

**SUCCESSION PLANING IN STATE
DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION**

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ABSTRACT

This project examines how state departments of transportation understand and implement the human resources management practice of succession planning. Past research examining succession planning in the public sector has identified numerous potential impediments that government agencies must overcome; however, little evidence exists documenting the degree to which these impediments impact state departments of transportation. As departments of transportation employ large numbers of in-demand engineers, some states have developed comprehensive succession plans to integrate recruitment, performance management, training, and retention practices. This project highlights two particular impediments – specific human resources management educational experiences of agency employees and the organizational culture of agencies on long-term workforce planning efforts – that agencies might consider rectifying.

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INTRODUCTION

Government agencies at all levels, federal, state, and local, face an impending demographic wave of turnover associated with the retirement of “Boomer” generation employees (born between 1946 and 1964). Some estimates suggest that as much as 40 percent of the United States workforce will retire as this generation reaches retirement age (The Council of State Governments, 2002). Two additional factors exacerbate this wave of turnover for state Departments of Transportation (DOTs). First, state DOTs employ large numbers of highly skilled and in-demand engineers. Because state employees typically earn less direct compensation (e.g., salary) than their private sector counterparts, state DOTs have historically struggled to attract and retain employees. Second, the 2008 Great Recession and its continued after effects has further stressed attraction and retention efforts. Whereas state DOTs have typically relied upon indirect forms of compensation (e.g., pension, flexible scheduling, work-family balance initiatives, etc.) to attract and retain employees, the Great Recession has caused state and local governments, due to increasing budget deficits and reduced Federal assistance, to shed more employees in response to any previous recession in the United States over the past 30 years (Bivens, 2012). State-level budget cuts, which have included some states’ plans to convert defined benefit pension plans to defined contribution retirement plans (e.g., 401k, 403b; Furchtgott-Roth, 2012), and layoffs have weakened states’ abilities to attract employees through pension and job security retention programs. These budgetary developments and the performance management guidelines states have increasingly adopted to conform to U.S. DOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) recommendations have led many state DOTs to explore the human resource management (HRM) process of succession planning as a retention and performance management tool.

Succession planning describes any effort designed to ensure the continued effective performance of an organization, division, department or work group by making provision for the development, replacement and strategic application of key people over time (Heneman, Judge, &Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). Fundamentally, succession planning is a strategic HRM process that integrates multiple HRM functions, such as recruiting, staffing, performance management, and training. This process should also directly link to an organization’s mission to help further the organization toward that mission. Succession planning generally involves seven steps (Cotton, 2007):

- 1) Define the organization’s strategic direction
- 2) Conduct internal and external environmental scanning
- 3) Define the current workforce
- 4) Assess future workforce supply and demands
- 5) Identify possible gaps in workforce knowledge, skills, and abilities
- 6) Develop and implement plans to address these gaps
- 7) Evaluate effectiveness of plans to improve future plans

Succession planning as a strategic HRM workforce development process slightly differs from what is often called “replacement planning”. Succession planning focuses on developing knowledge, skills, abilities, and other competencies (KSAOs) of employees and the development human capital of an organization. A succession plan sets broad career paths based on jobs, some of which might appear unrelated. Succession planning focuses on identifying competency gaps within an organization and developing commensurate workforce development plans to address those gaps (Heneman et al., 2012). A succession plan will identify jobs within any given career

path, the KSAOs required by the jobs in the paths, and the specific HRM programs to develop those KSAOs (e.g., performance management plans, training opportunities, job rotation programs, etc.). At a broad planning level, succession plans are “open” in that the plans might not identify specific employees in the path, only what jobs and KSAOs appear in the path.

However, a succession plan often includes what are known as replacement plans (Heneman et al., 2012). Replacement plans simply add incumbent employee information into the larger succession plan. Under the categories of the succession plan (e.g., job, KSAOs, development opportunities, etc.), incumbent employee information will appear. This information allows HRM planners to see exactly which employees appear in the paths, what current KSAOs they possess, what KSAOs they require for promotion to the next job in the path, what development opportunities they require, and whether or not the employees are ready for potential promotion. Thus, the replacement plan adds individualized information to the larger succession plan. In some instances, organization will only conduct the replacement plan portion of the larger strategic succession plan, which could lead some HRM professionals to view strict replacement plans as “closed” because not every incumbent will appear on the plan. By not including every incumbent employee into replacement plans, organizations likely limit the support of unions that represent employees with those organizations. While succession planning as defined above describes organization-level initiatives, employees within agencies likely perceive succession planning as part of a career development process, which includes providing training and development opportunities that are required for employees to progress through the ranks of the organization (Heneman et al., 2012).

