

Future-Proofing Succession: Insights from Top Talent Leaders

Post-Event Summary

Hosted By:



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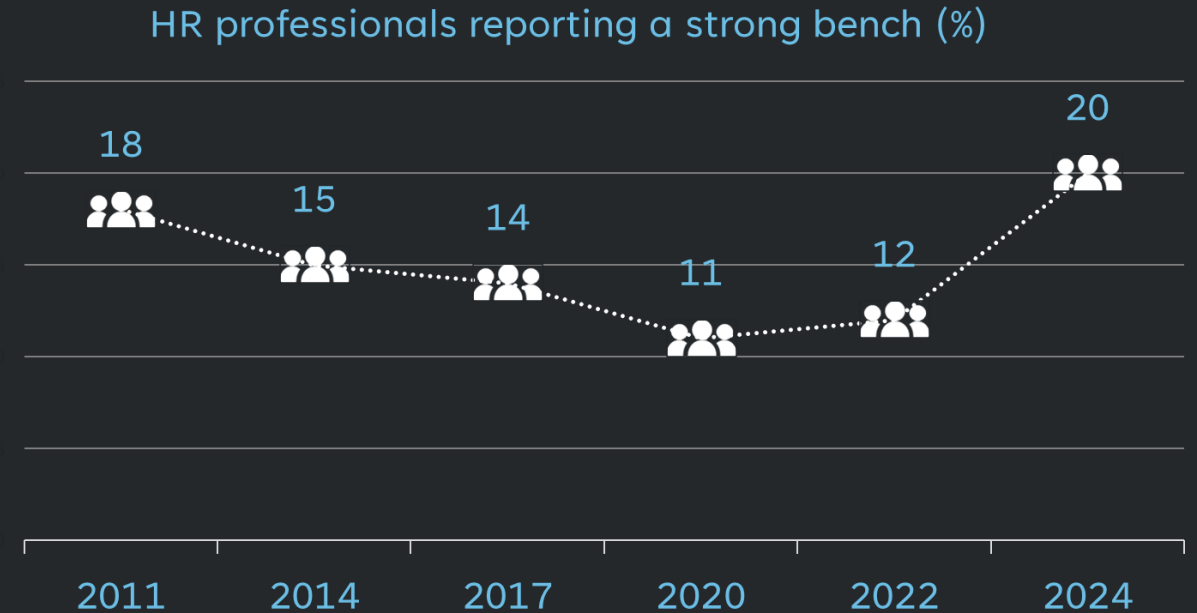
We began the session with a clear message: succession planning is no longer a future-facing luxury, it's a business-critical strategy.

We explored a growing tension: While leadership continuity is more critical than ever, DDI's Global Leadership Forecast found that **only 1 in 5 HR leaders feel confident in their succession bench.**

The data is clear: Those who invest in building strong benches are nearly 3x more likely to fill roles internally and 2.8x more likely to outperform financially.

The takeaway: The problem isn't the talent – it's the process. Traditional, reactive approaches no longer meet today's strategic and cultural complexity.

“Succession needs to evolve from backroom planning to a visible, strategic capability embedded in daily operations.”



Source: DDI, Global Leadership Forecast 2025

Next, we shifted the discussion focus from insight to action:

Succession planning needs end-to-end rigour



Participants were invited to reflect:
What would it look like to shift succession from reactive replacement to proactive development?

Key message: Succession becomes transformative when it's not treated as a standalone event, but as a business-owned, integrated process.

Call to action: Consider how your organization can embed succession into day-to-day talent rhythms and future-facing leadership priorities.

Next, we presented key insights from recent BTS research:

The shift from static pipelines to dynamic, experience-based, & business-owned development paths is redefining how organisations think about readiness, risk, and the future of leadership.

Top 3 shifts & trends:

1

Confidential to Transparent:

Organisations are moving away from succession conversations held behind closed doors and towards more open dialogue with potential successors. This shift fosters trust, clarity, and motivation, while also bringing to light important realities around aspirations and development needs. The current challenge lies in balancing visibility with strategic discretion.

2

Static Roles to Dynamic

Experiences: Rather than anchoring plans to static role definitions, leading organisations are defining readiness through experiential milestones such as rotations, stretch assignments, and cross-functional exposure. These developmental journeys are more adaptable to change and more reflective of what truly builds capability.

3

HR-Led to Business Owned:

Succession planning gains the most traction when it is owned and driven by business leaders. Shifting accountability from HR to line leaders ensures that talent development is embedded in business rhythms, aligned with performance cycles, and responsive to strategic needs.

We then introduced BTS's framework for aligning succession with purpose, strategic direction, and operational action.

This reinforced the idea that **succession must live within the DNA of the business**, not adjacent to it.



“Succession is most effective when embedded in performance cycles, not tacked on as a yearly ritual.”

Panellists reflected on how they're building leadership pipelines that reflect both future needs and today's realities.

1. Shifting from perfect fit to potential

Waiting for candidates to "tick all the boxes" delays readiness. Focus on potential and build capability through real experiences.

2. Sponsorship, not just assessment

Beyond identifying successors, leaders must actively sponsor and stretch high-potential talent. Sponsorship signals belief *and* accelerates development.

3. Line ownership drives relevance

Succession gains traction when embedded in business conversations. Line leaders, not just HR, must own development planning.

4. Psychological safety fuels visibility

Creating a culture where potential successors can express aspirations and receive candid feedback is critical. Succession transparency starts with trust.

5. Start sooner than you think

Succession readiness requires long-term investment. Building capability starts years before a role opens, not months.

Parting words of wisdom:



Sara's advice: *Focus on cultivating an environment where honest, forward-looking development conversations can happen early and often.*



Mirelle's advice: *Use data to challenge assumptions about readiness and rethink how you evaluate and activate potential.*



Ioanna's advice: *Be intentional about creating diverse development opportunities that prepare talent well before the need arises.*



We'd love to continue the conversation.

If you'd like to explore how BTS helps organisations design future-ready succession strategies that align leadership, culture, and business priorities, we'd love to continue the conversation, please reach out to:



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