



The 90-Day Leadership Continuity Playbook

A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR BUILDING
SUCCESSION READINESS

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Why Most Succession Planning Stalls

Many organizations delay succession planning because they assume they need to evaluate every role across the business before getting started.

That usually leads to one of three outcomes:

- a spreadsheet that quickly becomes outdated
- a process that's limited to the basic functionality of an HRIS
- a project that simply never gets finished

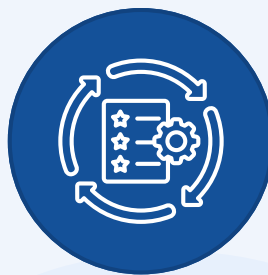
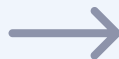
The organizations making the most progress take a different approach. Rather than trying to solve succession planning all at once, they begin with the positions that present the greatest business risk if left vacant.

Within 90 days, it's possible to establish meaningful visibility into leadership continuity and build a foundation that can grow with your organization.

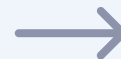
The 90-Day Roadmap



DAYS 1-30



DAYS 31-60



DAYS 61-90

Establish the Foundation

Defining Your Framework

Operationalize the Process

Establishing Ownership

Build Momentum

Turning Your Plan into Action

Days 1-30: Establish the Foundation

Before identifying successors, establish the structure that will support your succession planning program over time.

Start by identifying your Key Roles — the positions where an unexpected vacancy would create the greatest business disruption. At SuccessionHR, we recommend defining Key Roles that represent approximately **10% of your workforce**. This creates a manageable starting point while ensuring succession planning extends beyond the executive team.

Once your initial Key Roles have been identified, define the governance, expectations, and processes that will keep your program active as it grows.

Action Checklist for HR Teams

- ☐ Identify and add your initial Key Roles
- ☐ Define governance, roles, and responsibilities
- ☐ Establish your review cadence and succession planning framework
- ☐ Define successor readiness metrics, bench strength targets, and success profiles
- ☐ Standardize skills, competencies, and development activities
- ☐ Define how leadership risk will be measured and reported

Consider:



- ☐ Revenue impact
- ☐ Customer impact
- ☐ Operational dependency
- ☐ Strategic importance
- ☐ Regulatory or compliance exposure
- ☐ Difficulty recruiting externally
- ☐ Specialized institutional knowledge
- ☐ Retirement or retention risk



Days 31-60: Operationalize the Process

A succession plan is only effective if it's actively maintained. By this stage, the focus shifts from designing the program to embedding it into the organization.

Succession planning shouldn't be owned by HR alone. Business leaders play a critical role in identifying successors, evaluating readiness, supporting development, and keeping succession plans current. Now is the time to clarify ownership, train participants, and establish consistent expectations so the process becomes part of how leaders develop talent — not just an annual HR exercise.



Best Practice

Clearly define who owns each part of the succession planning process. While HR provides governance, consistency, and visibility, leaders should be accountable for the readiness of the talent pipeline within their areas of responsibility.

Action Checklist for HR Teams

- ☐ Assign a Key Role Owner for each Key Role
- ☐ Align on your organization's Key Role ownership philosophy (e.g., incumbent, manager, or another leader)
- ☐ Train Key Role Owners on the succession planning process, expectations, and responsibilities
- ☐ Establish a consistent approach to successor readiness discussions and talent reviews
- ☐ Confirm every Key Role has an active owner before moving into successor planning



Days 61-90: Build Momentum

With the right structure and ownership in place, succession planning becomes an ongoing leadership process.

Key Role Owners should now be actively identifying successor candidates, updating readiness assessments, and assigning development activities. At the same time, HR shifts from managing every succession plan to providing visibility, monitoring organizational risk, and ensuring the program remains consistent across the business. The goal is to create an ongoing rhythm where succession plans evolve alongside your people and your organization.

Action Checklist

FOR KEY ROLE OWNERS

- ☐ Confirm successor candidates for each Key Role
- ☐ Assign and monitor development activities
- ☐ Update successor readiness and target timelines
- ☐ Review and update succession plans regularly

FOR HR TEAMS

- ☐ Monitor successor readiness, bench strength, leadership risk, and mitigation efforts
- ☐ Provide ongoing executive and board visibility through dashboards and reports
- ☐ Review succession progress with Key Role Owners and business leaders
- ☐ Escalate succession gaps and leadership risks requiring action
- ☐ Facilitate recurring succession planning reviews and continuous program improvement



Your 90-Day Success Checklist

Days 1-30: Build the Foundation

- ☐ Defined Key Role criteria
- ☐ Identified and added initial Key Roles
- ☐ Established succession planning governance
- ☐ Defined bench strength and readiness expectations

Days 31-60: Operationalize the Process

- ☐ Assigned Key Role Owners
- ☐ Clarified roles and responsibilities
- ☐ Trained participants on the succession planning process
- ☐ Established a consistent review cadence

Days 61-90: Build Momentum

- ☐ Successor candidates identified
- ☐ Development activities underway
- ☐ Organizational succession risks visible
- ☐ Leadership reviews scheduled



Leadership changes are inevitable. The goal here isn't perfection — it's progress.

With this playbook, you can identify your most critical roles, assess successor readiness, and put meaningful development plans in place in just 90 days. From there, succession planning becomes an ongoing process of reviewing progress, adapting to change, and strengthening leadership continuity over time.

Want to Operationalize This Framework?

See how **SuccessionHR** helps organizations centralize and automate successor readiness, development planning, and leadership continuity.

Book a Demo Today