Succession Planning Checklist – Executive Director

Succession planning is crucial for maintaining the stability and continuity of an organization, as it prepares for scenarios that may range from challenging to easily managed. Here are three potential succession situations to consider:

* Scenario #1: Unplanned immediate (personal tragedy, dismissal);
* Scenario #2: Unplanned with short notice (resignation, temporary leave); and
* Scenario #3: Planned with long notice (retirement, reduced role).

Regardless of the circumstances, there are some fundamental steps that must be considered.

1. Delegation of Authority

* Board chair or alternate
* Staff person
* Third party

Notes:

1. Depending on situation, consider whether current Executive Director (ED) can provide Board with an annual assessment of staff interest/capability to take on role;
2. Important for Board level assignment in scenario #1 and #2.
3. Recruitment

* Assemble task force (3 max)

Job posting

* Edit existing/create new
* Posting sites
* Networks – staff, Board

Process schedule

* Interviews

Solicit relevant input

* Board
* Staff

Notes:

1. Ensure most recent posting on file for reference;
2. Passwords for indeed.ca (and others);
3. Depending on scenario, existing ED may provide input but unlikely to be part of process; and
4. Recruiting and interview process management can be outsourced.
5. Communication Plan

* Board members and staff
* Content/message
* Method
* Timing
* Media
* Content/message
* Method
* Timing
* Key stakeholders/partners
* Content/message
* Method
* Timing
* Donors
* Content/message
* Method
* Timing
* General public
* Content/message
* Method
* Timing

Notes:

1. Need a current listing of all stakeholder groups identified above; and
2. Rule of thumb – “Share what you can, as soon as you can.”
3. Hiring

* Job offer
* Job description (edit)
* Compensation details
* Timing
* Contract
* Communication of new hire
* Board
* Staff

Notes:

1. Ensure a current and relevant job description is on file;
2. Ensure the current employment contract is on file as a template for new; and
3. Important to keep staff/Board informed of process and progress.
4. Onboarding

* Introductions to staff and Board
* Method
* Timing
* Communications
* Media
* Key stakeholders and partners
* Orientation to work and workspace
* Keys
* Passwords
* Security considerations
* Policy and procedures
* Projects and initiatives

Notes:

1. Introductions done in person by Board president or designate; and
2. In case of scenario #1, do we have all keys (duplicates), passwords and security considerations in place?