

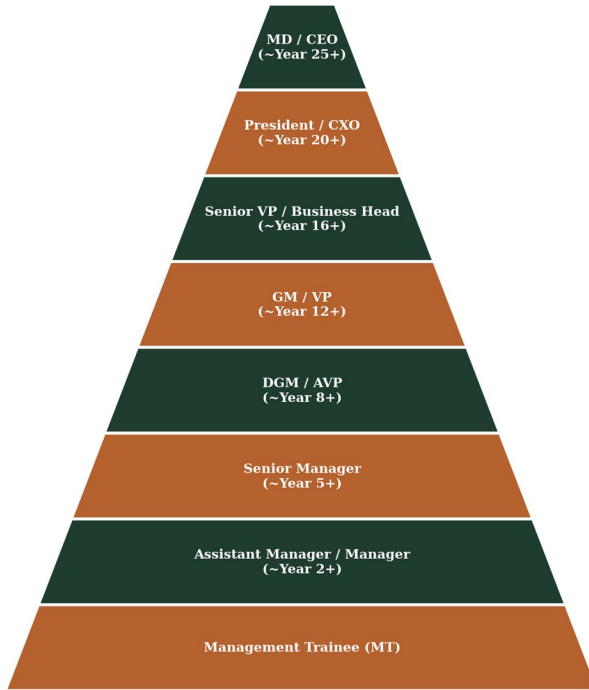
The MT-to-MD Succession Pyramid

A structured career-and-readiness architecture mapping the competencies, skills, mandatory learning, and performance-and-potential gates a Management Trainee must clear at every level to genuinely reach the top of the organisation, and the point at which the organisation should stop waiting and hire from outside instead.

The Philosophy: Keep Increasing the ABCs

Every level in this pyramid is assessed against the same three dimensions, weighted differently as seniority increases. Attitude is ownership, resilience, learning agility, and integrity, the disposition that determines whether a person can be developed at all. Behavioural Skills are communication, influence, conflict management, and composure under pressure, the observable conduct that determines whether others will follow this person. Competencies are the functional and strategic capability, technical depth at junior levels, business acumen and strategic judgement at senior levels, that determines whether the person can actually do the job. An organisation moving someone up the pyramid without genuine growth across all three, not just tenure or technical performance, is setting up exactly the failure pattern Chapter 14 describes: success in one role does not predict success in the next.

The MT-to-MD Succession Pyramid



The Build-or-Buy Gate

At every level transition, the same question is asked, formally, of every eligible internal candidate: does this person meet both the Performance Gate and the Potential Gate for the next level, and have they completed the mandatory learning for it. A candidate who clears all three moves up through internal promotion. A candidate who clears Performance but not Potential is developed further at their current level rather than promoted prematurely. Where no internal candidate clears the gate within a reasonable window, typically two review cycles, the role is opened to external search, using the full hiring architecture this book has already described, rather than the organisation quietly lowering its own bar to fill the seat from within.

HOW TO USE THIS TEMPLATE

Populate each level's Performance Gate with your organisation's actual PMS rating scale. Populate the Potential Gate with your actual assessment instruments, referencing Chapter 5's landscape of tools. Treat the mandatory courses as a floor, not a ceiling, adjust to your sector and the specific role family. Review and reissue this template every two years; a static succession framework calcifies as fast as a static job description does.

The Eight Levels, In Full

Level 1 – Management Trainee (Year 0-2)

Core focus: learning the business end to end, building foundational credibility through delivery on small, well-defined tasks.

LEVEL 1 REQUIREMENTS

Management Trainee

DIMENSION	REQUIREMENT
Attitude	Curiosity, coachability, ownership of small tasks without supervision chasing.
Behavioural Skills	Clear written and verbal communication; active listening in cross-functional settings.
Competencies	Foundational functional knowledge; basic data and analytical literacy.
Mandatory Learning	Structured rotation across two to three functions; company induction and compliance modules; a foundational communication skills workshop.
Performance Gate	Successful completion of all rotations with a 'Meets Expectations' or higher rating from each rotation manager.
Potential Gate	Baseline cognitive and personality assessment on entry, per Chapter 8's AC/DC-based

DIMENSION	REQUIREMENT
	MT selection architecture.

