

10 Questions to Quantify Your 2026 Talent Risk

The acceleration of AI and unprecedented demographic shifts mean that a talent strategy built just five years ago is now a major liability. The true cost of inaction isn't just a high replacement rate; it's the loss of institutional knowledge, a fractured leadership pipeline, and a critical disadvantage against competitors who are thinking about the future of their organizations now.

The difference between successful growth and crippling talent disruption in 2026 often comes down to five key areas: pipeline depth, skill agility, retention culture, and technology integration. This quick assessment is designed to help you honestly gauge your vulnerability and identify the immediate areas where a proactive strategy is needed.



Instructions: Answer these ten questions by selecting the option that best reflects your organization today. Tally your points to determine your current risk level.

Question	Option (3 Points - High Risk) ⚠️	Option (2 Points - Medium Risk) ⚠️	Option (1 Point - Low Risk) ⚠️
1 Succession Plan Depth	Our plan focuses only on 3-5 roles at the very top (CEO/C-Suite).	Our plan identifies 7-10 critical roles (C-Suite and VP-level), but the development efforts are inconsistent, and coverage for specialized, technical roles remains weak.	We identify and develop successors for 15+ critical roles at all levels of the organization.
2 Leadership Readiness Time	Less than 50% of critical roles have an internal candidate ready to step in within 6 months.	Between 50%-75% of critical roles have an internal candidate identified, but the timeline for readiness is often delayed, extending beyond 12 months.	At least 75% of critical roles have a qualified internal candidate ready to step in within 12 months.
3 Talent Identification Focus	We identify potential successors based primarily on past job titles and performance reviews.	We use a combination of past performance data and basic competency models, but the final assessment lacks alignment with the specific skills the organization will need in 3-5 years.	We use objective data (skills, competencies) to identify talent that aligns with future business needs.
4 HiPo Turnover	Our High-Potential (HiPo) turnover rate is noticeably higher than our general voluntary turnover rate.	Our HiPo turnover rate is roughly the same as our general voluntary turnover rate, suggesting we are not doing enough to specifically motivate and invest in our high-potential talent to encourage them to stay.	Our HiPo turnover rate is at or below our general voluntary turnover rate, indicating strong retention.
5 Succession Communication	Succession plans are kept confidential; employees do not know their potential career path options.	Employees receive general information about available career paths and their current development tasks, but lack clear visibility into the specific key roles they are being considered for, creating ambiguity about their future trajectory.	Employees have transparent visibility into available career paths and their individual development plan.
6 AI & Workforce Planning	We plan to reduce roles due to AI but haven't developed a new internal training track.	We are currently running assessments and modeling the impact of AI on our workforce, but we have not yet funded or fully launched the necessary internal reskilling programs for affected employees.	We use AI insights to identify skill gaps and have active reskilling programs for affected employees.
7 Development Methodology	We rely on generic, one-size-fits-all training sessions for leadership development.	We use a variety of development methods (formal classes, internal mentorship), but they are not individualized, lack accountability, or are not tied to specific skill gaps for the next role.	Development is hyper-personalized, using mentoring, coaching, and cross-functional projects.
8 Critical Skills Transfer	Our institutional knowledge for key roles resides primarily with one retiring expert with no formal transfer plan.	We have some basic cross-training or informal mentorship in place, but it lacks structure, is not mandatory for all critical roles, and is not formally documented or audited.	We have a structured knowledge transfer program (e.g., job shadowing, mentorship) in place for all critical roles.
9 Manager's Role in Talent	Managers are primarily focused on execution and rarely spend time on development or coaching.	Managers are encouraged to spend time on development and coaching, but it is not formally tracked, incentivized, or tied to their performance review and compensation.	Managers are held accountable for coaching and are incentivized to develop their team members.
10 Employee Value Proposition	We assume competitive pay is enough; we do not formally measure purpose or values alignment.	We communicate company values and purpose, but we do not formally measure or audit how these values align with the employee's role, well-being, or individual growth plan.	We actively measure and communicate how company purpose and values align with employee well-being and growth.

Total Score:

21-30 Points = Critical Risk: You have significant exposure to internal disruption, high turnover of key talent, and your 2026 growth is directly threatened by a lack of organizational depth.

11-20 Points = Elevated Risk: You have pockets of strength but are largely reactive. Your strategy is vulnerable to market shifts and is likely underutilizing your current talent.

10 Points or Less = Manageable Risk: You have a strong foundation. The challenge is ensuring your current plan can adapt to the AI and skills revolution while maintaining high-impact development.