SIGMA’s Succession Planning Guide outlines a straightforward process for identifying and developing internal talent to replenish existing talent when it exits the organization.

This planning guide takes users through SIGMA’s 6-stage succession cycle to: identify critical leadership roles, build leader success profiles, nominate high potential talent, assess development needs, develop talent, and measure your organization’s progress. The guide provides templates for each stage.
succession planning process

A proven Succession Planning process provides a roadmap for success. This structure ensures consistency across the organization, aides in the communication of the plan across all levels of the organization, and provides the ingredients for success.

Our Succession Planning framework and accompanying templates on the following pages should give you a sense for what is required at each stage of the process along with some helpful tools to get you started.

Identify Critical Roles
There is typically no shortage of need when it comes to Succession Planning. However, it is important to take a measured approach when introducing Succession Planning into an organization for the first time. With this in mind, the first step is to identify which roles your organization should target based on urgency and how critical the role is to the business.

TOOLS/TEMPLATES: At-A-Glance Critical Roles Worksheet (p. 6)

Build Success Profile
Now that you’ve narrowed down the need to your most critical positions, we can now focus on understanding the requirements of each role. At this stage, we define the talent composition required for success by incorporating present and future needs. This step will provide the target that we’ll aim for when selecting and developing future leaders.

TOOLS/TEMPLATES: Success Profile, Leadership Skills Profile - Revised, MEIA (p. 8)

Nominate Successors
The Success Profile in the previous step is the lens we’ll use when selecting candidates for succession. This is a stage where a formal process adds much-needed credibility and transparency to combat perceptions of favoritism.

Results from the nomination survey are used to populate a draft Succession Bench that groups successors based on their readiness and provides an ‘eye-test’ measure of bench strength for the incumbent’s role. A well maintained Succession Bench is also a great way to measure the success of your Succession Plan.

TOOLS/TEMPLATES: Succession Nomination Survey, Succession Bench Summary (p. 10 & 12)
Assess Development Needs
The nomination survey is just the first step in evaluating your bench strength. At this stage, there is an opportunity to add objectivity through scientifically validated leadership assessments. The assessments do not take the place of the candidate's history and experience, but add a unique perspective at an incredible level of depth. Any Succession Planning Process should incorporate an objective assessment to measure the talent profile of each succession candidate and to identify gaps that can be targeted through development.

TOOLS/TEMPLATES: Succession Profile, Leadership Skills Profile - Revised, MEIA (p. 14)

Develop Talent
To make your succession process truly succeed, you now need to follow up on the assessment phase by creating a development plan that will help potential successors fill in the gaps in their skills and experience, and progress into readiness for their future roles. This is where the work comes in as development plans are managed for each candidate, and recommended and completed development activities are tracked. At a minimum, create a development plan for all your high-potential succession candidates. In a perfect world, you would have development plans in place for your entire Succession Bench.

TOOLS/TEMPLATES: Development Plan, Development Activities Tracker, Executive Coaching (p. 16 & 18)

Measure Progress
Tracking measurable progress indicators and regularly sharing the results with key stakeholders demonstrates the value of your succession plan and keeps its importance top of mind. When you’re just starting out, you might not like all the numbers, but if you set and communicate reasonable expectations from the beginning, in time you’ll be able to show year-over-year progress.

Get started today by looking at what you can easily measure now and gathering those numbers. Set a calendar reminder to review, compare, and communicate progress every six months. Even if you only track one metric, get in the habit of recording it, attaching a dollar value if possible, and conveying that to your stakeholders.

TOOLS/TEMPLATES: Talent Progress Scorecard (p. 20)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify critical roles</th>
<th>Identify which roles your organization should target through its succession program.</th>
<th>At-A-Glance Critical Roles Worksheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build success profile</td>
<td>Describe the talent composition required for each critical role at the present time and according to your organization’s future needs.</td>
<td>Success Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominate successors</td>
<td>Select succession candidates for each critical role through a nomination survey.</td>
<td>Succession Nomination Survey Succession Bench Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess development needs</td>
<td>Summarize the talent profile of each succession candidate, and identify gaps to target through development.</td>
<td>Succession Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop talent</td>
<td>Outline or update development plans for each candidate, and track recommended and completed development activities.</td>
<td>Development Plan Development Activities Tracker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure progress</td>
<td>Update the scorecard, tracking various indicators of improved succession planning outcomes.</td>
<td>Talent Progress Scorecard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
at-a-glance critical roles worksheet

the goal: identify the roles your organization should target in your succession program

the steps:

- list your direct reports
- rate each direct report on:
  - readiness to move into your position
  - their plan to remain with the organization
  - the availability of replacements for their role, should the candidate leave or be promoted
- when evaluating someone’s plan to remain, consider their eligibility to retire as well as the potential risk that they will seek opportunities elsewhere
- begin with your team, but a good succession plan will scale this exercise out to multiple teams and levels
- print and complete one chart per critical role

For more information on identifying critical roles in succession planning, click here
at-a-glance critical role worksheet
build success profiles worksheet

the goal: describe the talent needed in each critical role, both now and in the future for your organization

the steps:

- include basic demographic information on the role
- use existing job descriptions to list position criteria (e.g., education required, skills needed, and duties to be aware of)
- develop the Success Profile by considering:
  - skills commonly needed for success in the senior management team
  - anticipated future requirements for all senior leaders
  - specific characteristics needed for the focal role
  - potential skill requirements for this role in the future
  - emotional intelligence or other important personal characteristics
- use validated measures to ensure complete and accurate Success Profiles

For more information on building success profiles for succession planning, click here
## Succession Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Succession Position</th>
<th>Current Incumbent</th>
<th>Exit Year</th>
<th>Urgency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Position Demographics

- **Location**
- **Level**
- **Direct Reports**

## Position Criteria

- **Edu**
- **Exp**
- **Skill**
- **Duty**

## Leadership Profile

### Competency: Senior Management Team

#### SMT: Future

#### Focal: Future

#### Other: Future

### Emotional Intelligence

### Other
succession nomination survey

the goal: evaluate succession candidates for each critical role

the steps:

- indicate name of candidate and role they are considered for
- for each candidate, rate your confidence in their potential performance for this role
- estimate the timeline until role readiness
- gather ratings from multiple sources, including:
  - the current role incumbent
  - the senior management and succession advisory teams
  - leaders, peers, and direct reports of the succession candidate
- provide additional information on the candidate in the comment box to add context to your evaluation
- complete this survey for each potential succession candidate

For more information on nominating succession candidates, click here
nominate succession candidates

Succession Nomination Survey

Position: Candidate:

How much confidence do you have in this candidate’s ability to perform effectively in this position with development in required areas?

- not at all confident
- slightly confident
- moderately confident
- very confident

- not sufficiently acquainted

When will this candidate be ready to fill this position?

- ready now
- ready 1 to 3 years
- ready 3 to 5 years
- ready 5+ years
- ready never

Please express any other comments you have, if any, about the ability of this candidate to effectively perform in this position.

Position: Candidate:

How much confidence do you have in this candidate’s ability to perform effectively in this position with development in required areas?

- not at all confident
- slightly confident
- moderately confident
- very confident

- not sufficiently acquainted

When will this candidate be ready to fill this position?

- ready now
- ready 1 to 3 years
- ready 3 to 5 years
- ready 5+ years
- ready never

Please express any other comments you have, if any, about the ability of this candidate to effectively perform in this position.
succession bench worksheet

the goal: track readiness of succession candidates for critical roles

the steps:

- indicate incumbent and urgency information for position
- list succession candidates according to three levels
  - level A: candidates ready for role in less than 3 years
  - level B: individuals ready for role in 3 to 5 years
  - level C: potentials ready for role in more than 5 years
- provide name and demographics for each candidate
- record candidate growth with dates spent at each level
- use the worksheet to track the overall strength of your Succession Bench, and individual candidate’s progress over time

For more information on using the succession bench in your planning process, click here
### Candidate List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate Name</th>
<th>Progression to Succession Position</th>
<th>Organization Demographics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Last</td>
<td>First</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2020 Succession Bench

- **Succession Position**
- **Current Incumbent**
- **Exit Year**
- **Urgency**
- **Bench Strength**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Succession Position</th>
<th>Current Incumbent</th>
<th>Exit Year</th>
<th>Urgency</th>
<th>Bench Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C: B: A:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Succession Position**
- **Current Incumbent**
- **Exit Year**
- **Urgency**
- **Bench Strength**

- C: Ready in 5+ years
- B: Ready in 3-5 years
- A: Ready in 1-3 years

---

www.SIGMASuccession.com
succession profile worksheet

the goal: identify gaps between role requirements and candidates, and assess opportunities for growth

the steps:

- indicate target position information
- report candidate demographics, education, and experience
- provide position criteria gathered in Success Profile
- use validated assessments to evaluate candidate on qualities required for target role, as indicated in Success Profile
- list gaps between current candidate skills and those required for the target position in each category
- use this worksheet to identify priorities for candidate growth and development opportunities