Level 2 – Assistant Manager / Manager (Year 2-5)

Core focus: independent ownership of a defined function or process; first experience managing others, even informally.

LEVEL 2 REQUIREMENTS

Assistant Manager / Manager

DIMENSION	REQUIREMENT
Attitude	Accountability for outcomes, not just tasks; resilience under first real performance pressure.
Behavioural Skills	Basic team communication; giving and receiving feedback; time and priority management.
Competencies	Functional depth in one area; working knowledge of adjacent functions; KRA-setting fluency, per Chapter 13.
Mandatory Learning	First-time-manager training; a functional certification relevant to the role; structured mentoring relationship, per Chapter 12.
Performance Gate	Two consecutive cycles rated 'Meets' or 'Exceeds Expectations' against defined KRAs.

DIMENSION	REQUIREMENT
Potential Gate	Manager and skip-level nomination into the high-potential pool; nine-box placement per Chapter 14.

Level 3 – Senior Manager (Year 5-8)

Core focus: leading a small team directly; owning a P&L slice or a critical process end to end; first cross-functional influence.

LEVEL 3 REQUIREMENTS

Senior Manager

DIMENSION	REQUIREMENT
Attitude	Ownership beyond the immediate team; comfort being measured on outcomes others contributed to.
Behavioural Skills	Team leadership; conflict resolution; structured, BEI-style interviewing skill if involved in hiring.
Competencies	Cross-functional business understanding; early strategic thinking; budget ownership.
Mandatory Learning	A short-duration general management programme (e.g. an IIM or ISB executive short course); people-leadership certification; formal 360-degree

DIMENSION	REQUIREMENT
	feedback cycle.
Performance Gate	Sustained 'Exceeds Expectations' rating; demonstrated team retention and development outcomes.
Potential Gate	Full psychometric battery, per Chapter 5; Development Centre participation.

Level 4 – Deputy General Manager / AVP (Year 8-12)

Core focus: leading leaders; owning a full business function; representing the function at the senior leadership table.

LEVEL 4 REQUIREMENTS

DGM / AVP

DIMENSION	REQUIREMENT
Attitude	Comfort with ambiguity; willingness to make unpopular calls and own the consequences.
Behavioural Skills	Influencing without authority; stakeholder management across functions; composure under public scrutiny.
Competencies	Multi-functional strategic capability; P&L or full-function ownership; talent-building track

DIMENSION	REQUIREMENT
	record.
Mandatory Learning	A recognised general management programme (e.g. IIM Ahmedabad's General Management Programme or an equivalent); a derailier-focused leadership assessment and coaching cycle.
Performance Gate	Two-plus years of function-level results with independently verifiable business impact.
Potential Gate	Full Assessment Centre participation, per Chapter 5; board or senior-leadership visibility.

Level 5 – General Manager / VP (Year 12-16)

Core focus: multi-function or multi-region leadership; genuine business unit accountability; succession-planning responsibility for their own team.

LEVEL 5 REQUIREMENTS

GM / VP

DIMENSION	REQUIREMENT
Attitude	Enterprise-first thinking over functional loyalty; genuine investment in building successors, not just delivering results.

DIMENSION	REQUIREMENT
Behavioural Skills	Executive presence; board and investor-facing communication; crisis composure.
Competencies	Full business unit strategic ownership; capital allocation judgement; external market and competitor fluency.
Mandatory Learning	A senior-cohort executive programme for leaders with 8+ years' experience (e.g. ISB's Accelerated General Management Programme); formal succession-planning training as an evaluator, not just a candidate.
Performance Gate	Demonstrated business unit or multi-region P&L delivery across at least one full economic cycle.
Potential Gate	Board or promoter exposure and feedback; Ready-in-12-Months or Ready-Now succession status, per Chapter 14.

Level 6 — Senior Vice President / Business Head (Year 16-20)

Core focus: enterprise-level strategic ownership; direct board interaction; genuine CXO-readiness under evaluation.

