

## **SEO DETAILS:**

Page Title: Why Nonprofit Organizations Should Make Management Succession Planning a Priority | [INSERT RELATED SERVICE] | [INSERT FIRM NAME]

Meta Description: [NAME OF FIRM] covers the critical role of individuals in nonprofits and explores Management Succession Planning (MSP) to ensure organizational continuity.

Headline: Why Nonprofit Organizations Should Make Management Succession Planning a Priority

## **BODY COPY:**

From the chair of a nonprofit board to the newest volunteer, nonprofits rely on individuals to promote their missions, expand their operations and keep the proverbial lights on. Some individuals are so central to an organization that it might be difficult, if not impossible, for the organization to function without them should they decide to leave their position or, in the worst-case scenario, something happens to them. Management succession planning (MSP) in nonprofits involves identifying key individuals and creating roadmaps for how an organization will respond if any of those positions become empty. This article offers a brief description of the MSP process, as well as some suggested steps for creating a plan.

### **What Is Management Succession Planning?**

MSP involves determining how an organization will respond to the loss of key personnel. This often involves one or more people at the top of an organization's leadership. It may also involve individuals with specialized knowledge or experience who are essential to the organization's operations. For example, an organization might have an officer or board member who has served the organization in various capacities for decades, and who therefore has a wealth of institutional knowledge.

In the past, MSP often meant choosing an heir apparent who could be prepared to take over for a CEO or executive director. It has grown to encompass a much broader approach. On one level, MSP is about planning for how to handle the succession of a variety of key roles. Another level of MSP is about adapting an organization's culture so that it never has to rely on a single person exclusively for knowledge or expertise.

### **What Are the Most Important Steps in the Management Succession Planning Process?**

There is no one-size-fits-all guide for MSP. Each organization has unique resources and needs. Their plans should reflect their specific circumstances. Of course, many or most succession plans have common features, such as the following:

#### **Evaluate the organization's current and prospective needs**

Perhaps the best place to begin almost any succession plan is by looking at where an organization currently is and comparing that to the organization's goals. MSP presents an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the status quo. Questions to ask might include:

- Is the organization on track to achieve its goals, whatever those goals might be?
- What issues might be interfering with the organization's success regarding its goals?
- Has the organization kept up with new technological developments that could help its mission?

- Has the organization remained in compliance with applicable laws or regulations and kept up with any changes in those areas?
- Does the organization have any potentially untapped resources among its staff? Could employees be given greater opportunities to further the organization's mission?

### **Identify where the organization is most vulnerable should turnover occur**

Who among an organization's leadership, employees and even volunteers plays such a critical role that they could fairly be described as indispensable? MSP is not just about planning for how to replace those at the top. It can also be about preserving critical skills and knowledge. If losing a particular person would significantly impact the organization's ability to function, that needs to be addressed.

### **Determine how best to fill essential roles**

Once the organization understands where turnover could cause the most harm, it can begin to consider how it can adapt to personnel changes. Discussions might include how to identify potential candidates and whether to prioritize hiring from within.

### **Analyze "bench strength"**

Who among the organization's current leadership or staff might be able to step into a critical role should the need arise? It is almost never too early to consider potential candidates for important positions.

### **Keep communication open**

The steps described above may require interviews and conversations with employees, volunteers and others. This can open lines of communication that can be invaluable once the time comes when a succession plan is necessary.

### **Update the plan periodically**

A succession plan reflects an organization's needs and available assets at a particular moment in time. Circumstances will gradually change or could change abruptly and without warning. Routine review of the plan is crucial, with updates made both on a regular basis and as the need arises.

### **Learn More About the Resources for Management Succession Planning**

Nonprofit organizations should focus most of their attention on serving their missions, along with issues like fundraising, administration and donor outreach. While organizations might have robust plans for how they will maintain donations and promote their missions years into the future, a plan for managing the loss of key individuals may be just as important. Nonprofits can seek help from organizational professionals with experience in succession planning. It is far better to be prepared in advance than to have to scramble to fill a critical role.

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