Succession planning from an organizational perspective requires two types of data. First, the organization needs to collect data about jobs within the organization. This requires job analysis,

which documents the KSAOs, tasks, functions, and duties required of the job and also documents the human capabilities required by an incumbent to perform the specified job. Second, the organization needs to inventory the human capital of its employees by capturing all employee KSAOs and demographic information (e.g., education level, years experience, etc.). Once the organization collects these data, HRM or workforce development employees can identify competency gaps between what jobs require and the current human capital of the workforce. HRM or workforce development employees then translate these gaps into the concrete KSAOs employees need for each job, which allows them to develop long term career tracks from entry- to executive-level jobs. What becomes apparent is that some jobs appear on multiple paths that can lead to the highest levels of an organization while other jobs only appear in specific paths that might cap at lower levels of the organization. For example, a Director of Maintenance within a State DOT might appear on career paths for engineering and design, bridge, and budget and finance jobs. On the other hand, a personnel assistant might only appear in a HRM career path that does not link to other paths that reach higher levels with an agency.

Impediments to Succession Planning in Government Agencies

A special issue of the journal *Public Personnel Management* focused on the topic of succession planning in government organizations; however, the Principal Investigator also conducted a literature review of relevant political science, public administration, government, and economics-based journals specifically addressing succession planning and performance management within government settings. After conducting this literature review, the Principal Investigator identified the following impediments that state DOTs might encounter when designing and implementing succession plans:

1) Lack of HRM expertise and knowledge about succession planning

Tompkins (2002) summarized the issues related to the lack of formal HRM expertise of government employees and their specific lack of knowledge about the process of succession planning. The lack of formal HRM training within the ranks of HRM jobs is not abnormal to the field of HRM in general. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) has developed internationally recognized professional certifications to professionalize the field.

2) Lack of integration with HRM functions

Related to the lack of HRM expertise, many organizations do not take a strategic view of the HRM function (Huselid, 1995). In contrast to the traditional view of the field, which views HRM jobs as administrative or clerical in nature and not adding value to the organization, the strategic view emphasizes the importance of an organization's people practices in helping any organization meet its strategic goals. This is done through integrating the HRM functions with each other (i.e., recruiting directly links to strategic selection processes, which link to training and performance management, etc.). These integrated functions then directly tie to the organization's mission. Organizations adopting this strategic view of HRM have been found to operate more efficiently and effectively, have lower voluntary turnover rates among its workforce, and have better organizational performance (i.e., profit, revenue, etc.) than organizations adopting the traditional view of HRM (Combs, Liu, Hall, & Ketchen, 2006). Adopting the strategic view over the traditional view reflects the value an organization places on developing reciprocal commitment with its workforce (Lepak & Snell, 2002). Succession planning by nature is a strategic HRM process, with direct links to recruitment, staffing, selection, training, compensation, and performance management. Moreover, organizations implement succession planning to ensure that the organization can meet current

strategic goals and help ensure that the organization meets its vision of the future. Without integrating the HRM functions with succession planning efforts, it is unlikely these efforts will succeed.

3) A negative view of the HRM function within an organization

Researchers have long observed that the HRM function within organizations is under-valued (Rynes, Brown, & Colbert, 2002). As mentioned above, the traditional view of HRM states that HRM does not add value to an organization, and this view gets translated into practice by staffing HRM functions with non-business or non-HRM educated employees. For those organizations adopting the traditional view of HRM, the advice of HRM professionals is not sought or ignored. If the HRM employees responsible for the implementation of succession planning are not included in the design of the process, the organization will likely have difficulty implementing succession plans or find that these plans do not operate as effectively as they might. As with the impediment described above, whether or not an organization holds a traditional or strategic view of HRM follows from an organization's culture. Does it value people practices?

