



## [Why Entrepreneurship Thrives During a Recession](#)

### **Video interview with Kevin Groves, PhD, Assistant Professor of Organizational Theory and Management**

**Danielle L. Scott**

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#### Start ####

**Danielle L. Scott:** Hello. This is Danielle L. Scott, managing editor of the Graziadio Business Report blog. Today we have Dr. Kevin Groves, assistant professor of organizational theory and management. Today we have Dr. Kevin Groves, assistant professor of organizational theory and management at the Graziadio School of Business and Management. Dr. Groves studies executive development and succession planning, managerial thinking styles, social and emotional intelligence, and organizational change. In December 2008, his article, Integrating Leadership Development and Succession Best Practices-- In December 2008, his article, Integrating Leadership Development and Succession. Succession planning best practices. In December 2008, his article, Integrating Leadership Development and Succession Planning Best Practices earned a highly commended award for outstanding paper from the Emerald Publishing Group as part of the Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence 2008. I'm going to do that one again. In December 2008, his article, Integrating Leadership Development and Succession Planning Best Practices earned a highly commended award for outstanding paper from the Emerald Publishing Group as part of the Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence 2008. Dr. Groves, thank you so much for taking the time to talk with us today.

**Dr. Kevin Groves:** Danielle, thank you very much for having me. It's a pleasure to be here.

**Danielle L. Scott:** We really enjoy having you here. First of all, why is talent management and succession planning so critical for organizations especially in today's business environment?

**Dr. Kevin Groves:** Well, there seems to be a series of macro forces that are converging on organizations irrespective of industry and size that have forced the issue where there's been traditionally a bit of a slower pace of boards, top management teams being able to take their time somewhat leisurely to make key succession decisions, but in the current business environment that luxury is gone. And the forces specially include one, downward pressure on costs, wanting to be as efficient and cost conscious as possible when it comes to developing talent. So what that often means is fewer resources devoted to executive development and leadership development systems; two, as organizations continue to flatten where middle management ranks and structural changes take place the natural training ground that middle managers and your high-potential leaders would have is gone where they don't get those intermediate kinds of experiences, real substantive challenging management experiences. So they're typically not as ready to be named in to really key roles, and then three, probably the biggest factor that again organizations of all sizes and industries face, is demographic changes, the- what some call the leadership crisis or essentially the baby boomer generation quickly moving out of organizations in to retirement leaves what some would call a real leadership crisis at the top where you have large numbers of top management team members, senior leaders, that are moving on and boards and management teams trying to make- trying to think through the best succession decisions with a smaller pool of eligible and developed talent. And so there's this squeeze, lots of senior spots about to be available with not as many really talented folks ready to assume those roles. Part of the other challenge with costs comes in. If you don't have talent developed in house, you're forced to go outside the organization, which is a very costly enterprise, having to retain executive search firm capabilities. The succession rate of talented people selected from the outside in to the organization is quite low so it's not only very expensive but the efficacy is considerably lower. So all that's to say these forces are converging or talent management succession planning is a much bigger priority.

**Danielle L. Scott:** You talk a lot about workplace mentoring as a great way to kind of foster leadership development and succession planning. What is workplace mentoring and how does it work within an organization?

**Dr. Kevin Groves:** Right. The research and support for the benefits of mentoring are extraordinary. The process and concept's been around for some time, and so as a academic community I had a chance to really study and understand. If you're a mentee or a protégé involved in a quality mentoring relationship, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and other attitudes, degree of promotion rates and other success indicators are extraordinarily higher. So organizations have caught on to say, "How can we develop and deploy really quality mentoring programs if in fact those folks involved in mentoring programs have these extraordinary outcomes?" So what that looks like practically in an organization is typically a formal mentoring program. It's typically a minimum one-year investment. Mentor and mentee

meet together for typically a two-hour session per month. That would be the minimum contact time. The matching process is really key to quality. With whom are we matching these high-potential protégés or really what we call high-potential employees with more senior members of the organization. Another key success factor is your mentors really have to see the value in being involved in the program. To really get a large pool of senior organizational leaders to engage in any kind of formal mentoring program there needs to be a hook for them, and often that is a sense of giving back and it's a sense of having a very positive experience with the organization with their tenure and they want to give back. A more recent trend has been an emphasis on what's called reverse mentoring where as organizations continue to grow much older in demographics there's a sense of how do we get the best of what our new work force entrants have to say in terms of their interests, their skills, their sense of creativity and innovation. So the mentoring process actually starts from new employees just joining the organization so the reverse mentoring is the matching process goes from mentee to mentor so- but, to kind of close the loop here on your question, the outcomes from an employee attitude, job performance and promotion rate is extraordinarily high for those folks involved in mentoring programs. So you typically see in talent management succession planning systems mentoring programs are a big part of that.

**Danielle L. Scott:** That leads me right in to my next question. What are the other characteristics of highly effective talent management teams at organizations?

