

Meeting the Challenges of Moving through the Leadership Pipeline

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The “leadership pipeline” model
assumes that what it takes for
managers to succeed is different for
jobs at the bottom, middle, and top.

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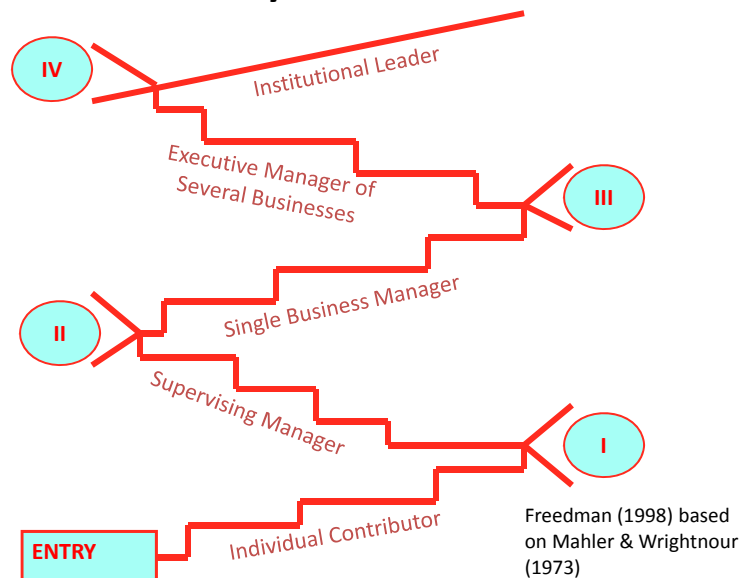
Ambitious, upwardly mobile persons who are perceived to be competent and committed (high potentials or “HiPos”) are confronted by the challenge of negotiating at least four 135-degree shifts in their career progression.

These critical career crossroads consist of unprecedented, discontinuous changes in role responsibilities and accountabilities.

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The Five Pathways and Four Crossroads



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Each level is distinctive and has unique, inherent demand characteristics.

To respond effectively and appropriately to these demands, the HiPo manager-in-transition must be proficient in applying relevant requisite competencies (KSAs):

- Core technologies of the business
- Theory and concepts (mental models)
- Methods and procedures
- Self-reflective awareness & use of self
- Behavioral skills, practices, & aptitude

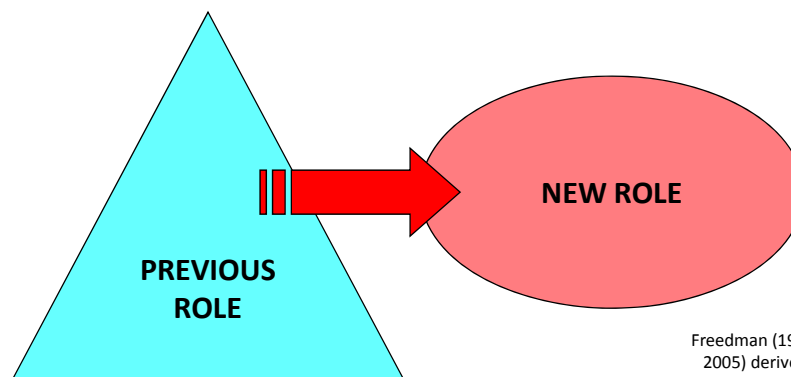
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To negotiate any Crossroad effectively, the ambitious, upwardly-mobile manager-in-transition must:

Shift from
Current State:

Shift to
Desired State:



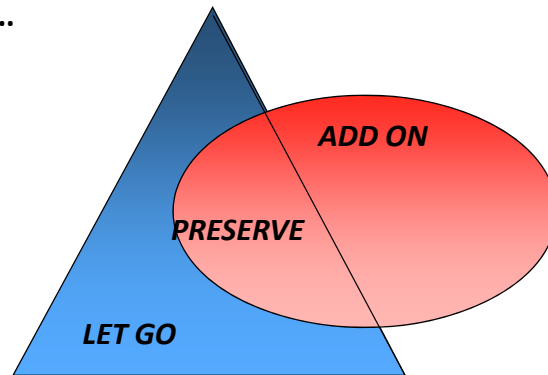
Performance and Role Transformations

Freedman (1998, 2005) derived from Harrison (1972)

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At each Crossroad, managers-in-transition must reinvent themselves. They have to assess their current perspectives, priorities, beliefs, attitudes, practices, and routines. Then, they must decide which elements they should ...



