



Has the Hybrid Environment Created Gaps in Succession Planning?

Why Companies Need to Reassess Their Planning Strategies

When a leader leaves an organization, it can create confusion and fear, and even threaten the stability of the business. Creating, defining, and implementing a proper succession plan ahead of time gives your organization the opportunity to mitigate these challenges and ensure a smooth transition of leadership roles and responsibilities.

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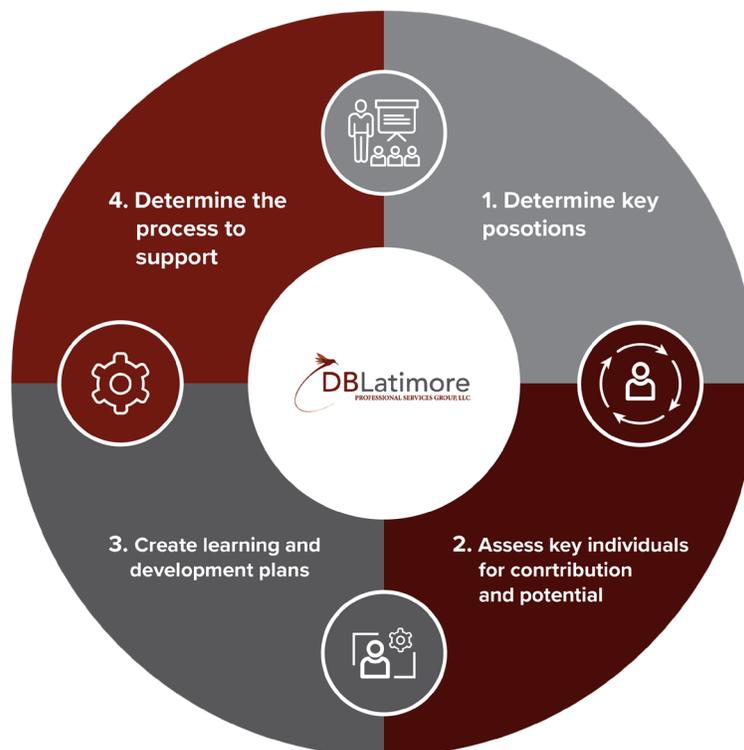
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What is succession planning?

[Succession planning](#) is defined as a strategy for identifying and developing future leaders of all levels within an organization. It assists existing leadership in preparing for all contingencies by preparing high-potential workers for advancement.

When an organization does not have proper strategies in place to address vacancies in critical roles ([C-suite](#), for example), it is at risk anytime employees take on new roles, go on leave, or unexpectedly quit — scenarios that have become a mainstay in what we now know as the hybrid workplace environment.

