



The 7 Killers Self-Assessment Tool

A Diagnostic Worksheet for Family
Business Succession

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Welcome to Your Succession Assessment

Identify the critical threats to your family business legacy

Why This Tool Matters

Family businesses face unique challenges that can threaten their very survival across generations. Research shows that only 30% of family businesses survive to the second generation, and just 12% make it to the third generation.

As someone who has lived this journey as a 2nd-generation successor and has guided hundreds of family business leaders through similar challenges, I understand the complexity of balancing family dynamics with business imperatives.

How to Use This Assessment

- Answer each question honestly based on your current situation
- Rate each statement on a scale of 1-5 (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

20,000+

Leaders Influenced

40K+

Hours of Content
Engagement

15+

Years Business
Experience

- Calculate your score for each "Killer" section
- Use the interpretation guides to understand your risk levels
- Develop an action plan based on your highest-risk areas

Time Investment: 20-30 minutes for complete assessment and initial action planning

About Leo Khoury

Having worked in multinational corporations at regional leadership roles, operated within my own family business, and embraced the entrepreneurial journey, I bring a unique perspective to succession planning. My experience spans organizational psychology, HR mastery, and commercial strategy - all essential elements for successful family business transitions.

Through my executive coaching practice and speaking engagements, I've helped family business leaders navigate the delicate balance between family harmony and business success, drawing from both academic frameworks and real-world experience.

Killer #1: Lack of Clear Succession Plan

The absence of a documented, communicated, and agreed-upon succession plan is the most critical threat to family business continuity.

Assessment Questions

1. Our family business has a written succession plan that clearly identifies the next generation of leadership.

①	②	③	④	⑤	<input type="text"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

2. All family members understand and have agreed to the succession timeline and process.

①	②	③	④	⑤	<input type="text"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

3. We have clear criteria for succession that prioritize competency and business acumen over birth order.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

4. Our succession plan includes contingencies for unexpected events (death, disability, family crises).

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

5. The succession plan is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changing business conditions.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

6. Non-family employees understand and support the succession plan and their role in the transition.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

Score Interpretation (Total: ___/30)

25-30: Excellent - Well-defined succession framework in place

19-24: Good - Solid foundation with some areas for improvement

13-18: Fair - Basic planning exists but lacks comprehensive approach

7-12: Poor - Significant gaps in succession planning

6 or below: Critical - Immediate action required



Key Warning Signs

- Succession discussions are avoided or postponed repeatedly
- Multiple family members assume they will be the successor
- No written documentation of succession intentions
- Succession planning is viewed as "the founder's decision alone"
- Current leadership shows reluctance to discuss retirement or transition



Immediate Action Steps

- Schedule a family meeting dedicated solely to succession planning
- Engage a family business advisor or coach to facilitate planning sessions
- Document current succession thoughts and preferences of all stakeholders
- Create a timeline for developing and implementing the succession plan
- Establish regular succession planning review meetings

Killer #2: Poor Communication & Transparency

Inadequate communication creates assumptions, breeds resentment, and undermines trust within the family and business.

Assessment Questions

1. Regular family meetings are held to discuss business matters, including financial performance and strategic direction.

①	②	③	④	⑤	<input type="text"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

2. Family members feel comfortable expressing disagreements and concerns about business decisions.

①	②	③	④	⑤	<input type="text"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

3. Financial information is shared transparently with all relevant family stakeholders.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

4. We have established communication protocols for major business decisions and family matters.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

5. Next-generation family members are kept informed about business performance and challenges.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

6. There is a culture of open feedback and constructive dialogue within the family business.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

Score Interpretation (Total: ___/30)

25-30: Excellent - Strong communication culture established

19-24: Good - Regular communication with room for enhancement

13-18: Fair - Inconsistent communication patterns

7-12: Poor - Significant communication barriers exist

6 or below: Critical - Communication breakdown threatens business unity



Key Warning Signs

- Important family/business information is shared through informal channels
- Family members learn about business changes from non-family employees
- Meetings are avoided because they "always turn into arguments"
- Financial performance is treated as "none of their business" for some family members
- Assumptions are made about others' intentions without clarification



Immediate Action Steps

- Establish monthly family business meetings with structured agendas
- Create communication guidelines that encourage respectful dialogue
- Implement regular financial reporting to all stakeholders
- Designate a family member to facilitate meetings and ensure all voices are heard

- Develop conflict resolution protocols for when disagreements arise

Killer #3: Inadequate Next-Gen Preparation

Failing to properly develop and prepare the next generation of leaders creates a capability gap that threatens business continuity.

