falling demand for energy, this "reduced the appetite and urgency for suppliers to invest now in new capacity" (IEA, 2009, p. 10).

Cannell and Cannell (2009) write that three fronts are affected by the financial crisis of 2008: (a) financing, (b) demand, and (c) expansion. As it pertains to finances, "due to their capital-intensive nature, electric utilities are a major presence in the financial markets, particularly in terms of short-term borrowing" (p. 5). Cannell and Cannell report that since 2008 there has been a declining demand from customers. "With many consumers overextended on their mortgage payments, customers likely are viewing their electric usage as an area in which they can save. This translates into reduced revenues for many utilities" (p. 8). Lastly, expansion projects are being deferred, pared down and or cancelled due to the impacts of the financial crisis. However, it's expressed that "most expenditures will be required to upgrade existing infrastructure, meet known service territory demand, and comply with environmental or renewable mandates" (p. 8).

Environment and Carbon Footprint

Yet another area of contention for the utility industry is the size and impact of the carbon footprint left on the environment. In an article published by Price Water House Coopers (2008), it was said that "public debate over climate change increases in the US on a daily basis. The pressure on corporations to go green is relentless. Already, a patch-work of regulatory standards and initiatives exists in response to growing public pressure" (p. 3). Though the Lieberman-Warner bill on the Senate floor in 2008 was defeated, and ultimately deferring to a later time, with possibly another administration, this bill was to seek additional regulations on greenhouse gases. McMahon and Gumaledar (2009) said that "Senate Bill 2191, commonly referred to as Lieberman-

Warner, would have required carbon emission reductions to 2005 levels by 2012 and to

10 percent below 2005 levels by 2020" (p. 4). This is one of many market pressures

being experienced by utilities. This creates "an enormous shift in the marketplace, which

will affect many aspects of the economy. Certainly those companies with the greatest

exposure to change will be those with the largest carbon footprints, in particular the

utilities and energy sectors" (p. 3).

Though the Liberman-Warner bill was defeated in 2008, the *cap and trade* policy

of 2009 was passed by Congress. This policy seeks to reduce carbon dioxide (CO2)

emissions. Samaras et al. (2009) stated in *Briefing Note from the Department of*

Engineering and Public Policy Carnegie Mellon University, the policy intends to have

targeted strategies for:

- Electric power – A tradable carbon emission portfolio standard (CPS) that

  gradually reduces the average amount of CO2 emitted per kW-hour for the

  electricity that companies sell to end users;

- Building and appliances – Higher and more inclusive efficiency standards for

  building design and construction, appliances, equipment, and lighting;

- Automobiles – Efficiency standards that at least double the miles per gallon of

  automobiles and light trucks over current vehicles. (p. 1)

These regulations have a significant impact on a utility company's operation.

The Rise of Renewable Energy

Renewable energy has been a steady incline as there is a need for "clean energy"

and to reduce the carbon emissions being omitted into the environment. Kammen (2006)

writes in his article *The Rise of Renewable Energy,* "to counter the alarming trend of

global warming, the U.S. and other countries must make a major commitment to developing renewable energy sources that generate little or no carbon" (p. 85). Alone, California has an aggressive Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to reach a target of 33% renewable power by the year 2020. Known as, "A Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) or Renewable Energy Standard (RES) requires a percent of energy sales (MWh) or installed capacity (MW) to come from renewable resources" (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 2011, ¶6). Renner (2008) states "the renewable energy industry includes: biomass, hydropower, solar, wind, tidal and wave" (p. 1).

A profound fact Renner (2008) asserts is that:

By the year 2030, it is projected that the renewable energy industry could employ 6.3 million people globally, with up to two million in the U.S. alone. Moreover, including expected retirements from electric utilities and oil and gas companies, conventional energy increasingly will be in competition with green energy for a relatively finite pool of human capital. The most acute labor shortages are expected in the core energy workforce: production, installation, maintenance, repair, construction, and transportation and service jobs. These demographic trends will continue to play a major role in reshaping the energy infrastructure across the globe. (p. 2)

Yet, this is another reason why the utility industry must begin taking progressive steps to secure the right types of talent to execute on the changing demands the energy sector is currently experiencing. Renner (2008) also conclude that "organizations across all industries are now focusing attention on the importance of having skilled and engaged people at all levels to execute the business strategy and deliver the desired operational and financial results" (p. 4). When companies place an importance on securing high performers and the pivotal talent that becomes critical to the business need, that's when the competitive edge begins and provides future sustainability to an organization.

Aging Assets

Naturally, it is quite understandable that utility assets and the operation and maintenance of such assets must be managed by utility workers. To ensure a reliable energy system, utility companies must ensure their assets are continuously being monitored, replaced and or upgraded. Though this is speaking specifically towards infrastructure assets, the type of assets that are under examination for this study is human capital assets. Just as assets that make the electrical utility industry operate, people who carry out critical functions and hold key leadership positions that plan for the industry challenges, it has become a very serious concern as it is apparent that this industry will be faced with a mass exodus of its aging workforce due to the aging-out of a disproportionate percentage of the utility workforce. Much of the retirements will come from the baby boomer generation.

In an article written by Bishop (2009), *Transformers Aren't the Only Aging Utility Assets*, he states:

> The issue of an aging and retiring workforce has become an unprecedented problem in the electric power industry. Up to 50 percent of electric utility employees in North America will be eligible to retire in the next five years. As a result, many utilities are concerned about the loss of a significant knowledge base. Recruiting and retaining employees is becoming a huge challenge. The number of undergraduate engineering students in the U.S. continues to decline. In China and India those graduating with an engineering degree number 40 percent whereas in the United States, only four percent are graduating with engineering degrees. What's more concerning, retirements are happening at a record pace. (p. 1)

This concern affects the utility industry on a whole, to include both public and privately owned utility companies. These challenges being experienced in one agency extends to the other and are both are beginning to feel the real threat of an exodus mounting from one specific generation, the baby boomers.

In an article by American Public Power Association (2003), *The Aging and Retiring Work Force: New Challenges for Public Power*, it is claimed that:

> The workforce is aging, with retirements, critical skills, expertise, and knowledge may dissipate. Qualified replacements may be increasingly difficult to recruit and retain. American employers are rapidly approaching what experts predict will be a major staffing crisis, triggered by two demographic trends:
> - The growing number of older workers, driven by Baby Boomer retirements;
> - The Shrinking pool of younger workers who can replace them. (p. 1)

Many believe this to be the onset of the age bubble. This is considered to be "a ballooning population of workers at one end of the age continuum, followed by a deep dip in the next generation and modest rise in the work force's youngest members" (p. 1). Combined, "these trends present a significant human resource impact and a strategic business challenge for utilities" (p. 1).

In *Addressing the Aging Utility Workforce Challenge*, Bruffy and Juliano (2007) state that there is a cost associated with the impacts of workforce challenges. "The costs of an aging workforce that impact utilities today can be placed into three categories, which are (a) operational costs (b) productivity costs, and (c) opportunity costs" (p. 144). These costs can accrue into the millions of dollars when combined. However, when the utility industry and or a utility company understand the impacts of such costs, they can begin to establish strategies to reduce risks to operations. The following three cost impacts are central concerns to utility companies:

> *Operational costs* – Operational costs directly affect the bottom line through a wide variety of forces, including:
> - Lost revenue; penalties from regulatory agencies; higher maintenance costs; increased frequencies of forced outages and accidents caused by human error as highly experienced operators retire (since human error rates would be expected to significantly decrease with experience)
>
> *Productivity costs* – Productivity costs are being incurred over a wide variety of areas, including:

- Increases in the duration of planned outages as new hires gradually build the expertise and efficiency that the current workforce has; and work time lost in recovery from injuries is expected to be much greater for older workers.

Opportunity costs – Lost or delayed opportunities to take costs out of the business are the opportunity costs of the aging workforce, including:
- Executing performance programs that end up costing more than budgeted and which extend planned ROI time frames; and internal resources may be limited and act to prevent the performance from ever beginning. (p. 144)

In addition to the listed cost impacts on utilities, Bruffy and Juliano (2007) state

that solutions can be viewed and addressed in a structured manner: (a) Short Term, (b)

Midterm, and (c) Long Term. First, short term management can include "quantifying the

impact of retirements on institutional knowledge and understanding the actions that will

be required in the future to mitigate the impact of the losses are critical first steps to

helping ensure a smooth generational transition" (p. 144). The step is to address

employee retention and leadership development of personnel. Bruffy and Juliano state

that such strategies should be built on three pillars:

1. Pillar 1 – Retention of current early – and mid-career workers, whose

   knowledge is valuable to their employer but who are also valuable potential

   suitors from inside and outside the industry;

2. Pillar 2 – Leadership programs that identify the high-potential individuals

   suited for key roles; and

3. Pillar 3 – Creation of incentives and programs for retiring workers to stay on a

   few years longer to help manage this generational transition. (p. 144)

Lastly, long-term solutions will be the toughest, particularly to investor-owned utilities

whose stakeholders want to see ever-decreasing quarter-over-quarter costs. As this study

will focus on a large investor-owned utility company, the findings can be benchmarked

for the larger utility industry.

Talent Management Processes

Talent management is considered a complex collection of connected HR

processes that delivers a fundamental value for any organization. McCauley and

Wakefield (2006) detailed in the article, *Help Your Company Find, Develop, and Keep its*

Strongest Workers that "today's businesses face increased global competition, shifting

markets, and unforeseen events. No wonder they are finding it more difficult than ever to

attract, develop, and retain skilled workers they need" (p. 4). As this research will have a

significant focus on the talent management strategies developed for a large investor-

owned utility company, it will also focus on other significant elements of this study,

which are: (a) assessment, (b) acquisition, (c) alignment, and (d) development of talent.

Talent management for the utility industry consist more than just identifying critical

positions for future replacement but more on how to groom, develop and establish

succession planning methods for the talent that reside within the organization. There is

nothing more critical than the long-term vitality of an organization than the development

of its future leaders. McCauley and Wakefield state that organizations that excel in talent

management follow eight best practices:

1. Defining "talent management" broadly.

2. Integrating the various elements of talent management into comprehensive
   systems.

3. Focusing talent management on their most highly-valued talent.

4. Getting CEOs and senior executives committed to talent management work.

5. Building competency models to create a shared understanding of the skills and behaviors the organization needs and values in employees.

6. Monitoring talent system-wide to identify potential talent gaps.

7. Excelling at recruiting, identifying, and developing talent, as well as performance management and retention.

8. Regularly evaluating the results of their talent management system. (p. 5)

Those industries that establish successful talent management processes develop a talent mindset. Conger and Fulmer (2009) claim that there are five fundamental rules that pertain to talent management, thus creating a talent pipeline:

- Rule 1 – Focus on development.

- Rule 2 – Identify linchpin positions.

- Rule 3 – Make it transparent.

- Rule 4 – Measure progress regularly.

- Rule 5 – Keep it flexible.

Rule 1: Focus on development. "The fundamental rule – the one on which the other four rest – is that succession management must be a flexible system oriented toward developmental activities, not a rigid list of high-potential employees and the slots they might fill" (Conger & Fulmer, 2009, p. 78). The implication is that an organization should attempt to bridge succession planning with leadership development to ascertain maximum results. A focus should be on the essential skills required for the pivotal positions to be replaced, "along with an educational system that can aid managers to develop those skills" (Conger & Fulmer, 2009, p. 78).

Rule 2: Identify linchpin positions. According to Conger and Fulmer (2009):

> Whereas succession planning generally focuses on a few positions at the very top, leadership development usually begins in middle management. Collapsing the two functions into a single system allows companies to take a long-term view of the process of preparing middle managers, even those below the director level, to become general managers. Succession management systems should focus intensively on linchpin positions – jobs that are essential to the long-term health of the organization. They're typically difficult to fill, they are rarely individual-contributor positions, and they usually reside in established areas of the business and those critical for the future. (p. 79)

By focusing on these "linchpin" positions, the organization can monitor the pipeline for such jobs, while emphasizing developmental programs that ensure a sufficient supply of the necessary talent.

Rule 3: Make it transparent. Succession planning has been shrouded with secrecy for decades. Though many companies and CEOs use this to their advantage, Conger and Fulmer (2009) state "the idea that if you don't know where you stand (and stand on a low rung), you will continue to strive to climb the ladder" (p. 81). CEOs have had the flexibility to make last minute changes without having to be concerned with employee let-down because a position was not offered to them. Succession planning can be transparent if organizations consider the following:

1. Being open and honest with its employees regarding their performance. In addition, companies can inform employees as to where they stand in the succession pipeline.

2. Allow the employee to become a source of information related to their background to include skills and experiences. Encouraging personal development plans ensures employees take accountability pertaining to their own development.

Though, transparency can be a positive attribute of a company, there are apparent threats in taking this stance. As transparency may make a positive impact to one company, it can become a detriment to another. Sometimes, being overly transparent may cause damage to team spirit. "An employee who discovers that there are relatively low on the roster may stop trying to excel" (Conger & Fulmer, 2009, p. 80).

Rule 4: Measure progress regularly. The intent for succession planning is to ensure the sustainability of the business. One way of achieving this is to ensure investment in human capital. Thus, the reason for succession planning is to identify those high potential individuals that will help to accomplish sustainability and continue to forge forward in meeting the long-term goals and objectives of the company. Conger and Fulmer (2009) believe:

> measuring success is not a short-term task but a long-term matter…No longer is it sufficient to know who could replace the CEO; instead, you must know whether the right people are moving at the right pace into the right jobs at the right time. (p. 80)

By far, the main objective is to have a plentiful pool of talent ready to assume pivotal roles within the organization. As part of the talent management efforts, it's important to know where your talent resides and what they are being developed for. Several companies have experienced the effects of not knowing their talent resources and how they are being groomed to meet an array of positions within the organization. One phenomenon Conger and Fulmer (2009) coined "Roger Jones phenomenon," revealed that a company to be named Sonoco:

> Was having trouble developing their own candidates and would simply identify one of the company's superstar performers as a potential success. But when succession plans were consolidated at the corporate level, a single employee, Roger Jones, was found to be the potential successor for most of the key jobs at the company. (p. 80)

Companies must stay cognizant of where their talent rest and what the other needs of the business are, so that talent can be dispersed in such critical areas. Companies must always maintain a pool of talent to draw from when the need arises.

Rule 5: Keep it flexible. Succession planning should maintain a flexible process that needs to be refined and reviewed regularly to meet the needs of business when required. "Succession management should allow for both process and content" (Conger & Fulmer, 2009, p. 84).

Price Water House Coopers (2009) claim in the article *Facing Critical Workforce Issues in the Utility Industry* that there are many implications surrounding talent management for the utility industry:

1. Technology organizations and defense contractors are luring engineers and technicians to switch industries. As these workers leave the business, so does knowledge, skills, and abilities.

2. Severe decrease in the sciences, engineering, and technology talent pool is making it difficult for organizations to fill pivotal positions.

3. A higher-than-average percentage of older workers will leave the utilities sector leaving them more vulnerable to the impact of baby boomer retirements.

4. Young and old employees working along-side each other poses concerns as to how to effectively manage a multigenerational workforce.

5. The staid, labor-intensive and technology-adverse reputation of the industry may make other industries a more attractive alternative for younger workers.

6. Major capital expense requirements in infrastructure and new technology make the decision to invest in talent more challenging as the return on investment on

people is more difficult to track and the risk of losing them to turnover is great. (¶ 3)

Ulrich (2005) states "an organization can reach effectiveness when five factors are aligned to the HR value proposition:

1. *Knowing external business realities* – technology, economics, globalization and demographics.

2. *Serving external and internal stakeholders* – customers, investors, managers, and employees.

3. *Crafting HR practices* – people, performance, information and work.

4. *Building HR resources* – HR organization and strategy.

5. *Assuring HR professionalism* – HR roles and competencies. (p. 6)

In an interview with Ulrich on HR transformation, it was said that his intent for writing the book was to update the field of HR. "In the past decade the pace of change has increased thanks to technology, globalization, demographics, and customer expectation. HR has to not only redefine roles, and outcomes, but be transformed to make those outcomes happen" (Greelman, 2009, p. 1).

The utility industry is approaching a critical juncture, with rising market demands, thus, strategic planning that addresses talent management is imminent. Serrat (2010) states "critical talent is scarce (and about to become scarcer) because of three trends: the ongoing retirement of the 'Baby Boom Generation', a widening skills gap, and large-scale social integration (driving rapidly changing lifestyles)" (p. 76). Talent management processes are not new and have been around for about half a century ago. However, Cappelli (2008) states, "over the past generation, talent management practices, especially

in the United States, have by and large been dysfunctional, leading corporations to lurch

from surpluses of talent to shortfalls to surpluses and back again" (p. 74).

Essentially, talent management is much about anticipating the need for human

capital and then setting out a plan to meet it. The utility Industry can no longer wait and

do nothing, thus rendering talent management valueless. In today's environment of

uncertainty for the utility industry, Cappelli (2008) asserts that:

> It's time for a fundamentally new approach to talent management that takes into
> account the great uncertainty businesses face today. Fortunately, companies
> already have such a model, one that has been well honed over decades to
> anticipate and meet demand in uncertain environments – supply chain
> management. By borrowing lessons from operations and supply chain research,
> firms can forge a new model of talent management better suited to today's
> realities. (p. 76)

Bersin (2006) provides a three stage chronology of how talent management came to

existence:

- Stage 1: Personnel Department – In the 1970s and 1980s the business function

  which was responsible for people was called *The Personnel Department*. The role

  of this group was to hire people, pay them, and make sure they had the necessary

  benefits. The systems which grew up to support this function were batch payroll

  systems. In this role, the personnel department was a well understood business

  function.

- Stage 2: Strategic HR – In the 1980s and 1990s organizations realized that the

  HR function was in fact more important – and the concepts of *Strategic HR*

  emerged. During this period, organizations realized that the VP of HR had a

  much larger role: recruiting the right people, training them, helping the business

  design job roles and organization structures (organization design), develop *total*

compensation packages which include benefits, stock options and bonuses, and serving as a central point of communication for employee health and happiness.

- Stage 3: Talent Management – This new era is the emergence of *Talent Management.* While strategic HR continues to be a major focus, HR and L&D organizations are now focused on a new set of strategic issues:

  1. How can we make our recruiting process more efficient and effective by using *competency-based* recruiting instead of sorting through resumes, one at a time?

  2. How can we better develop managers and leaders to reinforce culture, instill values, and create sustainable *leadership pipeline*?

  3. How do we quickly identify competency gaps so we can deliver training, e-learning, or development programs to fill these gaps? How can we use these gaps to hire just the right people?

  4. How do we manage people in a consistent and measurable way so that everyone is aligned, held accountable, and paid fairly?

  5. How do we identify high performers and successors to key positions throughout the organization to make sure we have a highly flexible, responsive organization?

  6. How do we provide learning that is relevant, flexible, convenient, and timely?

Succession Planning

Succession planning plays a significant role in the utility industry, especially because of the disproportionate amount of baby boomers becoming eligible for retirement in the very near future. Rollins (2003) states in *Succession Planning*:

> Organizations that embrace succession planning find that it helps identify management talent and capabilities, establishes a broad base of leadership that is ready to take on new challenges, and avoids the disruption that can result from ill-timed promotions and inadequately prepared managers. (p. 15)

Succession planning is a strategic endeavor. A common assumption is that a succession plan is isolated to the replacement of high ranking officers and or executives. Though executive officer succession planning is critical to the sustainability and stability of an organization, developing and identifying the next level of leaders are just as critical to the overall plan.

When organizations have plans in place they are more prepared for the future and are more likely to reach a level of success. "Succession planning is a structured process, involves the identification and preparation of a potential successor to assume a new role" (Garman & Glawe, 2004, p. 119). Leadership provides direction and by preparing for leadership transition by means of succession planning, allows the organization to maintain its stability. Succession planning is about understanding the dreams held by each of staff member and providing them the professional development, mentoring, sponsorship, and opportunities to lead that will prepare them to experience success along with the organization.

Though organizations must have many operational plans in place not limited to succession plans, a focus should be on the people who will execute on those plans, which provide the key ingredient to organizational success. For organizations to stay

competitive, they must have the right mixture of leadership and talent. In the evolution

of finding internal and or external talent and leadership, boards must consider the

competencies that will sustain their success. Rollins (2003) wrote:

> Succession planning addresses both sides of the recruitment and retention
> equation, drawing people to the organization and making it easier to fill senior
> positions from within. "One of the benefits is that it helps attract talent. People
> know there are broad opportunities for anyone in the executive track" says George
> F. Lonshore, Vice President of Organizational Effectiveness and Human
> Resources at Catholic Health East, a multi-institutional. (p. 15)

For organizations to compete within the marketplace there must be a heavy degree

of stability. Stability can be achieved through the means of organizational continuity.

With increased continuity, sustainability will follow. Sustainability is the degree to

which an organization is able to reach its goals and mission for a period of time. One

major threat organizations are facing which will disrupt continuity and sustainability, is

an aging workforce. Patterson and Pointer (2007) state "as the baby boomer age out,

many organizations are facing leadership deficits" (p. 101).

With an aging multigenerational workforce, organizations will need to plan for

the transition of leadership within the immediate years. Roddy (2004) states, "It is

commonly known that our workforce is aging, and employees with the most institutional

knowledge will be eligible for retirement in a few short years" (p. 487). When

considering the aging workforce and the leadership deficits that organizations will be

faced with, an element of the succession plan must include the current forecast of the

labor market and the rapidly changing technology that comes with such change in the

marketplace.

The following three phases can aid talent management strategies for the utility

industry and better prepare succession planning efforts for the organization:

Phase 1 – Identification of key leadership positions. By identifying the key leadership positions within the organization, it begins the process of describing the roles and responsibilities a successor must be prepared for. This identification allows for the planning for career progression. Progression planning plays a significant role in preparing staff for succession and replacing critical leadership positions when the need arises.

Phase 2 – Identifying competency, skills and success factors. Phase two consist of developing the competencies for each critical position. This becomes significant in developing talent management strategies, with a key goal of identifying both internal and external talent as successors; and developing and grooming talent to take on critical leadership positions. Ultimately having the right talent in the right place drives performance and aligns with the overarching business goals of the organization. Daft (2008) states:

> Part of a team's performance depends on knowledge, skills, and abilities of its individual members. He also claims to perform effectively; a team requires three different types of skills:
> 1. People with technical expertise.
> 2. People with the problem-solving and decision-making skills who can identify problems, generate alternatives, evaluate those alternatives, and make competent choices.
> 3. People with good listening, feedback, conflict resolution, and other interpersonal skills. (pp. 147-148)

Phase 3 – Assess current bench strength. Phase three allows for the development of organizational bench strengths. The process of bench strength helps to identify the depth of talent that exists within the organization. It's critical to the utility industry that strengths and weaknesses will be identified of employees that are part of the succession pipeline and that can potentially assume leadership roles throughout the organization.

The credible threat to the energy utility sector is that there will be multiple critical leadership positions coming vacant at the same time, causing significant loss of business continuity. Much of the concern comes with the pending exodus of the baby boomer generation in the next few years.

In summary, there are a certain strategies that help to support succession planning: (a) career ladders, (b) performance management, and (c) knowledge transfer.

Career ladders: Career ladders are clear and achievable routes for promotion within a defined organizational scope. This scope can be at a division, department, agency or enterprise level. Ladders encourage and facilitate the development and promotion of staff into management and leadership positions, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of succession planning.

Performance management: Combined with effective performance assessment, consistent and timely performance management ensures employee growth and development, which in turns supports an organization's capacity to promote from within and fill key positions with strong candidates.

Knowledge transfer: An organization's knowledge transfer performance is high when it has and uses clearly defined documentation and communication processes to pass essential information from executives and other key employees to others. This ensures knowledge management and institutional memory is shared, not lodged in one individual or unit. This becomes a key part of succession planning (Vermont Department of Human Resources, n.d.).

Talent Assessment

Utilities are aware of the clear and present danger the aging workforce has on the

industry. Awareness alone can no longer suffice but by establishing talent management

plans to address the need to fill mission-critical positions is the necessary course of action

utility companies must take now. An article published by APPA (2005) entitled *Work*

Force Planning for Public Power Utilities: Ensuring Resources to Meet Projected Needs,

stated "As with other segments of the U.S. economy and the electric utility industry,

utilities are faced with an aging work force and the potential retirements of a large

percentage of its employee base" (p. 4). In this 2005 report, it indicates that the

following occupational groups would be most at risk for retirement in the coming years:

- Chief Execution Officers and General Managers.

- Senior Managers.

- Supervisors.

- Engineers.

- Skilled trades to include: electricians, line workers, equipment installers and

  maintenance workers, machinery mechanics, plumbers, pipefitters, technicians,

  and construction workers.

- Information Technicians.

