

The NZ Business Owner's Succession Planning Checklist

Whether you plan to pass the business to family, sell to staff or step back over time, use this checklist to build a plan that protects you, your people and your value.

1. Define your goals

Item	Yes	No
1. Decided when you want to step back (target date)		
2. Know how much you need from the business to retire		
3. Chosen preferred path: family, staff/management buy-out, or external sale		
4. Discussed plans with your partner and family		
5. Considered what role (if any) you want after exit		

2. Identify and develop successors

Item	Yes	No
1. Identified potential successors		
2. Assessed their skills, interest and financial capacity		
3. Created a development plan with mentoring and training		
4. Gradually handed over decision-making authority		
5. Introduced successor to key customers, suppliers and bank		

3. Protect the business

Item	Yes	No
1. Shareholder agreement with buy-sell provisions		
2. Key person and shareholder protection insurance		
3. Up-to-date will and enduring powers of attorney		
4. Trust structures reviewed (if applicable)		
5. Emergency plan if you are suddenly unable to work		

4. Financial and tax planning

Item	Yes	No
1. Current independent business valuation		
2. Funding plan for the buyer/successor (vendor finance, bank, earn-out)		
3. Tax implications reviewed with accountant		
4. KiwiSaver and personal investments aligned to exit		
5. Fair treatment of non-involved family members considered		

5. Communicate and implement

Item	Yes	No
1. Written succession plan with timeline and milestones		
2. Communicated plan to staff at the right time		
3. Reviewed plan annually		
4. Advisers engaged: accountant, lawyer, financial adviser		

Next steps

Most succession plans take 3-5 years. Start with goals and protection - the rest can be built step by step.

General guidance only - not legal, tax or financial advice. Talk to your accountant, lawyer or a business broker about your situation.