

Quick Notes

Succession Planning Guide

for Boards and Management

A framework for building transitional resilience, ensuring continuity, and cultivating future leadership readiness.

● 9-Box Grid

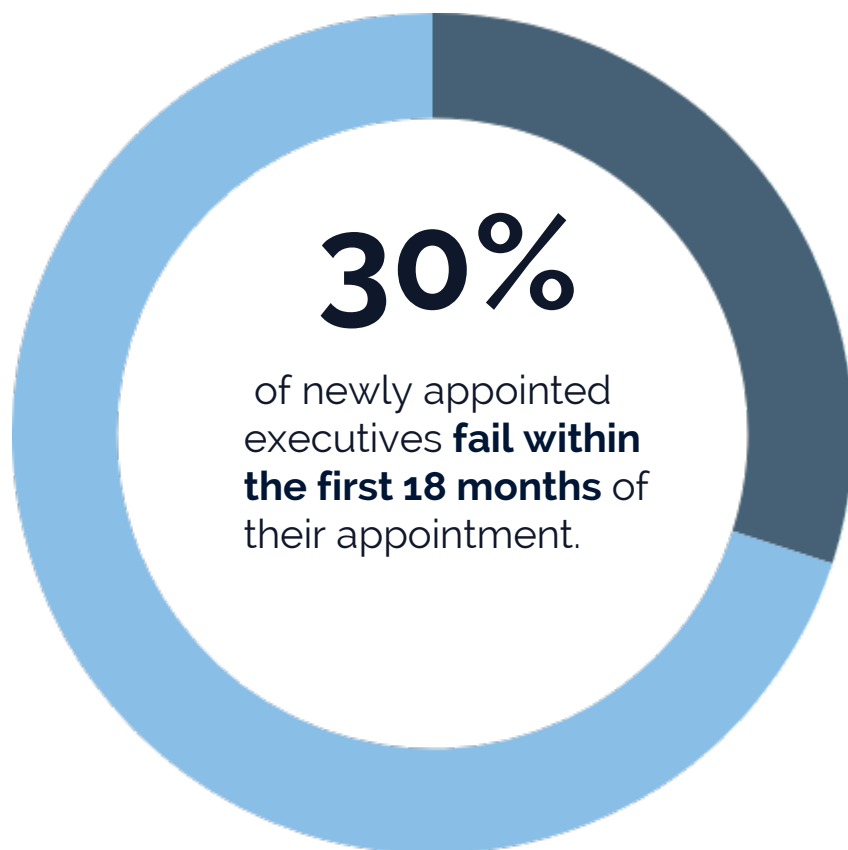
● Readiness Strategy

● Skills Matrix



Why Succession Planning Matters

Failure Rate



7 Primary Causes of Failure



1. Ineffective corporate onboarding



2. Misalignment between skills & role



3. Cultural misalignment



4. Poor team dynamics



5. Execution-strategy mismatch



6. Poor internal benchmarking



7. Inadequate behavioural assessment



Shift the Model: From Replacement to Readiness

