

Dr. LaTonya Applewhite Unveils the Succession Crisis Most Companies Don't See Coming

Dr. LaTonya Applewhite, a leadership expert with more than 20 years of experience in education, human resources, and executive leadership, is speaking out about a problem many companies



Chicago, Illinois Aug 26, 2026 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - A Warning Sign Hiding in Plain Sight

A leader retires. A leader gets promoted. A leader takes a new job somewhere else. In each case, many companies find out the same way, too late, that no one was ready to take their place. What follows is often a rushed search for someone new, lost time, and a team left without steady direction at the exact moment they need it most.

Dr. [LaTonya Applewhite](#) says this problem is common because most companies plan for growth, but not for who will lead that growth next. By the time the gap shows up, the company is already behind.

Why This Keeps Happening

Dr. LaTonya Applewhite points to a clear pattern across companies of many sizes. Leadership training tends to go to the people already in charge, while the next group of leaders is left to figure things out on their own, with no clear plan and little real support.

A few reasons this problem keeps repeating:

- Many companies think succession planning is only for large corporations, not something every company needs.
- Strong employees are given more work and more responsibility, but not real training on how to lead.

- When budgets get tight, leadership training is often one of the first things cut.
- Most companies only start thinking about succession after a leader has already said they're leaving.

What Dr. Applewhite Is Saying

In her own writing, Dr. LaTonya Applewhite has said, "Sustainable change happens when leaders intentionally invest in people." That same idea sits at the center of this warning. Companies that wait until a leader walks out the door to think about who's next are already too late. The fix has to start long before that moment.

Dr. Applewhite believes real change starts with finding future leaders early, not after someone resigns. She has written about the cost of skipping real planning, and how companies that plan only on paper, without real follow-through, tend to drift instead of grow. In her view, a plan for the next leader deserves the same care as any other major business plan, not something written once and forgotten.

The Real Risk of Waiting

Dr. Applewhite warns that the risk of waiting isn't just about filling one open role. A rushed leadership decision often means picking whoever is available, instead of whoever is ready. This can lead to a new leader who struggles, a team that loses trust, and a slower recovery than expected.

She also points out that this isn't only a problem for the very top of a company. The same risk shows up at every level, team leads, department heads, and regional managers all need a real path forward, not just the executives at the top. A company that only plans succession for its highest role is still exposed everywhere else.

What Companies Can Do About It

Dr. Applewhite works with companies to close this gap before it becomes a crisis. Her approach is built around a few simple steps:

- **Spot future leaders early.** Don't wait until a role opens up to start looking.
- **Build a real plan for each person**, not just a general idea that they might lead someday.
- **Give real training**, not just more work and a bigger title.
- **Check progress often**, the same way a company checks progress on any important goal.

She believes this work matters just as much for small and mid-size companies as it does for large ones. A company doesn't need thousands of employees to lose a key leader and feel it right away.

Why This Matters Now

More leaders are changing jobs, retiring, or moving into new roles than ever before. Companies that don't have a plan for what happens next are taking on a risk many of them don't even know they have. Dr. Applewhite's message is simple: the time to prepare the next leader is now, not after the current one is already gone.

About Dr. LaTonya Applewhite

[Dr. LaTonya Applewhite](#) brings more than 20 years of experience in educational leadership, human

resources, organizational development, and executive leadership. She helps organizations strengthen leadership, build people-first workplace cultures, and develop the talent needed to succeed for years to come.

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