



"Creating Life Opportunities"

Policy and Procedure # 174

Executive Leadership & Key Positions Succession Planning

Approval: _____ Effective Date: 05/07/2024

Policy:

Changes in executive leadership are an inevitable part of every organization's lifecycle and can present both risks and opportunities. This is why Exceptional Foresters Inc. (EFI) has adopted a succession policy for executive leadership and key positions as a standard risk management and sustainability planning measure.

This policy ensures that the organization is well-prepared for any permanent changes in executive leadership, whether they are planned or unforeseen. Such preparation is crucial for maintaining the organization's stability and accountability until a new leader is appointed.

Succession Planning for key positions

Succession planning is a strategic process that involves identifying essential roles within your organization and formulating action plans for potential candidates to fill those roles. By taking a comprehensive view of both current and future objectives, this kind of planning ensures the right talent is in the right roles, both now and in the future.

Over time, succession planning enhances the overall capacity of the organization by:

- Pinpointing crucial roles and potential vacancies.
- Identifying key skills and competencies necessary for business continuity.
- Concentrating on the development of individuals to meet future business requirements. A succession plan outlines prospective staffing needs and identifies the individuals with the skills and potential needed for these future positions. The EFI Succession Planning Toolkit can guide you through this process.

The EFI Succession Planning Toolkit (PDF) includes a series of worksheets guiding you through the succession planning process. This document provides templates and tips for:

- Ensuring that succession planning aligns closely with business strategy and objectives;
- Recognizing the importance of involving executive and senior leaders in the process;
- Clearly outlining the development of key talents; and
- Making sure staff understand their role in the process and what is expected of them.



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Assessment Phase

Step 1: Identify significant business challenges for the next 1–5 years.

Step 2: Pinpoint critical roles required for business continuity.

Step 3: Identify competencies, skills, and institutional knowledge that are crucial success factors.

Evaluation Phase

Step 4: Evaluate high-potential employees.

Step 5: Determine the competencies individuals will need to succeed in roles and to meet identified business challenges.

Development Phase

Step 6: Preserve individuals' knowledge before they leave the organization.

Step 7: Cultivate a pool of talent ready to step into crucial roles through targeted career development strategies.

Procedure for Handling a Vacancy in the Executive Director Position

1. **Organizational Evaluation:** The Board, or a designated committee, will undertake an appraisal of the organization's leadership requirements prior to initiating a search for a new Executive Director (ED). This evaluation will involve revising the organization's strategic plan if necessary. The goal is to ensure that the selected candidate is skilled, competent, and aligns with the organization's mission, vision, values, culture, and strategic objectives. External consultants may be engaged to assist in this evaluation.
2. **Transition Strategy:** The HR Committee will formulate and supervise the transition process, which includes setting up a search procedure, utilizing consulting/search services as required, and nominating staff members to aid in the selection of the new ED, if suitable.
3. **Option to Appoint an Interim ED:** To maintain uninterrupted operations while leadership needs are assessed and a new ED is recruited, the Board may appoint an Interim ED.



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This role could be filled by senior management identified in the Emergency Backup Plan for the ED position, or the Board might choose to hire an external Interim ED. If a Board member is appointed Interim ED, their board membership will be temporarily suspended but reinstated without loss of tenure once the assignment is completed. The Board should clearly outline the Interim ED's authority and compensation. External consulting expertise may be sought to support the Interim ED.

4. Responsibilities of the Interim ED: The Interim ED's main duty is to ensure smooth operation of the organization and fulfillment of existing commitments. This includes managing daily operations, supervising staff, overseeing finances, reporting to the Board regularly, conducting organizational analysis, suggesting operational improvements to the Board, and acting as the organization's spokesperson.
5. Restrictions on Interim ED's Authority: The Interim ED must adhere to the guidelines set forth above or detailed in the Emergency Backup Plan concerning delegated authorities. The Board may impose additional restrictions on the Interim ED's authority.
6. Concurrent Transitions for ED and Management Positions: If an Interim ED is appointed from within the organization, the Board may make additional temporary management appointments from among other management staff or external hires to ensure leadership continuity and program success during the transition period and beyond.
7. Communication: Keeping open and clear communication channels is crucial, especially during times of transition. In order to disseminate information promptly among key groups, the Board will implement the following communication protocol:
 - a. The Board Chair will liaise with the Executive Committee and Interim ED to notify all staff members about the interim leadership plans.
 - b. The Board Chair, in collaboration with the Executive Committee and Interim ED, will reach out to funders and external partners to update them on the transition plan and introduce the Interim ED. This information will also be made available on the organization's webpage and communicated to the public as deemed appropriate.
 - c. The Interim ED is responsible for reporting progress and providing updates to the Board on a consistent basis, at a frequency determined by the Board, throughout the transition period.



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d. The Board will schedule regular meetings with the Interim ED to offer guidance and support during the transition. The frequency of these meetings will be decided by the Board. The Board may opt to delegate these meetings to the Board Chair and/or the Executive Committee.