



Vickerstock
One **move** ahead

SUCCESSION PLANNING FROM THE BOTTOM UP IN MANUFACTURING





WHO ARE VICKERSTOCK?

Established in 2008, Vickerstock is a leading independent recruitment agency specialising in supplying sector-specific candidates for a wide range of businesses throughout Ireland, the UK and beyond.



DARREN MCVICKER

Managing Director



TODAY'S AGENDA

- Why succession planning at all levels is essential for long-term growth and stability.
- How bottom-up succession planning can improve retention and protect key skills.
- Practical steps to identify and develop potential at every tier of your workforce.
- How succession planning reinforces culture, strengthens identity, and positions your business as an employer of choice.

WHY SUCCESSION PLANNING MATTERS SOLUTION TO YOUR BUSINESS

- Manufacturing in NI faces unique pressures:
 - Retirements in key leadership roles.
 - Competition for skilled managers.
 - Need to adopt new technologies faster.
- Without a plan, businesses risk knowledge loss, disruption, and missed opportunities.
- A strong plan builds a pipeline of leaders ready to step in.

WHAT SUCCESSION PLANNING IS

- Not just replacing leaders.
- A structured approach to:
 - Identifying key roles.
 - Developing future leaders.
 - Ensuring smooth transitions.
- Goal: long-term stability and competitiveness.



96,700 JOBS IN MANUFACTURING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

CONSERVATIVE 2% RETIREMENT OF THE NEXT 5 YEARS

1934 experienced people
could leave
manufacturing over the
next 5 years

MODERATE 4 % RETIREMENT OF THE NEXT 5 YEARS

This would suggest 3,868
departures over the next
5 years

HIGH 6% RETIREMENT OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS

is 5,802 people



WHAT I RECOMMEND TACTICAL & QUICK

- Get your workforce age snapshot
- Run the same scenario model for your organisation
- Prioritise the 'critical roles'
- Mix retention + pipeline
- Measure & review





THE FRAMEWORK FOR MANUFACTURERS

01 DEFINE LEADERSHIP
OBJECTIVES.

02 ASSESS CRITICAL ROLES.

03 IDENTIFY HIGH-
POTENTIAL TALENT.

04 CREATE DEVELOPMENT
PLANS.

05 TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE
EFFECTIVELY.

06 MEASURE PROGRESS
AND ADJUST.

STEP 1 & 2: OBJECTIVES AND CRITICAL ROLES

- Production Managers.
- Quality Assurance Leaders.
- Technical Experts in food safety, lean manufacturing, or automation.
- Align these roles with business goals such as growth, innovation, and export expansion.



STEP 3: TALENT IDENTIFICATION

- Look within
 - Who already shows leadership potential?
- Tools
 - performance reviews, skills assessments, and feedback from line managers.
- Diversity matters – building a wider pool creates resilience.



STEP 4: DEVELOPMENT PLANS

- Leadership training tailored to manufacturing.
- Safety and compliance certifications.
- Mentorship with senior managers.
- Cross-department job rotations.
- Exposure to digital tools and automation trends.



STEP 5: KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

- Shadowing and mentorship.
- Documenting standard processes.
- Peer-to-peer learning.
- Embedding lessons learned from retiring leaders.





STEP 6: METRICS AND PROGRESS

- Retention of high-potential employees.
- Readiness assessments for critical roles.
- Leadership development milestones.
- Feedback from employees on career pathways.



LINKING SUCCESSION AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING

- Succession fails without leadership training.
- Training builds confidence and adaptability in leaders.
- NI manufacturers must prepare leaders to handle:
 - Technology adoption.
 - Supply chain pressures.
 - Continuous improvement initiatives.



BEST PRACTICES

- Start early, don't wait until a crisis.
- Involve your current leaders in mentoring.
- Tie succession planning to the overall business strategy.
- Use workforce planning to spot future skill gaps.
- Consider external partners (like Vickerstock) for specialist recruitment and leadership development.

COMMON CHALLENGES

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Communicate clearly and build buy-in.

LIMITED RESOURCES

Partner with training providers, leverage industry groups.

SKILLS GAPS

Prioritise development in areas like quality, lean, and automation.



THE NI MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE

- Workforce demographics show looming retirements.
- Apprenticeship pipelines and graduate recruitment are important but not enough.
- Succession planning ensures businesses keep their edge.



CONCLUSION

- Succession planning is about creating a resilient, future-ready workforce.
- By aligning leadership development with business strategy, NI manufacturers can:
 - Maintain stability.
 - Drive innovation.
 - Stay competitive in a changing industry.
- Vickerstock supports manufacturers by identifying, recruiting, and developing leaders for the future.



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THANK YOU
QUESTIONS?