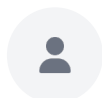


Replacement Strategy

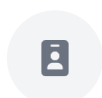
Traditional Approach



Nature
Reactive



Scope
One-for-one Backfill



Focus
Role-Centric



Readiness Strategy

Recommended Approach



Nature
Proactive



Scope
Talent Pools

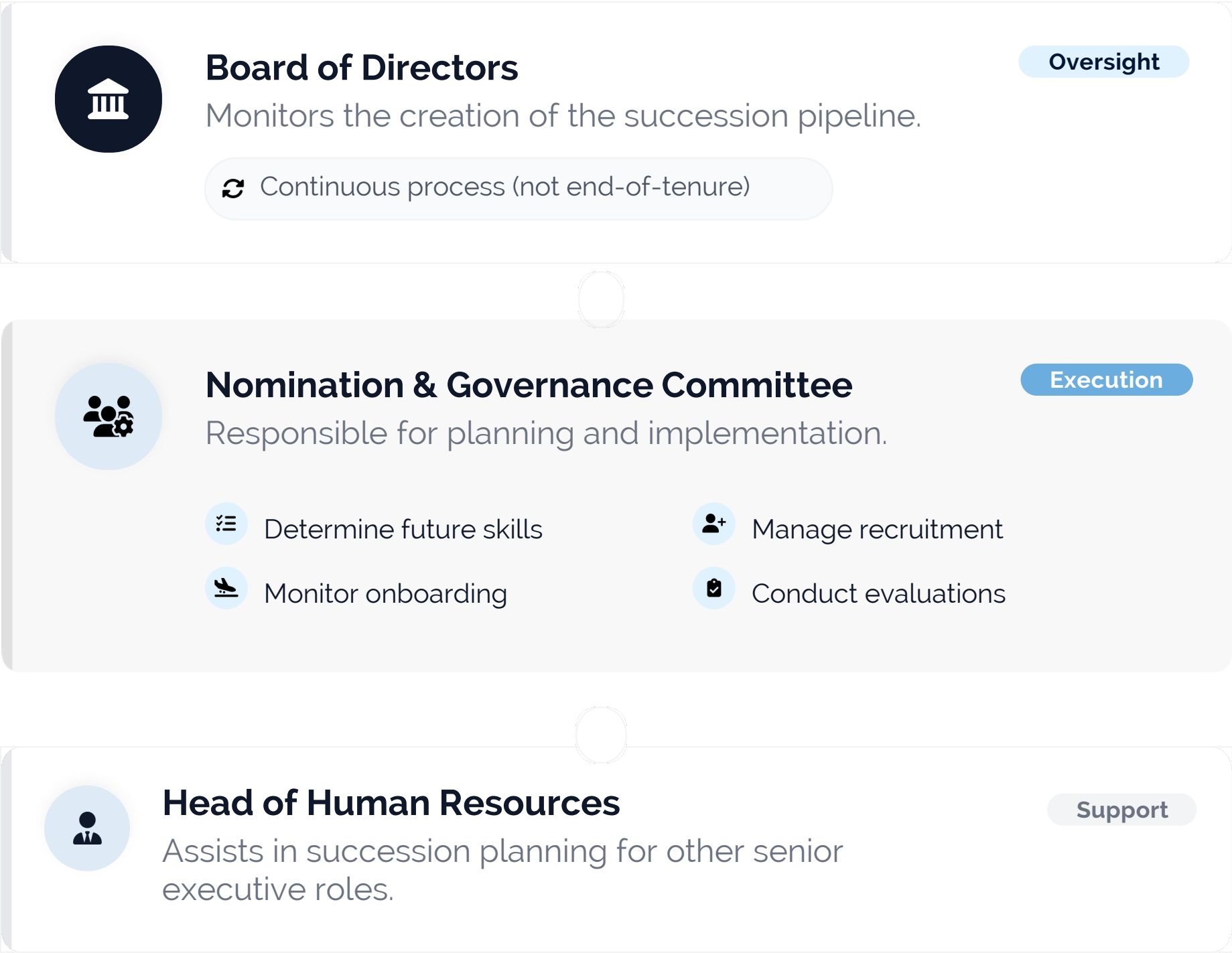


Focus
Capability-Centric

Key Insight

Build a talent pool at **all levels** to ensure organizational resilience.

Succession Planning



Skills Matrix:

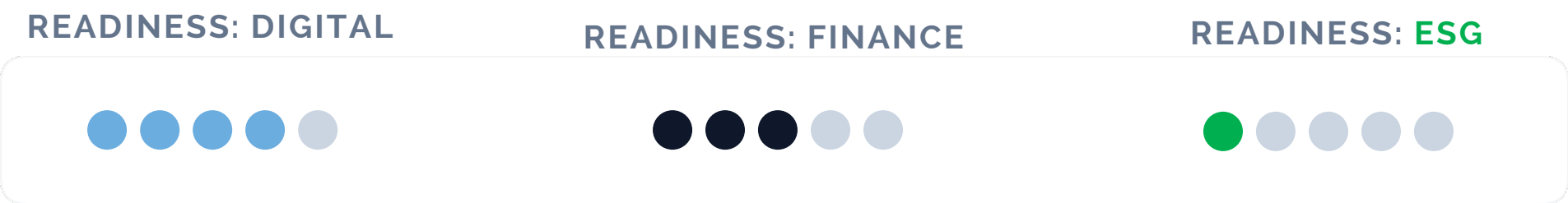
3–5 Year Horizon

Evaluating current leadership composition against the organization's strategic vision.