How Succession Planning Works

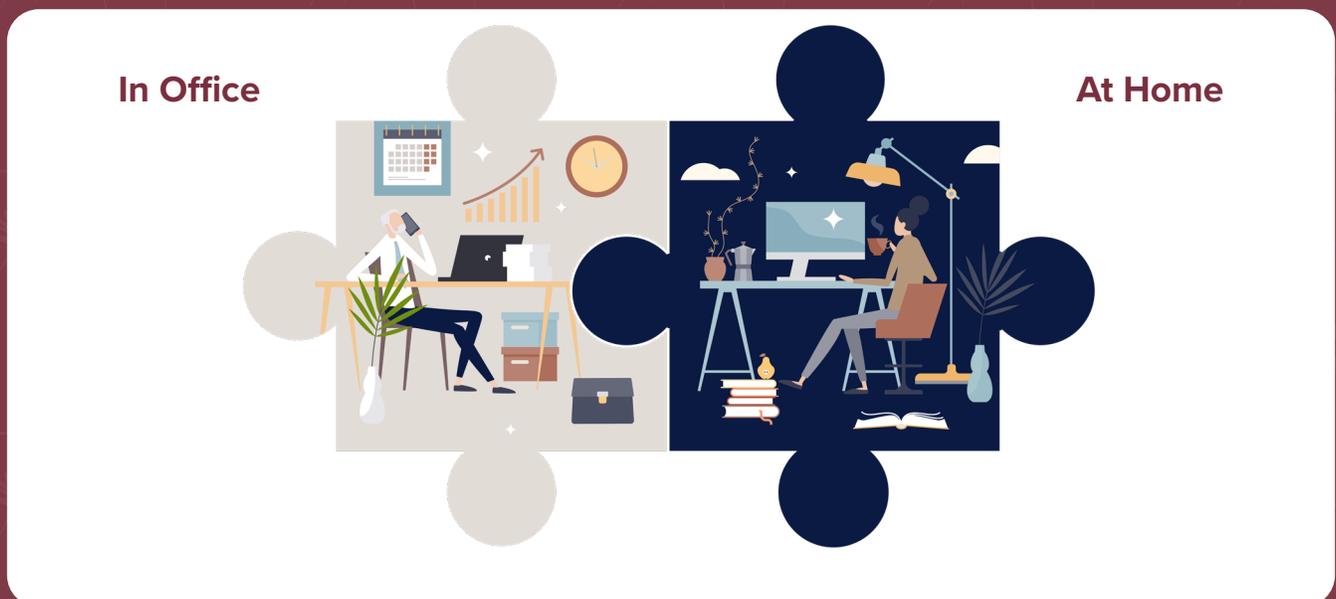


A classic — and historical — example of succession planning happened when [Ursula Burns](#) assumed the role of CEO at Xerox in 2009, taking over for [Anne Mulcahy](#). Burns was the first Black female to lead a Fortune 500 company and the first woman to succeed another as head of a Fortune 500 company.

Defining the hybrid work environment

At [DB Latimore Professional Services Group](#), we describe the [hybrid work environment](#) as an approach to business that promotes a blended work environment of on-site and/or virtual schedules based on the needs of the business. Our definition not only supports workforce flexibility, but also ensures productive business continuity for the organization.

According to [Forbes](#), a successful hybrid work environment depends on five imperative traits: flexibility, inclusivity, supportiveness, security, and proper management.

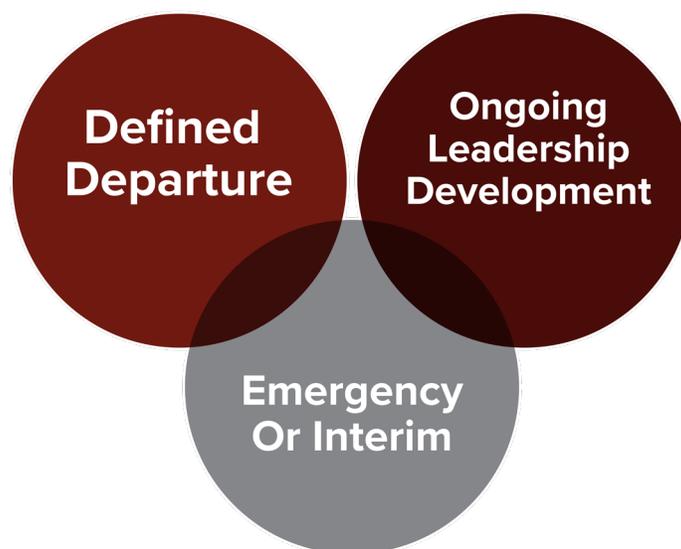


The hurdles of hybrid and its effect on succession planning

It's no mystery that hybrid work is here to stay, and the aspirations of employees have changed forever. Compared to before the pandemic, [47% of employees are more likely to put family and personal life before work](#), while [53% are more likely to prioritize their health and well-being](#).

As a result, companies are quickly pivoting to fulfill these new aspirations in order to keep employees engaged and looking forward to their career growth paths. This recent shift has motivated organizations to rethink their strategies and move towards better people management and talent development.