4) Size of the workforce (larger workforces increase the difficulty of succession planning)

Larger workforces require more detailed and comprehensive succession plans (Henneman et al., 2012). Because succession planning requires up to date job descriptions, organizations must ensure that they have engaged in the job analysis process. Job analysis becomes more time prohibitive as more jobs are added to the analysis. Moreover, the development of comprehensive skill inventories for current employees becomes more difficult as the organization employs more employees.

5) *Lack of resources (manpower, time, funds for training opportunities, poor*

InformationTechnology to create knowledge libraries and human capital databases)

The 2008-2009 Recession combined in some cases with a lack of confidence in an organization's HRM function in general has left many HRM departments within organizations operating with minimal budgets. As stated above, succession planning requires considerable resources to conduct.

6) *Poor management-union relationships*

The relationship between management and unions can limit the development, implementation, and effectiveness of succession planning. Some collective bargaining agreements exclude rigorous performance management, prohibit compensation practices (i.e., merit pay) based on performance management, base training and promotion opportunities strictly on seniority, or place specific requirements on recruiting and selection practices. Management must work closely with union leadership to ensure that succession planning is successful.

7) *Political influence from executives, legislatures, and appointed officials (includes transitions of government after elections)*

Politicians and their political appointees can affect implementation of programs (Bourdeaux&Chikoto, 2008). A dynamic tension can exist between elected or appointed officials and the career government employees. As politicians are elected to implement a specific vision, that vision must integrate into an established bureaucratic structure that must maintain stability across elected officials and their appointees (Aberbach&Rockman, 2006). Because newly elected officials and their appointees feel pressure to quickly implement the vision for which the voters elected them, politicians often experience frustration that the

bureaucratic structure cannot change as quickly as they would like (Pynes, 2004). Newly elected officials and their appointees, therefore, often see this bureaucratic structure as resistant or hostile to change (Kim, 2009). Further, many state governments experience tension between the executive and legislative branches of government (Bourdeaux&Chikoto, 2008). Whereas stronger legislative branches often make decision-making more deliberative, stronger executives often allow agencies to make faster decisions (Bourdeaux&Chikoto, 2008). Combining these factors, the transition between elected governments and their elected officials can stymie succession planning efforts, leaving career government employees uncertain as to how to best proceed or worried that their expertise will be ignored.

METHOD

Sample

The Principal Investigator sent introductory emails to 47 human resource management contacts within state departments of transportation and called 3 human resource management contacts via telephone. Of the 50 possible contacts, 14 participants from 13 states agreed to speak with the principal investigator (two participants from one state provided information). This represents a 26 percent response rate. The 13 participating state DOTs represent every region of the United States (e.g., northeast, mid-Atlantic, southeast, Midwest, southern plains, and Pacific). Both large and small population states are represented (sample median population size = 4,206,074), as are large and small geographic sized states (sample median land area = 42,774 square miles). In terms of political party affiliation of governors, seven states had Republican governors, five had Democrat governors, and one state had an Independent governor. In terms of party control of state legislatures, seven states had Republican control of bi-cameral legislatures and five states had Democrat control of bi-cameral legislatures. In total, five of the states had divided

governments in terms of political party affiliation (e.g., executive branch political affiliation differed from legislature political affiliation). Using the National Conference of State Legislatures (2012) definitions, three states had part-time legislatures (less than 50% FTE), nine had legislatures that worked more than halftime but less than fulltime (between 50-80% FTE), and one state had a fulltime legislature (100% FTE).

Of the 14 participants, ten were female and four were male. Seven had a bachelors degree, four had a masters degree, and three had a terminal degree (i.e., JD, PhD). Six had formal educational experiences in HRM, with three additional participants holding formal educational experiences in business affiliated fields (e.g., MBA, accounting, etc.). The 14 participants had an average tenure within their state government of 18.75 years. One participant held an executive or director level position within a state DOT, ten held department head positions, and three held middle-level manager positions.

Procedure

Upon establishing contact with the 14 participants, the Principal Investigator emailed the participants a list of six questions that were used to guide an unstructured interview (see Appendix A for questions). The Principal Investigator derived the six questions from the impediments to succession planning detailed above in the extant research. While these six questions formed the base of the interview, the Principal Investigator asked follow-up and probing questions based on participants' responses. The Principal Investigator gave the participants the option of responding to the questions via telephone or email. Ten chose the former, four chose the latter. The Principal Investigator did not audio record the interviews;

instead, the Principal Investigator typed notes on a computer laptop. The Principal Investigator guaranteed the participants confidentiality so that they might feel freer to provide their honest assessments; thus, no names of participants or their state agencies appear in this report.