Good Succession Planning

This can be achieved through the use of a skills matrix to evaluate the current composition of the board and other senior executive positions against the organisation's strategic vision for the next 3 to 5 years.

This evidence-based approach provides information that helps the organisation determine the extent of its leaders' in-depth knowledge in key areas, such as digital transformation, global finance, and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) issues.



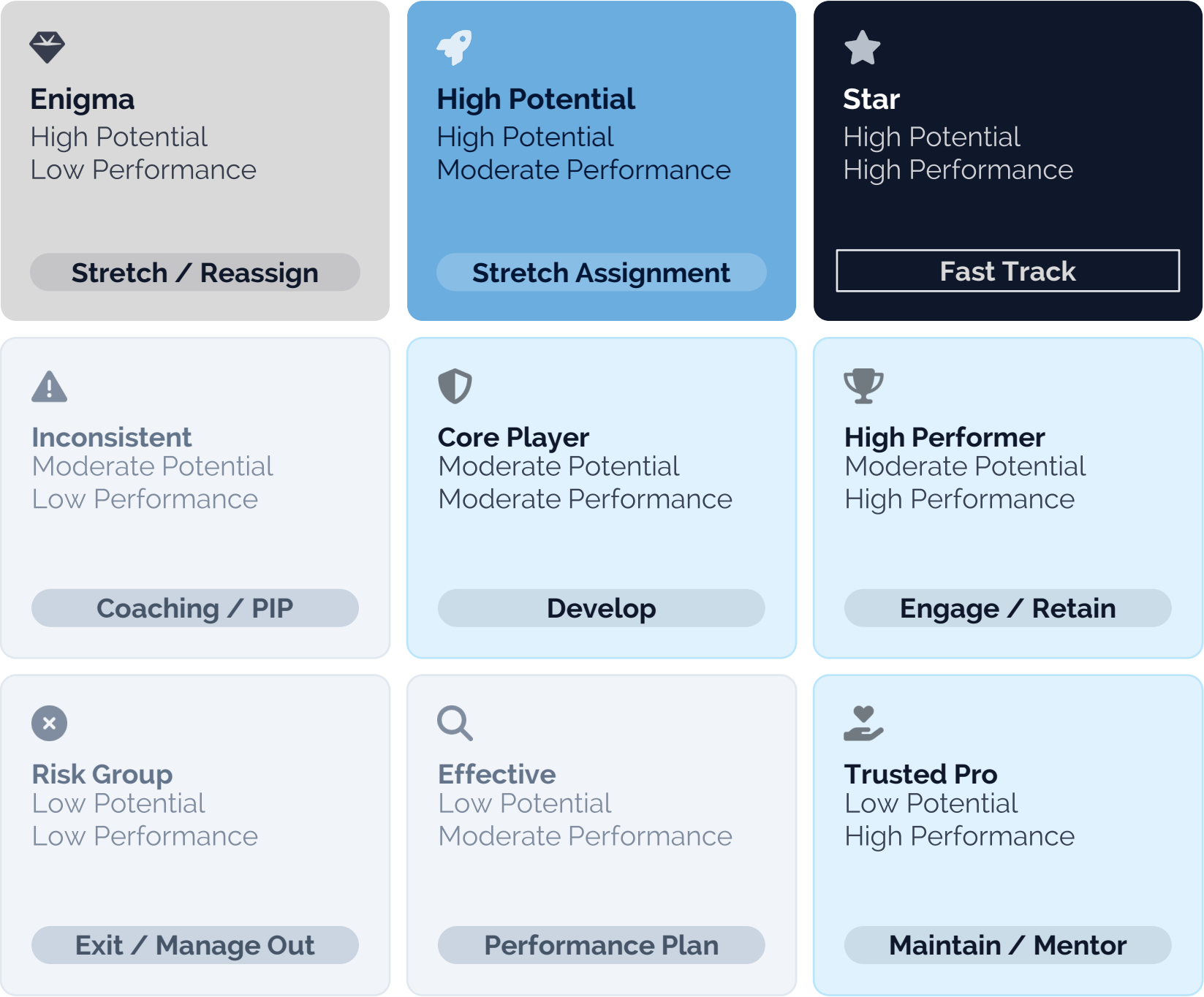
Strategic Alignment
Target: 80% coverage in key domains by 2027