Assessment Questions

1. Next-generation family members have clearly defined development paths and leadership competency requirements.

①	②	③	④	⑤	<input type="text"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

2. Potential successors have gained experience outside the family business before joining.

①	②	③	④	⑤	<input type="text"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

3. Next-generation members receive formal leadership development and business education.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

4. Potential successors have proven their competence in progressively responsible roles within the business.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

5. Next-generation family members understand the business's history, values, and strategic direction.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

6. There are mentoring relationships established between senior and next-generation family members.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

Score Interpretation (Total: ___/30)

25-30: Excellent - Comprehensive next-gen development program

19-24: Good - Solid preparation with some enhancement opportunities

13-18: Fair - Basic development efforts but lacking systematic approach

7-12: Poor - Insufficient preparation of future leaders

6 or below: Critical - Next generation unprepared for leadership responsibilities

Key Warning Signs

- Next-generation members join the business without clear roles or expectations
- Family members are promoted based on family status rather than demonstrated competence
- No formal development plans exist for potential successors
- Current leaders are unwilling to delegate meaningful responsibility
- Next-generation members lack industry knowledge or business acumen

Immediate Action Steps

- Create individual development plans for each next-generation family member
- Establish competency requirements for key leadership positions
- Encourage outside work experience before joining the family business
- Implement formal mentoring programs with non-family executives

- Provide leadership training, business education, and industry exposure

Killer #4: Family Conflict & Unresolved Issues

Unaddressed family conflicts and personal disputes can poison the business environment and paralyze decision-making.

Assessment Questions

1. Our family has effective mechanisms for resolving conflicts when they arise in business contexts.

①	②	③	④	⑤	<input type="text"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

2. Family members can separate personal relationships from business decisions and discussions.

①	②	③	④	⑤	<input type="text"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

3. Historical family issues and resentments do not interfere with current business operations.

①	②	③	④	⑤	<input type="text"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

4. We have clear boundaries between family gatherings and business meetings.

①	②	③	④	⑤	
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

5. All family members treat each other with professional respect in business settings.

①	②	③	④	⑤	
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

6. We seek external mediation or counseling when family conflicts impact the business.

①	②	③	④	⑤	
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

Score Interpretation (Total: __/30)

25-30: Excellent - Healthy family dynamics support business success

19-24: Good - Minor conflicts managed effectively

13-18: Fair - Some family issues affecting business operations

7-12: Poor - Significant family conflicts disrupting business



Key Warning Signs

- Business decisions are delayed or avoided due to family tensions
- Family members form coalitions against each other
- Personal disputes spill over into business meetings and decisions
- Non-family employees feel uncomfortable due to family conflicts
- Family members use business leverage to resolve personal issues



Immediate Action Steps

- Establish clear protocols for separating family and business matters
- Create a family code of conduct for business interactions
- Engage a family business therapist or mediator for conflict resolution
- Implement regular family relationship check-ins separate from business meetings
- Develop exit strategies for family members who cannot work together effectively

Killer #5: Resistance to Change & Innovation

Failure to adapt to market changes and embrace innovation can render even successful family businesses obsolete.

Assessment Questions

1. Our family business actively monitors market trends and adapts our strategies accordingly.

①	②	③	④	⑤	
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

2. Next-generation family members are encouraged to bring new ideas and perspectives to the business.

①	②	③	④	⑤	
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

3. We regularly invest in new technologies and business processes to maintain competitiveness.

①	②	③	④	⑤	
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

4. Our business model and strategies are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect market realities.

①	②	③	④	⑤	
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

5. We welcome input from non-family employees and external advisors about innovation opportunities.

①	②	③	④	⑤	
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

6. The phrase "that's how we've always done it" is rarely used as justification for maintaining current practices.

①	②	③	④	⑤	
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

Score Interpretation (Total: __/30)

25-30: Excellent - Innovation-focused culture driving competitive advantage

19-24: Good - Balanced approach to tradition and innovation

13-18: Fair - Some openness to change but room for improvement

7-12: Poor - Resistance to change limiting growth potential

6 or below: Critical - Innovation paralysis threatening long-term viability



Key Warning Signs

- Business performance declining relative to competitors
- New ideas from next generation are consistently rejected
- Investment in technology and innovation is viewed as unnecessary expense
- Customer feedback about changing needs is ignored
- Senior generation views change as a threat to family legacy



Immediate Action Steps

- Conduct a competitive analysis to identify innovation gaps
- Create innovation committees with both family and non-family members
- Establish annual innovation budgets and goals
- Encourage next-generation members to lead innovation initiatives
- Implement regular market research and customer feedback processes

Killer #6: Absence of Governance Structures

Without proper governance structures, family businesses lack the framework needed for effective decision-making and accountability.

