

Leadership Succession Plan

Table of Contents

This template is not intended as legal advice. Your organizational goals, purpose, values, and bylaws should drive the creation of this document.

Intention:

- This document intends to eliminate as many surprises as possible for the board and current staff at such a time that it is needed. Ideally, this plan stops a “rush to search” reaction.
- The plan is a high-level document that answers major questions about the first steps and major steps once a transition is announced.
- It serves as a reminder of items the team should think about well in advance of a transition including board stability, market competitiveness, and staff stability.
- It is a place to capture current institutional knowledge, philosophy, culture, gaps in leadership development, etc. This is not a plan to name an heir apparent.
- All the steps after this plan will be captured in a transition process led by the board for a new CEO and led by the CEO for all other staff.

Recommendations:

- This plan can be drafted by a small team including the current CEO and board members but must be approved by the whole board.
- It is helpful to review this plan every few years or after significant changes in the board or organization.
- For more information on the creation or implementation of this plan, please contact The Foraker Group, info@forakergroup.org.

Table of Contents

(options for consideration – skip items that are not currently relevant or known)

Definition of planned and unplanned succession

Scope of the plan (eg: CEO and other staff or just CEO)

Approval/adoption/renewal of plan process

CLARITY OF CULTURE

- Core Purpose and Core Values.....

- Long-term goals (*add the strategic plan to the appendices*)
- 3-5 year goals to consider during a transition (*eg: focus, people, partnerships, money, programs/projects*)
- Internal philosophy/considerations for internal and new leadership development (*eg: information that will set people up for success, lessons learned, institutional knowledge*)
- Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (*add to appendices*)
- Philosophy of hiring (as applicable)

CLARITY OF STRUCTURE

- Notes for consideration of organizational structure (*eg: opportunity during transition before other steps to consider collaboration, strategic partnership, merger options – a place of reflection not necessarily action – especially important if you have a founder*)
- Organizational staff chart considerations (*add to appendices*)
- Overall understanding of the role of the CEO (*add job description/CEO contract to appendices*)
- Economic engine definition (*eg: comments on revenue sources and considerations, strength of financial position, other financial considerations*)

ROLES TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN FOR A CEO*

- Role of the current executive in planned transitions
- Role of staff (and who)
- Role of the board
- Role of the board chair
- Role of the transition committee (*add job description to appendices*)
- Role of the transition chair (*add job description to appendices*)
- External support expected (*ex: Foraker Leadership Transition service, search firm, etc.*)
- Expected use of an interim and guidelines (*as applicable*)

** If this plan includes other staff beyond the CEO, note that the role of the board and the existing CEO along with other staff is different and should be noted accordingly.*

MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND TIMELINE OF PLANNED TRANSITION

- Preferred approach to interested internal candidates (staff and board)
- Proposed high-level preferred timeline
- Exit timing of current CEO

- Current understanding and guidelines for consideration by the board for transition (eg: internal work before a search, search, onboarding).....

Communication plan for succession.....

- Example of a communication plan to include key stakeholders who need to be notified and/or included in the process

High-level budget projections for transition.....

- Salary and benefits considerations for future transition
- Plan for market analysis to understand the market competitiveness of the position.....

MAJOR ACTION STEPS AND TIMELINE OF UNPLANNED TRANSITION (Emergency).....

(Note that the goal of this section to implement the majority of the planned activities. This is a stabilization space only.)

- Definitions of unplanned departure
- Procedures and conditions for risk management (eg: considerations to secure assets, etc.)
- The current executive “need to know” list
- Use of an interim executive (eg: current philosophy regarding internal vs external source)
- Authority of the interim executive (short or longer term).....
- Additional communication steps for unplanned succession (eg: activating crisis communication plan, designated spokesperson, use of external resources).....

ADDITIONAL POSITIONS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN

PLAN APPROVED BY THE BOARD (DATE).....

APPENDICES INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN

- Current strategic plan (core purpose, core values, long and short-term goals)
- Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- The organizational staff chart
- Role of the transition committee
- Role of the transition chair
- Current executive contract (as applicable)
- Current board roster
- Emergency executive “need to know” list/onboarding checklist