● Strong Coverage ○ Developing ● Critical Gap

The 9-Box Grid

● Top Talent ● Core Players ● Risk Group

↓ Potential



Performance →

Example of a Successor Readiness Time based Cohorts Company JD

A granular view to identify vulnerabilities and manage pipeline risks over time.

Immediate - Ready Now

Candidates capable of assuming the role immediately, with no loss of continuity and minimal disruption.

Pipeline Status

- **Strong** 2



Emergency succession plan validated.

🛡️ Low Risk

1-2 Years – Ready Soon

High potentials requiring specific stretch assignments to close gaps.

Pipeline Status

- **Gap Detected** 0

No candidates identified

- 🕒 **Action:** Initiate external mapping or accelerate 'Future' cohort.

⚠️ Vulnerability

3+ Years – Future Ready

Individuals undergoing mentorship and are building towards readiness

Pipeline Status

- **Healthy** 5



Mentorship programs active.

📈 Developing



- The Initials C1, C2, C3, C4 are pseudo initials; the initials for candidates identified can be used instead.
- Ready soon reads in red and vulnerable as company JD has no candidates identified within the organisation that would be ready for leadership in the next 1 – 2 years, this creates a future leadership void. It is important that the ready soon gap is identified early to avoid leadership risks.

Board Succession:

Best Practices

A structured framework for governance, planning focus, and execution tools.

Category	Planning Focus	Governance Tool
 Immediate / Emergency	Interim roles to fill unexpected vacancies.	 Emergency Succession Template  Pre-approved Delegation of Authority
 Near-term (1-2 Years)	Readiness assessment and specific gap-filling.	 9-Box Grid Planning Metric  360-Degree Feedback
 Long-term (3+ Years)	Foundational leadership development and rotations.	 Mentorship Programs  Individual Development Plans (IDPs)
 Board Composition	Diversity, skills mix, and overall effectiveness.	 Board & Individual Director Evaluation
 Market Benchmarking	Competitive talent analysis.	 Compare internal 'Stars' vs external top-tier (every 2 years)



Pro Tip: Update the emergency plan quarterly, regardless of other cycles.

Make It Effective:

6 Actions

Key requirements to transform succession planning from a concept into business value.



01

Intentional Onboarding

Onboarding and induction must be carried out in an intentional manner to ensure cultural and strategic alignment from day one.



02

Integrated Governance

Succession must be integrated into the corporate governance structure, treated not as HR admin but as a business-critical strategy.



03

AI & Predictive Analytics

Leverage artificial intelligence and predictive analytics to identify hidden talent pools and accurately predict future skill needs.



04

Strategic Evaluations

Board and individual appraisals should be strategic, encouraging radical transparency regarding performance feedback. Evaluations should include behavioural assessment



05

Readiness Over Planning

Shift focus from the documentation of plans to the actual readiness of candidates. Priority must be given to capability building.



06

Culture of Transparency

Create an organizational culture where the succession process is communicated clearly, reducing anxiety and office politics.

Succession Planning is *Value Creation*

It goes beyond filling a position. It is about building organisational resilience, ensuring continuity, and driving future impact.



Build Readiness

Shift focus from "Replacement" to "Readiness". Build robust talent pools at all levels, not just names on a chart.



Use The Tools

Leverage the **9-Box Grid**, **Cohorts**, and **Skills Matrices** to make evidence-based decisions without bias.



Quarterly Review

Talent is dynamic. Review readiness data quarterly to identify new gaps and adjust development plans.

Succession Planning Guide • End

Author



Abasiemediong Etuk

Senior Associate