Krell (2010) wrote:

> Industry demographics underscore the need for top-notch succession planning.
> For example, in three years, more than half of electric utility CEOs (who on
> average are older than corporate executives as a whole) will reach retirement age.
> Senior management in general will be retiring in greater numbers in the next few
> years – 51 percent of senior engineers, for example, will reach retirement age by
> 2015. In addition, the incoming management requires unique skill sets to face big
> challenges in the years ahead – aging infrastructure, deployment of new
> technologies for a low-carbon world, growing power demand, changes in the

nature of both state and federal regulation, growth of smart grid technologies, construction of advanced nuclear power, even new auditing rules. Add to this mix the lingering impacts of the economic crisis and tight labor market for linemen and engineering talent, and you begin to understand why succession planning may present a double or even triple whammy. (p. 25)

Talent management first begins with a proper assessment of an organization's current and future needs. Henman (n.d.) states "one of the most critical responsibilities of senior leaders involves assessing talent" (¶3). Talent assessments consist of three areas which are: (a) one's aptitude to perform a job; (b) behaviors that will result in job success, and; (c) requisite experience for success.

Aptitude involves a natural disposition or tendency toward a particular action, the readiness to learn, and the raw talent to function in the role. It involves three major capacities: verbal ability, quantitative skills, and strategic thinking. Behavior involves people's conduct – the way they present themselves. Behavior encompasses morals, deportment, carriage and demeanor. Lastly, experience, the most easily observed and objective aspect of talent assessment addresses the skills the person has displayed so far. In other words, they already know how to perform specific tasks and have demonstrated this in the past. (Henman, n.d., ¶4-9)

Haid and Stroud (2009) asserts that "there's one tactic that if approached correctly can go a long way toward helping companies ensure they have the talent they need, which involves creating systematic assessment methods for hiring, promoting and developing leaders throughout the organization" (p. 1). Haid and Stroud believe this will allow a company to remain competitive by (a) understanding your talent profile, (b) using the talent profile to guide where you look for job candidates, (c) adopting a customized selection process, (d) Keeping speed and efficiency top in mind, (e) incorporating savvy interview techniques, and (f) employing assessments for multiple purposes.

Understanding your talent profile. Haid and Stroud (2009) state, companies can accomplish this task by studying the strategy and culture of the organization. This

will help to determine the type of employees needed to make the strategy work. Another

way is to study the top performers that already exist within the organization, since those

traits are good predictors of success. Haid (2010) states:

> In today's uncertain times, companies urgently need the ability to adapt their culture quickly, to create an agile organization able to turn on a dime. Without the appropriate leaders in place, organizations may find they're unable to perform up to stakeholder expectations and move forward as rapidly as is necessary. On the other hand, those enterprises with the right leaders who fit the organizational culture – motivated by opportunities in the company and effectively interacting with peers and subordinates – stand a good chance of meeting the challenges of the current economy and thriving when conditions improve. (p. 4)

Use the talent profile to guide where you look for job candidates. It is very

common that companies select talent from top tier colleges. Though this is good, an

organization can lose out on finding the "whole person" if searches are not extended to

second and third tier schools.

Adopt a customized selection process. By creating a tailor-made assessment

instrument, this will aid in identifying high performers and or top talent. This will

enhance the accuracy in predicting suitability of a candidate and to assure that he or she

has the traits for the position.

Keep speed and efficiency top in mind. Haid and Stroud (2009) claim:

> The competition for talent typically means that the best talent is taken 'off the market' by those organizations that are better and faster at finding top talent ahead of their competitors. For that reason, companies need to design a customized system that identifies the most critical attributes of top employees early on in the qualifying and screening phases of the process and pinpoints other, less key features later on. That means focusing initial screening on areas that are the most difficult to train, while addressing other aspects of the profile that can be more easily developed afterward. (p. 3)

Incorporate savvy interview techniques. The key focus is to structure the interview to "zero in on applicants competencies so it can be determined how the person will behave once he or she is hired" (Haid & Stroud, 2009, p. 4).

Employee assessments for multiple purposes. This helps to collapse the various components of talent management (i.e., staffing, development, succession planning) into a single talent management strategy and avoid the silos that HR departments have been plagued with in the past.

For the utility industry, with the shifting market forces, these tactics will allow for the assessments needed to ascertain key talent to ensure a well-equipped and vital workforce. Haid and Stroud (2009) states, this will also help to ensure:

- A critical alignment is made between employee skills and the organization's culture, values, and business direction.

- Creates an integrated talent management strategy for all their efforts, from leadership development to succession planning.

- Pinpoints the most efficient sources for finding new talent.

- Develops "a more cost-effective talent management process. (p. 4)

Harrison (2008) states in a position paper "*Best Practices in Talent Assessment*", that "assessing people for jobs is the most important task of any organization…assessment is not merely one of the functions of the Human Resource Department, it is the essential foundation for effective talent acquisition and talent management" (p. 1). In addition "high quality assessment of applicants during the recruitment process results in less time and money spent on training and developing employees" (p. 1). Harrison claims "good assessment reduces training costs, minimizes

losses due to poor decisions, increases employee retention and can even provide a foundation for better teamwork" (p. 1). One clear benefit of providing assessment is that it leads to a better understanding for employees, and the performance and job expectations required of them. Ultimately, this leads to higher levels of retention, job satisfaction and motivation.

Harrison (2008) says that "effective assessment is to really have a clear understanding of the job and formulate the success factors" (p. 1). This includes the understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and requirements of the job to adequately support the performance desired. The two areas of job requirements are: eligibility and suitability.

As mentioned earlier, with Henman's point on the three constructs of talent, which entails aptitude, behavior and experience, Harrison (2008) contrast suitability – the behavioral tendencies, with eligibility – the experience, training and education to be part of the assessment process.

Eligibility: This assesses if the person can perform. "This is the only way in which you can effectively compare candidates to each other and to integrate the eligibility score with the behavioral score" (Harrison, 2008, p. 2).

Suitability: This assesses if the person will perform. Harrison (2008) states:

> Suitability factors are behavioral and are much more difficult for people to change than eligibility factors. This makes it even more important to accurately assess behavior during the recruitment process. Most organizations hire people for their eligibility and then try to develop their suitability. And in many cases fire them for their lack of suitability. Since behavior is fundamentally more difficult to change than eligibility, it is better to hire people who already have the suitability for the job. (p. 3)

Talent Acquisition and Recruitment

Chambers, Foulon, Handfiel-Jones, Hankin, and Michaels (2007) state in *The War for Talent* that that "Better talent is worth fighting for…and companies can win the war for talent, but first you must elevate talent management to a burning corporate priority" (p. 1). Mathur (2010) states "in the coming decades, the demands for talented people will far exceed the availability of skilled workers – at all levels, and in all industries" (p. 103). McGee (2008) parallels talent acquisition with talent spotting, which he says high caliber talent "tend to be the top 10% - 20% of people in the organization who consistently deliver high performance and demonstration to you that they have much further to go or more to give" (p. 5).

McGee (2008) claims that organizations have their own unique sought after attributes of high potentials but the following are some common attributes that are highly coveted as part of the acquisition and recruitment screening process:

- Has the respect and trust of peers.

- Consistently produces measurable results above expectation.

- Has a bias for action and is a proactive catalyst for change.

- Ensures that team goals are achieved within ethical and cultural guidelines.

- Self-manages in a manner that fosters learning and high-performance.

- Thinks and solves problems creatively.

- Is open to constructive criticism and feedback.

- Has a good understanding of your business and his/her role in delivering its goals.

- Strives to deliver and exceed customers' needs.

- Has a well-developed network of people helping to achieve their goals. (p. 13)

Hamilton (2009) claims, "Companies that will need to attract and recruit employees in the future will need to implement new strategies and tactics to address the immediate as well as long-term needs of reaching a targeted group of employees" (p. 34). In today's workforce, there are differing levels of needs and offering a job alone is no longer able to suffice top talent particularly from generation x and y. "The core concept of talent acquisition is to tap into top performers" (p. 34).

Hamilton (2009) states in today's workforce "younger job candidates are much more interested in creating solutions to daily challenges, working with new science and technology, and in seeking career growth and development" (p. 34). Particularly to the utility industry, it has often been seen for many years as technology adverse and not an industry on the cutting edge. However, with the growing number of green jobs, smart metering and renewable energy projects there has been a steady lure of attraction to the industry. For the younger generation, innovation is a very attractive lure and becomes one of several deciding factors when accepting a career offer. Kipps and Marshall (2006) write in *Not Your Grandfather's Recruiting Strategy* that "the most competitive organizations have begun to create proactive recruiting cultures where everyone in the organization becomes committed to attracting top performers" (p. 1). When companies are attempting to attract talent to them, they must do more selling during the recruitment process to these high potential prospects. Hamilton notes "companies must start by looking internally to identify what makes a successful employee. To understand the motivation of the best workers will help to create a picture for what to look for when hiring" (p. 34).

Bowley (2005) writes in his article, *Staffing Strategies: Can You Find, Recruit, and Retain the Talent You Need?* he observed that some organizations are less efficient than others in finding and recruiting talent. During Bowley's research, he learned:

> As with other functional areas, talent sourcing and recruiting tend to be isolated functions within the HR domain. Companies effectively treat each function as a distinct operational silo with minimal levels of interconnectivity with each other and with other functions, such as compensation planning or succession management efforts. In most mid-size and larger organizations, for instance, when a vacancy occurs, the manager completes and submits a job requisition that in-house or external recruiters use as the basis for a candidate search. After hiring, HR generally stores the detailed information it has gathered about candidates in departmental archives rarely seen by non-HR staff. This traditional approach, which many companies once considered efficient, has several challenges. Here are a few examples:
> - Recruiting criteria entered on job requisitions are often inconsistent with the criteria to be used subsequently in performance reviews.
> - Systems and processes are designed to target external candidates with no parallel structures for conducting internal searches.
> - Companies archive pre-hire employee information, making it difficult to access and consider during performance evaluations, compensation and succession planning, and internal hiring searches.
> - Because staffing initiatives are difficult or prohibitively expensive to track and analyze, companies rarely attempt either and thereby lose the substantial value of process feedback. (p. 4)

Ultimately, Jayne (2011) sheds clarity on talent acquisition and its processes by stating, "for an organization to make recruiting a genuine and effective part of overall talent management, there needs to be active participation, and commitment, on the part of the executives who will be the new person's boss, peers, and direct reports" (p. 474). Jayne not only believe participation from key stakeholders is necessary but also feels:

> Overly bureaucratic approaches by staff managing external searches, often leads to unsuccessful searches, or at least to long and drawn-out processes where the actual perspectives of the hiring executive are brought into the process late, incompletely, in a 'second-hand' manner, or, sometimes, they are not at all involved. (p. 474)

Aligning Business Objectives with Performance

The alignment of business objectives to performance is a catalyst to talent

management strategies. Hewitt Associates and Human Capital Institute's (2008) *The*

State of Talent Management states "achieving sustained organizational performance

through the development of a capable workforce lies at the very heart of talent

management" (p. 15). This is the bridge to the talent management structure. The

unfortunate truth is many companies and organizations are not very good at achieving

this desired objective. Softscape (2005) outlines in *Aligning Goals, Strategy, and*

Performance, though performance is an essential ingredient in the succession planning

efforts for many companies, other areas must be included in the *end-to-end* methodology

that extends to other aspects of the employee lifecycle. The lifecycle includes: (a) hiring,

(b) developing, (c) learning, (d) collaboration, (e) strategizing, and (f) reporting. The

performance management part of succession planning is important because it provides

insight into individuals and their performance on the job.

> Palan (n.d.) states:
>
> First, to develop and align goals that is essential to implement business strategy.
> This must link with the organizational structure and positions. The creation of a
> position is not without a reason. Organizational structure is nothing but a series
> of relationships/positions designed to successfully implement strategy. Second, to
> create consistent goals which align employees with managers and business units
> and align these goals with the organization's overall priorities. These goals also
> help employees themselves stay focused. (p. 4)

Therefore, succession planning for the future evolution of replacing linchpin positions

must include an emphasis on leadership development, while taking the necessary steps to

ensure the organization remains at equilibrium for planned and unplanned organizational

changes. Hence, this requires good management of people. Companies who develop

metrics to be included into their performance management plans, find that true

measurement of talent becomes objective. This minimizes hearsay and subjectivity,

which often reigns in performance management efforts for many organizations.

Alignment comes into clear focus and real value is gained for succession planning when

performance measurement is done equitably and consistently.

In a white paper written by Softscape (2005) it was stated:

companies are consistently faced with the dual challenge of cutting administrative costs while increasing overall organizational effectiveness. The bottom line is to achieve more with less and to do so companies need to align their employees with top business objectives. (p. 1)

By far, a focus on an organization's Human Capital Management (HCM) plays a

significant role in succession planning efforts.   HCM is the term used to describe the

business processes and technology that aligns people management initiatives with

business outcomes. HCM plays a strategic role in achieving corporate goals through a set

of applications and processes that enable companies to better measure, manage, and

optimize employee performance. (Softscape, 2005, p. 2)

Performance management is about linking the contributions of individuals to the

strategic goals of the organization and ensuring the right skills and efforts connect to

things that really matter to the organization, thus enhancing overall performance.

Ultimately, by "aligning business strategy with employee goals and performance will

drive growth, enhances corporate culture, and improves organizational effectiveness"

(Softscape, 2005, p. 7). In an article by CIPD (n.d.) *Performance Management in Action:*

Current Trends and Practices, it identified three areas that an organization should focus

on to maximize performance:

1. Effective – it should ensure people have the knowledge and ability to perform.

2. Strategic – it is about broader issues and longer-term goals.

3. Integrated – it should link various aspects of the business, people management, and individuals and teams.

Managers and key stakeholders who are responsible for talent management initiatives are held accountability to effectively managing their people and ensuring alignment with the goals and objectives of the organization. It is the primary means by which they ensure that individuals:

- Know and understand what is expected of them.

- Have the skills and ability to deliver on these expectations.

- Are supported by the organization to develop the capacity to meet these expectations.

- Are given feedback on their performance.

- Have the opportunity to discuss and contribute to individual and team aims and objectives (CIPD, n.d.).

In a study performed by Hewitt Associates and Human Capital Institute (2008), it was reported that "more than one-half (56%) of the respondents studied, do not feel their organization is effective at developing the capability of their employees. Outside of the leadership ranks, capability development occurs sporadically and with limited accountability" (p. 15). It was also indicated that most organizations "do not believe that their managers have the capabilities needed to manage and develop talent" (p. 15). The report emphasized three key areas that directly align to organizational development and capability: (a) lack of accountability and capability for workforce development, (b)

select organizations directly tackle capability development challenges, and (c) reward differentiation is still more of a concept than a reality.

"The lack of accountability for developing talent below executive levels, coupled with managers' lack of capability to develop talent are key drivers of the struggle many organizations have effectively and consistently executing talent management practices" (Hewitt Associates & Human Capital Institute, 2008, p. 15). Organizations who are successful at building bench strength will have earned value in employee development, ultimately leading to better organizational performance. Hewitt Associates and Human Capital Institute assert, "Commitment starts at the top and permeates all management levels. These leading organizations are truly on the front lines of talent development – guiding, rewarding, inspiring, and growing their talent pools" (p. 15).

Both senior executives and managers must stay accountable for performance management processes and to ensure employees are being developed. However "in most organizations, the responsibility for employee development is shared between employees and managers" (Hewitt Associates & Human Capital Institute, 2008, p. 16). Companies are now making it easier for employees to have more control of their own development but some of this stems from the lack of confidence in management and their capabilities to develop employees. "Based on extensive research on employee engagement and retention, the top three levers that motivate and engage employees are: 1) a sense of job fulfillment; 2) career advancement opportunities; and 3) the right mix of rewards that recognize contributions" (Hewitt Associates & Human Capital Institute, 2008, p. 17). With the ever increasing pressures the electric utility industry is experiencing, aligning

business drivers with employee development to reach organizational performance is

critical to future sustainability for this sector of business.

Talent and Leadership Development

Mentioned several times throughout the literature, talent is what drives

performance and is what allows a company to remain sustainable even in the face of

challenging market forces. Accenture (2008) outlines in the article *Securing Your Talent*

Reserves: An Accenture Perspective on Building Strategic Talent Management

Capabilities in the Energy Industry that:

> Energy companies have always needed highly capable and qualified employees to
> achieve their business goals. Without talent – the total of all the experience,
> knowledge, skills and behaviors that a person has and brings to work – the
> industry would not have advanced to its current state. (p. 4)

Talent development can take on many dimensions and can include: the focus on

leadership development; building individual and collective skills of talent; and increasing

capabilities that ultimately leads to organizational performance and building a pipeline of

highly capable employees. Hart, Pounds, LaShell, and Graham (2009) outline specific

priorities that target leadership development for the utility industry. These priorities are:

(a) leading employees, (b) confronting problem employees, (c) building and leading a

team, (d) broad organizational perspective, and (e) career management. These areas are

common business drivers to the utility business.

Leading employees. Leading employees is of high importance but yet is low in

effectiveness in energy organizations. To build leadership bench strength within an

organization, there must be a focus on these critical areas of weakness. Hart et al. (2009)

state "The ability to lead employees requires good skills in directing and motivating

people. This is a highly variable skill, requiring strong self-awareness and interpersonal

savvy" (p. 18). Hart et al. (2009) said some of the consistent behaviors needing

development from managers and executives are:

- Willingness to delegate important tasks, not just the things he/she doesn't want to do.
- Providing prompt feedback, both positive and negative.
- Pushing decision making to the lowest appropriate level and develops employees' confidence in their ability to make those decisions.
- Acts fairly and do not play favorites.
- Uses his/her knowledge base to broaden the range of problem-solving options for direct reports to take.
- Actively promotes his/her direct reports to senior management.
- Develops employees by providing challenge and opportunity.
- Rewards hard work and dedication to excellence.
- Surrounds him/herself with the best people.
- Finds and attracts highly talented and productive people. (p. 18)

Hart et al. (2009) claim that to foster and develop these skills among leaders in the

organization, it is imperative to "communicate the specific behaviors and skills that are

needed to manage others well. Be sure that managers know them and understand them in

the context of their roles" (p. 19). Hart et al. state other considerations are to "assess

leaders on their skills and behaviors; the development of targeted training programs;

identify development assignments for employees at all levels; development of internal

groups to share learning and to initiate mentorship programs" (p. 19).

Confronting problem employees. This is considered mid-level importance, yet

low in effectiveness. Effective leaders act decisively and fairly when dealing with

problem employees. Leaders who are effective in addressing these issues exhibit the

following highly coveted abilities:

- Act decisively when faced with a tough decision such as laying off workers, even though it hurts him/her personally.
- Move quickly in confronting a problem employee.
- Correctly identify potential performance problems early and document employee performance problems. (Hart et al., 2009, p. 19)

To further develop these skills, leaders must be informed on the importance of proper

documentation on legal issues involving employees and their performance problems;

stress the importance of swift and prompt actions; and the effectiveness of a feedback-

rich environment.

   Building and leading a team. This is considered a derailment factor if not

properly administered. "The ability to lead teams is a factor for long-term career

success" (Hart et al., 2009, p. 20). Effective leaders have the ability to set clear goals for

their teams. These individuals are skilled motivators and mentors. Leaders who are

effective at building teams are able to:

- Resolve conflict among direct reports.
- Hire people with good technical skills and the ability to work well with others.
- Motivate team members to do the best for the team.
- Select the right mix of people for the team, bringing together people who collectively have the expertise, knowledge, and skills needed to complete an assigned task or ongoing work.
- Help to understand how one's work fits into the goals of the organization. (Hart et al., 2009, p. 20)

Hart et al. (2009) say "learning to build and lead teams takes both individual learning and

organization support" (p. 20). One of the critical aspects to achieve team leadership is to

"Invest in team development. Evaluate progress continuously and make necessary

adjustments quickly based on benchmarks" (p. 21).

   Broad organizational perspective. This is considered another derailment factor

in the utility industry. "When a manager's orientation is too narrow, he or she is

perceived as not ready for more responsibility, unable to manage in a different

department or function, or how other departments operate within the organization" (Hart

et al., 2009, p. 21). In many cases, promoting a manager to a higher level, without

gaining a broader range of business competencies and or perspective can become

problematic. However, Hart et al. (2009) identify key perspectives of broad range

competencies:

> worked in multiple departments or functions over time; worked with groups and
> teams with competing interests; experienced both line and staff functions, dealt
> with internal and external issues; supervised diverse groups; managed during
> change; developed both tactical and strategic skills. (p. 21)

> To assure a broad business perspective is gained so a pipeline of management

talent is prepared and developed to assume higher levels of responsibility, the following

should be considered:

- Remove organizational obstacles. Organizations may inadvertently hinder
  leadership development through policies, procedures, norms and behaviors.
  Organizations limit their leaders when they focus on vertical job assignments,
  move people through assignments too rapidly, fail to provide people with
  development feedback, or ignore the value of learning from experience.
- Remove individual obstacles. Individuals can limit their own skills, knowledge
  and abilities. Leaders need to know when they are over-relying on strengths or
  previously successful strategies or ignoring or being blind to a notable flaw, for
  example. Other self-limiting behaviors include avoiding untested areas or
  challenges or holding a narrow or single-minded leadership perspective.
- Find challenging experiences. Organizations and bosses should offer employees
  challenging assignments outside their current functions. When this is not possible,
  individuals need to have opportunities within their current department or role to
  try new things, work in different ways, and manage change. (Hart et al. 2009, p.
  22)

Career management. "A person who manages his or her career well uses

professional relationships to help understand career paths and development

opportunities" (Hart et al., 2009, p. 22). Career management is a responsibility held by

all parties of the organization. The responsibility is shared amongst the members of the

organization so the key objective of creating and developing more talent is achieved.

Typically, the individual: "actively seeks others to provide coaching; understands the

value of good mentoring relationships; effectively builds and maintains feedback

channels; actively cultivates a good relationship with superiors; uses mentoring

relationships effectively; actively seeks opportunities to develop professional

relationships with others" (Hart et al., 2009, p. 22). Whereas, the organization can:

- Encourage managers to seek honest feedback from others on a continual basis and instruct them in techniques for giving and receiving feedback.

- Create an effective learning environment in the organization.

- Have managers review their performance development plans with a coach.

- Anticipate roadblocks that can sidetrack managers' development, and make adjustments.

- Create development partners for added support. (Hart et al., 2009, p. 23)

The energy sector is now realizing the changing landscape from the 20th to the

21st century is challenging, thus, causing the examination of new business model to be

able to confront the realities of regulatory, environmental, cost structure for affordability,

and the geopolitical and global pressures being levied on the industry. With all these

pressures mounting, an investment on talent and leadership development takes center

stage. Utilities must "think strategically about developing the skills and perspectives

needed to grow and succeed in the 21st century and the new landscape of the energy

utility industry" (Hart et al., 2009, p. 24).

Knowledge Management

The energy utility industry has serious concerns with the tacit and explicit

knowledge being held and not being transferred by its senior most employees, the baby

boom generation. There are multiple challenges the energy utility industry has to contend

with as the baby boomer generation holds a preponderance of the institutional and

historical knowledge that helps to tell the story of the past and help shape the future of

the industry as it moves into the 21st century. The transference of such knowledge must

transpire prior to the exodus of the baby boomer generation, to ensure the next

generations are well equipped to handle the challenges of tomorrow. Baker, Perez, and

An (2004) state "with the retirement of the baby-boom generation in the horizon, many

public utilities will inevitably face losing experience and knowledge compiled by key

members of their staff over decades of service" (¶ 1).

Baker et al. (2004) state that it's imperative that utilities take the necessary steps

to "enact systemic approaches to ensure that knowledge is maintained and not transferred

from the organization as a result of trends" (¶ 3) that lead to the mass exodus of the baby

boom generation from this sector. Baker et al. claim that "strategic approaches must be

developed to ensure the explicit knowledge ('hard work') and tacit knowledge ('soft

knowledge') are not exported along with people as they leave the organization" (¶ 4).

Baker et al. provides more definition to tacit and explicit knowledge:

> *Tacit Knowledge:* Knowledge that is difficult to capture or formalized.
> Typically, this is the type of knowledge that people gain through hands on
> training and years of experience and therefore it is not easy to standardize.
> *Explicit knowledge:* This knowledge is comprised of actionable information that
> can be easily captured and stored in paper form or databases. This is the type of
> knowledge that can be easily administered using knowledge management
> systems. (¶ 18)

Hoffman and Moon's (2010) *Knowledge Capture for the Utilities* states, "In all

complex sociotechnical workplaces, knowledge and skill have become widely recognized

as a critical asset. Expertise is a 'must' for proficient performance in these domains, and

yet many of the most knowledgeable personnel are nearing retirement" (p. 1).

