

01 / DECISION & CONTEXT

Succession planning

We help owners plan leadership and ownership succession, assess financing needs and compare the options before a transition becomes urgent.

An owner wants to reduce responsibility without rushing an ownership decision.

We help owners distinguish between leadership succession, ownership transfer and personal liquidity needs. We compare family succession, management ownership and external capital, then identify the preparation each option requires.

Overview

Succession planning gives an owner time to separate three decisions that are often conflated: who owns the company, who leads it, and how the founder's financial needs will be met. Those changes do not have to happen together. A staged transition can create room to develop leadership, prepare family shareholders, and consider external ownership options without forcing an immediate sale.

What we examine

We begin with the objectives of each shareholder and the dependence of the business on particular people. Family involvement, management aspirations, dividend needs, and willingness to retain investment risk may differ substantially. Operational assessment considers delegated authority, customer relationships, financial controls, and the strength of the second management tier. Property held outside the operating company and loans between family entities can also influence available options.

A useful starting point: agree the decision to be made before choosing a process or approaching counterparties.

02 / WORK PROGRAMME

Turn the decision into a plan.

We compare family transfer, management ownership, partial sale and full exit against your priorities. A readiness review identifies the changes needed to make each path credible. A transition roadmap can then set out leadership responsibilities, governance changes, information requirements, and decision points. Indicative valuation and cash-flow scenarios help frame discussions, while specialist legal, tax, and wealth advisers address matters within their respective remits.

WHAT WE PREPARE

- 01** An objectives map distinguishing each shareholder's priorities for liquidity, control and involvement.
- 02** An options comparison covering family transfer, management ownership, partial sale and full exit.
- 03** A business-dependency review identifying relationships and decisions concentrated with the owner.
- 04** A transition roadmap linking leadership development, governance and ownership decisions.

Your preparation checklist

Gather what is available. Mark any gaps and give each next action an owner.

- ☐ Record each shareholder's objectives for liquidity, control and future involvement.
- ☐ List the ownership routes the family or shareholder group wants to examine.
- ☐ Identify customer relationships and decisions that still depend on the owner.
- ☐ Outline leadership development, governance changes and the preferred transition pace.

03 / QUESTIONS & NEXT STEPS

Questions worth resolving.

Can an owner step back before selling shares?

Operational responsibility and ownership can change separately. An owner may delegate leadership while retaining shares, provided the management team has the authority, reporting and incentives needed to operate. The assessment should identify decisions and customer relationships that still rely on the founder. A transition also needs to reflect shareholder income expectations and the distinction between a board role and day-to-day management.

What if family shareholders want different outcomes?

Start by making those objectives explicit rather than assuming everyone wants the same timing or level of risk. Some shareholders may seek liquidity while others want continued ownership or an operating role. Financial scenarios and an options assessment can show where those preferences are compatible. Governance, valuation and transfer arrangements then need careful discussion, supported by separate legal and tax advice where appropriate.

Keep the trade-offs visible

The preferred successor must be both willing and equipped to take responsibility. A family or management solution also needs a sustainable funding arrangement; continuity alone does not establish feasibility. Owners should consider how disagreements will be resolved, how non-operating shareholders will receive information, and what happens if the intended successor withdraws. An alternative path helps preserve choice as circumstances change.

YOUR PRIORITIES / NEXT ACTION

Bring the decision into focus.

Outline your objective, timing and the questions you want to resolve. Use this guide to structure an initial conversation with Bergweiss.

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General preparation guidance. The scope and specialist inputs depend on the particular mandate.