Assessment Questions

1. We have a formal board of directors or advisory board that includes independent outside members.

①	②	③	④	⑤	<input type="text"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

2. Clear policies exist for family employment, including performance standards and compensation guidelines.

①	②	③	④	⑤	<input type="text"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

3. We have established a family council or similar body to address family-related business issues.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

4. Decision-making authority is clearly defined and documented across all levels of the organization.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

5. We have written policies governing ownership, dividend distributions, and share transfers.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

6. Family members are held accountable to the same performance standards as non-family employees.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

Score Interpretation (Total: ___/30)

25-30: Excellent - Robust governance framework in place

19-24: Good - Solid governance structures with minor gaps

13-18: Fair - Basic governance exists but needs strengthening

7-12: Poor - Inadequate governance structures

6 or below: Critical - Absence of governance threatens business sustainability



Key Warning Signs

- Major decisions are made informally without documented processes
- No accountability mechanisms for family members in the business
- Compensation and performance standards are applied inconsistently
- Outside perspectives and expertise are not sought or valued
- Ownership and employment are confused and conflated



Immediate Action Steps

- Establish an advisory board with independent external members
- Create a family employment policy with clear entry requirements
- Develop written policies for compensation, ownership, and succession
- Form a family council to represent family stakeholder interests
- Document decision-making authority and accountability structures

Killer #7: Emotional Attachment Over Business Logic

When emotions and legacy concerns override sound business decisions, the family business becomes vulnerable to poor strategic choices.

Assessment Questions

1. Business decisions are made based on objective criteria and market realities rather than emotions.

①	②	③	④	⑤	<input type="text"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

2. We are willing to consider strategic options including sale, merger, or external leadership if it's best for the business.

①	②	③	④	⑤	<input type="text"/>
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	

3. Family legacy and business success are viewed as complementary rather than competing priorities.

<input type="text"/>

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

4. We are willing to make difficult decisions about underperforming assets or business lines.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

5. External advisors and professionals are consulted for major business decisions.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

6. The business has clear, measurable performance metrics that drive decision-making.

① Strongly Disagree ② Disagree ③ Neutral ④ Agree ⑤ Strongly Agree

Score Interpretation (Total: ___/30)

25-30: Excellent - Balanced emotional and rational decision-making

19-24: Good - Generally objective with occasional emotional influence

13-18: Fair - Emotions sometimes override business logic

7-12: Poor - Emotional attachments frequently impede sound decisions

6 or below: Critical - Sentimentality threatens business viability

Key Warning Signs

- Underperforming assets are retained "because of what they represent"
- Family members cannot discuss business sale or exit strategies
- Business identity is inseparable from family identity
- Decisions are justified with "your grandfather would want..." reasoning
- Objective market data is ignored in favor of family preferences

Immediate Action Steps

- Establish objective decision-making criteria for major business choices
- Create a process for evaluating strategic alternatives without emotional bias
- Engage external advisors to provide objective business perspectives
- Develop clear performance metrics and accountability systems
- Facilitate family discussions about values vs. business requirements

Your Succession Health Score

Understanding your overall succession readiness

Transfer Your Scores

Killer #1: Lack of Clear Succession Plan

___/30

Killer #2: Poor Communication & Transparency

___/30

Killer #3: Inadequate Next-Gen Preparation

___/30

Killer #4: Family Conflict & Unresolved Issues

___/30

Killer #5: Resistance to Change & Innovation

___/30

Killer #6: Absence of Governance Structures

___/30

Killer #7: Emotional Attachment Over Business Logic

___/30

TOTAL SUCCESSION HEALTH

SCORE: ____ / 210

Overall Interpretation

175-210: Succession Ready

Your family business demonstrates strong succession planning practices across all critical areas. Continue to refine and update your strategies, maintaining the momentum you've built. Focus on continuous improvement and staying ahead of emerging challenges.

140-174: Strong Foundation

You have solid succession practices in place with some areas requiring enhancement. Review your lower-scoring "Killers" and develop targeted action plans. With focused effort, you can achieve succession excellence.

105-139: Work Required

Significant gaps exist in your succession planning. Prioritize the lowest-scoring areas and begin systematic improvements immediately. Consider engaging professional guidance to accelerate your progress and avoid common pitfalls.