Freedman (1998, 2005) derived from Harrison (1972)

The Transformation Trilogy

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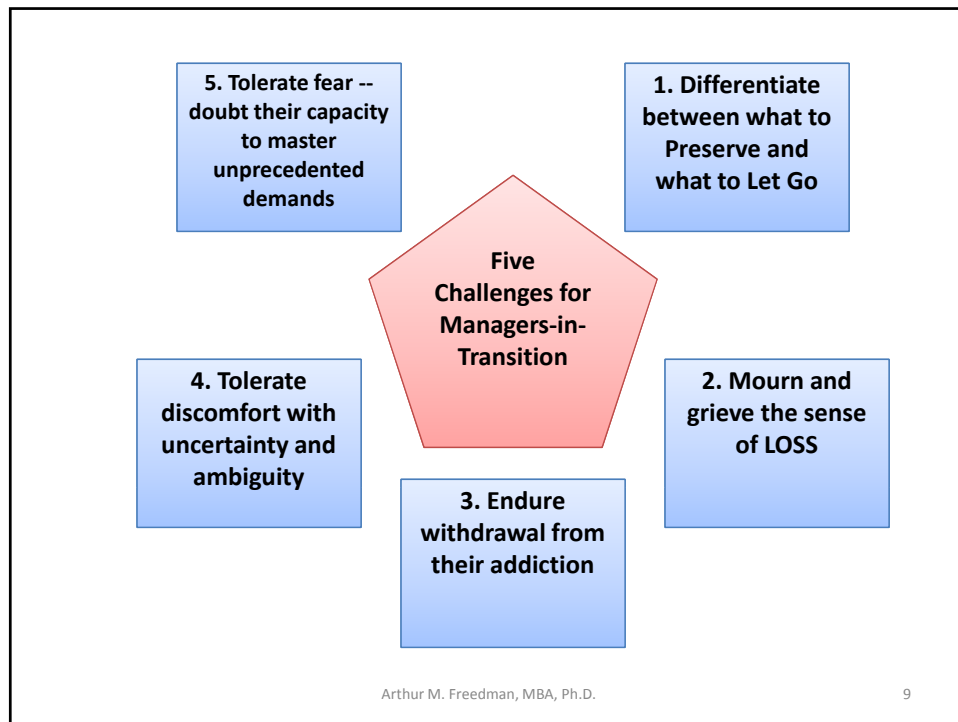
Example: The Triple Challenge for New CEOs

Let Go	Add On	Preserve
Self-centered image building	Serve as the most observable company figurehead interacting with the various internal and external corporate stakeholders	Evolve your self-concept and sense of identity (merge with corporate mission and purpose)
Making quick, tactical trade-off decisions	Authorize and monitor visioning and futuring research; decide on mid-term milestones and strategic policies	Maintain a global perspective
Collaborating with peers (you won't have any peers within your own organization now)	Empower and support your subordinate executive managers	Identify and challenge restrictive, limiting organizational beliefs or convictions to ensure their relevance or discard and replace them
Competing with peers (again, you won't have any peers -- but, whatever you do, you will have detractors)	Ensure consistency in your corporate leadership by managing: Attention; Meaning; Trust; and Self	Build and develop your subordinate executive managers into a high performance team

Freedman (2005)

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Most managers-in-transition approach their new role from the perspective of their previous role rather than specifying and responding to the demand characteristics of the new role.

The Significance of Performing Public Roles

When people achieve tangible, high-quality work results, they earn a sense of pride, self-esteem, and confidence. They feel comfortable with their work roles and with their performance in those roles. They exercise their competence and work with certainty and proficiency (*the three Cs*).

Pride and self-esteem is enhanced and reinforced by recognition from their stakeholders.

Opportunities for performing public roles constitute a major component of a person's sense of identity.

(Freedman, 1995b)

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Behavioral Addiction

People often addict themselves to whatever behaviors -- as with chemical substances -- result in good feelings.

Through education, training, and developmental experiences, managers-in-transition can learn new, more effective and appropriate behavior patterns.

Under stress -- e.g., unfamiliar, complex, ambiguous, or uncertain circumstances or crisis conditions -- people tend to regress to those behavioral patterns in which they are *competent, confident, and comfortable*.

Organizations must provide support (e.g., coaching and mentoring) and incentives to minimize regression.

(Freedman, 1995b)

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Historic KSAs Become the Default Position for New Managers

Coaches might ask:

- In your new position, for what tasks, activities, and functions (TAFs) are you responsible?
- How are these TAFs aligned with your unit's strategic goals?
- How are these TAFs different compared with your TAFs in your previous position?
- Which of these TAFs have you mastered?
- For which TAFs must you master new KSAs?
- How will you master these new KSAs?
- How will you prevent yourself from regressing to your default position?

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Mentors can help by:

- Providing information about which TAFs the new manager must let go, preserve, and add on.
- Providing information about the new manager's TAFs.
- Helping the new manager to comprehend how these TAFs contribute to the unit's strategic goals.
- Identifying the various stakeholders who will have an interest in the new manager's performance.
- Providing information about the KSAs the new manager needs to master to perform the new TAFs.
- Identifying resources the new manager must access to help in mastering the requisite KSAs.

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Future Research

- Determine how longitudinal results differ as a function of the amount of mentoring and coaching received by managers-in-transition.
- Determine how longitudinal results differ as a function of the orientation of mentors and coaches. That is, the extent to which mentors and coaches use the leadership pipeline as a mental model that informs the nature of their interactions with managers-in-transition.

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