For more information on assessing development needs, [click here](#)
### 2020 Succession Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Criteria</th>
<th>Leadership Profile Assessment Gaps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management: Current</td>
<td>Focal Role: Current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focal Role: Future</td>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Organization Demographics
- **Position**
- **Location**
- **Age**
- **Service**
- **Readiness**

#### Education and Experience
- **Education**
- **Experience**

#### Succession Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Succession Position</th>
<th>Current Incumbent</th>
<th>Exit Year</th>
<th>Urgency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Candidate</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
development plan worksheet

the goal:
create individual development plans for succession candidates and track their progress

the steps:
- provide information on candidate and their current function
- list all positions individual may be a candidate for
- choose top development areas from Succession Profile
- rank development opportunities on two criteria:
  - largest gaps between role requirements and incumbent abilities
  - most important or frequently used skills
- with the succession candidate, mutually decide which areas to develop in the short- medium- and long-term
- create measureable goals with action plans and deadlines for each area of development
- keep detailed progress notes on successes and setbacks

For more information on creating individual development plans, [click here](#)
## Development Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Current Incumbent</th>
<th>Readiness</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>☆☆☆☆☆</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td>☆☆☆☆☆</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td>☆☆☆☆☆</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top Development Areas

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  
5.  
6.  

### Development Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Area</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Complete By</th>
<th>Progress / Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-6 Months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 Months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12+ Months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
development activities worksheet

the goal: specify and track the development activities of each succession candidate

the steps:
- fill in succession candidate’s current information
- list each position candidate is considered for
- work together with candidate to create a list of available development activities or opportunities
- be sure to prioritize based on individual development plan
- try to provide a range of opportunity types to ensure candidate receives well-rounded training
- track activities that are completed, in progress, or recommended for future development

For more information on providing developmental opportunities for succession, click here
### 2020 Development Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate For</th>
<th>Succession Candidate</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Current Incumbent</th>
<th>Readiness</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☆☆☆☆☆</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☆☆☆☆☆</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>☆☆☆☆☆</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Development Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self Development</th>
<th>Internal Leadership Training</th>
<th>External Leadership Training</th>
<th>Cross-Functional Experience</th>
<th>Global Rotation / International Project</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Completed**
- **Recommended**

www.SIGMASuccession.com
talent progress scorecard

the goal: review program outcomes across important indicators

the steps:

- choose organization-specific indicators of success for your program
  - look for ways to add objective, impactful numbers (e.g., money saved, time delays prevented, or improvements made to existing HR processes)

- gather information from other worksheets, such as the Succession Bench, and from HR tracking systems

- update this scorecard every 6 months (at a minimum)

- use this scorecard to communicate success to senior leadership, succession candidates, and across the organization

For more information on measuring the success of your program, click here
### Talent Progress Scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Positions Filled Internally (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Positions Filled Internally (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Time Hi-Potentials in Same Role (Yrs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi-Potential Turnover (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Positions with 3+ Successors (%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Years Till Ready</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi-Potential Engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Improvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
are you ready?

Whether you believe you have Succession Planning under control or that your Succession Planning is on life support, the following Succession Planning Checklist is a quick measure of the maturity level of your Succession Planning and what areas need to be improved, including:

- Executive Support
- Process
- Communication
- Documentation
- Accountability
- The Long Game

Answer the questions on the following pages to see how your organization stacks up.
Is your succession plan set up for success?

Whether you believe your organization has Succession Planning under control or is woefully unprepared, the following Succession Planning: Success Checklist is a quick measure of the maturity level of your Succession Planning process and what areas need to be improved.

**Executive Support**
- Is your Succession Planning initiative supported by your CEO?
- Is Succession supported by the entire leadership team?

**Process**
- Do you use a proven Succession Process?
- Is that process easy to understand?
- Are you confident in your ability to explain the process at all levels of the organization?

**Communication**
- Are you consistently communicating the plan to:
  - the board (if applicable)
  - management?
  - individual succession candidates?
  - all members of the organization?
- Do you have formal conversations with leadership on their plans for retirement?
- Are leaders prepared to have candid discussions with their team regarding each candidate’s readiness?
- Do leaders have the right tools to support development discussions with their successors?

**Documentation**
- Is your Succession Plan formally documented?
- Does the leadership team review the Succession Plan (at least) annually?
- Is your Succession Plan updated (at least) annually?
- Does your Succession Plan include:
  - detailed Success Profiles for each leadership role?
  - populated Succession Benches for each leadership profile?
  - Successor Profiles for each Succession Candidate?
  - Development Plans for each Succession Candidate?
  - Documented Metrics to gauge the success of your plan?