RESULTS

Data analysis strategy

The principal investigator used the grounded approach (Locke, 2001) to qualitatively analyze participant responses. The grounded approach requires the data analyst to sort participant responses by question and look for common themes within each question.

Findings

Of the 14 states, seven currently engage in succession planning. These states have designed and implemented detailed succession plans, most of which have been in operation for at least five years. The main impetus for engaging in succession planning in these states was the forecasted turnover of primarily engineering and maintenance employees within the next 10 years due to retirement (estimates of eligible retirees ranged between 25-35% of workforce). The succession planning efforts within these seven states, while originally beginning with critical or core DOT positions, now encompass jobs DOT-wide, inclusive of administrative positions. Moreover, six of the seven participants from these states mentioned the word “culture” when describing their agencies’ succession planning efforts. Identifying employee KSAOs, job requirements through job analysis, and integrating performance management and training programs with recruiting, staffing, and succession planning processes has become a durable value to which these state DOT agencies ascribe. The integration of HRM practices to develop unique human capital within these state DOTs and the shared cultural value of workforce

development is a hallmark of a successful strategic HRM system that should lead to increased organizational performance and decreased voluntary employee turnover.

The Principal Investigator notes a consistent pattern across these seven state DOTs: each agency has a dedicated employee to oversee succession planning efforts, and six of the seven employees had either formal HRM or business-related educational experiences. The political party affiliations of governors or legislatures of these seven states varied, and all but one of these states had nearly full-time legislatures. Only one participant of this group of states identified management-union relations issues as impeding succession planning efforts, although this participant estimated that only about 15 percent of the unionized workforce resisted these efforts. All of these factors suggest that these seven states operate their HRM systems from a strategic viewpoint where the missions, vision, and values of these state DOTs are aligned. Moreover, the cultural value of workforce development has taken hold in these state DOTs.

Two states appear in the process of implementing formal succession plans. Similar to the seven states conducting succession planning, these two “in progress” state DOTs have identified the need to succession plan due to impending retirements of a significant portion of their workforces. One participant from this group of state DOTs suggested that upwards of 50% of this state DOT’s maintenance unit would be eligible to retire within the next five years. The other “in progress” state DOT participant noted that the average age of employees within this state’s DOT maintenance unit was 47 years old. These “in progress” state DOTs also appear to grasp the need to integrate all of HRM functions to successfully implement their succession plans; however, integration of HRM functions has been difficult. One participant noted that the decentralization of this particular state DOT made coordination and integration difficult. This suggests that succession planning efforts might be reactive to the impending retirement wave

instead of a strategic component to helping these state DOTs meet their strategic mission and vision.

Two state DOTs had informal succession planning components in place. A participant from one of these “informal” state DOTs acknowledged the need for developing a workforce and noted this particular state DOT’s intensive management and leadership training opportunities for both management and frontline employees. This same particular state DOT also heavily relies on tuition reimbursement programs for state DOT employees to gain specific management skills by taking formal education courses at state universities. The second “informal” state DOT also heavily relies on its state university system to recruit in demand engineering employees. This second “informal” state has also invested in elementary and high school “science, technology, engineering, and mathematics” (STEM) early intervention programs. Participants from these two “informal” state DOTs also reported a lack of integration among other HRM functions. As with the “in progress” state DOTs, decentralization of state DOT functions and operations appear to hinder these “informal” state DOTs from developing more strategic views of HRM.

Finally, the two remaining state DOTs did not engage in succession planning and had no plans to do so over the next five years. A participant from one of these state DOTs noted that while this particular state, like many other state DOTs, competed with for-profit transportation engineering companies for in demand engineering employees, the state government in general had not grappled with this issue of retaining high skilled employees across all government agencies. Due to the location of this particular state, the participant stated that the local state university did not graduate as many engineers from its engineering program to satisfy not just local demand for engineers but also that many engineers were often hired away by international transportation companies. The second state DOT without any succession planning attributed the

lack of succession planning to a lack of resources. Although this participant acknowledged a need for succession planning, the state government of this particular state does not provide enough resources, mostly manpower, to design or implement succession planning. Both participants from these state DOTs noted that there is very little if any integration of their HRM practices. While both of the participants from these state DOTs had formal education in HRM or in a business-related field, their DOTs appeared not to emphasize the role of HRM in helping the DOTs meet their mission or vision. This suggests that these DOTs do not share a cultural value of attracting, developing, and retaining unique human capital within their organizations. To this point, a participant from one of these state DOTs highlighted that this particular state often turned to retired former employees to complete projects as consultants.

