

BB Coaching, LLC

Leadership Pipeline Architecture Framework

The Leadership Pipeline Audit™

Enterprise Offering · Organizational Diagnostic

What This Audit Is

The Leadership Pipeline Audit is BB Coaching's enterprise diagnostic tool. It gives HR leaders, CHROs, CPOs, and senior executives a structured, honest assessment of their organization's pipeline health — measuring across five dimensions that determine whether an organization can develop, retain, and advance the leaders it needs.

This is a diagnostic tool, not a report card. It is designed to surface signals before they become crises.

How to Use This Audit

- Solo assessment: Complete it yourself as a starting-point diagnostic
- Team diagnostic: Have your HR leadership team complete it independently, then compare scores to surface alignment gaps
- Facilitated session: Use it as the framework for a leadership pipeline review with your CHRO or CPO

Scoring Guide

Score	What it means	Suggested action
1	Significant gap — not addressed or barely addressed	Prioritize immediately
2	Early-stage or inconsistent — some awareness, no structure	Build a plan
3	In progress — something in place but not yet reliable	Strengthen and systematize
4	Strong — functioning system with occasional gaps	Refine and maintain
5	Excellent — genuine strength with evidence to support it	Use as a model for other areas

The Five Dimensions

Each dimension contains four diagnostic questions. Score each question on a scale of 1–5. The maximum score per dimension is 20. The total audit maximum is 100.

DIMENSION 01 · PIPELINE CLARITY

Do you know who your future leaders are — and do they know it?

A strong pipeline starts with clear identification. Organizations that struggle with succession rarely have a talent shortage — they have a visibility problem. High-potential employees exist but are undocumented, inconsistently identified, or unknown to the people who make advancement decisions.

#	Question	Low end	Score	High end
1	We have a documented, regularly updated list of high-potential employees at every key level	No list exists	1 2 3 4 5	Actively managed
2	Managers and HR leaders share a consistent definition of what 'high-potential' means in our organization	No shared definition	1 2 3 4 5	Fully aligned
3	High-potential employees are aware of their status and have a development pathway tied to it	They are not aware	1 2 3 4 5	Clearly communicated
4	Our succession plan names specific internal candidates for senior roles — not just role categories	No candidates named	1 2 3 4 5	Named and developed

Dimension 1 score: (4 questions × 5 points = 20 maximum)

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DIMENSION 02 · DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Are you giving high-potentials what they actually need to advance?

Identifying high-potential talent without investing in their development is a retention liability. Employees who know they're seen but aren't given a pathway eventually leave for organizations that offer one. This dimension measures whether your development investment is structured, consistent, and tied to real advancement outcomes.

#	Question	Low end	Score	High end
5	Our organization provides structured leadership development programs — not just one-time trainings — for high-potential and emerging leaders	No structured programs	1 2 3 4 5	Robust ongoing programs
6	Development opportunities are distributed equitably — not concentrated in a small visible group	Highly concentrated	1 2 3 4 5	Broadly distributed

7	We measure effectiveness using outcomes data, not just participation or satisfaction scores	No measurement exists	1 2 3 4 5	Outcomes tracked consistently
8	Employees in our pipeline have individualized development plans with clear milestones and a timeline	No individual plans	1 2 3 4 5	Every pipeline leader has one

Dimension 2 score: (4 questions × 5 points = 20 maximum)

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DIMENSION 03 · PROMOTION READINESS

Are your leaders actually ready before they're promoted?

Promotion readiness is not the same as high performance. The skills that earn a promotion are often different from the skills required at the next level. This dimension assesses whether your organization is developing the specific leadership capabilities — not just technical expertise — that determine whether a newly promoted leader succeeds or struggles.

