For all the elaborate processes put in place to develop future leaders and submit them to rigorous assessments, the board and senior leaders often go outside those official channels to promote someone who wasn’t even on the succession list. This disconnect between the intent of succession planning and what happens in practice can be so great that the official process becomes, in essence, an act of theater.

Hundreds of articles are written annually about succession, yet despite its self-evident importance, it is a process often avoided by key stakeholders, and one that can be improved with minor procedural changes. But these discussions can ignore how foundational disruptions have rendered traditional approaches obsolete or outdated. By focusing narrowly on CEO succession, they also can overlook the complexity of succession as a systemic enabler or disabler of inclusion, innovation and agility.

Topics for exploration may include, but are not limited to:

**Succession at all levels.** What does innovative succession and development look like at multiple levels within an organization?

**Measuring development.** What realistic links connect the money that organizations spend on developing leaders with the way they measure those leaders’ growth for internal management and the board?

**Inclusion and succession.** How do you ensure that diversity candidates in your pipeline are real and are advancing? What if your successor slate isn’t diverse?

**Incentives and accountability.** What incentives or accountability structures work to ensure that today’s leaders are building tomorrow’s successors?

**Succession planning across cultures.** What systems enable you to identify and develop leadership talent outside the dominant norms of headquarters or your most mature markets? What risks does cross-cultural succession pose and how do you mitigate them?

**Culture.** Where does culture-creation need to fall on a new CEO’s agenda, and what roles do the board, CHRO and management play in fostering an intentional culture?

**Blindspots.** Is there a way to remove all biases from evaluating candidates in a succession process? How are analytics changing the lenses through which we view succession candidates?

**How succession changes leaders.** What is the impact of succession on a leader? What are HR’s roles and limitations in fostering self-awareness and helping leaders adapt effectively to step-change responsibility?

**Accelerated transition.** Has the pace of business today shifted either the timing requirements or practicality of the belief that new leaders should take 90-180 days to ground themselves and form their plans before executing? Is there data to support another approach?

**Succession in family-owned businesses.** How does effective succession planning within family-owned businesses look the same or different?

**HR and CEO succession.** What do CEO candidates need from HR to convey the clearest story to the board in terms of strategy and its implications for structure, talent, culture and leadership?

**CHRO.** What are the pitfalls and best practices of a CHRO when it comes to succession? What is their role in relation to the board, sitting CEO and incoming CEO?

Articles should be strategic, impactful, actionable, grounded in research or practice, offer another point of view and be readable with minimal jargon.

**Audience**
The typical reader of People + Strategy is a senior-level executive seeking actionable and practical advice based on sound evidence. Our readers are experienced, knowledgeable and work in and for a variety of organizations across the globe.

**Submission Process**
We encourage submissions of one-page proposals and article ideas first to the editors prior to submitting the completed article. All proposals will be reviewed by the editors and returned with comments. If accepted, we will then guide you on the development of your article.

Criteria for evaluation include significance of contribution to the field of human resources; timeliness of content; originality; provocative nature of content; and quality of supporting data.

**Writing Guidelines**
Articles should range from 2,500 to 3,500 words. Please include high-resolution graphics or charts to help present any complex information in a visual format. Limit references to no more than 10.

**Submission Information**
All proposals should be sent to editor@hrps.org. Please designate in the subject line that the submission is for Fall 2020: Succession Theater.

**May 8, 2020:** Proposals due. Submit a one-page overview of the article with the author’s bio.

**May 15, 2020:** Feedback provided.

**June 1, 2020:** Articles due. Submit a well-written draft ready to be edited.

**June 8, 2020:** Feedback provided. We will indicate if the article is accepted, and, if so, what revisions are needed.

**June 13, 2020:** Final articles due.

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