Allee (2001) writes in *12 Principles of Knowledge Management* that

"Understanding knowledge is the first step to managing it effectively" (p. 1). She also

claims "knowledge is perishable…The shelf life of expertise is limited because new technologies, products, and services continually pour into the marketplace. No one can hoard knowledge. People and companies must constantly renew, replenish, expand and create more knowledge" (p. 1). Allee provides 12 steady principles about knowledge:

1. *Knowledge is messy*: Because knowledge is connected to everything else, you can't isolate the knowledge aspect of anything neatly. In the knowledge universe, you can't pay attention to just one factor.
2. *Knowledge is self-organizing*: The self that knowledge organizes around is organizational or group identity and purpose.
3. *Knowledge seeks community*: Knowledge wants to happen, just as life wants to happen. Both want to happen as community. Nothing illustrates this principle more than the internet.
4. *Knowledge travels via language*: Without a language to describe our experience, we can't communicate what we know. Expanding organizational knowledge means that we must develop the languages we use to describe our work experiences.
5. *The more you try to pin knowledge down, the more it slips away*: It's tempting to try to tie up knowledge as codified knowledge-documents, patents, libraries, databases, and so forth. But too much rigidity and formality regarding knowledge lead to the stultification of creativity.
6. *Looser is probably better*: Highly adaptable systems look sloppy. The survival rate of diverse, decentralized systems is higher. That means we can waste resources and energy trying to control knowledge too tightly.
7. *There is no one solution*: Knowledge is always changing. For the moment, the best approach to managing it is one that keeps things moving along while keeping options open.
8. *Knowledge doesn't grow forever*: Eventually, some knowledge is lost or dies, just as things in nature. Unlearning and letting go of old ways of thinking, even retiring whole blocks of knowledge, contribute to the vitality and evolution of knowledge.
9. *No one is in charge*: Knowledge is a social process. That means no one person can take responsibility for collective knowledge.
10. *You can't impose rules and systems*: If knowledge is truly self-organizing, the most important way to advance it is to remove the barriers to self-organization. In a supportive environment, knowledge will take care of itself.
11. *There is no silver bullet*: There is no single leverage point or best practice to advance knowledge. It must be supported at multiple levels and in a variety of ways.
12. *How you define knowledge determines how you manage it*: The 'knowledge question' can present itself many ways. For example, concern about the ownership of knowledge leads to acquiring codified knowledge that is protected by copyrights and patents. (pp. 1-2)

These principles allows an organization to focus on knowledge competencies and "leads to seeking more effective ways to create, adapt, and apply knowledge" (Allee, 2001, p. 2). Hoffman and Moon (2010) also conclude, "The utilities as a whole need a technology innovation program aimed at helping them mitigate the challenges of knowledge loss by developing effective solutions for knowledge capture, transfer, and repurposing" (p. 6). With the growing labor and workforce shifts this problem will only grow "that will see as many as 40-70% of the workforce retiring over the next 5-10 years" (Hoffman & Moon, 2010, p. 6).

Summary

The literature provided a grounded understanding of the importance and need for talent management strategies to be developed and deployed for the energy utility industry. Faced with a host of new 21st century challenges, to include regulatory, environmental, new competitors in the market, cost structures, customer expectations and the need for reliable energy, the industry must invest in its people and identify highly capable talent to be part of the succession pipeline to take on critical leadership roles. Succession planning addresses the recruitment and retention equation, drawing people to the organization and making it easier to fill senior positions from within.

Talent assessment is one step toward identifying the right type of employee that displays the appropriate aptitude, behaviors and experiences to perform the critical work needing to be performed. When assessing a potential employee it's important to consider job fit to the organizational culture. In today's climate, utilities will need to attract and recruit talented employees that have the competencies and skills to address the shifting

demands being levied on the industry. It is a best practice to align business drivers with performance to ensure the goals and objectives are being met.

In addition, though leadership and development is the first to be cut during challenging economic times, it is this type of development that becomes essential to preparing the next cadre of leaders for the organization. Lastly, knowledge management is essential to organizational sustainability. With a generational shift being experienced, it's important that both tacit and explicit knowledge is continuously being transferred.

Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures

Overview

This chapter outlined the research methodology that will be used in this qualitative study. Polkinghorne (2005) states "Qualitative inquiry deals with human lived experience. It is the life-world as it is lived, felt, undergone, made sense of, and accomplished by human beings that is the object of study (Schawandt, 2001, p. 84)" (p. 138). In this chapter, the problem is restated, the nature of the study is addressed, and the research design and rationale are presented. Additionally, the chapter will discuss the population under study, data collection procedures, analytical techniques and reliability and validity procedures used.

This study was conducted to understand the value placed on talent management strategies when utility companies face significant market pressures, requiring them to take immediate actions to operating plans. Phenomenological research doesn't provide definitive explanations but provides awareness and allows for a better insight into the nature of the issue. Fade (2004) states "Phenomenology is concerned with human understanding and originated in the ideas of Edmund Husserl, first put forward in 1936 (Husserl, 1970)" (p. 647). The intent of this research is to conduct in-depth interviews and examine the perspectives of what is real to the participants under study. This study was process oriented and was conducted to discover the "how" and "why" of such phenomenon.   This study was designed to address the following three research questions:

1. What are the "lived perceptions" of the HR professionals who create talent management strategies; senior executives who support these strategies; and

employees who have been identified to be in the talent management pipeline at

Southern California Edison?

2. Are the current programs satisfying the need and demand for developing a

pipeline of talent?

3. Are the current programs in place delivering on its promises in preparing

candidates in assuming higher level positions?

Restatement of the Problem

Workforce challenges facing the electric utility industry will have a significant

impact on this sector in the next 5 to 10 years. If the right blend of talent management

strategies are not developed and deployed to confront new market forces, shifting

demographics, emergent competition, and the anticipated loss of institutional knowledge

from the baby-boomer generation, the largest segment of the current U.S. workforce,

there will be significant impacts that will impede the profitability and operational

requirements of electric utility companies to maintain reliable energy to its customers.

Additionally, utility companies are at risk when they are ill-prepared in their

succession management efforts in preparing the next cadre of leaders to address the

changing landscape of utilities in the 21st century. A well-known threat the electric utility

industry has to contend with is the ability to capture and transfer tacit and explicit

knowledge prior to it escaping from the institution. Knowledge drain will come from a

large portion of the baby-boomer generation. When utility companies are forced to make

drastic changes in its operations to ensure stability and vitality, and compete in a new

market landscape, talent management strategies should become a top priority but are

often reduced to a discretionary spending measure, subject to reductions in financial

support. Often, these measures are not fully understood by members of the organization and perceived as a lack of care and concern to ones' developmental opportunities.

However, research reveals that companies who establish the sense of urgency to focus on talent management strategies and make the investment in people, help their cause in addressing the many challenges being faced. Successful utility companies are realizing that the right mix of talent strategies must accompany (a) talent assessment, (b) talent acquisition, (c) talent development, (d) alignment of business drivers with performance, and (e) succession management.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this qualitative study was to understand the current talent management strategies being developed and deployed for a large investor-owned utility company, while in the midst of uncertainty and challenging market pressures. This understanding helped to explain the talent management strategies and actions taken by a large utility company when faced with a changing landscape of the 21st century. The study used in-depth interviews as its primary source of gathering rich information from key stakeholders to include, HR professionals, senior executives, senior management deploying talent management strategies from various departments within the organization, and managers who are identified in the succession planning pipeline at Southern California Edison. The researcher collected data on participants' histories, perspectives, and experiences.

Research Design and Rationale

This study was exploratory research with the use of open-ended questions, allowing the researcher to probe, thus giving participants the opportunity to respond in

their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses, indicative of

quantitative methods. Often, open-ended questions have the ability to elicit responses

that are:

1. Meaningful and culturally salient to the participant.

2. Unanticipated by the researcher.

3. Rich and explanatory in nature. (Family Health International, n.d., p. 4)

This type of research design offers flexibility for the researcher to probe initial participant

responses, that point to the "why" and "how", for which the researcher seeks to uncover.

This type of research design requires the researcher to be experienced and abreast of

differing personality styles. The researcher has a good understanding of personality

theory and is equipped to conduct this type of research design, which is probing in nature,

allowing for rich data collection from participants.

This study provided a description of three organizational attributes: (a) *lived
perceptions* of HR professionals, senior executives, and employees in talent pipeline
programs; (b) *program satisfaction* on the need and demand for developing a pipeline of
talent; and (c) *program effectiveness* in developing candidates to assume higher level
roles and responsibilities as part of succession planning efforts.

A modified van Kaam research approach, developed by Moustakas (1994) was
used for data collection and analysis. The phenomenological approach to this qualitative
research design was to have well developed questions designed to be administered in a
semi-structured, recorded, interview format, which allowed the researcher to explore,
discover, and describe the participant's experiences, feelings and perceptions. The
interview format was consistent with phenomenological study, as general themes and

sub-themes emerged based on the questions posed to participants. These questions were intended to foster open expression and evoke thoughts and feelings. NVivo software, Microsoft Excel and Word were all used to analyze, code, and categorize data from the researchers transcriptions imported into the tools and system. This aided the researcher in identifying the emergence of themes from the participants' experiences and perceptions.

Description of Population

The study was conducted by interviewing HR professionals, senior executives, senior managers from various business units and employees identified in talent pipeline and leadership and development programs, all of whom are employed by Edison International, SCE, a large investor-owned utility company. Many members of an organization play an important role in the development to deployment of talent management processes, and can provide the necessary data collection for this study.

Southern California Edison. Edison International has over 24,000 employees and through its subsidiaries, is a generator and distributor of electric power and an investor in infrastructure and energy assets, including renewable energy. Headquartered in Rosemead, California, Edison International is the parent company of SCE – a regulated electric utility – and Edison Mission Group, a competitive power generation business and parent company to Edison Mission Energy (EME) and Edison Capital. With over a century of service, SCE serves over 14 million people within a 50,000 square mile service territory within Central, Coastal Southern California. SCE has an employee base of 13,000 employees. For the purpose of this study, research will be directed toward SCE.

HR professionals. Lockwood (2006) states "supported by the CEO and the board of directors, talent management is headed by human resources, usually the head of HR organization (e.g., vice president of HR, chief human resource officer)" (p. 3). In gathering the necessary data for this study, SCE HR professionals were engaged to inquire on the talent management strategies being deployed for the company. By engaging HR, the researcher was be able to gain an understanding of the company's goals and objectives as it addresses its workforce challenges and the talent management strategies needed to remain a successful utility entity. HR and organizational development professionals are experienced in designing and implementing talent management and leadership development programs, which align with business goals and objectives. Part of their charter is to close the skill and knowledge gaps for key positions. In addition, HR departments are chartered with its design and initiate measurement systems to assess the quality of performance planning. Lockwood says, commonly, HR is focused on the following:

- Expectations regarding the differentiation of talent.

- The role of line leaders in the development of people.

- Philosophy regarding the movement of people across businesses and functions.

- The role of diversity in staffing strategy, and

- Beliefs about hiring for potential versus hiring for position.

Leadership and development professionals. Wahjosoedibjo (2009) states "Leaders, directors, and managers, who constitute the senior leadership in an organization, and members of the organization or workers, are required to maintain an organization's existence" (p 6). Senior executives from the various business units within

SCE can provide pertinent information into the nature of this study. As strategies are

developed at the HR level, it will be executed across the company and expected of senior

executive and management staff to deploy such strategies in their respective areas. An

article by Triple Creek Associates (2006) stated:

> Almost all major personal and professional development initiatives must have
> strong senior executive support to succeed and remain central to talent
> management strategy. Senior leaders set budgets and control spending on all
> development programs. They make sure programs align with both the long-term
> goals of the enterprise and the short-term strategies needed to accomplish the
> most current objectives. (p. 2)

It's said that the most successful companies are those that hold their entire management

team accountable to this goal.

Talent pipeline employees. Data collection was conducted on those employees

who are tracked in the company's talent management and or succession management

pipeline. In an executive summary by ASTD Research (n.d.) *Talent Management:*

Practices and Opportunities claim, "Talent management effectiveness was most likely to

be reported by organizations that targeted their talent management programs at senior

executives, high-potential employees, skilled workers, and those in pivotal roles" (p. 3).

There are three important aspects the researcher explored in this phenomenological study:

1. To understand the HR initiatives and planning efforts as it relates to the

   development and deployment of talent management strategies throughout the

   company. Also, this study intends to discover if there are targeted plans to

   confront the current uncertainties and challenges being faced for this large

   investor-owned utility company. Such challenges are being brought on by

   changing market pressures of the 21st century, and changing demographics in the

   utility workforce as a whole.

2. To understand the level of senior executive support for talent management strategies as many of these plans are considered discretionary spending efforts. In many cases, when market pressures cause an organization to make reductions in spending, talent management programs are one of several types of programs often targeted for spending reductions and or eliminated, as companies consider this as a non-essential spending measure when faced with financial constraints and or cutbacks.

3. To understand the *lived-perception* of (a) high-potential managers identified as potential successors, (b) managers who hold mission-critical positions, and (c) middle to senior managers capable of and ready to assume higher levels of leadership authority. The intent is to gain a perspective of the participants' feelings regarding one's leadership development and opportunity to achieve higher level of leadership responsibility as part of SCE's succession management efforts.

Sampling Methods

In this qualitative study, there are generally three common types of sampling methods: (a) purposive sampling, (b) quota sampling, and (c) snowball sampling. Each sampling method can be used as a single entity or used in conjunction to gather data. For the purpose of this study, purposive and snowball sampling were used. Purposive sampling is the most common type of sampling for qualitative studies. "Purposive sampling groups participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question…purposive sampling is therefore most successful when data review

and analysis are done in conjunction with data collection" (Family Health International, n.d., p. 5).

As this study has two primary target populations to collect data from, based on three distinct research questions, purposive sampling is a sound sampling method to be used. The researcher will be deliberate in the selection of participants for interview. The researcher assured that each participant selected for interview had knowledge of the talent management strategies of the company or an active participant in a company sponsored talent management program (ie., leadership and development program; future leadership program; or management rotation program). This allowed the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews and collect rich data from the participants selected for interview.

In conjunction with purposive sampling, *snowballing* was the other sampling method used. This is also considered *chain referral* sampling. Faugier and Sargeant (1997) state "if the aim of the study is primarily explorative, qualitative and descriptive, snowball sampling offers clear practical advantages in obtaining information of difficult-to-observe phenomena" (p. 792). Marshall (1996) also calls this *judgment sample*, which "the researcher actively selects the most productive sample to answer the research question" (p. 523). This study seeks revealed the *lived perceptions,* which is a difficult-to-observe phenomenon, in understanding talent management processes being developed, supported and deployed for a large investor-owned utility company.

The researcher used the snowball method when deemed appropriate to extend the interviewing process, only when value can be added to the study. Upon the completion of each interview, the researcher asked the interviewees if there were any person they felt would be a candidate the researcher should contact to conduct an interview with. The

researcher made the determination as to whether the referral would add value to the study. The researcher considered the amount of time to conduct this study and resources needed to conduct further analysis of additional information collected to be analyzed and interpreted for overall results and findings.

However, Faugier and Sargeant (1997) claims that the snowball method is:

a design in which the respondent is asked to mention other persons, according to some inclusion criterion defined by the researchers. By interviewing the newly mentioned persons, the sample can be extended, the basic assumption being the existence of some kind of 'linkage' or 'bond' with other people in the sample population. (p. 792)

The researcher established criteria to screen out participants as to gather pertinent data for the study. Potential candidates were screened in or out of the interview process based on:

1. For HR professionals, senior executives and managers, it will be required that each participant in this category has tenure of 5 years or had a thorough understanding of talent management practices through previous experiences.

2. For employees being tracked within a company leadership and development program, all participants had to have tenure of at least 1 year.

The researcher believed for HR professionals, senior executives and managers with 5 year tenure, has gained the business perspective required to provide valuable input into the study. This is a reasonable amount of time to have experienced a *lived perception* of the programs that have been established and or deployed within the organization. Additionally, the established tenure provides credibility for the knowledge and experience of the programs being deployed. All other participants can provide accurate details into their perceptions with the established 1 year tenure criteria.

However, the overriding requirement is that each participant has experience in the phenomenon being studied.

Valenzuela and Shrivastava (n.d.) reveal the various aspects of qualitative research include:

- Interviews are completed by the interviewer based on what the respondent says.

- Interviews are a far more personal form of research than questionnaires.

- In the personal interview, the interviewer works directly with the respondent.

- Unlike with surveys, the interviewer has the opportunity to probe or ask follow-up questions.

- Interviews are generally easier for respondent, especially if what are sought are opinions or impressions.

- Interviews are time consuming and they are resource intensive.

- The interviewer is considered a part of the measurement instrument and interviewer has to be well trained in how to respond to any contingency. (p. 2)

The researcher utilized three types of interviewing approaches to be listed as *protocols* (protocols 1 – 3) in the data collection and procedures section of this chapter. The researcher crafted interview questions to target each particular participant population. This study consisted of four populations (population A – D), outlined in the data collection and procedures of this chapter.

Sample size. Marshall (1996) states an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study "is one that adequately answers the research question. For simple questions or very detailed studies, this might be in single figures; for complex questions large samples and a variety of sampling techniques might be necessary" (p. 523). This study included in-

depth interviews with key members from specific areas of the organization that can

provide credible information for the study. "In practice, the number of required subjects

usually becomes obvious as the study progresses, as new categories, themes or

explanations stop emerging from the data (data saturation)" (Marshall, 1996, p. 523).

Mason (2010) states that there are differing perspectives, in which saturation is achieved,

particularly based on the type of study conducted:

- Ethnography and ethnoscience: Morse (1994, p. 225) 30-50 interviews for both;
  Bernard (2000, p. 178) states that most studies are based on samples between 30-60 interviews for ethnoscience;
- Grounded theory methodology: Creswell (1998, p. 64) 20-30; Morse (1994, p. 225) 30-50 interviews.
- Phenomenology: Creswell (1998, p. 64) five to 25; Morse (1994, p. 225) at least six. (¶ 10)

For this phenomenological study, the researcher interviewed the following sample

size (N=13):

- Population A
  - Director
  - (3) Program/ Project Managers
  - Training & Development Program Manager
- Population B
  - Vice President
  - Director
- Population C
  - General Manager
  - (2) Senior Managers
- Population D
  - (3) Senior Managers

The above mentioned sample size is the minimum amount (N = 13) of interviews

the researcher felt would provide a thorough understanding of the talent management

strategies established for SCE. Also the researcher believed saturation was reached at the

conclusion of 13 interviews, at which time a thorough understanding of this phenomenon

was met. This falls within Creswell's range of at least 5 to 25 interviews conducted

before hitting saturation for a phenomenological study. Marshall (1996) states "the

researcher actively selects the most productive sample to answer the research questions"

(p. 523). The population under study was $N = 13$ and snowballed based on a referral

provided by an interviewee from HR. The snowballing method was employed, based on

this recommendation which resulted in a field observation conducted with an HR

recruiter, at a local State University. This provided the 14th engagement for this study.

The research questions varied based on the target group under investigation.

Marshall (1996) says that it is advantageous to study:

> a broad range of subjects (maximum variation sample), outliers (deviant sample),
> subjects who have specific experiences (critical case sample) or subjects with
> special expertise (key informant sample). The hope is that subjects may be able
> to recommend useful potential candidates for study (snowball sample). (p. 523)

However, Marshall makes a clear distinction that "during interpretation of the data it is

important to consider subjects who support emerging explanations and, perhaps more

importantly, subjects who disagree (confirming and disconfirming samples)" (p. 523).

The sampling methods used ensured a comprehensive understanding was achieved for

this study.

Data Collection Procedures

Company approval. The researcher met with the Director of Leadership and

Development for SCE during 2010 while in the process of completing doctoral work as a

student in the EDOL program. The first interaction was to request him to become a

member of my doctoral dissertation committee. On October 30, 2011, the researcher

requested access to SCE personnel and data that could provide information into the

nature of this study. A meeting was scheduled for November 18, 2011, where the

researcher met with the Director of Leadership and Development and HR officials to receive access approval and the amount and types of information the researcher will be granted from SCE throughout the course of this study.

Data-gathering methods. The specific phenomena the researcher focused on was, how a utility company can develop and deploy the right mix of talent management strategies to combat 21st century uncertainty and challenging market pressures being experienced for this sector of business? For this reason, the following were general questions put to participants to gather baseline information:

- How long have you been employed by the company?

- What are your feelings toward the talent management strategies being developed and deployed for SCE?

- What value, if any, do you think the talent management strategies have on the company's ability to maintain a competitive and successful position in the utility community?

- Do you feel the current talent management strategies and programs in place are meeting the demand for and creating the pipeline of talent the company needs for its immediate and long-term future?

- Are the current programs in place delivering on its promises in preparing candidates in assuming higher level positions as part of the company's succession planning efforts?

In-depth interview questions targeted each research question posed. This aided the researcher in developing themes from the information received.

Purposive selection. The researcher's goal in this qualitative study was to

conduct in-depth interviews to obtain valuable information from the participants.

Polkinghorne (2005) claims,

> Most qualitative interviews are one-to-one or dyadic interviews. Unlike
> questionnaires and formal diagnostic interviews, research interviews are most
> often unstructured. However, the researcher knows in advance the experience he
> or she wants the participant to describe and has often written out questions (or
> protocols) he or she wants the participant to cover. The interview proceeds as a
> 'professional conversation' (Kvale, 1996, p. 5). The conversation consists of a
> give-and-take dialectic in which the interviewer follows the conversational
> threads opened up by the interviewee and guides the conversation toward
> producing a full account of the experience under investigation. (p. 142)

To accomplish this, Valenzuela and Shrivastava (n.d.) state, the researcher needs to

ensure the following items are met before data collection is initiated:

1. Knowledge of the topic under study.

2. Provide structure to the interviewing process.

3. Ensure for a clear and simple short questions which are well understood.

4. Be gentle, tolerant, sensitive and patient with participants' provocative and

   unconventional opinions.

5. Ask probing questions and to steer the interviews, thus, having control of the

   interview to avoid digression from the topic and or direct questions.

6. Ensure criticality to test the reliability and validity of what the interviewee tells.

7. Ensure the retention of subject information from the interviewee.

8. Interpret what is said by participants. (p. 10)

The researcher assured the above mentioned criteria were met for this study. In addition,

prior to data collection, the interviewer had a clear understanding of interviewer bias and

how it can interfere with objectivity of the interviewing process, with the potential to slant the results and or purpose of the study.

In qualitative studies, where interviews are conducted, there are several types of interviewing methods Valenzuela and Shrivastava (n.d.) claim the researcher can deploy: (a) informal, conversational interview; (b) general interview guide approach; and (c) standard, open-ended interview. For this study, each type of interview question were named protocols (Appendix A – for comprehensive list of questions):

- Protocol 1: Informal, conversational interview

- Protocol 2: General interview guide approach

- Protocol 3: Standard, open-ended interview approach

In this study, there were four target populations the researcher interviewed for the purposes of data collection, analysis and interpretation:

- *Population A*: HR professionals who are responsible for developing and deploying talent management strategies throughout SCE.

- *Population B*: Senior executives who support talent management strategies throughout SCE.

- *Population C*: SCE managers who execute talent management strategies at a business unit or department level.

- *Population D*: Managers identified in a talent pipeline and or succession management program.

The following interviewing methods were considered *protocols* and used on the target population accordingly.

Protocol 1: Informal conversational interview. This type of interview has no

pre-established questions asked. To aid the interviewer in a flexible style of interview,

this is often a free flowing interview where the researcher "goes with the flow." The

researcher may start off the interview with:

> Hello, Jim. It's so nice to finally meet you in person. I have been anticipating this meeting and look forward to the discussion. I'd like you to think about some of the really important experiences you had related to your engagement with talent management strategies and or programs you had with the company. Can you think of something that stands out in your mind?

After the initial informal introduction, the following questions were put to the

participants under protocol 1:

- *Population A* – HR professionals

  - What types of talent management programs does your department engage

    in?

  - Do you feel your department is effective at socializing the talent

    management strategies to the various departments within the organization

    to execute on its plans?

  - Do you feel the talent management strategies align with the company

    business drivers and can this aid in the effort in confronting the

    challenging market pressures currently being experienced?

  - How has the HR department effectively identified highly-valued talent and

    engaged them in participating in a talent management and or development

    program?

  - What leadership development competencies have been established by HR?

- Would you consider your talent management system broad for the type of industry it serves?

- Is there a monitoring and or evaluation plan established to determine program effectiveness?

- *Population B* – Senior executives

  - Do you feel that the company is prepared in its leadership development?

  - With the mounting uncertainty and challenging market pressures being faced within the utility industry, do you feel there is enough emphasis being placed on developing the talent that resides within SCE?

  - How would you rate the company's efforts in applying succession management strategies?

- *Population C* – Department managers

  - How important is it to recruit and retain high caliber talent?

  - Do you hire for position versus potential?

  - How would you rate your understanding of the company's talent management strategies?

- *Population D* – Managers in a talent pipeline and or in a succession management program

  - Are you currently in a talent management or development program at SCE?

  - How did you become a participant in a development or talent pipeline program?

- Do you feel you are adequately being developed to take on a higher level responsibility and leadership role within the company?

Protocol 2: General interview guide approach. This type of interview intends to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee. This is a more focused style of interview but still offers certain degrees of freedom to ascertain the information for the study. During the interviewing portion of this study, the researcher collapsed the above mentioned populations into two groups: (a) SCE representatives who are engaged in the development and deployment of the talent management strategies (Population A, B, C), and (b) managers who are in a talent pipeline or succession management program (Population D). For this, population A, B, and C will answered the same standard questions. Population D had an established interview guide with questions targeted for participants who are currently part of a talent pipeline and or succession management program within the company. The types of questions put to population A, B, and C for protocol 2 were:

- Do you feel like you know enough about the talent management strategies to assess its effectiveness?

- Do you feel that the current talent management strategies are creating the pipeline of talent required for the company in both the short and long-term?