LEVEL 6 REQUIREMENTS

SVP / Business Head

DIMENSION	REQUIREMENT
Attitude	Comfort being personally accountable to the board; genuine intellectual honesty about own derailer risk.
Behavioural Skills	Board-level communication; negotiation at the highest stakes; mentoring the next generation of GMs and VPs.
Competencies	Enterprise strategy formulation; M&A or major transformation experience where relevant; governance fluency.
Mandatory Learning	A CEO-track or C-suite-oriented executive programme (e.g. IIM Indore's CEO Programme or equivalent); formal board-readiness assessment.
Performance Gate	Sustained enterprise-level impact, independently referenced by board or promoter feedback.
Potential Gate	Explicit board discussion of succession candidacy, per Chapter 14's board-oversight recommendation.

Level 7 – President / CXO (Year 20-25)

Core focus: functional or business ownership at the executive committee level; a genuine, visible successor pipeline of their own.

LEVEL 7 REQUIREMENTS

President / CXO

DIMENSION	REQUIREMENT
Attitude	Willingness to be the honest, occasionally unwelcome voice in the room, per Chapter 16.
Behavioural Skills	Peer leadership among equally senior colleagues; external stakeholder and regulator credibility.
Competencies	Full executive committee-level strategic and governance capability; crisis and turnaround experience.
Mandatory Learning	Formal board-observer or board-adjacent exposure; a global or cross-border immersion programme where the role has international scope, per the book's Global Hiring chapter.
Performance Gate	Demonstrated enterprise-level results across multiple planning cycles, with a credible internal successor of their own in place.
Potential Gate	Formal CEO-succession candidacy status, reviewed by the board at least annually.

Level 8 — Managing Director / CEO

Core focus: full enterprise accountability to the board and shareholders; the final, cumulative test of everything below.

LEVEL 8 REQUIREMENTS

MD / CEO

DIMENSION	REQUIREMENT
Attitude	Founder-grade ownership without founder-grade unaccountability; genuine comfort with being the last line of judgement.
Behavioural Skills	Board chemistry; the specific CEO-context competencies described in Chapter 9, tested directly rather than assumed.
Competencies	Complete enterprise strategic, financial, and governance command, tested across the full assessment architecture this book describes.
Mandatory Learning	Whatever gaps the Level 7 board-readiness assessment specifically identified, closed deliberately rather than left to on-the-job discovery.
Performance Gate	Board consensus, built over years of visibility, not a single interview.
Potential Gate	The full Chapter 9 CEO-context assessment architecture, run as though the candidate were an external finalist, regardless of internal tenure.

The JD-to-Person Fit Matrix

The final check at every gate is not the individual's readiness in isolation. It is whether that readiness actually matches what the specific next role requires, tested as a genuine fit exercise, not a promotion granted simply because someone has waited long enough.

PERFORMANCE AND POTENTIAL, READ TOGETHER

The nine-box logic, applied as a promotion decision rather than just a talent-review label

PERFORMANCE X POTENTIAL	WHAT IT MEANS FOR THIS GATE
High Performance, High Potential	Ready now, subject to the mandatory learning for the next level being complete. Promote.
High Performance, Moderate Potential	Strong at the current level; develop specifically toward the next level's Behavioural and Competency gates before promoting.
High Performance, Low Potential	Retain and reward at the current level. Promoting risks the exact failure pattern Chapter 14 describes: success in one role does not predict success in the next.
Moderate Performance, High Potential	Investigate the performance gap before assuming a readiness problem; it may be a role-fit or manager problem, not a capability one.

PERFORMANCE X POTENTIAL	WHAT IT MEANS FOR THIS GATE
Any Performance, No Ready Internal Candidate	Open the role to external search using this book's full hiring architecture, rather than promoting past the evidence.

The Governing Rule

At every gate in this pyramid, the same principle applies: keep performing, keep developing the ABCs, and the internal path stays open. Fall short of either gate, and the organisation owes the individual an honest conversation, per Chapter 16, not a quiet, indefinite parking in the 'developing' category. And where the internal pipeline genuinely cannot produce a ready candidate, the organisation owes itself the discipline to hire from outside rather than promote past the evidence. That is the entire discipline this book has argued for, in miniature, compressed into eight gates.