The Principal Investigator could infer no other patterns related the questions asked of the 14 participants. Every participant stated that recent budget and workforce reductions would inhibit implementation of not just succession planning but of all workforce development programs. While two participants mentioned the lack of “merit pay” as an impediment to succession planning, viewing succession planning as a part of a larger strategic plan appears to be a stronger factor in predicting whether or not a state designs and implements an effective succession plan. Only one participant from a state DOT noted management-union relationships as a limiting factor to implementing succession planning. The influence of politicians and political appointees does not appear to contribute to whether or not a state DOT will design or implement succession planning or any other type of workforce development initiatives. While every participant mentioned the transition between elected officials as causing some delays in operations, only one participant identified the political process as impeding succession planning or workforce development. However, this was not due to political ideology as much as it was

due to how frequently the executive branch replaced appointees. Because of this state's unique government process of replacing executives and appointed officials more frequently than other states, the frequent transitions caused uncertainty among workforce development planners within this particular state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evidence collected for this report, the Principal investigator offers the following recommendations.

1) Increase the formal HRM training of employees working in HRM specific jobs

The lack of formal HRM training, even among those participants with business-related formal education, poses problems for state DOTs. State DOT employees working in HRM need to understand not just the operational details of specific HRM functions but how these functions integrate to form strategic HRM systems to help state DOTs meet their missions. For instance, one common issue that the Principal Investigator noticed while interviewing the participants was that many participants did not view replacement planning and succession planning as interdependent processes. While this might appear a small issue, understanding these processes impact the ultimate effectiveness of these types of workforce development processes. Some of the confusion surrounding this issue had to do with the perception that unions might have problems with replacement plans (multiple participants used the phrase "closed system"). By definition, replacement plans do not preclude specific employees from an organization's long-term planning efforts unless the organization decides to do so; rather replacement plans help map incumbent KSAOs onto the KSAOs and development opportunities specified in the succession plan.

State DOT HRM employees must clearly articulate how and why these workforce plans will be designed and implemented, and these plans must receive input from all of the organization's stakeholders to increase the likelihood of success.

2) *Get the data*

Of the 13 state DOTs included in this survey, only two state DOTs have integrated data information systems that allow these state DOTs to accomplish several goals related to a strategic HRM view. First, these state DOTs possess employee data (e.g., skill inventory data, job performance data, training data, etc.) and organizational performance data (e.g., financial efficiency data, transportation performance metrics, etc.). Those data can be accessed by decision-makers across departments to serve multiple goals. Second, these state DOTs use the integrated data sharing systems to create knowledge libraries, which are used to crystalize institutional memory within the agencies. Employees within these state DOTs have access to best practice information so that lessons are learned more efficiently. Third, these state DOTs have developed data-driven cultures where all employees value the collection of evidence to make better informed decisions. It should be emphasized that more valid and reliable data lead to more informed decisions; however, the data do not make decisions: employees do. Finally, these state DOTs more easily identify workforce needs and more easily develop training solutions to ensure that their state DOTs have the human capital needed to meet agency missions.

3) *Staff the right strategic person*

Of the seven state DOTs with existing succession planning programs, each state staffed a strategic HRM position that coordinated the integrated implementation of HRM practices. These employees were not director or executive level HRM employees.

Rather, these employees were senior-level managers who ensured that each HRM function integrated with other functions and linked to the mission of the organization. Often, these employees were found in the planning departments or units with their state DOT agencies. In one case, a HRM employee within a state DOT surveyed in this report single handedly developed integrated strategic HRM systems through a years long planning process. This HRM employee utilized rigorous data collect methods to provide the evidence needed to sell executive-level employees and legislators on the need not just to success plan but to integrate all HRM functions to directly support this DOT's mission. This recommendation is not to hire a new FTE as much as it is to reorganize the HRM units within each state DOT to have an employee dedicated to strategic HRM integration.