- Do you feel knowledge transfer is an important aspect of talent management strategies?

The types of questions put to participants belonging to population D for protocol 2 were:

- Are you currently in a talent pipeline program and or leadership and development program at SCE?

- What type of development are you engaged in to prepare you to assume higher level leadership responsibilities?

- What would you consider the best part of your leadership development and or training?

- How effective do you think your program is?

- Do you feel you are missing any critical development that you can benefit from?

- Do you feel your program is preparing you in the immediate future to be an instrumental leader for the company?

Protocol 3: Standardized open-ended interview. This type of interview consisted of the same open-ended questions to all participants. This is an efficient type of interviewing technique, allowing the researcher to analyze the information to be compared. The types of questions put to the participants A, B, C and D under protocol 3 included:

- What are your feelings toward talent management at this company?

- How much emphasis is placed on succession planning?

- Do you feel job rotation and or job shadowing is valuable way of developing high potentials for future development?

- How well is talent management understood and socialized throughout SCE?

- How does one become a part of a succession management or talent pipeline program?

- How important is mentorship in one's leadership development at this Company?

- Do you feel knowledge transfer is important?

- Do you feel development programs are valuable?

Preparation for interview. In preparation for the interview, the researcher assured the following was performed: (a) chose the setting with the least distraction; (b) explained the purpose of the interview; (c) addressed the terms of confidentiality; (d) explained the format of the interview; (e) indicated how long the interview usually takes; (f) provided contact information of the interviewer; (g) allowed the interviewee to clarify any doubts about the interview; and (h) prepared a method for recording data – field notes, recorder, scribe, etc. Valenzuela and Shrivastava (n.d.) say the types of questions asked will help to provide rich data collection. The research allowed for themes to emerge by using the following areas:

1. Behavior – what a person has done or is doing.

2. Opinions/values – what a person thinks about the topic.

3. Feelings – what a person feels rather than what a person thinks.

4. Knowledge – to get facts about the topic.

5. Sensory – what people have seen, touched, heard, tasted or smelled.

6. Background/demographics – standard background questions, such as age, education, etc.

The researcher applied categories to the questions to be asked within a preliminary theme. For example:

- Category - 3: FQ4PA1 = (*Feelings* - Question#4/Population A/Protocol 1) Do you feel the talent management strategies align with the company business drivers and can this aid in the effort in confronting the challenging market pressures currently being experienced?

The researcher utilized NVivo software, Microsoft Excel and Word which aided in coding, categorizing and interpreting the data.

Analytical Techniques

  Analysis of interviews. The researcher deployed the following forms of analysis for this qualitative study: (a) iteration, (b) use of field notes and memos, (c) use of audio recordings, (d) data entry and storage, (e) coding and the use of category systems, (f) enumeration, and (g) use of computer programs (NVivo).

  Iteration. In this qualitative study, data analysis was ongoing and an iterative (nonlinear) process. Polkinghorne (2005) claims "Selection of sources most often remains open throughout the research process. After initial accounts are gathered they are analyzed to construct a preliminary description or a theory of the experience" (p. 140). The researcher applied *interim analysis*, which is the process of collecting and analyzing data and continued until it was understood. Polkinghorne wrote in his article *Language and Meaning: Data Collection in Qualitative Research* that:

> Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggested that the iteration of data collection continues until the description of the experience is saturated, that is, until the new sources repeat what has been previously learned and no longer deepen or challenge the finding. (p. 140)

  The researcher used an iterative process when collecting and analyzing data. During the course of data collection and analysis, the researcher organized and reduced the data through the use of computer software and tools. The researcher recorded the subjects' perceptions and *lived experiences* about the phenomenon under study. Through the use of field notes and memos the researcher documented and transcribed the data to a Microsoft Word document to be imported for categorizing and coding of information, through the use of NVivo and an Excel spreadsheet. Through the use of the software and

tools, the researcher produced codes and themes that described the participants'

behaviors, feelings, opinions and knowledge of the phenomenon under study.

   Use of field notes and memos. The researcher used field notes to record what

was learned throughout the interview and study. The researcher used memos as written

notes to self in times where ideas and insights become present. This allowed the

researcher to include such information for later analysis. Greonewald (2004) states

"Field notes are a secondary data storage method in qualitative research. Because the

human mind tends to forget quickly, field notes by the researcher are crucial in

qualitative research to retain data gathered (Lofland & Lofland, 1999)" (p. 15).

Greonwald (2004) lists four types of field notes based on a model developed from

Leonard Schatman and Anselm Strauss supplemented from Robert Burgess. Ultimately,

field notes assisted the researcher in data collection:

1. Observational notes (ON) – "what happened" notes, deemed important enough to the researcher to make a conclusion.
2. Theoretical notes (TN) – attempts to derive meaning as the researcher reflected on experiences.
3. Methodological notes (MN) – reminders, instructions or critique to oneself on the process.
4. Analytical memos (AM) – end-of-a-day summary or progress reviews. (p. 15)

   Fade (2004) states "It is helpful to keep field notes describing non-verbal

communication and the researcher's general impressions of issues such as the tone of the

interview and the respondent's ability to retrieve information for discussion" (p. 648).

The researchers' field notes and memos outlined the identification of patterns, variances

in what was said from participants and explanations in patterns seen during the course of

interviews. The researcher used the four forms of field notes and at the end of each field

day, the researcher opened a file with tabs for the various interviews conducted and

stored the hard copy documentation to include:

- The informed consent agreement.

- Dated field notes, memos and transcriptions conducted during and after the
  interview(s).

- Any notes, sketches, brochures, pamphlets and or documents the participants
  provided during the interview.

The researcher utilized the best practice of transcribing and filing information

away immediately after each interview, as the information was fresh to memory. For

example, the researcher wrote this on November 18, 2011, in a Microsoft Word

document:

> I held a meeting with two SCE Directors from the HR Learning and Development
> and Talent Planning to discuss parameters in which formal consent is required to
> collect data for this study. Each Director seemed genuinely interested in the topic
> and was more than willing to assist me in any way possible for me to carry out
> this research. The one question both individuals asked was that of confidentiality.
> I assured them that confidentiality will be upheld with all care and concern to
> each participant that I speak with and informed consent will be agreed to by all
> participants prior to conducting any interviews. At the conclusion of the meeting,
> both parties expressed their interest of the key findings that will come from this
> study. I expressed that my findings as well as a copy of my dissertation will be
> made available to them and all participants who engaged in this study.

Use of audio recording. The researcher interviewed 13 professionals who are

knowledgeable and engages in the talent management programs at SCE. The researcher

conducted the interviews and audio recorded each interview for later data analysis and

interpretation. The data were analyzed using a modified van Kaam (Moustakas, 1994)

method of analysis. This included:

> (a) listing and preliminary grouping (b) reduction and elimination (c) clustering
> and thematizing the invariant constitutes (e) final identification of the invariant

constitutes and themes for application (f) textual description (g) structural description (h) textual-structural descriptions of the meanings and essences of the experience. (Machtmes et al., 2009, p. 160)

At the end of each interview and or field day, the researcher listened to the recorded interview and analyzed the contents for clarity. The researcher will employ the use of two home office analysts' to assist in the transcribing of information into a Word document in preparation for text-based information to be imported into NVivo software.

Data entry and storage. The researcher transcribed interviews as data was collected (from interviews, notes, memos and any observational notes) and transferred them into a Microsoft Word document to be imported into NVivo and Excel, a computer software and Microsoft office tool used for qualitative studies. NVivo uses text-based, electronic format. For all recorded interviews, the researcher employed the help of a transcription service (Berger Transcription Service) to transcribe all interview recordings into a Microsoft Word document. The researcher entered them into the NVivo system and Excel spreadsheet for analysis, coding, and interpretation. When the researcher entered the data into the systems, it aided the researcher in identifying meaning and patterns of the information.

Coding and developing category systems. After interviews were conducted, field notes and or memos were entered into a Word document and imported into NVivo software; this also aided the researcher in analyzing, coding and sorting the data into distinctive categories. Schoenbach (2004) defines coding as "translating information into values suitable for computer entry and statistical analysis….The objective is to create variables from information, with an eye towards their analysis" (p. 454).

Schoenbach (2004) states the following questions underlie coding decisions:

1. What information exists?

2. What information is relevant?

3. How is it likely to be analyzed? (p. 454)

The researcher maintained a master list of all codes that became a theme or sub-themes, where the codes were reapplied to new segments of data each time an appropriate segment was encountered.

Enumeration. The researcher applied enumeration in this study to quantify data and its frequencies, percentages and cross-tabulation. Microsoft Word, and NVivo software aided the researcher in counting the number of times that a particular word occurred and or counting the number of times a category appeared in the data. Some examples of enumeration included:

- Counting the number of times a word appeared in a document or the number of times a code was applied to the data.

- Clarifying words that the researcher may want to use in the report (e.g., *culture, mentor, strategy, effective*, etc.).

Computer programs. The use of computer programs aided the researcher in storing and coding, creating classification systems, enumeration, finding relationships and producing graphics for data collection representation for study results and findings. The researcher utilized computer software and tools to analyze the data, field and observational notes, and imported relevant text-based data into the systems.

The use of these analytical techniques allowed the researcher to reveal the perceptions and lived experiences of key members engaged in SCE's talent management

programs and initiatives. The collection, analysis, interpretation and coding of data for

this study aided the researcher in determining the effectiveness of SCE talent

management processes, programs and strategies that are being developed and deployed

during times of uncertainty and market pressures for a large investor-owned utility

company. The themes and information that emerged from this study allowed the

researcher to identify critical areas pertaining to three essential attributes of this study: (a)

lived-perceptions of the study participants, (b) program satisfaction, and (c) program

effectiveness of the talent management strategies that can be benchmarked and used

throughout the electric utility community. By identifying best practices and or areas of

weakness, this will allow other utility companies experiencing similar market pressures,

to focus on those effective talent management strategies to include (a) talent assessment

(b) talent acquisition; (c) talent development; (d) aligning business drivers with

performance, and the establishment of effective; and (e) succession management

programs to develop the next cadre of leaders.

Validity and Reliability

Creswell and Miller (2000) state "there is a general consensus, however, that

qualitative inquirers need to demonstrate that their studies are credible" (p. 124). The

researcher ensured this study was reliable and valid by establishing procedures that

ensured credibility. Creswell and Miller propose two validity procedures which are (a)

lens the researcher choose to validate their studies, and (b) paradigm assumptions.

The lens used by the researcher. Creswell and Miller (2000) state that

"qualitative researchers use a lens not based on scores, instruments, or research designs

but a lens established using the views of people who conduct, participate in, or read and

review a study" (p. 125). In this study, the researcher used his lens and determined how long to stay in the field at which point saturation would be achieved. In this lens, the researcher concluded the investigation once it was determined the amount of data collected was suitable to generate the appropriate themes or sub-themes that culminated into a *persuasive narrative*. Creswell and Miller state, "Patton (1980) describes this process as one where qualitative analysts return to their data 'over and over again to see if the constructs, categories, explanations, and interpretations make sense' (p. 339)" (p. 125).

Paradigm assumptions. Creswell and Miller (2000) claim this lens "suggests the importance of checking how accurately participants' realities have been represented in the final account. Those who employ this lens seek to actively involve participants in assessing whether the interpretations accurately represent them" (p. 125). Essentially, Creswell and Miller apply a two-dimensional framework to account for nine differing validity procedures based on paradigm assumption and lens: (a) lens of the researcher, (b) lens of study participants, and (c) lens of people external to the study (reviewers, readers). The following are a list of nine validity procedures:

- Post-positivist or Systematic Paradigm – (1) triangulation; (2) member checking and; (3) the audit trail.

- Constructivist Paradigm – (4) disconfirming evidence (5) prolonged engagement in the field (6) thick, rich description.

- Critical Paradigm – (7) researcher reflexivity (8) collaboration (9) peer debriefing

Application of Validity Procedures

The researcher used six Creswell and Miller (2000) validity procedures for this study:

1. *Triangulation* – The researcher used this validity procedure to converge among multiple and different sources of information and sort through the data to form themes or categories in the study.

2. *Disconfirming evidence* – The researcher used this validity procedure by first, establishing the preliminary themes or categories in the study and then search through the data for evidence that is consistent with or disconfirms the themes.

3. *Researcher reflexivity* – The researcher used this validity procedure to disclose any assumptions, biases and or beliefs, early in the research process. The researcher will attempt to remove any personal and or perceived biases from the study under investigation.

4. *Member checking* – The researcher used this validity procedure as a follow-up function of the interviewing process. After the conclusion of each interview, and the collection of data to include the transcription of recorded interviews, the researcher routed the interpretations back to the participants in the study so that they could confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account.

5. *Peer debriefing* – The researcher used this validity procedure to ensure the information collected, interpreted and analyzed is credible and accurate. Creswell and Miller state A peer reviewer provides support, plays devil's advocate, challenges the researchers' assumptions, pushes the researchers to the next step methodologically, and asks hard questions about methods and interpretations.

The researcher worked with his dissertation panel member who is an expert in leadership and development and other peers who are knowledgeable pertaining to the research study and or considered subject matter experts in talent management.

6. *Thick, rich description* – The researcher provided thick, rich description through the use of in-depth interviews with 13 professionals from SCE. The in-depth interviews will be to gain a thorough understanding of the talent management strategies being developed, deployed and executed across the company. This will allow the researcher to understand the targeted talent management strategies that are intended to address the company's (a) workforce challenges, (b) succession management efforts, and (c) people investment. (pp. 126-129).

Summary

This chapter presented the methods that the researcher used to conduct this study. The researcher began with a restatement of the problem and an overview of the qualitative nature of the study. This was followed by the study design, the approach of how the target population will be engaged and the ways in which data is collected and analyzed. The chapter concluded with the validity and reliability procedures to be used in the study. Chapter 4 will present the findings of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This chapter will present the results of a qualitative study that was undertaken to determine the talent management strategies established for a large investor-owned utility company. By gaining a thorough insight into the lived perceptions of key members engaged in talent management strategies for a large investor-owned utility company, the information will aid other organizations to create or modify talent management strategies for use within their respective organization.

Chapter Structure

Chapter 4 will present the results of the study by first restating the purpose of the research, discussing the profile of the participants in the study, and finally analyzing the collection, analysis, and display of the data that was compiled during the study. There were a total of 14 engagements conducted for this study. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews with 13 participants, and 1 field observation conducted by a research assistant. The 13 participants interviewed were managers and senior-level executive employees at a large investor-owned utility company (Managers, Directors and Vice President). This process resulted in a high volume of raw data for analysis.

It was essential to have a diverse population group under study, to include variables such as age, ethnicity, gender, and work organization. The results of the study are organized and presented according to the themes generated during the course of the qualitative study.

Overview

By gaining a thorough insight and understanding of the talent management strategies developed and deployed for a large investor-owned utility company, this

research has: (a) contributed to the scholarly research regarding talent management

strategies for a large investor-owned utility company; and (b) enabled other

organizations, both public and private utility companies to use this data either to examine,

modify and or create talent management strategies for their organization. The research

conducted to support this study sought to answer the primary research questions:

1. What are the lived perceptions of the HR professionals who create talent

    management strategies; senior executives and managers who support these

    strategies; and managers who have been identified in the succession planning

    pipeline at Southern California Edison.

2. Are the current programs satisfying the need and demand for developing a

    pipeline of talent?

3. Are the current programs in place delivering on its promises in preparing

    candidates in assuming higher level positions?

There were a total of 37 questions (Appendix A) developed and codified to target

four population groups. Research questions based on population group and member

participation were created for each population group:

- Population A – 22 questions

- Population B – 18 questions

- Population C – 19 questions

- Population D – 20 questions

A panel of subject matter experts reviewed the proposed interview questions used

to collect data from the participants. These experts were selected based on their

knowledge related to the study. Each member received Appendix A, an overview of

chapter 1 of the study, and a copy of the interview questions. After review and comment was received from the subject matter experts, the final interview questions were prepared.

The data gathered during the interview was analyzed using two validity procedures offered by Creswell and Miller (2000), (a) lens the researcher choose to validate their studies, and (b) paradigm assumptions. The lens of the researcher allowed for determining when saturation has been met based on the information received, allowing for convergence of the data collected. Paradigm assumptions allowed for participants to review and determine accurate interpretations were made from the data collected. The process of allowing respondents to review transcribed interviews was performed.

To ensure reliability and validity into the study, a combination of six recommended validity procedures were employed through the use of (a) triangulation; (b) disconfirming evidence; (c) researcher reflexivity; (d) member checking; (e) peer debriefing; and (f) thick, rich description through interviews conducted.

Profile of Participants

There were 13 participants interviewed for this study that fell under one of four population groups (Population A – D). One field observation was conducted by a research assistant (Supervisor 3) recruited to aid the researcher in observing a college recruitment outing held at a local California State University. The participant that observed the recruitment trip was not given a semi-structured interview but was asked to provide a written summary (field notes) of his lived experience and perceptions from what was observed, seen or heard. This resulted in a total of 14 engagements for this study.

The participants included 7 men and 6 women. The 13 participants listed below, participated in a semi-structured interview:

- Project/Program Managers

    o HR Program Manager

    o (2) HR Project Manager - Strategic Business Associate (SBA)

- Program Manager 3 = Training, Development & Analytics

- Manager 2 = Power Delivery Service (PDS)

    o (3) Transmission Distribution Business Unit (TDBU)

    o Customer Service Business Unit (CSBU)

- Manager 3 = Power Delivery Services (PDS)

    o Customer Service Business Unit

- General Manager = Information Technology & Business Integration

- Director = Human Resources / TDBU

    o HR Talent Planning Director

    o Distribution, Construction & Maintenance Director (TDBU)

- Vice President = 1: Power Delivery Services

The selection of the participants was based upon the following criteria:

1. Participants must be currently employed by the company.

2. Participants must be in the population group (A-D) under study at the time of the investigation.

3. Participants must have more than 5 years of experience and or have a thorough understanding of the subject matter under investigation.

Care was taken during the selection process to ensure that the sample population (A-D) for the study was as diverse as possible in terms of factors such as management level, business unit/ department affiliation, age and race.

Data Collection

The data collection process for the study employed semi-structured interviews with 13 participants from 4 population groups (A-D) at a large investor-owned utility company. To ensure reliability and validity of the research, the researcher (a) employed a subject matter expert familiar with doctoral dissertation requirements; and who works for the company in the Training and Development department. The expert reviewed the 37 interview questions and provided feedback accordingly; (b) ensured that the appropriate Director of Talent Planning reviewed the proposed interview process that would be used at the large investor-owned utility company; (c) ensured that Pepperdine's IRB reviewed and approved the study; (d) ensured that candidates who met the defined research criteria were identified; (e) ensured that candidates were contacted and were asked to review the research questions and sign an Informed Consent Form, which advised possible participants about the nature and purpose of the study, as well as their involvement if they elect to participate; (f) ensured that all interviews were scheduled with candidates who agreed to participate in the study; and (g) ensured that interviews were conducted in a private location, using a tape recorder. In addition, the researcher took field notes, where applicable, to ensure comprehensive documentation of each interview, and lastly, (h) the researcher ensured that each interview was transcribed and submitted back to interviewees for final review and approval.

Upon receiving Pepperdine's IRB approval to conduct the research study, the researcher contacted participants via e-mail and telephone to solicit participation in the study. Each candidate who agreed to participate in the study was sent an overview of the study to provide sufficient background and a summary of the topic under investigation. Interviews were conducted with each participant with each session lasting between 30 minutes and 1 hour. The process of collecting the data, via interviews, was completed within a period of 3 weeks. The process of transcribing ran parallel with the interviews and was completed shortly concluding the last interview dated, March 1, 2012. The researcher used Berger Transcription Service for the transcribing of all interviews.

Data Analysis

The process of analyzing the data began with an in-depth review of the transcribed interviews. *Interim Analysis* was utilized to reduce the information into meaningful units/segments of information. The researcher and second reviewer analyzed the first interview transcript (Population A: Code A1) separately. During the review process, the researcher employed the process Creswell and Miller (2000) recommended, which included the use of paradigm assumptions to validate and make the study reliable. One of the six methods used, the researcher utilized the researcher reflexivity procedure. This allowed the researcher to disclose any assumptions, biases and or beliefs, early in the research process.

The second procedure the researcher utilized was to disconfirm evidence by establishing broad themes that would codify the data into initial themes (a) feelings, (b) opinions, (c) sensory, (d) behaviors, and (e) knowledge (Appendix B). Disconfirming evidence establishes the preliminary themes or categories in the study and then allows the

researcher to analyze the data for evidence that is consistent with or disconfirms the themes. A research assistant aided with coding the data and placed the codes into categories that resulted into classifications that linked the questions to the primary themes (Appendix C). A Results Matrix (Appendix D) allowed the researcher to identify significant findings from the data collected. These findings aided with the identification of primary and sub-themes.

The third procedure was the use of triangulation which allowed the researcher to converge among multiple different sources of data to sort through the information to form the final themes or categories for the study.

The fourth procedure utilized was that of member checking. At the conclusion of field interviews, the researcher sent the transcribed interview back to the participants for review and approval. This allowed the participants to confirm the credibility of the information in its narrative account.

The fifth procedure used was peer debriefing. A doctoral colleague was requested to play devil's advocate and challenge the researchers' assumptions and interpretations made from the data collected and analyzed.

Lastly, the researcher had 13 thick, rich descriptions with a combined total of 233 years of company experience from the participants engaged in the study. This amount of experience allows for thick, rich, in-depth experiences, knowledge and lived perceptions that provided greater understanding of the talent management strategies being developed and deployed for a large investor-owned utility company.

Utilizing these procedures allowed for detailed analysis to determine patterns and categories, with the result of six primary themes. A Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was

created to annotate and tabulate the data to a given response. This tabular format allowed the researcher to analyze, record, and cross-reference the voluminous amount of data generated. Additionally, this tabulated data allowed the researcher to identify trends and patterns to be depicted in table format.

Data Display

The display and analysis of the data is grouped by each theme and sub-theme. Tables have been provided to represent the collected data.

Theme 1 – Talent Management Value

Questions 2, 3, 37 and 8 were linked to the participant's feelings and their sense of the value talent management strategies had on a large investor-owned utility company. These questions provided a lived perception that helped to answer research question 1. Additionally, there were two sub-themes generated (a) organizational culture and personality, and (b) talent management alignment. Table 1 depicts the responses to questions 2, 3, 37 and 8.

The 13 participants from the four population groups (A-D) responded to question 2 with 6 participants having high feelings, 6 participants having moderate feelings, and 1 participant expressing low feelings toward the talent management strategies being developed and deployed for the company. Question 2 asked, what are your feelings toward the talent management strategies being developed and deployed for the company? Code A1 expressed high feelings and said:

> Frankly, I'm very excited about it. Because I think the company is taking it very seriously. The CEO and the Company's Senior Managing Committee, has made this as their top priority for the company. So, that trickles on down throughout the whole corporation.

Table 1

Tabulated Responses to Interview Questions 2, 3, 37, 8

Population A-D	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Question #2 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X					X			
Moderate						X	X	X	X		X		X
Low												X	
Question #3 Sensory	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
Moderate						X						X	
Low													
Question #37 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Moderate											X		
Low													
Question #8 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X				X								
Moderate				X		X							
Low							X						

Code A3 stated:

> I think most people would be surprised to learn that the company is actually more advanced and generally more sophisticated than the rest of the industry with its talent management strategies and practices. A lot of the utility industries are in their infancy of using talent management strategies. So, for example, they may have no workforce planning in place. They may not be using any assessment tools for the selection or development of their employees, including the use of basic structured interview guides. They might use catalogue training that is from other companies.

Code A4 had moderate feelings and expressed:

> My feelings are that they are fine. I think textbook wise they are doing what they should do. When I think of talent management strategy I think of – it kind of falls into three buckets for me. It's either, when you look at whatever the business need is for getting some kind of human resource or person, it's either buy, build or keep and so when I look at how we buy people as basically our recruiting organization and staffing and how we're going about getting talent, getting them in the door. The build is, are we doing any kind of development for the people that are here, so that as our business needs change, are they prepared to go in that direction or even if we have people that are here, is there anything we can do to

help optimize the talent they have. Lastly, the keep is if we've got some specialized skill that can't go by, it takes a long time to train or develop; are we doing everything we can to keep those people engaged. I say engaged, not just how do we keep them in their seat, we can throw money at people all day, but it doesn't mean we're going to get what we're paying for and so how do you keep them here but keep them engaged to really either do some knowledge transfer or to execute the tasks that we need them to do.

Code B1 examined the question and expressed his feelings from the vantage point of a program he and another colleague recently developed.   With the aid of the organizations training department, the program was developed based out of the need to develop and prepare middle-managers to assume a senior level managerial role within the department. Code B1 had high feelings toward this pilot program and stated:

I think we've been pretty proactive and I would say the reason that we've been proactive in the development of this Manager Development Program (MDP) is because of a void from a corporate perspective. So, we developed a couple of programs, we developed the MDP, which we rolled out last year and I'm currently a mentor in that program. So, I think that program is really good and I think we're looking to expand that and that's at the beyond the Manager II level. We are looking to expand that into the lower ranks, because I think that's kind of a key -- the further down in the organization you go the more you can cross-pollenate, the better. However, it makes it a little more difficult once you reach the M-II and M-III positions.

