

## Apply the principles of succession planning

Succession planning considers the future of employees and the continued success of the business. The quality of a business's succession planning and its corporate image are closely linked.

Businesses that have developed and implemented an effective succession plan have identified and adhered to several key principles as follows:

### 1. Know what you're planning for

Succession planning is an essential strategy for harnessing the substantial talents in your business. It is the process by which successors in your business are identified for key posts (or groups of similar key posts) and career development – and subsequent activities are planned accordingly. When you have created a workable succession plan, you can then include various planned development activities for those identified for advancement.

### 2. Customise any plan to the needs of your business

Although valuable ideas might be gained from perusing other business's plans, ultimately the one best suited to your situation will be the one you design yourself – tailored to your business's needs and demands, including selection processes, reward systems and management development.

### 3. Emphasise culture, values and strategy

The existing and desired culture of the business, its values and future strategic direction will influence a succession plan. It is essential that the plan is aligned with the business's future strategic direction. If that direction isn't clear, include a succession plan as a crucial issue for discussion at your next business planning workshop.

### 4. Focus on the development of successor candidates

Succession planning is much more than selection: development is vital. Successor candidates can expect either to have their own individual career and personal development programs, or to be involved with colleagues with perceived similar development needs. In both cases, candidates must accept responsibility for their contributions to such programs. Identified successor candidates can expect to have access to coaching and a senior person prepared to act as a mentor.

### 5. Develop a leadership team

Succession can generally be expected to come from a strong talent pool of successor candidates. As pool members develop and take on more active roles in your business, individuals' leadership skills will increase. As these candidates develop, they will become members of a leadership team, and act as role models for others in your business.



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## 6. Keep everyone informed

Everyone in your business must know about the succession plan – even if they are not included on any list of successor candidates. You cannot afford to have the reputation and integrity of the plan be affected adversely by withholding information about it and the progress of its participants. Consider including, via internal communication (eg emails, staff meetings or newsletters) details about criteria for identifying those aspiring to be included on the list of successor candidates. Potential selection as a successor candidate can act as a positive motivator.

## 7. See succession planning as a journey, not an event

All aspects of an effective succession plan are inextricably linked to other parts of the organisation: succession planning can never be a stand-alone event.

### Further information

The following fact sheets provide further information on these issues:

- Business image
- Business planning
- Business values
- Develop a succession plan
- Leadership – introduction
- Leadership – advanced