Regardless of its size, scale, and sector, a company's competitive advantage is an engaged and talented pool of people who are ready to pivot into key positions when vacancies occur, either through promotion or departure.



Why every organization needs a succession plan

Having the right succession planning tools in place creates sustainability and reduces risks associated with the departures of critical players, as well as generates employee goodwill by demonstrating the fact that there is an opportunity for growth and movement within the company — especially in the increasingly volatile job market.

Additionally, it provides organizations with the opportunity to:

- Allow leadership the space and time to focus on business goals
- Create clear communication and alignment within talent management
- Maintain board and shareholder transparency
- Give successors time to prepare

People are an organization's greatest asset. By investing in succession planning, the organization retains a talented and engaged workforce with the knowledge, skills, and abilities — aligned with the organization's strategic direction — thus enabling and ensuring business continuity.

— DAPHNE B. LATIMORE

[DB Latimore Professional Services Group](#)



When organizations aggressively pursue a talent acquisition strategy focused on replacement planning, they miss the opportunity to create a long term talent strategy that is centered on succession, making them vulnerable when critical talent unexpectedly leaves.

Benefits of succession planning

There are countless benefits of succession planning, from boosting employee engagement through career development to fostering a better reputation for a company as a talent destination. Succession planning also:

- *Saves time and costs.* The time needed to find an employee's replacement will cost lost productivity, time, and money.
- *Aligns HR with the vision of the organization.*
- *Ensures there are more employees available with skill sets to maintain business continuity.* In a candidate-driven market, companies compete for a scarcity of talent, making hiring more difficult. Choosing internal employees to fill vacant critical roles helps avoid this challenge.
- *Supports HR and managers in creating and supporting proactive programs.*
- *Provides for smoother business operations and delivery of uninterrupted excellence.* Skilled employees can immediately fill needed high-level roles.
- *Assists management in keeping track of potential valuable employees.*

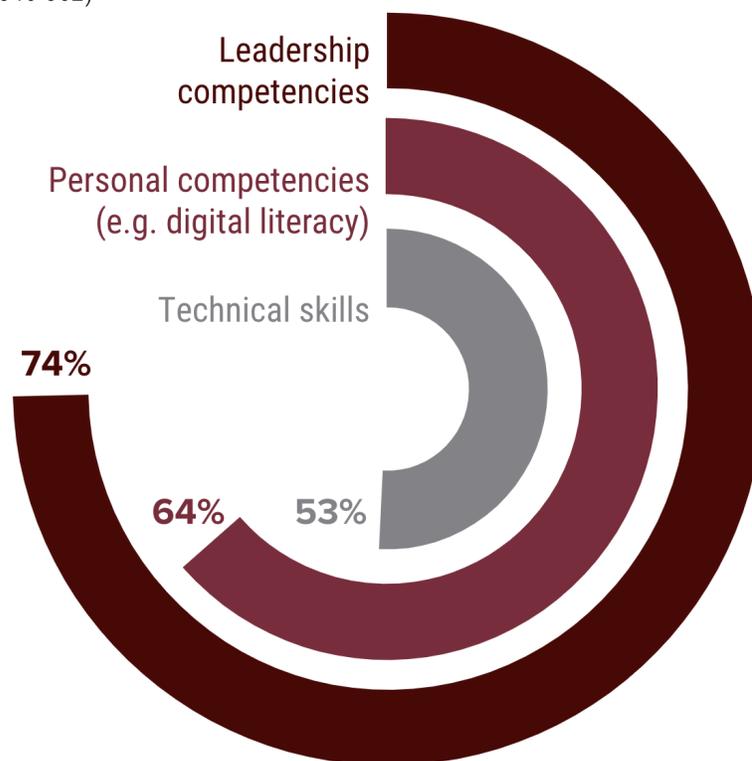
Common Succession Planning Mistakes

Succession planning requires careful organization and — you guessed it — planning. Companies often miss big opportunities or make mistakes when they:

- Can't communicate their vision with employees
- Assume their talent already has the skills and knowledge to advance and succeed
- Don't adopt a formal agreement or plan by including a shortlist of potential candidates and conducting regular employee reviews
- Ignore the need to diversify their talent pool

Skills gaps rated as important or very important:

(n=346-352)



Effective succession planning in the hybrid environment

In short, succession plans emphasize assessing and developing strong pipelines of internal talent to better plan for the future of the business. These employees are key resources in times of significant change, as they have greater versatility. Two essential components of succession planning are talent reviews and career planning.