Code C3 was the only respondent that expressed low feelings and offered:

For our company, I've been through this, especially because we're from a technology era, you used to meet with HR on a weekly basis with the executives. It's difficult. We've tried – we send people to these college recruiting, job recruitment fairs and I think, like I stated earlier, the utility industry is not sexy to kids. They're looking for the sexy jobs. They're not as attracted to us, even though we may have similar work, like you say, like an Apple or something. It just is not to them, cutting edge.

Question 3 provided the respondents' to share their sense of value talent management strategies has had on the company's ability to maintain a competitive and successful position in the utility community. There were 11 of 13 participants responding with a high sense that there is value in talent management strategies. The question asked

the participants, what value, if any, do you think the talent management strategies have

on the company's ability to maintain a competitive and successful position in the utility

community? Code B2 stated:

> Well, I think it's very valuable. It's highly important to continue to develop your
> leaders. My philosophy is that every person has a leadership role because every
> person makes decisions in the course of doing their job that impact the success of
> the enterprise. So, as our industry gets more complex and difficult, we rely more
> and more on people to keep up. Therefore, I think that if we're not managing our
> people or developing them and thinking about them as the key asset, then we're
> not going to be able to keep up. So it's very important for everybody.

Code C2 provided this perspective:

> The process is a good process for compliance related to federal, state, local labor
> law and regulation. So, that also means, what you put in place, it should protect
> the organization from any type of discrimination lawsuit and the perception of the
> public on how the company hires, retain and recruit their workforce to the
> organization. So for me, that value is added to the process. That's probably the
> most valuable component that is being put in place on the recruitment of the talent
> management strategy that we have in place.

Code A5 measured a high level of sensory to this question and offered:

> I think from a position standpoint, I think all organizations need to provide talent
> management strategies and to the extent that we can offer them to new people
> coming into the organization; it can be seen as an attractive kind of benefit. You
> join the company and you will be developed in your career. There are certain
> kinds of programs that you can go through and that the company invests in you.
> Also, from an existing employee, it's good to know that the company is doing
> something to develop you as an individual if you're a high potential, that there's
> programs that they're being proactive in developing those leaders managerial
> skills or just providing any other technical skills that you may need. So, from a
> kind of a strategy perspective, it's good that the company offers those. I don't
> think, however, that they're doing the best that they can right now. It's kind of an
> open enrollment process. It's not tied to any clear objective or competency.
> People kind of just sign up. If there's room, they go to a class and that's it. I'd
> like to see a more comprehensive leadership development talent management
> strategy, for instance - I'm a new supervisor, I'm going to go to this, and over the
> next five years, come out the other end looking like a newer supervisor, a more
> experienced supervisor.

Question 37 asked the participants to express their feelings regarding the value of development programs. This resulted in 12 of 13 participants expressing high feelings.

Code A2 stated:

> Yes, they are valuable but when considering development programs, I think we have to look at the specific needs for each organization and I mean, some groups might not need a development program, but they could have a generic one or you can develop soft skills, for example, communication skills, because it's going to be universal across the board. So you could have a model which is universal for the group, and you could have development programs that are customized for another group.

Code B1 expressed his feelings by stating:

> I think if they're done correctly, they are absolutely valuable. I think often-times development programs, like on a Personal Development Plan (PDP) are worthless unless you do follow-up with them. Unless you put some rigor and responsibilities on the person themselves and on the manager, it won't be as valuable as it could be. Also, I think unless we do them correctly and share information, provide on-time feedback, real time feedback, only then they're rendered valuable.

Code A3 said:

> Development programs are valuable, but it's just not the only factor. You have to get in the right people so you have to have the right workforce plan; you've got to have the right talent acquisition strategy; you have to have the right assessment program in place to know what you're going to be developing and; you need effective development through your general development plus your performance management and you would need to be compensating correctly. It all goes together to ensure that you're retaining the right people and you're uncomfortable enough with the wrong people and you're able to work the strategy in the future.

Code C2 expressed moderate feelings as to his perception of the company's talent management strategies. Code C2 stated he believed talent management strategies are important but:

> It's hard to determine the company's stance. It's a simple question but it's hard because I don't know if – I don't feel there is a strategy; I don't feel the culture; I don't feel the commitment. And there are a bunch of programs that are put in place. I feel like those programs, they are just established to say that we have them!

Organizational culture and personality. Throughout the course of data collection and analysis, organizational culture emerged as a sub-theme, linking itself to the primary theme of talent management value. This linkage provides information as to the organization's culture and personality and providing credence to the value placed on talent management. Questions 4, 7, 9, 11, 25, 33, and 34 evoked dialogue related to organizational culture.

Question 4 asked, Do you feel the current talent management strategies and programs in place are meeting the demand for and creating the pipeline of the talent the company needs for its immediate and long term future? Code A1 stated:

> You have enterprise talent planning. You have integrated talent planning. Then you have talent evaluation and measurement. In the talent management framework, your *culture* supports the process.

Code A4 stated:

> I think part of the problem, at least for our company, is we're not sure what the future looks like for us, because there's talk of even getting out of distribution and that's kind of the meat of our company, but I also vacillate with what we need to do because if we're going to get out of distribution and we're going to go into some more of these high end technical types of services or products, yeah, we're going to need a huge *culture* shift.
>
> But if we stay in distribution and stay in generation, I'm not sure we necessarily need a *culture* shift as far as for being successful as a business in those two arenas, cause at the end of the day what it takes to put up a pole ten years ago won't be any different than what it takes ten years from now, other than the tools will be different than it is now. I think the technical knowledge that the line crews had and even engineers had before is definitely changing, but I almost feel technology is always changing.

Question 7 asked, Do you feel your department is effective at socializing the kind of management strategies to the various departments within the organization to execute on its plans? Code A1 responded:

At some point the hope is socializing talent management strategies becomes part of our *culture*. And it really isn't so problematic. It just happens all the time continuously. If you look at actually the Stage 5 metrics within our talent management model, that's really what it talks about. Because it assumes that it is engrained. It's not something that I have to go out and talk to them about.

Question 33 asked, How well is talent management understood and socialized

throughout the company? Code A1 responded:

I'll give it a 70%. This is obviously just an opinion but—so, I think people get why we do it. They understand the process of what we do. But I think it's not embedded yet into the *culture*. Once it's like embedded, where they feel like, I can't make a decision unless I look at my talent management stuff.

Code D2 stated:

Oh gosh. I think in TDBU, I spent 6 years before moving over to MPO – Not at all. Very little attention paid to it. Local Public Affairs (LPA), Customer Service Business Unit (CSBU) certainly paid a lot more attention to it in their organizations. Each of the business units certainly has its own *culture* and own history with the issues. There's a distinct difference between departments and business units. However, I think the old *culture* in TDBU prevails today – "The kind of good old boy network." I think that still is pretty prevalent in certain areas of the organization. It seems to be going away, somewhat quickly with Sally's leadership. But I think it's hard to get away from, especially if you get into the field of course.

Question 34 asked, How does one become a part of a succession management or

talent pipeline program? Code A3 responded:

Part of talent management understanding requires one to ask oneself, what value am I adding, what's my role, what am I contributing, and am I cooperating effectively. One should never underestimate the relationships in this company? Particularly, in this company, it is critical to have really good relationships with people, so you need to understand the *culture* and you need to know how the decision-making works and you need to be real about yourself.

So everybody has like this inflated sense of how great they are, but they never go collect real feedback and that's when you have to get a 360. So if you're sitting around wondering, well how come I'm not identified to participate in one of these programs, I would say, you need to go get a 360 because you're out of touch.

There is a reason that you're not identified and if your boss or if you don't believe your boss in terms of what they're telling you, either they're not telling you or

you don't believe it and you're not hearing it, maybe having multiple people tell you that would be important. You do see a lot of people though who refuse to hear the feedback.

Nine-tenths of surviving an organization, you have to know how other people see you, you've got to know the *culture* and then you need to probably take some initiative and don't be a baby about it. If you want to go lead a project you can tell somebody I really want to lead a project and if they say, one, we don't have any projects right now, but I'll keep you in mind, or two, NO, you're not ready to lead a project, then you don't go cry in your cube.

Question 9 asked, How has the HR department effectively identified highly-valued talent and engaged them in participating in a talent management or development program? Code A4 responded:

I think our role here in HR is really more about planting the seeds and that's probably just more because of our *culture* and how we can get things done in spite of our *culture* is really more about planting the seeds and when you're planting those seeds with the right people and I kind of look at them as I guess the earth or the dirt. I can plant that John seed and say, hey, what about John, and then I come along with some water and some fertilizer saying he's done this, he's doing that and that helps it to grow.

Question 11 asked, Would you consider your talent management system broad for the type of industry it serves? Code A4 response:

Traditionally, especially in utilities, you kind of come up, you're hired in as a groundman, you climb a pole and then you get to a foreman or something and now you're in an office managing and now you're maybe a district manager or region manager and then you're a director. Well that's very narrow, you only know that business, but they're really looking for people that are more integrated.

So, you understand the customer side of it, the meter side of it, you understand the billing side of it, you already know what it takes to distribute electricity, but do you know what it takes to actually get some money out of people that you're delivering it to and then all the regulation; why do we do things the way we do; so, having a more broad-based manager, leader, and employee, so that you can make more strategic decisions at lower levels; and I don't think we move people around well enough, cause we have some *culture* issues there.

Question 25 asked, Do you feel knowledge transfer is an important aspect of talent management strategies?Code A4 responded:

I think the one thing that goes with knowledge transfer is not just how do you do a job, but how do you get the job done in our *culture*, in our environment or under changing conditions. So, one of the things I think that comes with experience is you learn how to do a job under different conditions just because you've been here for so long.

And it could be the market conditions are different or just the leadership that's in place is different and they want it done a certain way, right, or as regulation changes and changes back again, because that happens all the time, how do you do it. So, if you have someone that has tribal knowledge, they're not only telling you how to do the job, but they're telling you how to get it done in whatever environment or *culture*.

Talent management alignment. Question 8 provided data that revealed insight into the alignment of talent management strategies for this utility company. Participants felt that when talent management strategies are aligned properly with the company's mission and vision, value is generated in the programs. Question 8 asked the participants, do you feel the talent management strategies align with the company business drivers and can this aid in the effort in confronting the challenging market pressures currently being experienced?

Code A1 had a high feeling toward the alignment of the talent management strategies and provided additional literature to the researcher (*Executive Strategic Talent Planning Presentation*) to explain:

Basically we start our process with a business strategy and plan. So we start with where are we going? What kind of company are we going to be? We revised all the executive competencies.

We lined out all of our competencies. Like if this is the strategy in a company that we want to be, then what kind of leaders do we need. So, if you look at this (referring to the presentation), it says, "Business strategy and plans is the very first thing." When we get together to talk about talent planning, the first thing we do is say, tell me your business strategy. What are you trying to do? Then we say, what are your talents in the organization? As a result of that, what's your talent and organizational strategy?

Code A2 had moderate feelings but offered a perspective that she felt valuable in aligning talent management strategies with business drivers. Code A2 stated:

> In some areas I would say alignment is made, and when I say that it's really some of the more critical jobs that they do – it is definitely aligned. When I say aligned, there's definitely integration from their development to the job level and the criticality of that role or responsibilities for that position. But again, for example, Power Supply, we have a really good program and it's aligned with their business drivers. So, for some positions, yes, but again, it's not across the board.

Code A2 responded to this question from another perspective related to developing resources. One of the company's business drivers is *Resource Planning,* which the competency model outlines:

> *L (Leader):* Allocates and or ensures proper utilization of staff, equipment, and time to maximize organizational effectiveness. Develops and implements contingency plans to overcome obstacles and address resource challenges.
> *IC (Individual Contributor):* Leverages resources and equipment so that work is completed on schedule, on budget, as planned, and to the satisfaction of customers.

Based on the above business driver (Resource Planning), Code A2 stated that the executive responsible for the Power Supply division demonstrates the ability to tie talent management strategies to the company's business driver. Code A2 went on to illustrate:

> Take Power Supply for example – their individuals don't stay in a position long, there's a rotation program – one of the reasons why they're rotated is for the purpose of developing them into much more – either more valuable positions or much more strategic level positions.

> The executive in this area has been very successful moving his people resources. And over there people resources are not only just challenged, but they're developed and they acquire the needed skills and it gets more challenging over time, so they either progress to a manager position or project manager positions. They start off as business analysts and they kind of move up – so there's a general expectation that you move after two years.

Code A5 had a lower feeling toward the talent management alignment but examined the question and answered from a training and development perspective. Code A5 stated,

> So to answer the first part about are they aligned with the business drivers, I'd say it's a very, very weak correlation. The classes that they're offering are conflict management, how to write PDPs, things that are very generic. I don't think they've looked at what our true business drivers are for the next ten years and developed competencies or training programs around those. There are classes like strategic planning but I've audited those classes and it's more about how to write PDPs that line up to your boss' goals and it's -- it's very loose.

> One of the reasons is we literally had 30 vendors, each teaching their own programs, independent consultants coming in to do one class at a time and they're external. They do this for any company. It's not tied to the company's goals. It's just a class because people like sitting and watching a funny guy talking for two days. But is it aligned? Not right now. So, for the new classes that they're building, we'll take a supervisor class…. They're building a seven day class for new supervisors into the company and they're trying to make it align with the company goals. But what it's more turning out to be is kind of a class on how to manage the little things, like how to write PDPs, what to do when someone gets hurt, what do you do if someone fouls up, focus on resolution. So it's more tactical things.

Theme 1 provided an in-depth perspective of how the participants viewed the benefits and value of talent management strategies and how important it is to invest in human capital and develop leaders for the company to remain competitive in the utility industry. Additionally, when talent management strategies are aligned to the company's business objectives, value is created. The participant's responses provided information that helped to answer research question 1, which examined the lived experiences, perspectives and histories of individuals engaged in talent management programs, practices and strategies for the company.

Theme 2 – Talent Management Communication

A central theme emerged throughout the course of data analysis that resulted in significant findings, whereas two sub-themes were generated, linked to talent management communication (a) talent management understanding, and (b) talent management socialization. Questions 16, 19, 23, 7, and 33 all helped to answer research question 1, the lived experiences and perspectives of the talent management strategies for a large investor-owned utility company. Table 2 depicts the participants' responses.

Table 2

Tabulated Responses to Interview Questions 16, 19, 23, 7, 33

Population A-D	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Question #16 Sensory	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													
Moderate										X		X	
Low											X		
Question #19 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High												X	
Moderate										X			
Lo											X		
Question #23 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X				X							X	
Moderate		X		X						X	X		
Low			X			X	X						
Question #7 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High						X	X						
Moderate	X			X	X								
Low													
Question #33 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													
Moderate	X	X		X		X				X		X	X
Low			X		X		X	X	X		X		

Talent management understanding. Questions 16, 19, and 23 provided data for the sub-theme linked to talent management communication. Question 16 was directed

toward population C to gain a sense of their perception of how talent management is communicated for this large investor-owned utility company. Three participants provided their sense of the question that asked if they understood the talent management strategies being developed by HR and the expectation that the company's senior executives have with them deploying talent management strategies in their area of responsibility. Question 16 asked the participants, if they had a clear understanding of the talent management strategies being developed by HR and the expectation company executives have with them deploying such strategies in their area of responsibility?

Code C1 expressed moderate feelings and stated, "Well, I can't quote HR's mission…quote exactly what training program there are, there are different ones for different departments." Code C1 went on to say:

> Well, we do have a yearly work environment survey that highlights our strengths and weaknesses across our enterprise, then you take that same survey information and you break it down to within your own work area and division and you can kind of see some trends and you can identify some areas that you need to work on.
>
> That combined with the service offerings that our HR department has, whether it is negotiation skills, technical skills, areas that you may have strengths and or weaknesses in, the goal would be to have a fully performing person in each position. I'm not quoting any executive, but, I mean, that would be kind of the – you want somebody who's fully performing, fully capable and then potentially ready to take on new challenges. So, that's kind of how I view it.

Code C2 expressed low feelings and stated:

> My response is no, and the reason for that is again, it's a big vision. The question I have is what it means to me and my organization when it comes to operationalizing that vision. At the company level, it may be strong, clear and promising but at the business and department level it appears to be a narrow scope. I have not seen that it has been driven down to the organization level, as of yet.
>
> So, I see a lot of good people, a lot of good managers have been doing their own initiative within the organization to be able to meet their talent demand.

So, I don't know what the company is implementing that aligns with the vision. I say this because I don't know if they understand the vision.

So again, I have to say no for now. I'm unsure if that vision is applicable to my organization based on the linkage from the corporation to business unit to my department and to my organization.

Question 19 asked population C participants how they would rate their understanding of the company's talent management strategies. Code C3 stated, he had a good understanding of the talent management strategies HR had to offer and because he was knowledgeable of HR talent management practices, he stated:

I think my knowledge of what HR and their practices are very good because of the involvement we had from an IT perspective, working with HR in trying to fulfill gaps in my area. Was it perfect, no, it was a good start. It was a very strict partnership with HR. Whenever we were doing business travel, my director would ask me if there was a college or something that I could go talk to potential candidates while I was out there and with our partnership with HR, they would make arrangements for me. We would meet with HR regularly and discuss kind of the "here is" a strategy and kind of the "here is" a result.

We went to Cal Poly, we spent three days there and we only received a hundred applications, so it was very prescriptive. I thought it worked pretty well.

Code C2 expressed that he had low knowledge of the talent management strategies that currently exist within the company and stated:

I'm going to say either low to intermediate. I understand a lot of programs that were put in place. I want to know more about the vision, about the commitment, about the culture that a leader would like these programs to represent. I don't have a clear picture yet. So that's why I would rate myself intermediate to low. If I don't see the vision, priority, commitment and the culture around such strategies, I can't get a total understanding of the strategy.

Question 23 also supported the findings for the sub-theme of talent management understanding. The question was to determine the participants understanding and knowledge of talent management program effectiveness. Data was collected from populations A, B, and C. The findings revealed varied responses from the three

population groups in relationship to understanding of talent management programs and

the ability to assess its effectiveness. Question 23 asked the participants, if they felt they

knew enough about the talent management strategies to assess its effectiveness?

Code A1 had high feelings and showed optimism but also expressed a realistic

perspective in the difficulty in getting to the maturity level the organization needs to be in

its talent management efforts. Code A1 provided the researcher with a maturity model

that outlined the current state and the future state of talent management development.

Code A1 responded to the question:

> I think I know enough about them to think it's difficult to do. Again, we are
> going to continue to mature and get better at it. That's the whole creating type
> thing. And I do think we're getting better. We're moving people around; we're
> giving them different experiences so that they can be more prepared.

Code A5 provided insight into his ability to assess talent management

effectiveness because of his previous experience with the HR work group that develops

and deploys such talent management strategies. Though, he is currently serving in a

training, development and analytics function, by having an understanding of HR, this

afforded him greater abilities to assess effectiveness of the various talent management

practices and programs. Code A5 expressed a low feeling but showed optimism with the

new leadership in the HR department. He provided:

> I know quite a bit because I've been in HR for a couple of years. I worked in HR
> for six years before I even came to the company in a talent management group. I
> read up on it. I would say we're kind of sub-par right now. I know with the new
> director up there, he's trying to make it a world-class HR department. It's going
> to take some time. But if I didn't have that relationship with HR, if I look at my
> colleagues, they have no idea what's going on over there.

Talent management socialization. Questions 7 and 33 generated a sub-theme

(talent management socialization) that linked to the primary theme (talent management

communication). The linkage provided information as to how talent management strategies are socialized throughout the organization. Question 7 was directed toward population A which asked the participants to describe their feelings as to whether their department (HR) was effective at socializing the talent management strategies to the various departments throughout the organization. There were 5 participants that responded to the question with 4 providing moderate feelings and only 1 expressing high feelings.

Code A1 responded with moderate feelings but with an optimistic outlook. She stated:

> We're getting better. I think, it's a big organization, so some places are better than others. We also have to unbind things that already were out there so that we can all be doing the same things. We have to get out there and educate people on what we're trying to do so we can also kind of be on the same plane.

> We've really only been doing this, like this, for about a year and a half. So I think, again, I think we're making strides. I think there's more work to be done.

> But we also started doing it at the non-executive talent planning. So we were bringing it down a level, again for that talent pipeline component. And that's even harder from a socialization perspective because I have more people. You're not just talking to the executives. Now you got more people.

> Code A4 also expressed having a moderate feeling and added:

> We do socialize it and we do provide references, tools and things of that nature. But it's in pockets and it's not consistent. So, for example, if there were targeted communication (e.g. video or PowerPoint presentation that could be used across all the organizations), enhanced socialization would occur.

> Here are the things that are being offered, I think we always rely on the company portal to socialize the programs that we have available. Or what a department such as MPO would say, "hey, I'm interested in developing my group." And that's the only time that there's a discussion or more socialization that does occur.

> But like I said, it's kind of case-by-case, it's not consistent as much as we'd like to be. But we do recognize that there's a lot more push this year to make – to drive the development programs to other organizations and they just acquired a new director and so definitely, socialization could improve.

Code A5 expressed his perception and feelings towards the socialization of talent management programs from a different perspective. He began his response with his overall low feeling from a holistic view, expressing his view from an overall HR socialization of programs, and then turned his lens inward to his department's ability to socialize talent management strategies. He stated:

> Are we effective? No. I think because the business unit has not really adopted HR's talent management programs to begin with so we're not being proactive and saying "hey, go sign up for classes over there or programs," because us, as a training department, we haven't felt that confidence in those HR programs to begin with.

> So, we're not really going out and proactively selling those programs because we don't feel confident that they can deliver on what they're trying to say and that's why we typically had to kind of grab those programs and for us, customize them ourselves or build them ourselves and when we do that, yeah, we're out there selling our programs. So if it's something that we built, yeah, we're proactively sharing. We presented at "All Hands" meetings and conference calls that include a lot of people and we say what we're building.

Question 33 was an open ended question for population groups A-D to gain their opinions on if talent management strategies are both socialized and understood throughout the company? There were 13 participants responding to the question and resulted in moderate to low opinions as to the understanding and socialization of talent management strategies. Six participants responded with moderate opinions, six responded with low opinions and only 1 had a favorable opinion of the question. Question 33 asked the participants, how well is talent management understood and socialized throughout the company? Code A1, had a moderate opinion and stated:

> I think more so at the executive level, than further down in the organization. I believe this is because we spend a little more time on it. We went down lower this last year. So, that's a little tougher because there's just more people at the lower levels.

However, I'll give it a 70%. This is obviously just an opinion but—So, I think people get why we do it. They understand the process of what we do. But I think it's not embedded yet into the culture. Once it's like embedded, where they feel like, I can't make a decision unless I look at my talent management stuff.

Code A2, also expressed moderate feelings and echoed:

Oh God. I think individuals would probably know one or two, but not necessarily, for instance, they probably don't know about the ones that are currently being developed for Supervisor 4, even though it's been socialized, but again, it depends on the party.

Code C2, had expressed a low feeling and also challenged the researcher to ask his peers

who also serve in a managerial role, of their understanding of talent management

strategies. He stated:

It's limited. Because if I have to go to my peers and ask them where to find the 2011 corporate HR vision, that outlines talent management strategies and offerings, it's considered limited. I encourage you to also ask your supervisors or peer managers and say, "What is the 2011 corporate HR vision?" I have to say high 90% would say, "What is that?"

Code D1 expressed a low feeling and stated:

I don't know what the company is doing other than the mentoring website, and the web access that they do monthly or however often they do them. Besides the rotations at PDS – and I don't know what else is going on. I guess the succession planning is being done at a higher level, which is a good thing. But all I know is they're putting people's names on a form in the system. What are they doing with those people's names? I don't know. There's more to talent management than just putting people on a list.

Code B1 had high feelings and provided his perspective from a feeling based on his

personal engagement within his work unit. He stated:

I can only tell you for Power & Delivery, because I don't know how that's socialized outside of our department. I think it's socialized well within, and understood well within Power & Delivery, I think, again, we're probably better than most, I think we understand the criticality of it. I think for us being more of a technical organization, core business type where you just can't import people, a lot of it is being taught in-house. So, in other words, project management, I think it's a pretty transferable skill. Whereas, you can be a good project manager in the oil industry and you can probably come in here and manage a project.

Theme 2 provided insight into how talent management is communicated throughout the company. The information received from participants aided the researcher to answer research question 1. The perceptions and lived experiences from the members engaged in the process provided the linkage to how the components of talent management for the company operate.

Theme 3 – Knowledge Transfer

Through the analysis of data, knowledge transfer became a primary theme. Questions 25 and 36 provided support to research question 1. Additionally, this theme helped to provide a thorough insight into the lived perceptions of talent management strategies for a large investor-owned utility company. Table 3 depicts the responses from population A-D.

Table 3

Tabulated Responses to Interview Questions 25, 36

Population A-D	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Question #25 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		
Moderate												X	
Low													
Question #36 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Moderate					X							X	
Low													

The 13 respondents reported high feelings to questions 25 and 36. The participants were asked, if knowledge transfer was an important aspect of talent management strategies?