4) *Update job descriptions through proper job analysis methods*

Three of the state DOTs currently not conducting succession planning mentioned the lack of up-to-date job descriptions. The fundamental strategic HRM function within any organization is job analysis, which acts as an integrating mechanism across all HRM functions. Conversely, the state DOTs with succession planning did not have this initial hurdle to overcome, as ensuring accurate job descriptions has become on-going process. A state DOT cannot develop succession plans, and more broadly cannot accurately manage performance or develop training programs, without making sure that KSAOs required by the job are identified by job analysis.

5) *Form transition committees*

State DOTs cannot control political elections and the appointment of new agency executives; however, state DOTs can plan for the transitions associated political turnover. While politicians and their elected officials often possess different visions for their state

agencies than their predecessors, they need accurate information about the current state of affairs for each agency. Some participants interviewed for this study did not report to political appointees; instead reporting to either legislative committees or boards of directors that have more stability than political appointees. What each state DOT can more systematically accomplish is to form a transition committee that meets at least yearly regardless of whether or not a political election has occurred or a new appointee placed at the head of the agency. This transition committee can make sure that yearly “state of the agency” reports are drafted. These documents provide newly appointed or elected officials with easily understood and accessed information that shows agency goals and trends over time.

In total, these recommendations, if implemented, tie together to form a culture of continuous improvement related to workforce development. As the goal of succession planning is to ensure continuity of workforce capabilities, each state DOT must develop a culture consistent with that aim.

CONCLUSION

State DOTs face multiple threats to adequately staffing their agencies with capable workforces; shrinking budgets, uncertain futures, federal transportation mandates tied to funding, impending demographic turnover related to retirement. Succession planning represents a viable workforce development practice that helps to integrate any state DOT’s other HRM functions to help those agencies meet their missions and visions. Increasing the probability of success in these integrative workforce development practices requires developing a organizational culture that

values these practices. The present study highlights impediments that state DOTs might experience relative to succession planning and workforce development in general and also recommends certain actions to help alleviate some of these impediments.

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APPENDIX A

Thank you for agreeing to talk with me about your agency's workforce planning abilities. In my final report, I will not identify you or your agency in any manner, so please feel free to provide as honest of an assessment as you can. Should you want a copy of my final technical report, please let me know. I thank you for your time and your insights.

Succession planning can be defined as any effort designed to ensure the continued effective performance of an organization, division, department or work group by making provision for the development, replacement and strategic application of key people over time.

Questions

- 1) Are you familiar with succession (career) planning? What is your understanding of it? Does your agency currently have or plan to implement succession (career) planning? If so, how has the agency gone about implementing or developing those plans?
- 2) If your agency does not succession plan, do you feel there is there a need to implement succession (career) planning in your agency?
- 3) How would you describe the integration of your agency's human resource/personnel practices? Would succession (career) planning help your agency's performance management practices? Would it help with recruiting and retention practices? Please explain.
- 4) What impediments do you think limit your agency's ability to succession (career) plan? Do these same impediments occur when trying to implement other workforce development plans (e.g., performance management, merit pay, etc.)?
- 5) How do political elections impact your agency's ability to implement personnel/HRM practices? In general, do feel political appointees help, hinder, or have no effect on the implementation of workforce development issues?
- 6) Demographic – What is your highest level of education? How long have you worked in state government? In a department of transportation? How many years of HRM experience do you have? Do you have formal or continuing educational experiences specific to HRM? If yes, please explain.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Anthony R. Wheeler, PhD, SPHR is the Alan Spachman Professor of Management at the University of Rhode Island. He holds joint academic appointments in the College of Business Administration and Schmidt Labor Research Center. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Maryland and his masters and doctoral degrees from the University of Oklahoma. He has held the Senior Professional in HR certification since 2005. His research has appeared in peer-reviewed academic journals such as *Journal of Applied Psychology*(forthcoming), *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Business Logistics*, and *The Leadership Quarterly*. He is an active member of the Academy of Management and the Southern Management Association. He has 15 years of HRM consulting experience for Fortune 500, transportation engineering, federal and state government, and for- and not-for-profit family service organizations.