

# Do You Need Succession Planning and Management?

written by Alisa Fairweather | December 3, 2024



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For small- and medium-sized manufacturers, securing the future of your workforce is essential to long-term success. Yet with an aging workforce and a rapidly changing industry, many companies are left vulnerable when key employees retire or move on. Effective succession planning is crucial—and not just for senior executives. Supervisors, team leads, and other essential roles need a well-thought-out succession plan to ensure organizational continuity and help bridge the skills gap in your company.

Four key reasons why succession planning and management is essential:

### 1. **Continuity in Leadership**

Succession planning creates a pipeline of trained, capable leaders who can step into essential roles with minimal disruption. This ensures your operation remains efficient, productive, and competitive, even in the face of unexpected personnel changes. Continuity in leadership also maintains the steady workflow and productivity that manufacturers rely on to meet demand, reduce downtime, and keep customers satisfied.

### 2. **Overcoming Psychological Barriers**

Many supervisors hesitate to plan for their successors. Whether it's the fear of being replaced, or uncertainty about finding someone with the same skills and commitment, these challenges can get in the way of succession

planning. Addressing these concerns is crucial to building a team that's not only competent but also empowered to step up and support the company's future goals. Succession planning helps shift the focus from individual roles to collective growth and long-term stability.

### 3. **Strategic Selection of Successors**

Choosing the right successor goes beyond technical skills. Both internal and external candidates bring unique advantages, so evaluating them on experience, education, growth potential, and cultural fit helps ensure the best match for your company's specific needs. A strategic approach to succession means identifying candidates who not only have the right qualifications but who also fit the culture and values that make your organization unique.

### 4. **Setting Clear Timelines and Development Paths**

Succession isn't an overnight process. Developing a roadmap with clear timelines, milestones, and regular feedback channels ensures that successors are thoroughly prepared to step into their roles when the time comes. Establishing pathways for continuous skill development keeps successors engaged and motivated while they learn the ins and outs of their future responsibilities. This also promotes a proactive mindset, helping your company stay adaptable in an ever-evolving industry.

Want more insights and practical tools? We're offering a workshop on **Strategic Succession Planning for Supervisors** on March 12, 2025. *Click here for our upcoming training session to secure your spot!*

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# **Do you Know the Role of HR in Workplace Civility?**

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In the politically charged climate of today, maintaining civility in the workplace is more important—and more challenging—than ever. For small and medium-sized manufacturing companies, where close-knit teams are critical to daily operations, promoting respect and collaboration is essential. Human resource (HR) specialists play a pivotal role in fostering a positive workplace culture. Here are five key strategies to help promote civility in your manufacturing environment.

### **1. Lead by Example**

In smaller manufacturing companies, where teams work closely together, the behavior of HR professionals and company leaders sets the tone for the entire organization. By consistently demonstrating respectful communication, fairness, and professionalism, HR can establish a benchmark for employees to follow. When leaders model civility, it encourages a culture where mutual respect becomes the norm, reducing the likelihood of conflicts.

### **2. Create and Communicate Clear Policies**

Clear, well-communicated policies are essential in any workplace, but especially in manufacturing settings where team collaboration is crucial. With support or buy-in from top workplace leaders, HR should ensure that policies explicitly define respectful conduct and outline the consequences of incivility. Emphasize the importance of maintaining respect, particularly in high-pressure situations common in manufacturing environments. Regularly remind employees of these policies through meetings, trainings, and accessible documentation.

### **3. Empower Supervisors as Role Models**

Supervisors in manufacturing often have a significant influence on their teams. HR

should train these leaders to model civility and handle conflicts effectively. Equip supervisors with the tools to foster a culture of collaboration and respect, as their behavior directly impacts team dynamics. When supervisors lead with empathy and fairness, it can create a positive ripple effect throughout the organization.

#### **4. Implement Accessible Conflict Resolution Mechanisms**

Conflicts in a manufacturing environment can escalate quickly if not addressed. HR should establish accessible and straightforward conflict resolution mechanisms that allow employees to address issues constructively. Consider implementing an open-door policy or creating a peer support program to resolve disputes before they escalate. Ensuring that employees feel heard and supported can help maintain a harmonious workplace. Remember that not all conflict is bad, it is natural and properly navigated it can be constructive.

#### **5. Foster a Culture of Recognition and Well-being**

In manufacturing, where teamwork is essential, recognizing and celebrating positive behaviors can significantly impact morale and civility. HR can lead initiatives that highlight and reward examples of teamwork and respect. Additionally, promoting employee well-being through access to resources such as counseling services or wellness programs can reduce stress and foster a more positive and productive work environment.

### **Conclusion**

Promoting civility in a manufacturing workplace is not just about managing conflicts; it's about creating a culture of respect, empathy, and collaboration that enhances both employee satisfaction and company success. HR specialists in small and medium-sized manufacturing companies play a critical role in this process. By leading with intention, developing clear policies, empowering supervisors, implementing conflict resolution mechanisms, and fostering a culture of recognition, HR can help create a workplace where civility thrives.

To learn how IMC can support your HR needs, contact Alisa Fairweather at [alisaf@imcpa.com](mailto:alisaf@imcpa.com).