Responding to question 25, which asked, do you feel knowledge transfer is an important aspect of talent management strategy, Code A1, measured a high feeling and

felt certain that knowledge transfer was important but wanted to challenge the researchers

thinking and offered to gain another perspective. She stated:

> It is. But I'm going to challenge this a little bit in how you're thinking about it.
> So traditional knowledge transfer kind of activities is one thing, but the way I
> think about the leadership…..if I get enough people with enough experiences that
> can help with knowledge transfer, it's not as important. But typically, when we're
> talking about executives, we want people who can move around and do lots of
> different things.
>
> If I can move people around enough to get them used to getting new positions
> and giving new experiences, then that knowledge transfer per se, I don't want to
> say it's not important, but let's just say – let's say Sue Ann's job opens up
> tomorrow, right? If I have enough people who've had experiences that can take
> her job, does she really have to knowledge transfer to the next executive? Or does
> she have strong enough people underneath her? And I've gotten Joe to move
> around 15 other times, and this is just another job, and he's used to taking on new
> jobs, right?

Code B1, C2 and D1 responded to question 36, which asked an open-ended

question, if they felt knowledge transfer was important? Code B1, felt knowledge

transfer was essential and provided an in-depth description of the criticality of knowledge

transfer in his area of work. He stated:

> I think the people that are coming up today for one, they move up through the
> ranks quicker than they ever did before. So that knowledge transfer in some cases
> doesn't happen to the full extent. So as you're losing the more seasoned folks,
> there's less of an opportunity for that to occur.
>
> So, I'll state some examples, a real example. So before as a lineman, well this
> even started before that, so in the old days when I started, you had to be a
> groundman for a long period of time before you got an apprentice bid. Today,
> folks can come in as a meter reader and after six months, bid to become a
> groundman. Theoretically, in six months they're climbing poles. They really
> don't know the work itself. They don't get the full understanding; they've only
> got six months of it, and depending on what they do for those six months.
>
> So now after three years they become a journeyman/lineman and some have made
> it as quickly as six months to a year and they become a foreman. Now, you've
> got in a time frame of four to five years, a very inexperienced individual in a very
> critical role. And so that kind of gives you an idea that knowledge transfer didn't
> occur. Whereas in the old days to become a foreman it literally took years, so you

could have a person be a journeyman/lineman for 12 to 15 years before they became a foreman. So that gave you an opportunity for the knowledge transfer to occur.

That doesn't happen anymore and so I could just say that for almost every job. I think the knowledge transfer is not occurring but it's essential that we try to somehow offset some of that. And I don't know how that's done. I mean, I'm not a training professional, but I think it's a key role. And how do you get some of my experiences transferred into another person?

Code C2, also felt knowledge transfer was important and that the company

needed to be cognizant of the current market conditions. He said:

I'd say yes and one reason is the aging population. Our company is experiencing an aging population. We have a lot of people who are going to retire. I feel they're holding onto their jobs because of the economy. So again, external pressures related to the economy may come to the point that they are ready to retire. The question is, are we ready for them to retire? That would be the first that comes to my mind when I respond "yes."

Code D1, had high feelings toward knowledge transfer and added, "I absolutely

do, especially because we do not have the systems, the well-developed systems to do it

deliberately or intentionally. So we are forced to do it through other vehicles." Code A3,

had moderate feelings and added her perspective to question 36 by stating, "Well it's one

aspect of talent management and it's one form of ensuring that your workforce retains

valuable history and knowledge, but I would put it as one item in a list of several risk

mitigation strategies."

Theme 3 provided an in-depth perspective of the participant's lived experiences

as it related to the importance of knowledge transfer and how it can be better utilized as a

talent management strategy and or aid. The information received from HR professionals,

executives, and managers provided more support to answering research question 1. The

participants lived experiences and perspective of knowledge transfer and the relationship

it has with talent management strategies had a strong correlation.

Theme 4 – The Role of Mentorship

Upon synthesis of the data, question 35 appeared many times throughout the data, resulting in a primary theme that had strong links to talent management strategies and supports research question 1. All population groups were asked, how important is mentorship in one's leadership development at this company. There was thick, rich dialogue generated from this question, where 12 of 13 participants expressed high opinions as to the importance of mentorship at this large investor-owned utility company. Table 4 depicts responses from population A through D.

Table 4

Tabulated Responses to Interview Question 35

Population A-D	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Question #35 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Moderate											X		
Low													

Question 35 asked the participants how important is mentorship in one's leadership development at the company under examination? Code A1 had high opinions in regards to mentorship and stated:

> Mentorship is important because you know it's a relationship based company. So I think mentors are important for networking, and for understanding the politics and how to get around and do things; for all sorts of things. I think the answer is yes. I'm not sure that we've done it both ways. I'm not sure a formal mentoring program is necessary. I do think it's important to have mentors. I think everybody should have at least one or two mentors.

Code B2 expressed high opinion of the value of mentorship relationships and provided some of his experiences related to mentorship, along his career. He provided:

I think it's really important. A mentor can take on many forms. When we tend to think of mentoring, as a mentorship program or some really high level person – and that's perfectly fine. That's a form of mentorship.

But then another form of mentorship is your boss. Or you've got a peer who's been around who you go to for guidance and information, or who takes a person under their wing. For me, it was always anyone who was interested in what I was doing, and I too was happy to share with them. I was not shy about asking – I'd ask a plant operator, "What do you do? What does this mean?"…and that person may or may not be a mentor to me.

But there were some people who took an interest in me when I was starting out. They would be more than willing to tell me about what they did and answer my questions. Others were true mentors and really, over a long period of time, developed me, and gave me the experience that would help me. Those were more like my bosses. Then there are your peers and your bosses, even if they're not your direct boss, you can still go to them for advice. I don't think I was ever really formally designated in a mentoring program but I definitely had some along my career.

Code C1 expressed high opinions and provided a perspective that considers both

formalized and informal mentorship relationship. Based on his experiences he sees value

in both approaches. He said:

I think it's important, but I've had the opportunity to be in relationships where it's more informal mentorship than the formalized mentoring program. When the company has or the department has determined that one may need a mentor and X-person is selected to be your mentor, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. So I think it's important, having someone you can go to, to ask questions is always important and I think it means different things to different people.

I've probably had a little more luck with the informal just because you kind of connect with people that you're more comfortable with. I've also had some success with the formal. I think a combination of both is kind of good. Having maybe two mentors, one that you maybe have worked for in the past and no longer work for, but you're comfortable going back to them or the company's formal mentoring program and get assigned to somebody who wants to be a mentor.

Code C2 provided a different perspective on mentorship though he agrees with

the overarching intent and impact. However, his reflections were more of a moderate

feeling, as he expressed his point of view. He provided:

My response is that it's not a requirement. Mentorship is voluntary. It's not my job. And the relationship you build with that person, you don't have the reward, you don't have the punishment, you don't have a Personal Development Plan (PDP) to require that person to perform within that parameter. You have to be able to show them, and give them the road map. I have to show you that this road map will benefit you and that person has to be able to feel trust and be willing to follow it for the proper development.

Code D3 provided thick, rich data as it related to mentorship. Throughout the interview, the participant mentioned mentorship many times as he sees a significant value in a mentorship relationship. The participant is currently in a Manager Development Program (MDP) and stated that "it is the mentorship that is the best part of my personal development in the program…the curriculum is fine but the best part is the mentorship."

Code D3 answered question 35 by saying:

I think being mentored by the right people is critical. It's probably the most helpful. It's the most personalized. Being mentored by the right people that take the time and interest in a real person's development, you get a lot out of it, you do. The one-on-one's I'm having now are structured and in a way that are getting right at my development needs.

What I had in the past was a guy who sent me on-the-job assignments outside of any structured program, saying why don't you go there….. I spent three days there; he wanted me to write a white paper on what I observed in several different areas. Because he took an interest in me and enough time to identify a development need, I received valuable mentoring. So I think mentoring is, if it's structured correctly and it's strategically executed, it can be a huge value.

Theme 4 was a significant finding in the research that helped to answer research question 1. With 12 of 13 participants feeling strong favor for mentorship and the value it brings to the organization, the primary theme of talent management value became pronounced. Value is built when the organization and its members understand its culture; when alignment is made to company objectives; knowledge transfer is recognized as an essential strategy to talent management; and high potentials are mentored to develop and

meet their full potential. The feelings, experiences, perspectives and histories provided in

the four themes allowed the researcher to answer research question 1.

Theme 5 – Creating a Talent Pipeline

The data generated from questions 4, 15, 17, 18, 21, 24, 31 and 34 helped to

generate the primary theme and supported research question 2. The sub-themes

generated were (a) recruitment strategies, and (b) succession management. Table 5

depicts the response to questions 4, 15, 17, 18, 21, 24, 31 and 34.

Questions 4 and 24 had a direct linkage to research question 2, which asked if the

current talent management programs are satisfying the need and demand for developing a

pipeline of talent in the company's short and long-term future?   Both questions resulted

in moderate to low feelings when asked if the talent management programs for this large

investor-owned utility company was meeting the talent pipeline demand. The two

questions combined, resulted in 2 high feelings, 15 moderate feelings and 6 low feelings.

Responding to question 4, which asked, do you feel the current talent

management strategies and programs in place are meeting the demand for and creating

the pipeline of talent the company needs for its immediate and long-term future, Code

A1, was one of three participants that expressed high feelings as to the talent

management strategies and programs in place meeting the demand for and creating a

talent pipeline for the company. She stated:

> Well, that's certainly our goal. I think that the answer is a qualified yes. We
> definitely are on that path. But again, it takes some time and maturity to actually
> get to the place where – it's just a meeting of demand.

Code A1 shared a 5-stage maturity model that has been developed to craft out the "as-is"

state and the "to-be" state as to where the talent management program should be within

the next two years. Based upon the maturity model, the organization has identified key

areas to concentrate on to advance its talent management programs and strategies.

Table 5

Tabulated Responses to Interview Questions 4, 15, 17, 18, 21, 24, 31, 34

Population A-D	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Question #4 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X												
Moderate			X	X	X	X			X	X		X	
Low		X					X	X			X		X
Question #15 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													
Moderate			X										
Low		X											
Question #17 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High										X	X	X	
Moderate													
Low													
Question #18 Behaviors	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High										X	X	X	
Moderate													
Low													
Question #21 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High								X	X				X
Moderate													
Low													
Question #24 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X									X			
Moderate		X	X	X	X	X					X	X	
Low							X						
Question #31 Behaviors	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High		X	X	X								X	X
Moderate	X				X	X	X		X	X			
Low								X			X		
Question #34 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X
Moderate							X		X				
Low								X					

Code A1 also stated, "We are going to continue to mature and get better at it. That's the whole creating the pipeline goal and I do think we're getting better. We're moving people around and giving them different experiences so that they can be more prepared."

Code B1 expressed a low feeling to question 4 and provided his perspective. Based on the pilot program (Manager Development Program, MDP) he had involvement with developing and initiating in 2011, he stated:

> No, I don't believe we are currently creating the pipeline we need because in the program I'm involved with, we've only got 19 people in the program and to me, I think to have the kind of effects that I think you would want needs to be expanded. We should have probably 100 people in the program, and at all different levels. That's expensive, obviously, and also demanding on resources but I think if you want a talent pool in the future that's prepared, I think it is essential going forward.

Code A5 expressed low feelings to question 4 and stated:

> I would say right now, no. Because HR hasn't had a systematic program in place to do that, they've started programs, they've stopped programs. They started the high potential program and it lasted two years and then they stopped it. Now, they're building something else. So, while it does give you those one off classes, there is not a solid leadership development kind of program that could build that pipeline of leaders.

Responding to question 24, which asked, do you feel that the current talent management strategies are creating the pipeline of talent required for the company in both the short and long-term, Code D1, provided a fresh and interesting perspective as she has been with the company less than 5 years and early in her career, she provided her lived experience in the business unit she was initially hired in as an external candidate. She believed being hired in as an external candidate was part of the company's talent management strategy, as it was building a talent pipeline the company needed in a particular area. She stated:

You know, again, my experience, from what I've seen and – on SMART Connect there were an awful lot of folks that were hired in from the outside intentionally. They wanted to bring in fresh new blood, fresh experience from the outside. And then there was a struggle because these people with new ideas and experiences that could be brought to bear were not listened to. And they were not allowed to really change the environment, because that's what they thought they were brought in to do.

So if part of the talent management strategy was to bring in new talent to help push the environment forward, it seemed like that was part of the strategy for all of us that came in from the outside. If that was part of the strategy, then those of us who were swimming against the tide were just beaten back, you know.

This is an old and well-grounded company. It's incestuous to a point where people have been here for 30 years, and people's brothers and sisters and mothers and daughters and dogs all work here! And they all – there's a lot of groupthink that goes on here from what I've seen. So, it's really hard to turn the tide.

Based on certain information received from study participants, particularly Code A4 and Code D1, it led the researcher to want to gain a broader picture of the company's recruitment strategies at the beginning pipeline of talent acquisition. This was a snowballing technique used and chapter 3 methods section, to gain additional information in answering research question 2. The researcher had a research assistant attend a company recruitment fair at a local state university (San Diego State University), located in Southern California. The researcher requested the research assistant to attend the fair and to observe to (a) gain a sense of the event, (b) a feeling toward the effects of the recruitment strategies deployed by the HR department, (c) observe the behaviors of the company representatives in attendance, (d) acquire knowledge about company recruitment, and (e) express his opinions in field notes as to the overall observation. The researcher wanted another pair of eyes to observe the recruitment strategies for this large investor-owned utility, to avoid researcher bias.

The research assistant provided the following field notes as it related to his

perspective, experiences and knowledge acquired during the company's recruitment fair.

He provided:

- Brand marketing – Apple the company, their booth had a clean design with young people in jeans and T-shirts, standing in front of the booth, both talking about and showing jobs on their I pads. The booth was crowded with students the entire day.
- Business as usual – While the company's representatives were very knowledgeable about the company, they appeared "stuffy", non-enthusiastic, standing behind the company's booth.
- That's not what we are looking for – While our recruiters were targeting a specific group of students (engineers) for summer internships, I overheard an environmental engineer major be told by one of the company recruiters, that "we are really looking for electrical, mechanical, and civil engineers." I felt there was a narrow focus and this could cause us to miss opportunities as a company.
- Paper waste – I observed that we are still collecting paper resumes, and while it is the traditional way of gathering potential candidates, there has to be a better way we screen candidates.
- Another brick in the wall – Positioned in a long isle with other companies, we did not stand a chance of standing out. Nothing distinguished our company from the competition.
- Bric-A-Brack, Baubles and Trinkets – We were handing out trinkets (hand sanitizer, plastic bags, letter openers, etc.) with our company logo printed on them. While this is a common practice during trade shows, almost all of these and other vendors' knick-knacks will be thrown away.

The research assistant provided a summary of his opinions, feelings, and

experience from the company recruitment field trip. His summary stated:

It is evident that much time and effort is put forth to register, coordinate and attend the various job fairs. The company's approach is standard amongst the other participants and or vendors. While this method of recruitment can produce resumes and potential candidates, our "business as usual" routine is in dire need of a makeover.

A focus on what the company has to offer; the company benefits; the other career opportunities besides engineer; innovative work the company has; the networking abilities and most importantly, the people at our company. We need to put an emphasis on why our company is an amazing place to work and be prepared to articulate why the skills of the potential graduates will be critical to our success.

Recruitment strategies. Question 17, 18, and 21 had targeted population groups C and D. For this reason, the researcher wanted to gain a perspective of recruitment strategies from department managers and the lived experiences of managers that are currently in a development program. Question 21 was asked to gain knowledge about how candidates for development programs were recruited and or selected to participate in programs. Questions 17 and 18 provided insight into the views related to recruitment. All participants that answered question 17 had expressed high opinions as to the need for recruitment strategies as well as high engagement behaviors in attempting to attract high caliber employees to their organization. Question 17 asked how important is it to recruit and retain high caliber talent? Code C1 expressed:

> Obviously you want to recruit and have the highest caliber talent. Now, the flip side of that is you also don't want to pay to have the Harvard educated PhD doing front-line work because they're the highest caliber person. So you want to match skills with positions, look for relative experience, related experience, but you also want to be cognizant, because I've seen it both ways, you don't want to hire someone who is too capable for a job. Sometimes, people look at me whenever I say that and think, are you crazy?

> You don't want to hire somebody who's over-qualified because they won't have job satisfaction, you'll make investments in them and they'll be gone. Now, in some cases you do it, you know what you're doing and you bring them in, but it's a pretty broad question.

> You want to recruit and retain your high caliber talent, because you'll have a high performing organization, but I would say how important is it to focus on recruiting high potential so that you look for the high potential and then through the programs we're talking about you transform the high potential into high performing.

> By giving them new assignments or different broad experience, you can retain them because they turn into overall high caliber talents. I look more on the potential versus the high caliber talent. It depends on what level. If you're hiring a VP, you kind of don't want to hire high potential because they should already be there. Maybe you're hiring a VP for a Senior VP position someday, but you see where I'm going with this.

Code C3 expressed his opinions by stating:

> Part of me says, in certain areas I think it's absolutely critical to recruit top talent and retain it. Now, in other instances, from a managerial standpoint, my job is not to keep people here forever and a day, my job is to develop them, move them along and put them in positions that will best serve themselves and the company.

> So, when we say retain within the company I think it's critical, some managers I think take that to literally and think that, hey, I've got a good one here, I'm not letting him go. Well, I don't think that's fair for the employee. I don't think that's fair for the company, because if I see talent that is being underutilized in certain areas, then my first intuition is I've got to do something to move this person on, because I think they can not only fill this role, but I think they have the potential to continue on and on.

> So, retention can be a double-edged sword for some folks because some managers get very comfortable with their employees because they are of an extremely high caliber. I have a different sense, whereas I believe you get experience from here, learn from here, but when we think you're ready and come to that agreement, then we really should kick you out of the nest and challenge you more to see if you can live up to what we think is your full potential.

> When the researcher asked the participants in the population group under

investigation, whether they hire for position versus potential, outlined in question 18.

Code C2 stated:

> I personally look for a candidate with potential, so that person has a good chance to advance. Basically, it's based on fit and if the person can fit into the company's culture. I look to see if they have personality to go both beyond and contribute to the organization; they have the ability to see and link their own role and responsibility to the organization's vision.

> You can hire a lot of technicians to do a job but you cannot hire a lot of people, for example people who can be a manager; people who can service clients; which is harder to find. So the reason I would say both position and potential is because the organization requires you to meet certain requirements for particular positions.

> Question 21 asked participants how they became a candidate in a company

sponsored development or talent pipeline program. This was asked to determine the

linkage between internal program recruitment and the participants' knowledge of the

recruitment process for their particular development program.

Code D1 and D2 both are participants currently serving in a company rotation program within Power Delivery Services. Code D1 stated, "I became aware and then just applied." Code D2 stated, "You just apply for the program and then look for the magic that happens behind the scenes." The researcher asked if there were any application requirements and Code D2 responded, "I don't think there was any. It was just expressing an interest, which business unit did you want to move into? Where were your interests within the company? And then, they tried to find a good fit for you."

Succession management. The data produced from Questions 15, 31, and 34 helped support the primary theme of creating a talent pipeline. Question 15 asked the population B participants to rate the company's efforts in applying succession management strategies. Code B1 expressed low feelings and stated:

> I would give it a "D." I don't think that they (HR) do enough of that. I think we count on this bubble being pushed out and I don't think we're...eventually, the age-bubble I think is going to burst and I think we are not prepared. Personally, I think our organization is at risk and the DC&M Management-III ranks, we probably have 9 of the 15 folks in the Manager Development Program (MDP) and I would say over half of those are over 55. We have two of them that are over 60. So, you have the potential there, out of those nine, to lose over half of these individuals to retirement in the next three to five years. These are resources that the experience level, maturity level and the leadership level are hard to replace. So, that's just in our business unit, so we could do a whole lot more of that.

Question 31 asked the participants from population groups A, B, C, and D, the amount of emphasis placed on succession planning. The data analysis provided a wide range of perceptions toward the behaviors being placed on succession planning. The 13 participants expressed their thoughts based on what they perceived to be the the engagement (behaviors) level as it related to succession planning. The data revealed, 5 participants expressed high behaviors, 6 expressed moderate behaviors and 2 expressed

low behaviors. Code A4 expressed high behaviors but added a caveat to the question and

stated:

> I think the right amount of emphasis is placed on succession planning. I think where we're working right now is to really shift people from having it be about succession planning. I think we do a good job of that, honestly. I think it's at the right level and let me qualify that by saying we do a good job of the succession planning work, but we don't do a good job of following through on the work that comes out of that and identify what needs to be done, right?
> So, we can go through and assess talent very well. We can identify their gaps and what their strengths are, but we don't do a very good job of helping to fill those gaps. We'll say so and so needs to work on strategic ability, but okay, go get them a strategic job to do it, that's where we fall short.

Code C2 expressed low behaviors and stated:

> I'm going to respond based on my experience here in 5 years with the organization. I have not seen a strong emphasis on succession planning. I don't know, I just don't see it as of yet.
>
> For example, when I first came as a manager to the company, I put in place succession and progression planning within my department. Also, in my department I established a practice of in-line promotion. I felt that should have already been in place. So, that's in my 5-year duration but I have not seen the succession planning at a higher level. Maybe it's at the leadership level. Maybe it's at the Manager 3 and above level.
>
> I came from AT&T and succession planning includes the Manager 1 and 2 levels. They have succession that they call "Ready Now." They have advisors that will socialize succession management. These advisors will identify the employee based on performance, particularly those who exceed their performance expectations and have potential in different capacities. Upon assessment of the high performing individuals, some sort of program or project is established for the person, for them to continue to progress in their development, acquiring new skills and learning.
>
> When that person becomes "Ready Now", then they become part of a larger succession management pool. They have the names when the opportunity comes up and or a critical position needs to be filled, rather than opening a job posting, they will go to the "Ready Now" list.

Question 34 was asked to determine the participants' knowledge level of

succession management and the practice that is used for this large investor-owned utility

company. The data revealed that there is a high level of understanding for the succession

management practices that are utilized at the company. There were 10 participants that expressed high knowledge, and 3 expressing moderate knowledge.

Research question 2, which examined if the current programs are satisfying the need and demand for developing a pipeline of talent, was answered. The participants provided information that allowed the researcher to determine the status of the company's talent management programs as well as efforts being levied in meeting the demand for creating a pipeline of talent for its short and long-term future. The results revealed the perspectives of the participants engaged in this study, which resulted in the need for the company to continue to progress toward its talent management planning to enhance its programs, tactics and strategies to meet its demand and or pipeline of talent required for its future success.

Theme 6 – Program Development and Effectiveness

Throughout the course of this study, a central theme was discovered, linking directly to program development in a quest to create a pipeline of talent in preparing and developing leaders to take on higher levels of responsibilities. Based on the data received, there were two additional sub-themes to help support the research question 3, which asked if the current programs in place are delivering on its promises in preparing candidates in assuming higher level positions. The questions that helped to generate the primary and sub-themes were questions 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 32. These questions generated a voluminous amount of data, where the researcher codified the questions based on the preliminary and sub-themes (a) leadership development [Q10, 13, 22, 26, 29, 32] and; (b) program effectiveness [Q5, 9, 12, 27, 28, and 30]. Tables will be displayed based on the sub-themes that helped to support the primary theme. This

body of data helped to answer research question 3. Findings will be revealed by areas that showed significance in the data.

There are several programs that were mentioned to the researcher throughout the course of the interviews. Some of these programs are developed by HR and or in conjunction with HR but some are department specific, developed out of a department need. The participants that were engaged in this study provided the researcher with the following programs that are currently in place throughout the company:

1. *College Internship Program* – Established for college students who maintain a 3.0 GPA to gain experience within the company. Additionally, this program offers the business units the ability to preview college talent for potential positions within the company upon completion of college studies.

2. *Executive Edge Program* – Established for executive talent planning. The goal of the Executive Edge Program is to prepare the next generation of executives to lead in an uncertain future, by equipping them with the capabilities needed to lead a more agile business through accelerated learning and development experiences.

3. *Leadership Edge Program* – Established for non-executive talent planning. It is designed to prepare the senior leaders to shape, lead, and influence the business and organization.

4. *Power Delivery Service (PDS) Rotation Program* – Established for PDS eligible employees. A development program that rotates eligible managers (M1, M2 or M3) to other business units to gain another perspective of the company.

5. *Manager Development Program (MDP)* – Established for TDBU eligible employees. The program is in its pilot phase and is to provide a variety of

activities that identify areas where further development can occur and then design learning opportunities to fill those gaps.

6. *Manager III Development Program* – Established for CSBU senior managers. This is a development program for the senior managers (level III) within the Customer Service Business Unit. On a monthly to bi-monthly basis the program brings in speakers and is used as a networking and information sharing forum.

7. *Managing Personal Growth (MPG)* – Established for CSBU senior managers. A developmental program/tool that involves filling out surveys and seeing where ones' values lie. The Program/tool will also be transcended down to the front-line leadership.

Leadership development. Questions 10, 13, 22, 26, 29, 32 helped to generate the sub-theme that linked to the primary theme of program development and effectiveness. Table 6 provides the tabulated responses that support the leadership development sub-theme.