70-104: At Risk

Your family business faces serious succession challenges that require urgent attention. Multiple critical areas need immediate intervention. External expertise is strongly recommended to help navigate these complex issues.

Below 70: Critical Danger

Your family business is in critical danger of succession failure. Immediate, comprehensive intervention is required. Engage professional family business advisors and coaches immediately to develop an emergency action plan and begin the transformation process.



Next Steps

1. Identify your three lowest-scoring "Killers"
2. Complete the Action Planning Worksheet on the next page
3. Share results with key family stakeholders
4. Schedule a family meeting to discuss findings and priorities
5. Consider professional guidance to accelerate your succession success

Action Planning Worksheet

Prioritize and plan your succession improvement initiatives

Step 1: Identify Your Priority Areas

List your three lowest-scoring "Killers" from the assessment. These represent your highest-priority areas for improvement:

Priority #1 (Lowest Score):

Priority #2:

Priority #3:

Step 2: Prioritization Matrix

Use this matrix to evaluate each priority area based on urgency and impact. Place your priority killers in the appropriate quadrant:

**HIGH URGENCY /
HIGH IMPACT**

Address Immediately

**HIGH URGENCY /
LOWER IMPACT**

Quick Wins - Address Soon

LOWER URGENCY / HIGH IMPACT

Strategic Initiatives - Plan
Carefully

LOWER URGENCY / LOWER IMPACT

Monitor and Maintain

Step 3: Action Plan for Top Priority

Create a detailed action plan for your highest-priority area:

Priority Killer Being Addressed:

Specific Actions to Take (List 3-5):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Person Responsible:

Target Completion Date:

Resources/Support Needed:

Success Metrics (How will you know you've succeeded?):



Review Schedule

Succession planning is not a one-time event. Schedule regular review sessions to assess progress and adjust your plans:

- **Weekly:** Individual action item progress checks
- **Monthly:** Family business meeting to review succession initiatives
- **Quarterly:** Comprehensive reassessment of priority areas
- **Annually:** Complete re-assessment using this tool to measure improvement

Ready to Transform Your Succession Journey?

Partner with someone who's been in your shoes



Executive Coaching with Leo Khoury

"I've lived the family business succession journey as a 2nd-generation successor. I understand the unique pressures of balancing family expectations with business realities, honoring legacy while driving innovation, and preparing for leadership transitions that change everything."

Why Partner With Me?

✓ I've Lived Your Reality

Not just theory from textbooks - I've navigated multinational leadership roles, worked within my own family business, and built my own entrepreneurial ventures. I bring real-world experience to every coaching engagement.

✓ Proven Methodology

My approach blends organizational psychology, neurolinguistics, and leadership philosophy with practical commercial strategy. This isn't just feel-good coaching - it's transformation that shows up in your business results.

✓ **Track Record of Impact**

20,000+ leaders influenced through content, workshops, and coaching. 40K+ hours of content engagement. Serving clients globally in Jordan, GCC, and USA with measurable outcomes and lasting transformation.

✓ **Systems-First Approach**

I don't just help you solve today's problems - I help you build the systems, structures, and mindsets that prevent future crises and enable sustainable growth across generations.

How I Can Help You

One-on-One Executive Coaching

Personalized sessions designed to unlock your leadership potential, clarify your succession strategy, and navigate the complex dynamics of family business transitions.

Family Business Workshops

Facilitated sessions that bring your family together to address succession challenges, improve communication, and build alignment around your shared vision for the future.

Succession Planning & Governance

Strategic guidance to develop comprehensive succession plans, establish governance structures, and create the frameworks that enable smooth leadership transitions.

Next-Generation Development

Customized programs to prepare your future leaders for the responsibilities ahead, combining leadership development with business acumen and family business dynamics.

What Clients Experience

"Leo helped us navigate one of the most challenging periods in our family business history. His ability to understand both the business imperatives and family dynamics was invaluable. We now have a clear succession plan and a renewed sense of unity."

— **Family Business CEO, GCC Region**

- **Clarity** on succession strategy and leadership transition
- **Improved communication** and trust among family stakeholders
- **Structured frameworks** for governance and decision-making
- **Confident next-generation leaders** ready to take the reins
- **Sustainable systems** that outlast any individual leader

Take the Next Step

Your assessment results reveal where you are. Coaching reveals where you can go.

Book Your Consultation

Website: www.leokhoury.me

LinkedIn: Connect with Leo Khoury for leadership insights and succession strategies

Serving: Jordan, GCC, USA & Global Clients



Don't let the 7 Killers claim your family's legacy.

The best time to plan your succession was yesterday. The second-best time is today.