#	Question	Low end	Score	High end
9	We have clearly defined leadership competencies describing 'ready for the next level' — and we use them consistently in promotion decisions	No defined competencies	1 2 3 4 5	Used in every decision
10	Leaders being developed for promotion receive structured feedback on their leadership behaviors — not just performance results	Performance feedback only	1 2 3 4 5	Full leadership feedback
11	Our organization actively builds executive presence, strategic communication, and visibility skills — not just technical competencies	Not addressed	1 2 3 4 5	Actively developed
12	When we promote internally, the person has been prepared for the new role before the announcement	Always reactive	1 2 3 4 5	Always proactive

Dimension 3 score: (4 questions × 5 points = 20 maximum)

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DIMENSION 04 · RETENTION OF HIGH-POTENTIAL TALENT

Are you keeping the leaders you've invested in?

High-potential employees are the first to be recruited away — and the first to recognize when they're being overlooked. This dimension measures whether your pipeline development is actually retaining the talent it identifies, or whether you're investing in people who eventually take that development to a competitor.

#	Question	Low end	Score	High end
1 3	High-potential employees have a visible, communicated path to advancement — they know what it looks like and what it requires	No visible path exists	1 2 3 4 5	Clear and communicated
1 4	Our attrition rate among identified high-potential employees is low — we retain the people we invest in	High attrition in this group	1 2 3 4 5	Strong retention
1 5	Exit interviews show leadership development and advancement opportunity are not primary reasons people leave	Frequently cited reasons	1 2 3 4 5	Rarely cited
1 6	Managers are equipped and incentivized to develop their people — not just manage their performance	Development not prioritized	1 2 3 4 5	Managers are active developers

Dimension 4 score: (4 questions × 5 points = 20 maximum)

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DIMENSION 05 · SUCCESSION RESILIENCE

Could your organization survive losing a senior leader tomorrow?

Succession resilience is the ultimate test of a leadership pipeline. It's the difference between an organization that plans proactively and one that reacts to vacancies. This dimension examines whether your succession planning is real — documented, tested, and backed by developed internal candidates — or a spreadsheet that lives in HR and never gets used.

#	Question	Low end	Score	High end
1 7	For every senior leadership role, we have at least one internal candidate who is 'ready now' or 'ready within 12 months' — not just identified, but actively developed	No internal candidates	1 2 3 4 5	Candidates for every role
1 8	Our succession plan has been tested — internal candidates have been given stretch assignments, acting roles, or development experiences that prove readiness	Never tested	1 2 3 4 5	Regularly tested
1 9	Senior leaders are actively involved in developing their successors — this is part of their performance expectations	Not expected or measured	1 2 3 4 5	Core leadership expectation
2 0	Our succession planning process is revisited annually and updated when key talent moves, departs, or new roles emerge	Ad hoc or never	1 2 3 4 5	Scheduled and consistent

Dimension 5 score: (4 questions × 5 points = 20 maximum)

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Your Pipeline Audit Results

Add your dimension scores below. Use the interpretation guide to understand where your pipeline stands and where to focus investment.

Dimension	Your score	Maximum
01 · Pipeline Clarity	—	20
02 · Development Infrastructure	—	20
03 · Promotion Readiness	—	20
04 · Retention of High-Potential Talent	—	20
05 · Succession Resilience	—	20
TOTAL	—	100

Score Interpretation

Total score	Pipeline status	What it signals
80–100	Strong pipeline	Identify 1–2 areas to reinforce. Structured investment will accelerate from strong to exceptional.
60–79	Developing pipeline	Structured investment will yield fast results. The foundation exists; close the gaps before they widen.
40–59	Fragile pipeline	Gaps are creating real organizational risk. Reactive decisions are likely already occurring.
Below 40	Critical gaps	Proactive succession planning has broken down. Vacancies are managed reactively. Intervention needed.

Next Steps

A score is a starting point, not a verdict. Every organization has pipeline gaps — the ones that create risk are the ones that go unnamed.

High score (80+)	Schedule a pipeline review to identify which 1–2 dimensions to strengthen before they drift.
Mid score (60–79)	Prioritize the two lowest-scoring dimensions. Structured investment at this stage produces fast results.
Low score (below 60)	Begin with a facilitated audit debrief to name the gaps clearly and build a 90-day action plan.