Question 32 provided the most significant data in its findings as it related to leadership development. The question asked the participants if they felt job rotation and or job shadowing is a valuable way of developing high potentials for future leadership responsibilities. From the 13 participants that engaged this question, 11 reported having high feelings toward the value of having established rotation and or job shadowing programs in place to develop leaders. There were 2 participants who expressed moderate feelings. Code A1 expressed high feelings and stated:

> In general, getting new experiences and stretching yourself and getting into positions that are uncomfortable and not getting too comfortable with what you are doing, is a highly valuable skill. Beyond that, I think job rotation, meaning going into a job, let's say, that's meaningful to your career is helpful and job

shadowing is helpful. But getting out of your comfort zone and learning how to do that and seeing that you can do it, is great.

Table 6

Tabulated Responses to Interview Questions 10, 13, 22, 26, 29, 32

Population A-D	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Question #10 Behaviors	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X				X		X						
Moderate				X		X							
Low													
Question #13 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													
Moderate			X										
Low		X											
Question #22 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													X
Moderate								X					
Low									X				
Question #26 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High								X					X
Moderate									X				
Low													
Question #29 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													
Moderate								X					X
Low									X				
Question #32 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Moderate										X			X
Low													

Code B2 expressed high feelings but felt job shadowing could be used more strategically

when used as a development opportunity. He stated:

> Yes, I believe in this type of development. However, I don't know about shadowing as much as rotation. But in a way that helps the person, makes sure that the person is going to succeed. I'm thinking shadowing can be valuable in certain circumstances. But I think it may be better to rotate into a function rather than shadow. Maybe shadow for a short period of time could work. But for sure, I agree in both strategies.

Code A2 expressed high feelings and stated:

> I absolutely agree. Yes, it's extremely valuable. Basically, employers that provide and offer job rotation opportunities strengthen human capital for the company. And the company is as good as their people, right. I think we need to help managers think that the investment in our people is really a priority.

Code C3 expressed high feelings and his personal career experience with a

developmental rotation and shadowing program. He stated:

> I absolutely agree in both. I've done a couple of them, both inside an existing business unit as well as outside and I learned, I honestly say that and it's kind of a weird thing, but I wouldn't have been able to get this GM position had I not gone through the job rotation. I was fortunate and lucky enough to have a manager that had a completely different approach to things.

Program effectiveness. Questions 5, 9, 12, 27, 28, and 30 all helped the

researcher in supporting the primary and sub-theme. The tabulated responses are

depicted in Table 7.

Question 5 had a direct linkage to research question 3, which asked the

participants from all 4 populations (A-D), are the current programs in place delivering on

its promises in preparing candidates in assuming higher level positions as part of the

company's succession planning efforts? The data revealed an overall moderate opinion

of the program's effectiveness in preparing leaders to assume higher level leadership

positions.

Responding to question 5, which asked, are the current programs in place

delivering on its promises in preparing candidates in assuming higher level positions as

part of the company's succession planning efforts, Code A1 had high feelings and

provided information about a program that she has direct involvement with and stated:

> We have a program that we just launched in October 2011 called Executive Edge. Its sole purpose is to prepare leaders, high potential leaders, for the future. The program has 12 people annually that would go through it. And its whole purpose is to prepare leaders to manage in an agile business environment, linked to where

the company is headed, not where we are today. It's a really in-depth program. So, they get classroom curriculum, sort of like, in a way it's like an MBA and in a way it's different. So they get classroom curriculum, individual coaches, action learning projects and they get the networking with their peers.

Table 7

Tabulated Responses to Interview Questions 5, 9, 12, 27, 28

Population A-D	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Question #5 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X			X								
Moderate			X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X
Low									X		X		
Question #9 Behaviors	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X			X	X		X						
Moderate						X							
Low													
Question #12 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X				X	X	X						
Moderate													
Low				X									
Question #27 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High								X					X
Moderate									X				
Low													
Question #28 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													
Moderate								X					X
Low									X				

Code C2 expressed low feelings and stated:

So, I referred back to the human resource mission and goal in 2011, and that lay out exactly what the corporation promises. Then I look at my own TDBU goals and looked at what the promises were, which the leadership put in place. I laid them out. I have seen documents that said leadership culture and processes which is part of what we talked about before regarding if the recruitment process is valuable to the organization. It also detailed the succession issue, what the corporation is looking and striving to head toward. It's a very good document and it shows the promises.

But when we compare it to TDBU, with the business unit level goals, it's a one bullet line item that refers to our people and culture driver. And the bullet states

"continue the development of managers and the development of programs to support a robust and diverse profile of managers…to advance into future senior level positions. The target is greater than 50 managers." You can see that the promise is large and fits the vision, but the execution to operationalize that vision; I think we have some room. So my response would be "no, it's not there" in my opinion.

Code D3 expressed low feelings as to certain aspects of her job rotation assignment in relationship with the effectiveness of her current development program. She stated:

I feel like that the management piece of my rotation program is completely lacking….the how you're going to grow as a manager of people piece is missing. I think the skills, as far as me growing as an individual and the subject matter expert from my new assignment, I've learned a lot from the program but I don't feel I've grown as a manager at all. The role wasn't really clear when I came into it. Probably 75% of my duties are more project manager related. There's no focus on true manager grooming, the whole piece of becoming a better manager of people, if that makes sense.

Code B1, expressed high opinions and linked the question to the Manager Development Program that he helped develop and pilot. He stated:

We've been pretty happy with the progress. We have – I think we've made some changes along the way, but we are happy with the progress that's occurring. I have two mentees in the program. We also have, I think out of DC&M, seven or eight of the nineteen candidates currently in the program. So, we're seeing kind of the effects of that. And so I think for us it's going to pay dividends. I'm really happy with the progress that we're making. We've got to just keep it up and, again, expand the program.

Research question 3 examined if the current programs are delivering on its promises in preparing candidates in assuming higher level positions. The information acquired throughout the course of this investigation allowed the researcher to answer research question 3. The views and perspectives provided by the members engaged in the company's talent management portfolio, all lead to strong efforts being made to prepare candidates to be prepared to assume higher level leadership responsibilities. The company has been aggressively revising elements of its talent management programs and

practices and is in the process of "unbinding" certain aspects of its previous talent management profile, to emerge with a more comprehensive and targeted talent management system.

Summary

The data for the study was gathered using semi-structured interviews with 13 managers and senior level executives at a large investor-owned utility company. Thirty-seven interview questions were developed to answer three research questions:

1. What are the lived perceptions of the HR professionals who create talent management strategies; senior executives and managers who support these strategies; and managers who have been identified in the succession planning pipeline at Southern California Edison.

2. Are the current programs satisfying the need and demand for developing a pipeline of talent?

3. Are the current programs in place delivering on its promises in preparing candidates in assuming higher level positions?

After gathering the raw data through interviews and one field observation, the process of analyzing the data began with the researcher's examination of the transcribed interviews. A second reviewer was recruited to enhance the reliability of this study. The researcher utilized the process of (a) lens the researcher used to validate their study, and (b) paradigm assumptions. The researcher's lens allowed for the convergence of the data collected, where themes emerged. Additionally, six validity procedures (a) triangulation; (b) disconfirming evidence; (c) researcher reflexivity; (d) member checking; (e) peer

debriefing; and (f) thick, rich description of information, all ensured that a thorough and unbiased assessment of the data was collected.

The primary and sub-themes were discussed using excerpts from the interviews. In addition, tables were utilized to depict the participants' responses. Six primary themes were identified through the analysis of the raw data from interviews: Talent management value, talent management communication, knowledge transfer, the role of mentorship, creating a talent pipeline, and program development and effectiveness.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendation

Chapter Structure

This chapter begins by presenting an overview of the study. The findings and conclusions of the research are presented as they relate to the research questions that were used to guide the study. Lastly, the implications of the study, which are based upon the findings and recommendations for further research, are addressed. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Overview

Restatement of the purpose and research questions. The purpose of this study was to examine the talent management strategies established for a large investor-owned utility company and to:

- Determine the strategic change required for the utility company to effectively deploy talent management tactics within its organization.

- Determine the position-specific competencies amongst the multi-generational workforce, to ensure a pool of talent is developed for a host of critical leadership positions.

- Identify professional development toward a "ready now" workforce to include rotational assignments.

The three questions drafted to guide the research were:

1. What are the lived perceptions of the HR professionals who create talent management strategies; senior executives and managers who support these strategies; and managers who have been identified in the succession planning pipeline at this large investor-owned utility company?

2. Are the current programs satisfying the need and demand for developing a pipeline of talent?

3. Are the current programs in place delivering on its promises in preparing candidates in assuming higher level positions?

Findings and Conclusion

This section reports the findings and conclusions as they pertain to each of the three research questions. These findings are based on a small participant population at a single utility company. The findings, conclusions, and interpretations that are drawn may not be applicable to other organizations.

Research Question 1

Research question 1 asked: What are the lived perceptions of the HR professionals who create talent management strategies; senior executives and managers who support these strategies; and managers who have been identified in the succession planning pipeline at this large investor-owned utility company?

Based on my research, the findings from this study were generated from four primary themes and four sub-themes that helped to answer research question 1:

- Theme 1: Talent management value
    - Sub-theme 1a – Organizational culture and personality
    - Sub-theme 1b – Talent management alignment

- Theme 2: Talent management communication
    - Sub-theme 2a – Talent management understanding
    - Sub-theme 2b – Talent management socialization

- Theme 3: Knowledge transfer

- Theme 4: The role of mentorship

Talent Management Value

Talent management value emerged as a primary theme through the course of data analysis, which allowed the researcher to answer research question 1. The population groups (HR professionals, senior executives, and senior managers) engaged in this study provided their lived perceptions, experiences and histories on the scope of talent management efforts being made for this large investor-owned utility company, which aided the researcher to answer research question 1. Based on 13 participants' lived perceptions, there was a strong sense of value placed on talent management for this company. An overwhelming number of participants felt that talent management is very important as the company is experiencing a shifting landscape of the 21st Century and will require human capital to advance the company's future. Code B2 stated:

> So, as our industry gets more complex and difficult, we rely more and more on people to keep up. Therefore, I think that if we're not managing our people or developing them and thinking about them as the key asset, then we're not going to be able to keep up. So it's very important for everybody.

The supporting sub-themes that also emerged were (a) organizational culture, and (b) talent alignment. The link the researcher found was that talent management practices are at its best when the culture supports the mission and goals of the "HR proposition" established for talent management. The researcher concluded that the company has made great strides in their talent management portfolio and are committed to maturing its talent management program. The researcher also concluded that when talent management strategies are aligned with company business drivers, value in the proposition is achieved and the efforts being made from every member engaged in the talent management proposition are significantly optimized.

Additionally, participants expressed the need for aligning talent management strategies with the company's current utility industry climate. Because the company is experiencing a great degree of uncertainty in today's utility landscape, high potential candidates that can be the next successors and or leaders for the company must be identified and developed to meet tomorrow's challenges for this sector of business. Value is gained for an organization when the emphasis is placed on people assets, who are able to lead in a changing energy market of the 21st Century. Thus, the company and senior executives have identified the need for targeted leadership development and creating the pipeline of talent for its short and long-term future. However, I conclude that the type of development must not be typical "cookie-cutter" training, taken off the shelf but more targeted and deliberate that trains and develops individuals to learn how to lead with agility during changing market pressures. This type of targeted development adds value to the talent management proposition and prepares not just more leaders, but the right type of leaders the company needs to remain competitive, meet its operational commitments, and to provide the very best service to its customers, with reliability and safety being paramount.

Organizational culture and personality. For this company, the researcher found that there is a sense of culture where its members have a general awareness of talent management practices but do not fully understand the gravity of which talent management strategies can elevate a company to its highest potential to combat the challenges being faced in the current utility climate. During the course of this investigation, the researcher found that there is a distinct culture established for this utility company. With this organization being around for over 100 years, there are some

cultural norms that are heavily engrained. The findings for this study were that this organization's culture plays a significant role as it relates to talent management. In particular, the views from the participants that engaged in this study had a common thread of dialogue that led the researcher to conclude that relationships at this company play a significant role in talent management behaviors. The researcher concluded that there are some great programs that other utility companies can benchmark from but a powerful driver that still exists in this utility company's culture is that relationship building is a strong force that remains to be the vehicle that drives career advancement. It was discovered that this large investor-owned utility company is very relationship oriented and by building positive relationships with those who wield influence can be a career additive that far exceeds one's engagement in the various developmental programs that currently exist and offered at this company.

Though there are prescribed programs established as part of the suite of talent management strategies for this company, it was deemed extremely important that individuals understand the culture and how decisions work which ultimately feeds into talent management behaviors. For this company, it is more important to understand the culture of the organization and the extreme importance relationships plays, and how it can be leveraged to benefit one's career, than it is to seek out just any development opportunity and or program to join. As one HR professional stated, "I can send an entire group through a program but at the end of the day it's the manager's choice who they select for that next promotion…..and most of the time they go with the one they like and or the one they feel most comfortable with." Though programs offer developmental benefits, the real effect is not as impactful as one who has developed relationships that

foster career sponsorship and or mentorship that aids the development and career advancement process. The researcher concluded, that when a person understands how the culture works and how talent management practices are heavily linked to relationships, a person can begin to understand how to effectively navigate their career path and use a blended method of building effective relationships while seeking those developmental programs that will add value to leadership development, which ultimately adds to the creation of the talent pipeline the company needs to be successful in its immediate and long-term future.

   Talent management alignment. Talent management alignment emerged as a sub-theme that offered support to the primary theme of talent management value. Many of the participants engaged in this study felt value is achieved when talent management alignment is tied to specific drivers. Drivers are not limited to corporate drivers but business unit drivers, department drivers and or initiatives that are linked to the overarching company's goals and objectives. The researcher concluded that talent management alignment must be comprehensive and deliberate where individuals have a thorough understanding of how the two are interdependent. The researcher also concluded that this is a large organization and it is a difficult endeavor to ensure every business unit has a standardized alignment process. There are a number of business units that reside within the organization and each may have different drivers, goals and objectives, though they are tied to the same mission for the company to remain completive and viable. However, I conclude that the company is maturing and has identified the need to link business drives with talent management strategies.

Talent Management Communication

The data revealed talent management communication as a significant finding. I concluded that the communication platform for talent management understanding and socialization was marginal. I found through data analysis that a good majority of participants engaged in talent management had variations of what the organization's talent profile consisted of. Clearly, the current advancements being made with the HR proposition in maturing into a healthy and vibrant talent management portfolio for the company, is merely understood by the members I engaged in the study. As the lead researcher, I was just as excited with the many great programs and practices being established throughout the company but became sorely aware that such progress has not been socialized throughout the organization to ignite the passion and build on its momentum in building a world class talent management portfolio that other industries can benchmark from.

Additionally, there were a number of programs that are currently developed for the company that have many similarities but have varying degrees of outcomes.   For example, there are two separate Manager Development Programs (MDP) that are established in different business units (a) Customer Service Business Unit, and (b) Power Delivery Services.   The nexus of this finding was that each program had a unified goal of developing managers but what was more striking to me was that neither senior leader I interviewed had heard of the different programs that were named the same. Based on the information gathered from the participants, the CSBU program has a stronger emphasis on networking where the PDS program has a stronger emphasis on leadership

development that is intended to groom and prepare the next cadre of middle managers to assume higher level senior manager positions.

My conclusion was that the two programs could be collapsed with each benchmarking from the other's strengths in its program and curriculum design. The goal is to enhance both programs or combine the two in one and have a standard program that could be utilized for other business units. I also conclude that HR should be more engaged in business unit program design, as some standard models can be built and replicated for other business units when and if the need arises to develop their employees. My final conclusion is that HR has to be more engaged in every facet of the company and understand the needs and socialize the offerings of programs to drive development. HR has to act as an agent or ambassador to the business units to ensure best practices and or programs are benchmarked and identified so that value added curriculum (a) aligns the business unit developmental needs with company objectives, and (b) affords candidates that are in the programs with similar core developmental competencies as their counterparts in different business units. The HR value proposition for talent management communication should be a simple repeatable model that is effective, strategic and integrated.

Knowledge Transfer

Knowledge transfer was a key finding through the course of data analysis where over 87% of respondents felt knowledge transfer was important and closely linked to talent management strategies. The participant that provided the greatest insight into his perceptions and lived experiences expressed his concern in how fast individuals are coming into leadership positions with a limited amount of knowledge to effectively

perform their roles. He provided his experience as he has served the company for over

35 years. He provided the amount of time it once took to advance in one's career. He

stated "to either be eligible to bid for a higher level position one had to be in a position,

sometimes 12 years before they could go from an apprentice to a lineman but now,

people are rapidly advancing and they don't know the material."

The conclusion I was able to draw upon from the data was that the company has

more to contend with than just a shifting landscape that requires more leaders to be

prepared and developed to take on the challenging work in a new climate but also, with

the graying of the population, those who will be called upon to lead may not have the

institutional knowledge to effectively lead, especially if the mass exodus of baby boom

generation becomes a reality in the next few years. My final conclusion to this theme

based on the data collected, is that the utility industry has a great deal of tacit knowledge,

particularly from the baby boomer generation, which is the predominant workforce that

holds the institutional knowledge and understands the nuances of the utility work. I

conclude the types of information systems established to capture knowledge are marginal,

thus identifying a risk that will need to be mitigated prior to the exodus of the baby boom

generation. This will only ensure key knowledge is being captured and transferred to the

next generation of leaders.

Role of Mentorship

Based on the data collected for this study, mentorship was a shared perception and

experience that a high percentage of candidates expressed being a significant part of a

leader's development, and a success factor which aides an individual throughout career

progression. I found that mentorship was closely linked to relationships, which was

outlined in theme 1 as a sub-theme discussing the company's culture. The participants felt that mentorship is sometimes more critical than the prescribed development programs intended for learning and development. However, several participants felt that one has to be very cautious as to who you choose to be your mentor. Once again, it links back to building positive and healthy relationships that will aid one's career advancement. I conclude that mentorship should be part of every development program, as it adds value to all parties involved. Mentorship allows for information to be transferred and shared. By sharing knowledge through mentorship, it will continue to develop leaders in gaining the tacit knowledge that is so much at risk of losing from the industry. As one participant put it "mentoring can take the form of a formal and informal mentor….a boss can be a mentor, it may not be formal but it is still just as impactful."

I conclude that the utility culture should adopt the *mentoring gene* as it provides so much more benefits than just the typical notion that if you find a mentor and or sponsor, you will automatically advance your career. It is my conclusion that mentoring has lost some of its essential purpose and is now believed to be the passage of right for mentees to advance their careers, which becomes a false promise and spirals individuals out of control when career advancement doesn't happen at their expected pace. It is my belief that the company should engrain the essence and the principles of what mentorship can provide for both the company and the individuals engaged in such a practice:

1. Institutional knowledge sharing and transference will allow a company to forge forward.
2. Mentees will get targeted coaching and leadership development in learning a broader perspective and how to navigate areas never experienced.

3. Through the mentorship partnership, both parties gain from each other and grow personally and professionally.

Research Question 2

Are the current programs satisfying the need and demand for developing a pipeline of talent?

Creating a talent management pipeline. The key findings were that HR's goal is to create a healthy pipeline of talent through the development and deployment of talent management tools, systems and programs. However, the lived perceptions of the participants were that the execution of this goal was marginal. Based on the data collected, the participants had an overall feeling that the company is on the right path but there is much more work to be done to be at the maturity level to have a sustained pipeline of well developed, experienced and competent leaders to move the company through unchartered waters. Throughout the course of this investigation it was discovered that there are several company development programs, all which adds to the talent pipeline. Based on the information received from the participants during this investigation, there were a total of seven talent management programs that are part of a talent pipeline program. Though this was a small population group examined, the programs established only had a small percent of individuals participating in the current programs, in comparison to the amount of leaders needing to be developed as part of the company's corporate goal of building a strong pipeline of leaders. Several participants expressed the need to expand many of these programs to meet a wider pool of candidates to strengthen the leadership pipeline.

I conclude that the company is investing in creating a strong leadership pipeline but the systems and programs are not linked to aid the effort. It is my conclusion that great strides are being made to integrate some of the new tools and systems that aids talent management planning. Some of the new tools and systems established for talent planning at this company are (a) VEMO – workforce planning system, and (b) Taleo – Staffing software. I conclude that by communicating these tools and systems, HR can properly assist the departments in identifying potential candidates that are prepared to take on critical roles in their department if the need arises. These systems intended to house candidates' profiles which allows for a standard platform for all staffing and workforce needs. With this tool, managers can leverage the technology and identify specific skills in candidates through searching through profiles. Also, this can minimize the need to build redundant programs to develop internal candidates when it is deemed potential successors don't exist within the department. This type of technology can identify a "ready now" candidate pool that has already been developed through one of many of the company's developmental programs. This will also provide integrity to the programs, where candidates feel they are now being assessed and their developmental training is worthwhile and it's not just another program.

For example, if I was a hiring manager and I had a critical role that was vacant and needed it filled immediately and there were no other candidates in my present department prepared to assume the role, I can work with my HR Strategic Business Associate and first ask, through our staffing system (Taleo) run me a report on all of the candidates that fit the profile I'm seeking. Then in partnership with HR, I can review and identify those candidates that I would like to consider to fill the need. This is the

capabilities of the systems the company has but the problem is that the average manager probably doesn't know these tools exist. Historically, managers revert back to relationships and the antiquated process of "hey, do you know anyone that can fill my position?" I conclude that the advancement in the company's tools and technology are on par with other companies but the socialization, communication and understanding of such tools becomes marginalized when hiring managers don't know they exist. Therefore, as efforts are being made to grow the talent pipeline through program design, managers who may have a need for a specific talent that resides in business unit "X" should know how to tap into to the company's talent base through advanced technology. If the systems are centralized to a few HR professionals and the masses (hiring managers) are unaware of the resources to be used, this too marginalizes the programs which are intended to provide a talent pipeline for succession.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 asked, if the current programs in place are delivering on its promises in preparing candidates in assuming higher level positions?

Program development and effectiveness. The overall feeling towards the company delivering on its promises was that the company is taking the necessary steps to develop programs to prepare more leaders as part of its succession efforts but is not totally meeting the promises the programs should deliver on. However, based on the data collected, job rotation and job shadowing was a key finding that was strongly supported (84%) and viewed as favorable by the participants engaged in the study. Participants felt that it was an essential element of the talent management strategy. The company has established a Power Delivery Service (PDS) Rotation Program that affords high potential

candidates to rotate with another manager in a different business unit for a twelve month assignment. I conclude this program is a valuable way of developing candidates to acquire different knowledge and business perspective but it must have curriculum design that outline roles, responsibilities and expectations from all members engaged in the program to include (a) hosting managers, (b) program managers, and (c) program participants.

Based on the discussions with two managers who are currently engaged in the program, the resounding tenor is that the program has positively exposed them to new learning. However, there were apparent areas that can be improved upon. One of the participants expressed that, it was not really clear what her new role was when she first reported to her rotation assignment. She expressed to me that she had to figure out what her new assignment was all about before she could become fully engaged to the point where her efforts were effective. As I wanted to learn more about the program, I asked if there were clear expectations from her new manager. She replied "not really." I proceeded to ask if she felt if she acquired more leadership skills through the program to be a better manager. Once again, she replied "not really." Another key finding was that, she expressed that "it would have been nice if I had a mentor assigned when I assumed my new role."

The second person I interviewed that was part of the PDS Rotation Program stated, "I'm very fortunate to have been selected for the program and glad I was assigned to the business unit I'm currently supporting." Though some of the dialogue took a different course, the same types of questions surfaced as did with the first PDS candidate. However, the second participant expressed her "luck" with working for a manager that

really is supporting her development opportunity and is truly exposing her to different things as part of her new assignments. When asked if she is learning to be a better manager, she expressed "yes." When the dialogue ventured into mentorship, she clearly expressed, "it would have been nice if I was set up with an executive or senior manager mentor to help me navigate through the waters when I first came to the department."

Though I believe these types of programs are beneficial, they can be more impactful if the program design clearly articulates the expectations and roles of the hosting managers that are involved in the program. This allows the participants to quickly transition into their new role and minimize the loss of time trying to figure out what their new role is.

Implications and Recommendations Based on Findings

The findings from this study provided a thorough insight into the "lived experiences", perceptions and histories of the talent management strategies established for this large investor-owned utility company. This topic has been studied widely for many companies but relatively few studies have been as profound for investor-owned utility companies.

As utility companies will begin to experience the loss of critical roles due to retirement of baby boomers, they will also have to contend with the multi-generational workforce that has different needs and desires. Gesell (2010) stated, "what we have in American organizations today is a diverse group of workers with differences in attitude affecting everything from recruiting, building teams, dealing with change, motivating, managing, maintaining, and increasing productivity" (p. 21). The utility industry is experiencing a changing landscape of the 21st Century with many unknowns. The

company has acknowledged the fact that transformational change is imminent and the investment in human capital is required to lead the organization through the change required to meet its operational goals and remain successful as in its past 125 years of service. Leaders are going to need the development to become agile and lead their teams toward the new mission and vision set forth by the senior executive team.