Talent reviews

Talent reviews involve using competency-based analytics — such as the 9-Box Model — to gain a better understanding of the realities of talent within an organization. The 9-Box Model, also known as the 9-Box Grid, is a tool used to analyze, display, and compare employee work performance and potential. This user-friendly performance map is a talent management tool that helps HR and managers effectively identify leaders, and strategically prepare employees for future roles. This ultimately informs companies on where the gaps are, and which employees and skills could be leaving the organization.

Having this knowledge — and monitoring it often — allows companies to do the following:

- Streamline hiring
- Search for specific skill sets
- Recognize employees' strengths and development areas

Through these primary aims, talent review meetings increase the *visibility* of talent and the *validity* of decisions about talent.

Career Mapping

Career mapping is a critical component of talent development and succession planning. It is the beginning of the employee journey, and is led by the employee with the aid of career ladders created by the organization. It should incorporate data and easy-to-understand visualizations to help leaders *and* employees assess where they are — and where they could go. This ensures succession candidates are provided a clear roadmap for success.

Succession planning is driven by the organization, while career mapping empowers employees at all levels to create a plan for their professional development. As employees invest in their professional development, they create a line of sight for leaders to be able to determine their performance and the potential of future succession candidates.

In the succession planning process, it is imperative that the right tools are in place and the right questions are asked:

- What leadership talent do you *have*?
- What leadership talent do you *need*?
- How can your organization strategically close those gaps?

Using a combination of talent management experts and senior leadership, companies can gain the agility to make fast workforce decisions with ease, while keeping employees safe and avoiding crises and emergencies in their overall business performance.

Have you aligned your P.E.O.P.L.E. with your purpose?

Aligning your workforce with your organization's mission and values is critical in order to successfully thrive in today's hybrid work environment. Succession planning allows you to effectively manage your talent. And having the right organizational plans in place to develop and retain talent for key roles is essential, and helps to avoid the risks associated with talent gaps.

By integrating succession plans into the hybrid workforce environment, companies can create actionable plans to develop and grow its greatest asset — its workforce — serving as a navigation tool to couple change with opportunities.

At DB Latimore Professional Services Group, we specialize in aligning P.E.O.P.L.E. with purpose. Our talent strategies align talent management and talent acquisition to create a sustainable workforce model for the organizations we serve. Furthermore, our succession planning model utilizes a systemic and comprehensive approach, which encompasses the full employee lifecycle and is customized to the organization's needs.

— DAPHNE B. LATIMORE

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Conclusion

So, has the hybrid work environment created gaps in succession planning? In short, it's really too early to tell. What we do know, though, is that it has created the need for leaders to be more intentional about — and even reassess — their planning processes. Companies must take into account the fact that traditional ways of working have evolved — and will continue to do so.

At [DB Latimore Professional Services Group](#), we provide bespoke programs that are customized based on our clients' needs utilizing our exclusive Productivity Powered by P.E.O.P.L.E.® framework. Our goal is to provide talent and leadership development that aligns strategy with operations by cultivating the value every employee brings to the table — turning stagnant operations into agile organizations that empower and educate their talent in living a purposeful life.

As an operating business in 2022, a structured approach to the succession planning process is imperative, as it will ensure that talent is continuing to be evaluated on their performance — and their potential.

Get ahead and safeguard your business now!

Allow us to create a custom succession plan for your organization.

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