

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!*