

Succession Readiness Questionnaire

A practical fillable questionnaire to help leadership teams assess succession readiness, identify risks, and translate insights into priority actions.

Participant Information

Organization / Team	Click or type here	Date	Click or type here
Participant Name	Click or type here	Role	Click or type here
Current Leader / Owner	Click or type here	Potential Successor(s)	Click or type here

How to Complete This Questionnaire

- For each readiness area, use the probing questions to calibrate your score from 1 to 5.
- Capture the evidence, risks, and readiness improvements that support the score.
- At the end, total the five scores and choose the appropriate readiness band.
- Convert the highest-priority gaps into a roadmap with owners and dates.

1	2	3	4	5
Not in place	Early / unclear	Partially in place	Mostly in place	Strong / ready

1. Leadership Alignment

Measures	Alignment on goals, roles, and ownership of succession.
Strong looks like	Clear agreement, defined ownership, transparent communication.
Weak looks like	Avoidance, conflicting agendas, unclear responsibility.
Key question	Would all leaders describe the plan the same way?
Common gap	False alignment.
Probing questions	• Would each leader describe the succession plan, priorities, timeline, and decision rights the same way? • Who owns succession planning today, and what authority do they have to move it forward? • Where do leaders appear aligned in meetings but behave differently in practice? • What decisions are being avoided because they may create conflict?

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Select one	☐ Not in place	☐ Early / unclear	☐ Partially in place	☐ Mostly in place	☐ Strong / ready
What evidence supports the score?					
Type response here					
Type response here					
What risks, misalignments, or assumptions need to be tested?					
Type response here					
Type response here					
What would strengthen this area or move the score higher?					
Type response here					
Proposed score rationale / notes					
Type response here					

2. Successor Readiness

Measures	Whether the successor can truly step into leadership.
Strong looks like	Identified, credible, tested, and developed successor.
Weak looks like	No clear successor or untested capability.
Key question	Would clients trust them today?
Common gap	Confusing loyalty with readiness.
Probing questions	• What evidence shows the successor can lead the business, not just perform their current role well? • Which high-stakes leadership moments has the successor already handled successfully? • Would clients, employees, and partners view the successor as credible today? • What development gaps would create risk if the transition happened sooner than expected?

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Select one	☐ Not in place	☐ Early / unclear	☐ Partially in place	☐ Mostly in place	☐ Strong / ready
What evidence supports the score?					
Type response here					
Type response here					
What risks, misalignments, or assumptions need to be tested?					
Type response here					
Type response here					
What would strengthen this area or move the score higher?					
Type response here					
Proposed score rationale / notes					
Type response here					

3. Client Transferability

Measures	Whether relationships extend beyond one individual.
Strong looks like	Multiple touchpoints, shared relationships.
Weak looks like	Founder-dependent relationships.
Key question	How many clients stay if the leader exits?
Common gap	Underestimating emotional loyalty.
Probing questions	- Which client relationships still depend primarily on the current leader or founder? - How many meaningful touchpoints does each key client have beyond the current leader? - Which clients would be most at risk if the current leader stepped away unexpectedly? - What evidence shows clients are building trust directly with the successor or broader team?

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Select one	☐ Not in place	☐ Early / unclear	☐ Partially in place	☐ Mostly in place	☐ Strong / ready
What evidence supports the score?					
Type response here					
Type response here					
What risks, misalignments, or assumptions need to be tested?					
Type response here					
Type response here					
What would strengthen this area or move the score higher?					
Type response here					
Proposed score rationale / notes					
Type response here					

4. Economic Clarity

Measures	Alignment on valuation and deal structure.
Strong looks like	Clear valuation, aligned expectations, feasible deal.
Weak looks like	No discussion or unrealistic expectations.
Key question	Can the successor afford the transition?
Common gap	Emotional vs. market valuation.
Probing questions	- Have valuation expectations been discussed openly and documented? - Do the current leader and successor agree on what is being transferred and how it will be valued? - Can the successor realistically finance the transition without creating undue business risk? - Where might emotional value, legacy value, or market value be getting confused?

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Select one	☐ Not in place	☐ Early / unclear	☐ Partially in place	☐ Mostly in place	☐ Strong / ready
What evidence supports the score?					
Type response here					
Type response here					
What risks, misalignments, or assumptions need to be tested?					
Type response here					
Type response here					
What would strengthen this area or move the score higher?					
Type response here					
Proposed score rationale / notes					
Type response here					

5. Execution Clarity

Measures	Whether succession is structured and actionable.
Strong looks like	Defined steps, ownership, measurable progress.
Weak looks like	No plan, reactive approach.
Key question	What are the next 3 steps?
Common gap	Planning without execution.
Probing questions	- Is there a written transition plan with clear milestones, owners, and decision points? - How is progress reviewed, and how often are obstacles escalated or resolved? - Which actions are dependent on one person, and what happens if they stall? - What evidence shows the plan is being executed rather than simply discussed?



Score	1	2	3	4	5
Select one	☐ Not in place	☐ Early / unclear	☐ Partially in place	☐ Mostly in place	☐ Strong / ready
What evidence supports the score?					
Type response here					
Type response here					
What risks, misalignments, or assumptions need to be tested?					
Type response here					
Type response here					
What would strengthen this area or move the score higher?					
Type response here					
Proposed score rationale / notes					
Type response here					

Scorecard

Readiness Area	Score (1-5)	Top Gap / Note
Leadership Alignment	___	Type note here
Successor Readiness	___	Type note here
Client Transferability	___	Type note here
Economic Clarity	___	Type note here
Execution Clarity	___	Type note here
Total Score	___ / 25	20-25 Ready 12-19 Moderate Risk <12 High Risk

Succession Roadmap

Stage	Focus	Actions / Decisions	Owner	Target Date
Stage 1: Stabilize	Align leadership; identify successor; document client relationships; establish valuation perspective	Type actions here	Owner	Date
Stage 2: Build	Develop successor; transition client relationships; refine financial structure; define milestones	Type actions here	Owner	Date
Stage 3: Execute	Formalize transition; complete client handoffs; finalize ownership transfer; communicate transition	Type actions here	Owner	Date

Priority Actions and Accountability

Priority	Action	Owner	Deadline	Status / Notes
1	Type priority action here	Owner	Date	Notes
2	Type priority action here	Owner	Date	Notes
3	Type priority action here	Owner	Date	Notes