

“We need to identify and prepare more minorities to lead our industry. Succession planning is the key.”

Shirley DeLiberio, Former Board Chair, COMTO

Succession Planning: COMTO Proposes a Solution

THE PROBLEM IS CRITICAL

ISSUE

Of the \$10 billion in public transportation fares collected annually, more than half are paid by minorities. Yet there is a significant shortage of minority group representation at the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and other C-Suite Slot level Slots in transportation systems across America. Trends in transportation system **succession planning** do not lead to a suitable destination.

BACKGROUND

CEOs and their governing boards set the corporate agenda and lead organizations to achieve diversity and inclusion goals. Of the top 20 public transportation agencies, only four are led by minority CEOs. The proportion decreases as more agencies are considered. Public transportation governing boards are responsible for appointing the chief executive and often use an independent executive search firm to locate the ideal candidate. Recruitment challenges have been the traditional reason cited by executive search firms for not providing a selection of minority candidates, but minorities in general are seldom found in the career paths that lead to top leadership positions. Moreover, most transit systems lack succession plans and mentorship and leadership development programs that prepare and feed minorities into the career paths that lead toward CEO leadership.

Succession planning is having the right leadership in the right place at the right time.

IMPACT OF NON-ACTION

The lack of succession plans that prepare and place minorities into the career paths that lead toward CEO leadership places the future of transportation agencies at risk.

- **Loss of Public Support**—A diverse workforce at all levels of the organization that reflects the demographics of the public served increases the public’s confidence in the transportation agency. *Succession planning for diversity reduces the risk of losing touch with the public served in the long term.*
- **Frenzied Hiring**—Executed plans to increase diversity in the workplace create greater productivity, efficiency, and a positive impact on the business environment. *Succession planning for diversity reduces the risk of frenzied hiring that does not produce the best fit for the agency.*
- **Wasted Resources**—Transportation agencies that invest in developing the workforce receive a larger return on that investment when the workforce becomes a stronger group of leaders both internally and within the community. *A succession plan for diversity reduces the risk of wasting resources already invested in the existing workforce.*

THE FACTS

Succession planning is needed now more than ever.

Baby Boomers are retiring, and a sharp decline in the ranks of available personnel is beginning to appear. In addition, the CEOs of the future are expected to be more sophisticated in order to develop and lead new infrastructure and technological initiatives. The next generation cannot do it alone. Eighty percent of CEOs in transportation agencies who responded to an APTA survey had a mentor who helped them navigate the path to CEO. Twenty percent indicated gender, race, or age as their biggest challenge in becoming a CEO.

THE PATH FORWARD

COMTO is Uniquely Positioned to Lead the Effort

COMTO ADVANTAGE

With members in 39 chapters of various intermodal, transit/traffic, and transportation backgrounds, COMTO is a leading force for identifying leaders for various positions to fill key roles and viable positions in the transportation industry.

What COMTO Will DO

Near Term (2011-2012)

- Create structured mentoring program for the C-suite level
 - Identify gaps and opportunities *early*
 - Establish a database for referrals
 - Mentor and monitor Rising Stars using Board members and senior leaders

- Enhance member education and training throughout the industry
 - Offer more scholarships and internships
 - Increase chapter growth
 - Increase training programs at all levels—core competencies and executive-level skills
 - Increase partnerships with universities and foundations

- Raise COMTO National profile
 - Place more members on select boards and committees
 - Increase number of key appointments to White House and other senior-level positions
 - Increase advocacy at all levels—National, State, and local (work the key issues)
 - Increase strategic partnerships with key (supportive) organizations
 - Continue “View From The Hill” and “CBC Summit”

COMTO
Strategic Plan

Long Range (2012 and beyond)

- Establish the COMTO Leadership Foundation (CLF)
 - Issue focused
 - Executive coaching and career management
 - Board training
 - In partnership with academic institution
 - With support from private and public sectors
 - *Former chair to administer*

- Conduct annual summit(s) on workforce, leadership, or other key issues

COMTO LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

- Training
- Mentoring
- Workforce Development