**The Long Game**
- Is the Succession Plan aligned with the organization’s long-term Strategic Plan?
- Is there a plan in place for multiple levels of the organization (i.e., not just the CEO)?
- Are recruitment, hiring, and talent development aligned with your Succession Plan?
- Are Success Profiles built with the future in mind?
- Are you focused on developing pools of talent for each role vs. identifying one successor?

**Your Score**
- 0–10 At risk for unexpected disruptions
- 11–15 Demonstrates need for improvement
- 16–23 Solid foundation with room to grow
- 24–28 Mature plan with minor adjustments needed

Regardless of your score above, our Succession Planning Launch Series can help. With just two separate half-day workshops, our series delivers a comprehensive full-year implementation plan customized for each member of your executive team. Find out more [here](https://www.SIGMASuccession.com).
THE NEED FOR SUCCESSION PLANNING

Due to a variety of demographic factors, there is a heightened sense of urgency for organizations to focus on succession planning to lessen risk and stay competitive.

Despite this urgency, organizations continue to delay making succession planning a priority. As a result, they struggle to simply keep up with every day organizational demands.

SIGMA can help with our Succession Planning Launch Series. This series efficiently delivers everything you need without sacrificing your ability to focus on more immediate priorities.

SUCCESSION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TABLE OF CONTENTS

- the need for succession planning
- context for succession planning
- future of organization
- organizational vision
- staff statistics
- staffing counts, hiring numbers, retirement eligibility
- the plan
- detailed implementation plan organized by stages
- succession process
- overview of stages
- identify critical roles
- overview and plan
- succession advisory team
- list of succession advisory team members
- organizational charts
- color-coded for incumbent retirement / candidate readiness
- build success profile
- overview and plan
- impact on business
- key impact areas for each critical role
- draft success profiles
- key knowledge, skills, and credentials for each critical role
- nominate successors
- overview and plan
- draft succession benches
- candidates sorted by readiness and progress along bench
- assess development needs
- overview and plan
- assessment plans
- candidate assessment activities for each critical role
- draft succession profiles
- summary of candidate attributes as per key criteria for role
- develop talent
- overview and plan
- development plan form
- candidate top development areas, activities, and timeline
- development tracking form
- record of development activities completed / to complete
- measure progress
- overview and plan
- talent progress scorecard
- measure of progress indicators over time

WHAT IS SIGMA’S SUCCESSION PLANNING LAUNCH SERIES?

Through two interactive workshops, we work with your leadership team to build an actionable Succession Implementation Plan.

WORKSHOP 1

In the first (half-day) workshop, we focus on learning about your specific organizational needs and gathering information to help you build your detailed Succession Implementation Plan, including:

- NOMINATING your Succession Advisory Team
- DOCUMENTING your current Succession Planning process
- IDENTIFYING Critical Roles to help determine focus moving forward
- DEVELOPING draft Success Profiles for each leader
- DEVELOPING draft Succession Benches for each leader’s team
- DETERMINING what Objective Metrics you currently have in place

We then work with what we’ve learned to prepare a customized Succession Implementation Plan for each member of your management team, including a detailed project plan for each stage of the process.

WORKSHOP 2

In the second workshop, we collectively review, critique, and analyze the implementation plan while:

- REINFORCING the urgency of Succession Planning using staff metrics, hiring activities, and retirement eligibility data
- VALIDATING draft Success Profiles and Succession Benches by leveraging perspectives from multiple leaders
- DEVELOPING Assessment and Development Plans for successors
- BUILDING Accountability into the process by assigning deliverables and milestones
- DELIVERING the knowledge, structure, and resources you need to successfully implement and manage a robust Succession Process.

The Succession Implementation Plan becomes a living document and will form the foundation for managing your process, providing accountability, and measuring progress.

At $9,500, our Succession Planning Launch Series is the simplest way for you to build a robust Succession Planning process to ensure your organization’s leadership is positioned for success and prepared for the unknown.

Contact Glen at gharrison@sigmaleader.com or 800-265-1285 ext. 233 to schedule your workshop now.
Glen Harrison
gharrison@SigmaSuccession.com
800-265-1285 ext. 233
SigmaSuccession.com
US: SIGMA Assessment Systems, Inc. • PO Box 610757 • Port Huron MI • 48061-0757 • P: 800-265-1285 • E: support@sigmahr.com
Canada: Research Psychologists Press, Inc. • PO Box 3292 Stn. B • London ON • N6A 4K3 • P: 800-401-4480 • E: support@sigmahr.com
www.SIGMASuccession.com