**Dr. Kevin Groves:** When it comes to really wanting to make an investment in talent management and succession planning, it's a couple things. One, you have to make the assumption that it's a long-term investment. Mentoring, multisource or 360-degree feedback, action learning projects, stretch assignments of the menu of these interventions or activities that you would want to put high-potential members through. Those are not short-term investments. You're unlikely to see the benefits of that kind of investment in a short-term period so the first best practices you're in it for the long haul. This is a 5-plus-year kind of investment to really get to a point where a top management team member retires or steps down and you've done your job to be able to make good succession decisions. So one, it's long term. Two, you don't want to go use a kind of piecemeal format where you're just doing let's say mentoring but you're not investing in leadership assessment systems. For example, 360-degree or multisource feedback systems are a really powerful, very popular way to make sure your early career leaders, these emerging leaders, are getting feedback on their leadership style, how they go about influencing their team members. And 360s are simply a way to have your managers and high-potential leaders self-assess what are the leadership skills and strengths that they see in themselves but just as importantly how do you get a confidential rating or sense of feedback from those individuals who work with your emerging leaders. And that gets in to teammates participate often, direct reports, supervisors, and in some environments that are client intensive like the consulting industry or others oftentimes even clients. Third-party participants would participate in a 360 assessment process so really important to avoid a kind of piecemeal approach but to really take the long-term comprehensive view on succession planning.

**Danielle L. Scott:** You also study emotional and social intelligence. Some say that can be learned; some say it can't. What is the role in leadership development? How do you develop that emotional intelligence?

**Dr. Kevin Groves:** Good question. What happens in a lot of personality variables or competency-competencies-- They get very popular in the mainstream press or in the academic community and emotional intelligence certainly fits the bill. It's-- There's been lots of attention to why should organizations really care and why should they invest in any kind of assessment or development system. I think the- where this starts is with the job. Organizations need to take a real clear look at what are the specific competencies that the jobs and career paths that we have in the organizations. To what extent do they demand what we would call emotional intelligence or emotional capabilities, and that's a logical starting point as opposed to we know that our competitors are now using emotional intelligence for selection so we should too. It really should start with what are the specific competencies that the job requires and would using an emotional intelligence selection tool to screen candidates for the job or as an assessment and development tool-- Does that actually add value for that position? So that's the starting point. The second issue becomes of the many tools that are out there for measuring emotional intelligence which do you choose. The evidence suggests that in large part you want to stick with a behavior or competency-based measure and avoid what are more the academic languages mixed model, but that essentially means it's more of a personality-based measure. So the extent to which organizations can select emotional intelligence assessments or measures that are based on observable behaviors and competencies and not personality variables-- That lends itself to clear training and development implications. It does very little good as a trainer or as a organization development professional to give feedback to someone who's gone through a personality kind of assessment in light of the fact that it's very difficult to change personality characteristics once you're an adult versus a behavioral competency-based tool has very clear development implications. And that- those are two important decision points for organizations to think about.

**Danielle L. Scott:** When you say a personality evaluation tool, would that be something like Myers-Briggs?

**Dr. Kevin Groves:** Absolutely. Myers-Briggs or the traditional big five factor on extroversion, openness to experience these dominant frameworks to think about personality characteristics which we know are stable once we reach adulthood. The trend with any training or development implication is almost always if you're looking to develop and look at characteristics that are amenable to change it's much more useful to use a behavior-based observable behavioral competency-based tool. And there are measures out there that have been published, that have been- are used in industry on emotional intelligence. So, to get back to your initial question, there is clearly room to develop individuals' emotional competencies but it's got to be required by the job and the assessment tool really has to focus on observable behaviors and observable competencies.

**Danielle L. Scott:** So my last question is about your current research which is on value-centered leadership. What have you learned so far and how can it help managers in the work force?

**Dr. Kevin Groves:** Sure. The project's currently in the preliminary stages so we're very excited to share more comprehensive results down the road, but initially what we're finding is a fairly strong pattern between leader values, meaning those end states that leaders really hold true to despite others, the business community or even colleagues and the organizations kind of working against them so the- we have kind of-- Articulated leader values are those things that an aspiring leader, an emerging leader would hold true to despite the environment punishing him for it or her. So what we've found thus far is that leaders tend to self-report their values along a continuum of more economic values, and that is when I face critical incidents and really important decision points, profitability, costs, market share those are the overriding end states or values that I hold true to versus more stakeholder values. And that- that's a much broader sense of not only are bottom line measures important but also employees, the local community, some of the corporate social responsibility values are also important. And so what we've found thus far is that leaders tend to favor or are towards one end of that continuum or another and that influences their leadership style, how they go about trying to engage their coworkers and their team members. And part of what the- what we're hoping to conclude, and this again is preliminary, is that leaders who do adopt these stakeholder more broad-based values tend to go about influencing and leading their work teams in much more of a transformational kind of style versus more economic value-oriented leaders tend to have much more of a transactional leadership style in terms of how they go about influencing their colleagues. The initial evidence is promising, but again we're in the somewhat preliminary stages and we'll have more comprehensive findings to share a bit down the road.

**Danielle L. Scott:** Very good. I think that's all we have for you, but Dr. Groves, thanks again for taking the time with us and best of luck on your research.

**Dr. Kevin Groves:** Danielle, thank you very much for having me. It was a pleasure.

**Danielle L. Scott:** This is Danielle Scott for the GBR blog. Find us online at [gbr.pepperdine.edu](http://gbr.pepperdine.edu).

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