Succession Planning:
A Quick Reference Guide for Not-for-Profits

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Many volunteer and charitable organizations run well and have done so for years with little or no thought of Succession Planning. Most small and midsized businesses are the same.

Succession Planning should be the responsibility of each incoming Board of Directors for your Not-for-Profit, for some obvious reasons:

- your volunteer members may have conflicts arise that will keep them from their commitments and responsibilities
- people move or make career changes as often as every three to five years, change is inevitable and often unplanned
- mortality and long-term disability are also harsh realities that must be faced
- the organization may need to accelerate plans for growth and change requiring additional personnel

In short, unplanned changes happen all the time, and while your Succession Plan could never cover every contingency, it can ensure that you are prepared to handle most of the possibilities.

Here is a starting checklist to get you ready for Succession Planning:

1. Include Succession Planning in the Board of Directors list of duties.
2. If you do not have a Staffing Director, volunteer or personnel, create that role at the Board Level
3. Create your Organizational Chart of all positions and reporting relationships
    - tip: Check this against other Org Charts to look for missing roles and for conflicting roles
4. Establish duties for each position:
    - Responsibilities: What do they have to do in their job
    - Accountabilities: What work do they need to oversee and ensure is done right

- Authorities: What decisions can they make on their own, which can't they
    - TIPS: While having current people complete this criteria is a good start, review those to ensure there are no oversights, errors or omissions. Existing Job Descriptions are available from a variety of freely available sources online and elsewhere.
5. Define the core competencies each role requires:
    - Skills & Capabilities
    - Experience
    - Credentials
6. Identify and agree to plan to address any gaps in your current structure
7. Perform a personnel loss risk assessment for each role as it would impact the organization
    - TIP: the Decision Priority Worksheet can be used for this
    - this allows you to prioritize the roles you want to first have Succession Plans in place for until you have a complete Organizational Succession Plan
8. Review existing competencies within and around your organization
    - existing Board Members
    - volunteers
    - staff
    - affiliated organizations

9. Map available existing competencies to each key role you have identified
    - create a separate list of those who can step in temporarily and those who can do so permanently
    - remember you may have to replace the replacement, plan for their role as well
    - TIP: you may need to have two or three people to replace one key role
10. Identify external candidates like colleagues of members and sources for finding external candidates like placement agencies
11. Create an orientation and duties file for each role, for each successor to draw on, it should include:
    - Organizational Chart with titles and with current names
    - Organizations By-Laws, Policies & Procedures
    - Business Plans, Strategic Plans, Budgets, Plans, Technology Plans
    - Duties for the role, for the one-up role, and for any roles reporting to this position
    - Current Operations Contracts, Projects, Events & Commitments the role must ensure are met
    - Governance & Oversight will vary by Not-for-Profit but must be met or exceeded
12. Create & Maintain a Succession Pipeline of people and Centers of Influence to draw upon when it becomes necessary

NOTES:
Do not forget to include Staff in your overall Succession Plan.
This list is by no means all-inclusive nor exclusive.

DECISION PRIORITY WORKSHEET

OBJECTIVE	_____

Often decisions can produce unintended consequences and unanticipated problems. Most of those result from either having insufficient information or on factors that may or may not be within the control of the decision maker. The following SWOT analysis can help identify and clarify issues within your control (Internal) outside your control (External). These can include facilities, time, technology, expertise, resources, markets, regulations, laws, politics, public opinion, employees, media, etc.

S W O T	INTERNAL FACTORS	EXTERNAL FACTORS
STRENGTH	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
WEAKNESS	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
OPPORTUNITY	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
THREAT	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

R²OI

PRIORITY CHECKLIST

Based on this SWOT Analysis, use the 'Risk-rated Return On Investment' (**R²OI**) Priority Checklist to determine the overall value and importance of this Objective to improving business results. This business objective, if met, can have a direct impact on the business by:

📁 POINTS
- ☐ 1 Adding qualitative value to relationships (member, client, stakeholder)
- ☐ 2 Adding new clients or new business
- ☐ 3 Retaining existing clients or business
- ☐ 4 Improving profitability (increase revenues, lower costs)
- ☐ 5 Reducing potential risks, issues or liabilities for clients
- ☐ 6 Reducing potential risks, issues or liabilities for employees/Company
- ☐ 7 Reducing potential Company/stakeholder risks, issues or liabilities
- = ____ TOTAL POINTS [sum of checked items]

This rating is on a Points scale from 1 [lowest] to 28 [highest]:
- Prioritize Objectives based on how high a total value you have assigned to each.
- When two or more Objectives rank with equal importance, prioritize them based on which will produce benefits for the most customers or employees.
- If two Objectives will produce benefits for similar numbers of clients or employees prioritize them based on which of the two you would eliminate if necessary.

DATE: _____	PREPARED BY: _____