BLACKBIRD FOR TRAINING

Talent Management and Succession Planning

16 – 20 August 2027
Toronto (Canada)



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Introduction

Advanced talent management and succession planning is about one hard question: if a key leader resigned tomorrow, who would step in, and are they truly ready? Many organisations keep successor lists that are out of date, built on opinion and rarely tested. This advanced course is designed for experienced HR, talent and succession practitioners who want to move beyond basic replacement charts and build a succession system that protects leadership continuity.

Participants work through the full succession cycle: pinpointing the roles where a vacancy would hurt most, judging readiness with evidence instead of instinct, running candid talent review meetings, closing readiness gaps quickly and reporting bench strength to the board. Each session includes case work, and participants apply the tools to their own organisation's succession challenges.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Link succession priorities to the organisation's strategy and future leadership needs.
- Pinpoint critical positions using vacancy risk, replacement difficulty and business impact.
- Judge successor readiness with evidence-based assessment and calibrated talent review meetings.
- Design succession slates with ready-now, ready-soon and emerging candidates for each critical position.
- Close readiness gaps through accelerated development, mentoring and planned job moves.
- Track bench strength and succession risk, and report them clearly to executives and the board.

Course Outlines

Day 1: Succession Strategy and Leadership Continuity

- Why successor lists fail: common pitfalls in succession practice.
- Linking succession priorities to strategy, growth plans and future leadership needs.
- Replacement planning versus true succession management.
- Diagnosing the maturity of your organisation's succession practice.



Day 2: Critical Positions and Vacancy Risk

- Pinpointing critical positions: business impact, replacement difficulty and flight risk.
- Mapping retirement exposure, single points of failure and key-person dependency.
- Defining success profiles for top leadership and specialist positions.
- Building a succession risk register for the organisation.

Day 3: Judging Readiness and Running Talent Reviews

- Distinguishing current performance, long-term potential and readiness to step up.
- Evidence for readiness decisions: assessment centres, 360-degree feedback and structured interviews.
- Preparing and chairing candid, calibrated talent review meetings.
- Reducing bias, favouritism and the "crown prince" effect in successor selection.

Day 4: Succession Slates and Closing Readiness Gaps

- Building succession slates with ready-now, ready-soon and emerging candidates.
- Individual development plans targeted at specific readiness gaps.
- Accelerating successors: stretch roles, job rotations, acting assignments and executive mentoring.
- Planning leadership handovers and supporting newly appointed leaders.

Day 5: Succession Governance, Metrics and Board Reporting

- Who owns succession: the roles of the board, CEO, HR and line leaders.
- Bench strength, coverage ratios, internal fill rates and successor retention metrics.
- Presenting succession risk to the executive committee and the board.
- Capstone workshop: drafting a succession plan for three critical positions in your organisation.

Why Attend this Course: Wins & Losses!

- Replace outdated successor lists with a tested, evidence-based succession system.
- Gain practical tools to judge readiness objectively and chair productive talent reviews.
- Reduce leadership continuity risk with measurable bench strength.
- Strengthen your credibility with the board through clear succession reporting.
- Leave with a draft succession plan you can put to work immediately.

Conclusion

This advanced programme from Blackbird Training Center prepares experienced HR and talent practitioners to secure leadership continuity. Participants return able to identify the positions that matter most, prepare credible successors for them and give leadership a clear view of succession risk.

