

# Succession Planning: Three 15-Minute Activities to Start Preparing for Tomorrow

By Heather Haas, President of ADVISA, a PI Worldwide-Member Firm

Succession planning is planning for the future success of your business. It is a deliberate, ongoing process of selecting and preparing the right people to assume leadership positions at all levels of your company. However, some of even the most prosperous and forward-thinking organizations have not made succession planning a priority. Why is that? The reasons are many, but I would offer that most business owners and leaders simply don't know where to start.

This article provides a starting line for those of you who haven't begun the process. For those of you who have, this article will help you gauge your progress.

## 1. Now and Later Assessment – 15 minutes

**Purpose:** This exercise forces you to think about the knowledge, skills, abilities, values and personality traits that are required for success in your role, now and later. Once you understand how to quantify the kind of leadership that's required, it's easier to set about the task of finding or developing talent for the future.

**Instructions:** Set the timer on your cell phone for 15 minutes, open a Word document and type your answer to the following two prompts. Don't overanalyze. Just think for a moment or two and start typing.

- Describe what success looks like in your present role. That is, what does someone have to know and be able to do in order to succeed to the highest standard?
- Fast forward five years: does success in your role look the same? If not, what's different? If you can't confidently predict what will be different, why is that?

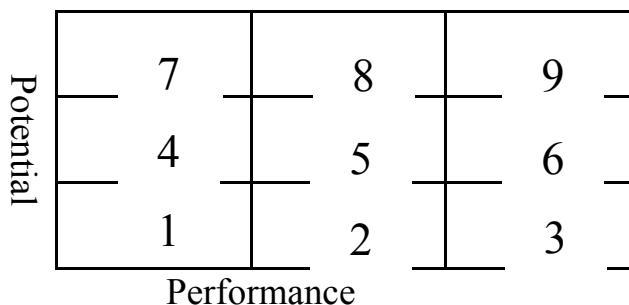
**Next steps:** Ask each key leader in your company to complete the Now & Later Assessment and discuss at your next management meeting. Were there any common themes? Was this exercise easy or hard? Why? What was the mix of descriptors—behavioral/personality, explicit knowledge/skills, performance outputs, values or intellectual capabilities? What does your team need to do as a result of this exercise?

## 2. 9 Box Exercise – 15 minutes

**Purpose:** This exercise requires that you evaluate your current talent according to actual performance and perceived leadership potential.

**Instructions:** Take a piece of paper and draw an X and Y axis. Label the X axis Performance and the Y axis Potential.

Draw two more vertical lines and two more horizontal lines to create a grid of nine boxes like the diagram below.



Assess your talent pipeline by writing down people's names according to your subjective assessment of their current performance and leadership potential. People in Box 1 are Low Performers with Low Potential. People in Box 9 are High Performers with High Potential.

**Next steps:** Reflect on the results. Was this difficult to do or easy? Why? Any surprises? Do you think the individuals you ranked would assess themselves close to the way you did? What's the implication of that? Do these individuals know specifically how to "move up and over" to another box? Why or why not? Are you formally evaluating and coaching on relevant leadership competencies? If yes, are they the right ones? If no, what's the risk?

## 3. Urgent • Important Matrix – 15 minutes

**Purpose:** This activity causes you to prioritize and rank the organizational task of succession planning against all of the other business initiatives that you are committed to. It should help you quantify the business imperative for investing time, energy and resources into succession planning.

**Instructions:** List the top five priorities or initiatives for your company this year. Then give each one an Urgency score and an Importance score from 1 - 10, with 1 being least and 10 being most. Multiply the factors together to get a score for each item you listed.

For example, if you ranked "open a new production facility" as a 3 on Urgency and a 10 on Importance, the score for that item would be 30. Now add "succession planning" to the list. How does that rank?

**Next steps:** Consider asking your executive team or board of directors to do this activity individually and then share responses in a meeting. How similar were everyone's lists of

CONTINUES ON PAGE 6

CONTINUED FROM PAGE

## SUCCESSION PLANNING

priorities? How about the rankings? Given everything on “the organization’s plate,” is it realistic to think succession planning will get the necessary attention? Whose responsibility is it? What’s at risk if a deliberate, systematic approach isn’t taken to selecting and preparing the right people to assume leadership positions at all levels of your company?

In conclusion, succession planning requires reflection, clarification, communication and deliberate planning. It

should not be a one-and-done event. It requires a balance of short-term and long-term thinking which is why the activities in this article are so important. They force you to think. In succession planning, as with any worthwhile pursuit, knowing where you are starting from is just as important as knowing where you want to end up. The first step is the hardest. But take it. The future success of your company—and quite possibly, your personal or family legacy—depends on it.

## RECENT PMPA LISTSERVE TOPICS

PMPA members support one another through email Listserves, where they can solve problems, share advice, sell excess material and equipment, and learn about new developments and opportunities. Here is a list of topics that were recently discussed:

- Searching for 303 SS tubing?
- CNC lathe grooving tool life
- Issue with drilling 304 SS
- Round bore in less-than-round tubing
- Misaligned root & crest problem
- ID chucking
- Thread/worm gear inspection
- Oscillating high-speed drilling attachment on a screw machine
- European tapered pipe thread
- Ganesh machinery cyclone - 52 - TTM lathe
- Dimensional control plan question
- Question on air compressors and environments
- Substance abuse policy/drug testing policy
- Vacation/paid time off policies - looking for examples
- Alcohol testing limit
- Document laminators
- Windows server for remote desktop service
- Affordable Care Act repeal vote update

VISIT OUR BLOG >>

PMPA SPEAKING OF  
**PRECISION**.COM

## PMPA CALENDAR

Below is the calendar of upcoming conferences and events scheduled for the 2012-2013 program year. For the latest district/chapter meeting information, please view the Calendar of Events at [pmpa.org/calendar/](http://pmpa.org/calendar/). If you have questions about PMPA conferences or regional meetings, please contact Rob Kiener, Director of Government Affairs & Communications: 440-526-0300 or [rkiener@pmpa.org](mailto:rkiener@pmpa.org).

### PMPA 2012 Annual Meeting

October 26-30, 2012

The Ritz Carlton, Manalapan (Palm Beach), Fla.

### PMPA Management Update Conference

February 15-17, 2013

Renaissance Hotel & Spa, Glendale, (Phoenix) AZ

### National Technical Conference

April 14-16, 2013

Greater Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, OH

### Precision Machining Technology Show

April 16-18, 2013

Greater Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, OH



6700 West Snowville Rd. • Brecksville, Ohio 44141

Phone: 440-526-0300 • Fax: 440-526-5803

Website: [pmpa.org](http://pmpa.org)

© 2012 P M P A