Implications of Findings

   For investor-owned utility companies. The following implications have been suggested and are a product of the literature review and results of this study:

1. That it will be necessary for private and public utility organizations to ensure that leadership and key positions of their organizations will be staffed by competent personnel. Utility companies experience the same rates of attrition that other private companies experience and the workforce will shrink due to pending retirements from the baby boom generation. Additionally, as the economy continues to show life and provides more jobs, unplanned departure coupled with planned retirements, will potentially cause a shortage of talent that resides within the organization.

   Based on the data collected in this study, this large investor-owned utility company must invest in human capital as its number one asset and develop the targeted training and development required to continue in its quest to have a healthy pipeline of talent for its immediate and long-term needs. As the data also revealed, HR and all other members in which I interviewed expressed a strong interest in this research topic and felt that talent management is a strong ingredient that will aid the company in confronting certain market pressures

currently felt. With the ever increasing pressures the electric utility industry is experiencing, aligning business drivers with employee development to reach organizational performance is critical to future sustainability for this sector of business.

2. Integrating and collapsing talent management strategies within the various business units in the company will allow for a standard understanding and platform to operate from. For the utility industry, with the shifting market forces, integrating talent management strategies at all levels of the organization will allow managers to properly assess, recruit, evaluate and develop their key talent, to ensure a well-equipped and vital workforce across business units and the company. This will also help to ensure:

- Ensure that a critical alignment is made between employee skills and the organization's culture, values, and business direction.

- Create an integrated talent management strategy for all their efforts, from leadership development to succession planning. With the aid of the company's tools and systems, and integrating the business unit's annual succession planning with companywide staffing and workforce planning can provide a platform for other business units to select from when critical talent needs are required.

- Pinpoint the most efficient sources for finding new talent.

- Develop a more cost-effective talent management process.

3. Building talent management competencies and or requirements in the business unit expectations and performance plans of each manager. Talent management

expectations are built into each manager's development plan as well as the roles and responsibilities in which they serve in their respective department. In today's climate, utilities will need to attract, recruit and develop talented employees that have the competencies and skills to address the shifting demands being levied on the industry. It is a best practice to align business drivers with performance to ensure the goals and objectives are being met.

However, the competencies should be a consistent and standard set of expectations only to be deviated from to align the unique business unit or department goals with the overall drivers of the company. An example provided by a study participant was to develop a training competency that could teach managers how to become agile and lead an environment through change.

The entire company is experiencing change that impacts all and by having targeted training and development that every manager can develop and lead their organizations through change, will align the company's short-term mission, while providing necessary development, so the company can meet its operational and customer expectations.   For organizations to stay competitive, they must have the right mixture of leadership and talent. In the evolution of finding internal and or external talent and leadership, boards must consider the competencies that will sustain their success.

4. Communication of the company's talent management profile is essential for employees to be successful at the execution of its talent management strategies. As a form of knowledge transfer, the company can leverage its efforts and build a communication model to ensure the understanding of and socialization of talent

management strategies are performed at every level of the organization.

> An organization's knowledge transfer performance is high when it has and uses clearly defined documentation and communication processes to pass essential information from executives and other key employees to others. This ensures knowledge management and institutional memory is shared, not lodged in one individual or unit. (Vermont Department of Human Resources, n.d., ¶8)

A simple model that can be used and continuously repeated to ensure the talent management message is leveraged, understood and socialized from all HR professionals, senior executives, managers and employees who want a clear understanding of the talent planning strategy, is to ensure the message is:

- Effective – it should ensure people have the knowledge and ability to perform the work of talent management.

- Strategic – it is about broader issues and longer-term goals.

- Integrated – it should link various aspects of the business, people management, and individuals and teams.

It is recommended that each HR professional have a thorough understanding or business perspective of talent management strategies, to ensure the correct messaging is being disseminated to the business units. Strategic Business Associates, HR Program Managers, Training and Development Managers and other participating members of the talent management team that are assembled to further the investment in the company's human capital must have a standard set of training and development themselves to have a better understanding of how other contributing members input into the portfolio of talent management work.

5. The last recommendation that the researcher offers is for the company to engage in *the war for talent*. Chambers et al. (2007) stated "Better talent is worth

fighting for….and companies can win the war for talent, but first you must elevate talent management to a burning corporate priority" (p. 1). Mathur (2010) states "in the coming decades, the demands for talented people will far exceed the availability of skilled workers – at all levels, and in all industries" (p. 103). McGee (2008) parallels talent acquisition with *talent spotting*. McGee says high caliber talent "tend to be the top 10% - 20% of people in the organization who consistently deliver high performance and demonstration to you that they have much further to go or more to give" (p. 5).

The company must first recognize, identify and communicate to the top 10% to 20% of talent that currently resides within the company, that they are the future and they will be developed to continue their personal and career growth with the company. Though development is often seen as a mutual engagement for the individual to develop themselves, while the boss offers guidance and act as an aid to one's development, it must be expanded to a more rigorous engagement on the behalf of the managers who are expected to execute on talent management strategies. As the lead investigator into this study, it is encouraged that managers act with the sense of urgency and as it is truly a war to keep the best and brightest of its high potential employees.

The war is won by those companies that treat the war for talent as if it is truly a war, and they recruit, retain, reward and mentor their best talent for adding value to the organization. The utility company can no longer be seen as a monopoly that an individual will stay 30 years and make this a standing career. The aging of the generation is here and the utility company is unique, being that a

large percentage of its workers hold key knowledge – tacit and in many cases and

are eligible for retirement but just have elected to stay a little longer due to the

current economy. The economy is turning and the youth of the organization are

more mobile than ever before and less risk adverse to try new careers, and other

opportunities when the time becomes right for them. As one participant stated,

"this company is no longer the only show in town."

A war is historically devastating to the loser, and can take several years to

recover, if ever able to really recover.   The cutting edge companies, such as

Apple, Google, and the likes of others, have established the talent mindset and

know what their future needs and the potential candidates they want. For this

utility company, it is going to take an army of dedicated employees and *Change*

Champions who want to see the next generation forge ahead and continue the

legacy of *Leading the Way in Electricity* to band together and unbind old practices

and get a youthful spirit and transition into a new approach and or mindset to

bring talent management to a new way of maintaining a successful and vibrant

workforce.

Recommendations for Future Research

Utility companies cannot escape the transition of workforce loss through baby

boomer retirements. Leadership development and preparing a sound leadership pipeline

is only one aspect of talent management efforts being performed to ensure the company

has the right leaders to move the company forward in its immediate and long-term future.

However, large investor-owned utility companies who are committed to having safe and

reliable energy, while delivering it to the customer at a low cost, may need to re-examine

what it will take to successfully acquire, retain and develop the best and the brightest talent for tomorrow's sustainable future. To ensure the company has an educated and well trained workforce, while ensuring the work is done within regulatory compliance, with safety being a top priority, a study is needed to better understand utility leadership development and the pace in which high potentials are transitioning into leadership roles at such a rapid pace that can be detrimental to the organization. This will help to uncover the training needs of high potentials at the onset of the leadership pipeline, so that the appropriate training and knowledge transfer is effectively being ascertained and mitigated.

Knowledge transfer was a significant finding in this study but it can be examined closer to determine the level of knowledge transfer required to ensure critical knowledge is being secured in systems, in effort to mitigate the "brain drain" that will come with the baby boomer exodus. This will ensure appropriate training needs are targeted for leadership development for these high potential candidates that may not have all the institutional required for critical roles. Because some organizations will be forced to move high potentials into key roles based more out of need versus development opportunity, this future study can aid companies in determining the best mix of talent management strategies to deploy during a shifting landscape the utility industry is undergoing during the early stages of the 21st Century.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the talent management strategies established for a large investor-owned utility company and to determine the strategic change required for the utility company to effectively deploy talent management tactics

within its organization, determine the position-specific competencies amongst the multi-generational workforce, while assuring a pool of talent is developed for a host of critical leadership positions and to identify professional development toward a "ready now" workforce to include rotational assignments.

The review of the applicable literature began with an overview of the topic of talent management strategies being developed and deployed for a large investor-owned utility company. The lived experiences of all populations (HR professionals, senior executives and managers) provided a thorough and in-depth understanding into their knowledge, feelings, sense, opinions, and behaviors of the talent management tactics the company develops and deploys. Ultimately, the researcher discover key findings that answered the three research questions established for this study (a) lived experiences, (b) talent programs meeting the demand and creating the pipeline, and (c) programs delivering on its promises in preparing candidates to assume higher level leadership positions and responsibilities.

The attributes of effective talent management planning were identified and discussed. Developing and preparing leaders to assume higher level leadership responsibility was also discussed. Tools and tactics that could be used to develop high potential candidates, such as knowledge transfer, established programs and mentorship were identified and discussed.

The data collected reflected the knowledge, sense, opinions, behaviors and feelings of 13 HR professionals, senior executives and managers from a large investor-owned utility company. The essential recommendations that came from the analysis of the data were to:

1. Motivate and engage high potential employees to build a healthy talent pipeline.

2. Integrate and collapse talent management strategies at all levels.

3. Build a talent management competency model that develops managers for value added training to aid the company in meeting its challenges in learning how to effectively navigate through a new uncertain utility landscape of the 21st Century.

4. Establish effective communication channels with a simple and repeatable message that is:

    a. Effective

    b. Strategic

    c. Integrated

5. Engage in the war for talent and devise effective tactics to compete in the 21st Century.

The findings and conclusions of this study are presented to inform the field regarding the talent management strategies that can be developed, deployed or benchmarked to keep a vibrant and diverse workforce. The researcher's desire is to encourage additional study on the topic.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Question Matrix

Theme	Population	Protocol	Research Question Linkage	Question
1. Background	All	Baseline	Screening	How long have you been employed by the company?
2. Feelings	All	Baseline	1	What are your feelings toward the talent management strategies being developed and deployed for SCE?
3. Sensory	All	Baseline	1	What value, if any, do you think the talent management strategies have on the company's ability to maintain a competitive and successful position in the utility community?
4. Feelings	All	Baseline	2	Do you feel the current talent management strategies and programs in place are meeting the demand for and creating the pipeline of talent the company needs for its immediate and long-term future?
5. Opinions	All	Baseline	3	Are the current programs in place delivering on its promises in preparing candidates in assuming higher level positions as part of the company's succession planning efforts?
6. Knowledge	A	1	1	What types of talent management programs does your department engage in?
7. Feelings	A	1	1	Do you feel your department is effective at socializing the talent management strategies to the various departments within the organization to execute on its plans?
8. Feelings	A	1	1	Do you feel the talent management strategies align with the company business drivers and can this aid in the effort in confronting the challenging market pressures currently being experienced?
9. Behaviors	A	1	2	How has the HR department effectively identified highly-valued talent and engaged them in participating in a talent management/development program?

(continued)

Theme	Population	Protocol	Research Question Linkage	Question
10. Behaviors	A	1	3	What leadership development competencies have been established by HR?
11. Knowledge	A	1	1	Would you consider your talent management system broad for the type of industry it serves?
12. Knowledge	A	1	3	Is there a monitoring and or evaluation plan established to determine program effectiveness?
13. Feelings	B	1	3	Do you feel that the company is prepared in its leadership development?
14. Opinion	B	1	2	With the mounting uncertainty and challenging market pressures being faced within the utility industry, do you feel there is enough emphasis being placed on developing the talent that resides within SCE?
15. Opinion	B	1	1	How would you rate the company's efforts in applying succession management strategies?
16. Sensory	C	1	1	Do you have a clear understanding of the talent management strategies being developed by HR and the expectation that SCE senior executives have with you deploying such strategies in your area of responsibility?
17. Opinion	C	1	2	How important is it to recruit and retain high caliber talent?
18. Behaviors	C	1	2	Do you hire for position versus potential?
19. Knowledge	C	1	1	How would you rate your understanding of the company's talent management strategies?
20. Background	D	1	Screening	Are you currently in a talent management and or leadership and development program at SCE?
21. Knowledge	D	1	2	How did you become a participant in a development or talent pipeline program?
22. Opinion	D	1	3	Do you feel you are adequately being developed to take on a higher level responsibility and leadership role within the company?

(continued)

Theme	Population	Protocol	Research Question Linkage	Question
23. Feeling	A,B & C	2	1	Do you feel like you know enough about the talent management strategies to assess its effectiveness
24. Feeling	A,B & C	2	2	Do you feel that the current talent management strategies are creating the pipeline of talent required for the company in both the short and long-term?
25. Feeling	A,B & C	2	1	Do you feel knowledge transfer is an important aspect of talent management strategies?
26. Knowledge	D	2	3	What type of development are you engaged in to prepare you to assume higher level leadership responsibilities?
27. Knowledge	D	2	3	What would you consider the best part of your leadership development and or training?
28. Opinion	D	2	3	How effective do you think your program is?
29. Feeling	D	2	3	Do you feel you are missing any critical development that you can benefit from?
30. Feeling	D	2	3	Do you feel your program is preparing you in the immediate future to be an instrumental leader for the company?
31. Behavior	All	3	1	How much emphasis is placed on succession planning?
32. Feeling	All	3	3	Do you feel job rotation and or job shadowing is valuable way of developing high potentials for future development?
33. Opinion	All	3	1	How well is talent management understood and socialized throughout SCE?
34. Knowledge	All	3	1	How does one become a part of a succession management or talent pipeline program?
35. Opinion	All	3	1	How important is mentorship in one's leadership development at this Company?
36. Feeling	All	3	1	Do you feel knowledge transfer is important?
37. Feeling	All	3	1	Do you feel development programs are valuable?

APPENDIX B

Theme Matrix

Feelings	Sensory	Opinions	Knowledge	Behaviors
High	High	High	High	High
Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Low	Low	Low	Low	Low Enga

Defining Responses	
High Feelings	Responses reflecting: 1. Advantageous; helpful 2. Encouraging 3. Manifesting approval; commendatory 4. Winning approval; pleasing 5. Granting what has been desired or requested 6. Indulgent or partial
Moderate Feelings	Responses reflecting: • Of medium or average quantity or extent. • Of limited or average quality; mediocre.
Low Feelings	Responses **_not_** reflecting: 1. Advantageous; helpful 2. Encouraging 3. Manifesting approval; commendatory 4. Winning approval; pleasing 5. Granting what has been desired or requested 6. Indulgent or partial
High Sensory	Responses reflecting: 1. A high level of perception or feeling produced by a stimulus; sensation 2. A high level and or capacity to appreciate or understand 3. A highly Intellectual interpretation, as of the significance of an event or the conclusions reached
Moderate Sensory	Responses reflecting: • Of medium or average quantity or extent. • Of limited or average quality; mediocre.

(continued)

Feelings	Sensory	Opinions	Knowledge	Behaviors
High Moderate Low	High Moderate Low	High Moderate Low	High Moderate Low	High Moderate Low
Low Sensory	Responses reflecting: 1. A low level of perception or feeling produced by a stimulus; sensation 2. A low level and or capacity to appreciate or understand 3. A low Intellectual interpretation, as of the significance of an event or the conclusions reached			
High Opinions	Responses reflecting: 1. A strong belief or conclusion held with confidence but not substantiated by positive knowledge or proof 2. A judgment based on special knowledge and given by an expert 3. A judgment or estimation of the merit of a person or thing 4. A strong conviction and or prevailing view			
Moderate Opinions	Responses reflecting: • Of medium or average quantity or extent • Of limited or average quality; mediocre			
Low Opinions	Responses reflecting: 1. A weak belief or conclusion held with confidence but not substantiated by positive knowledge or proof 2. A weak conviction and or prevailing view			
High Knowledge	Responses reflecting: 1. High knowledge in state of affairs pertaining to subject matter 2. High familiarity, awareness, or understanding gained through experience or study			
Moderate Knowledge	Responses reflecting: • Of medium or average quantity or extent • Of limited or average quality; mediocre			

Feelings	Sensory	Opinions	Knowledge	Behaviors
High	High	High	High	High
Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Low Knowledge	Responses reflecting: 1. Low knowledge in relationship to state of affairs pertaining to the subject matter 2. Low familiarity, awareness, or understanding gained through experience or study			
High Engagement	Responses reflecting: 1. The act of engaging or the state of being engaged in the process			
Moderate Engagement	Responses reflecting: • Of medium or average quantity or extent • Of limited or average quality; mediocre			
Low Engagement	Responses reflecting: 2. The lack of engagement in a process			

APPENDIX C

Research Question Linkage

Research Question 1	Supporting Questions
1. What are the "lived perceptions" of the HR professionals who create talent management strategies; senior executives and managers who support these strategies; and managers who have been identified in the succession planning pipeline at Southern California Edison?	2, 3, 7, 8, 16, 19, 23, 25, 33, 35, 36, 37
Questions generating themes from research question #1:	
Theme 1 - The value of talent management strategies and programs *Question Linkage* – 2, 3, 37, 8 　　Sub-Theme 1 – Organizational culture & personality 　　Sub-Theme 2 – Talent management alignment **Theme 2** - Talent management communication *Question Linkage* – 7, 16, 19, 23, 33 　　Sub-Theme 1 – Talent management understanding 　　Sub-Theme 2 – Talent management socialization **Theme 3** - Knowledge transfer *Question Linkage* – 25, 36 **Theme 4** - The role of mentorship *Question Linkage* – 35	
Research Question 2	**Supporting Questions**
2. Are the current programs satisfying the need and demand for developing a pipeline of talent?	4, 15, 17, 18, 21, 24, 31, 34
Questions generating themes from research question #2:	
Theme 5 - Creating the pipeline of talent 　　Sub-Theme 1 – Recruitment strategies 　　Sub-Theme 2 – Succession management	
Research Question 3	**Supporting Questions**
3. Are the current programs in place delivering on its promises in preparing candidates in assuming higher level positions?	10, 13, 22, 26, 29, 32
Questions generating themes from research question #3:	
Theme 6 - Leadership development and program effectiveness 　　Sub-Theme 1 – Leadership development 　　Sub-Theme 2 – Program effectiveness	

APPENDIX D

Results Matrix

Population A-D	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Question #1 YOS	23	35	27	10	9	27	5	4	8	20	5	33	27
Question #2 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X					X			
Moderate						X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Low													
Question #3 Sensory	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
Moderate						X						X	
Low													
Question #4 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X												
Moderate			X	X	X	X			X	X		X	
Low		X					X	X			X		X
Question #5 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X			X								
Moderate			X	X		X	X	X		X		X	X
Low									X		X		
Question #6 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X			X	X	X	X						
Moderate													
Low													
Question #7 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High							X						
Moderate	X			X	X	X							
Low													
Question #8 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X				X								
Moderate				X		X							
Low							X						
Question #9 Behaviors	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X			X	X		X						
Moderate						X							
Low													

Population A-D	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Question #10 Behaviors	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X				X		X						
Moderate				X		X							
Low													
Question #11 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X			X	X	X	X						
Moderate													
Low													
Question #12 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X				X	X	X						
Moderate													
Low				X									
Question #13 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													
Moderate			X										
Low		X											
Question #14 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													
Moderate			X										
Low		X											
Question #15 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													
Moderate			X										
Low		X											
Question #16 Sensory	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													
Moderate										X		X	
Low											X		
Question #17 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High										X	X	X	
Moderate													
Low													
Question #18 Behaviors	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High										X	X	X	
Moderate													
Low													

(continued)

Population A-D	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Question #19 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High												X	
Moderate										X			
Low											X		
Question #20 Background	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
Screened In								X	X				X
Screened Out													
Question #21 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High								X	X				X
Moderate													
Low													
Question #22 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													X
Moderate								X					
Low									X				
Question #23 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X				X							X	
Moderate		X		X						X	X		
Low			X			X	X						
Question #24 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X												
Moderate		X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	
Low							X						
Question #25 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		
Moderate												X	
Low													
Question #26 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High								X					X
Moderate									X				
Low													
Question #27 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High								X					X
Moderate									X				
Low													

(continued)

Population A-D	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Question #28 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													
Moderate								X					X
Low									X				
Question #29 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													
Moderate								X					X
Low									X				
Question #30 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High													X
Moderate								X					
Low									X				
Question #31 Behaviors	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High		X	X	X								X	X
Moderate	X				X	X	X		X	X			
Low								X			X		
Question #32 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Moderate										X			X
Low													
Question #33 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High		X											
Moderate	X			X		X				X		X	X
Low			X		X		X	X	X		X		
Question #34 Knowledge	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X
Moderate							X	X	X				
Low													
Question #35 Opinions	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Moderate											X		
Low													
Question #36 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Moderate					X							X	
Low													

Population A-D	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Question #37 Feelings	A1	B1	B2	A2	A3	A4	A5	D1	D2	C1	C2	C3	D3
High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Moderate											X		
Low													

APPENDIX E

Participant's Informed Consent Form

My name is Jeffrey Thrift, a student in Organizational Leadership at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology. I am currently in the process of recruiting individuals for my study entitled "An Examination of Talent Management Strategies For A Large Investor-Owned Utility Company: Facing the Market Pressures of the 21st Century." This research study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Doctor of Education degree in Organizational Leadership in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University, California.

The Professor supervising my work is Dr. Mark Allen. The purpose of this research *is to examine and gain a thorough insight into the perceptions, histories, and lived experiences from participants that are engaged in the talent management strategies being developed and deployed for a large investor-owned utility company, Southern California Edison, SCE. This study will help to determine best practices, discover gaps in the talent management processes, and to bring about exposure to talent management and the investment in human capital to be shared throughout the utility community.*

I am inviting individuals like you who are knowledgeable of talent management processes and or programs to participate in my study. Please understand that your participation in my study is strictly voluntary. The following is a description of what your participation in this study entails, the terms for participating in the study, and a discussion of your rights as a study participant. Please read this information carefully before deciding whether or not you wish to participate.

I do not foresee any potential risks that you should consider before deciding to participate in this study; however, in the event you do experience any risks, please inform me immediately, please note that individual interviews will be audio taped so that the researcher can study them in detail.

You will not be treated differently from anyone else participating in this study whether you agree to participate in the research study or not. Everything you tell the researcher is confidential and your real name will not appear anywhere in the study. The researcher will be the only person who will be able to identify who is in the study.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can decide whether or not you want to participate at any time. If you should decide to participate and find you are not interested in completing the individual interview, you have the right to discontinue at any point without being questioned about your decision. If you feel uncomfortable at any point during the study you may leave or stop the interview.

There is a low risk of loss of privacy if you participate in this study. In order to minimize the risk, your confidentiality will be protected in a variety of ways; your real name will only be used on this form when you sign it and as a recording when we tape the interview; you will be given a code number when you arrive at the interview your name will be changed when the researcher transcribes the interview; any transcription that anyone could use to identify you will be blacked transcription; the researcher is the only person who will have full access to the audio tapes of the interview and the transcriptions; The audio tapes and the interview transcription will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home; the audio tapes will be destroyed after the study is completed. When you speak during the interview you will only use your code number. You can stop at your own free will at any time.

The benefit to you for participation is to further contribute to the study of *how to develop and deploy effective talent management strategies for an investor-owned utility company during a shifting landscape of the 21st century.*

If you have any questions regarding the information that I have provided above, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address and phone number provided below. If you have further questions please feel free contact the following persons:

Dr. Mark Allen, Ph.D., Professor and Chairperson of the dissertation committee, at XXX

Dr. Yuying Tsong, Chairperson of the Graduate and Professional IRB, Pepperdine University, at XXXXXX.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. If you agree to be a participant in my study, please sign below.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Thrift

I, _____, agree to participate in this research study being conducted by Jeffrey Thrift under the direction of Dr. Mark Allen

_____

Participant's Signature

I have explained and define in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent

_____   _____

 Jeffrey Thrift   Date

APPENDIX F

Participant's Interview Procedure

Location and date: The interviews will take place at the Southern California Edison, SCE locations in California. At the participants' request, the interviews will be held in a reserved conference room and or office setting. These interviews shall occur in late-January, 2012.

Moderator and recorder: Jeffrey Thrift, a doctoral candidate, shall lead the interview dialogue. A trained interview facilitator/field analyst will serve as recorder.

Procedures:

1. Jeffrey Thrift shall interact informally with individual interviewees and introduce the analytical assistant that will be the recorder for the interview.

2. The recorder will be responsible for ensuring all recording devices are tested and in working condition prior to the start of the interview.

Jeffrey Thrift shall share the purpose of the forthcoming activities, and will verify that interviewees have signed the Participant's Informed Consent Form.

3. At this time of turning on the tape recorder, the assistant will state that he is turning the tape recorder on and that any names that are spoken will not be transcribed.

4. Jeffrey Thrift will begin the interview with informal question(s). The field analyst will record field notes to capture interview dialogue.

5. Jeffrey Thrift will continue with the interview questions in a serial fashion. Responses will be documented in the field notes and audio recordings.

6. Jeffrey Thrift will solicit comments from participants regarding talent management engagement. Upon completion of the interview, the investigator will solicit other participants that would be good to interview to add to the value of this study. The investigator will thank them for their participation at which time the recorder/field analyst will turn off the tape recorder.

7. At the completion of the interview(s), and the interviewee(s) have been dismissed, the assistance and Jeffrey Thrift will organize the responses by question number. The responses and the audio tapes will remain in Jeffrey Thrift possession for content analysis using back-office analysts' as coders.