

6-Month Implementation Plan

Building Leaders Who Can Replace You

Transform from Irreplaceable to Leader Developer

A systematic approach to building succession and multiplying your impact

"The ultimate measure of leadership success isn't how much your team needs you—it's how well they succeed without you."

The Journey Overview

- Months 1-2: Stop Answering, Start Asking**
Transform from problem solver to capability builder through questions
- Months 3-4: Transfer Real Authority**
Give away decisions that don't need your approval
- Months 5-6: Create Stretch Opportunities**
Let them tackle challenges slightly beyond their comfort zone

Why This Implementation Matters

The Real ROI of Developing Successors

Cost of developing internal leader:	\$15,000
Cost of hiring external leader:	\$125,000
Savings per promotion:	\$110,000
Internal leader success rate:	2x higher

Pre-Implementation Assessment

Ask Yourself These Questions

- ? Can your team solve problems without you?
- ? Do they bring solutions, not just problems?
- ? Can they make decisions you might disagree with—and explain why?
- ? Are you creating more leaders or just more followers?

- Month 1
- Month 2
- Month 3
- Month 4
- Month 5
- Month 6

Months 1-2: Stop Answering, Start Asking

Your Mission

Transform every instinct to provide solutions into opportunities to develop thinking. Your new default response: "What do you think?"

Week 1-2: Build Awareness

- Track how often you give answers
- Notice when you jump in to solve
- Document missed coaching moments

Week 3-4: Change Response

- Replace answers with questions
- Use "What are your options?"
- Practice uncomfortable silence

Week 5-6: Deepen Questions

- Ask "What would you recommend?"
- Explore their reasoning process
- Challenge their assumptions

Week 7-8: Celebrate Thinking

- Recognize independent solutions
- Share their insights with team
- Build their confidence

Key Phrases to Master

- "What's your take on this?"
- "Walk me through your thinking"
- "What would happen if...?"
- "How would you approach this?"
- "What's another way to look at it?"

Success Metrics

Metric	Month 1 Target	Month 2 Target
Questions vs. Answers Ratio	50/50	80/20
Team Solutions Without You	2-3 per week	5-7 per week
Coaching Conversations	1 per team member	2 per team member

"Every time I 'helped' by doing the work myself, I was robbing our team of growth opportunities."

Month 1-2 Checklist

- ☐ Created question bank for common situations
- ☐ Practiced wait time after asking questions
- ☐ Tracked reduction in direct problem-solving
- ☐ Celebrated team member solutions publicly
- ☐ Identified top 3 coaching opportunities per person

Months 3-4: Transfer Real Authority

Your Mission

Identify and transfer decisions that don't truly need your approval. Build confidence through graduated autonomy.

Decision Authority Matrix

Decision Type	Current Owner	New Owner	Transfer Date
Customer accommodations under \$500	You	_____	Week 1
Schedule adjustments	You	_____	Week 2
Process improvements	You	_____	Week 3
Vendor relationships	You	_____	Week 4

Month 3 Actions

- Map all current decisions
- Categorize by risk/impact
- Create decision criteria
- Start with low-risk transfers

Month 4 Actions

- Transfer medium-risk decisions
- Create feedback loops
- Document decision rationale
- Celebrate autonomous wins

Building Decision Confidence

The DECIDE Framework

Define the decision clearly

Explore all options

Consider consequences

Identify best path

Document reasoning

Execute and evaluate

Authority Transfer Principles

- ✓ Start with decisions that have clear parameters
- ✓ Provide context, not just rules
- ✓ Allow mistakes within safe boundaries
- ✓ Review decisions together, not as judgment
- ✓ Gradually increase complexity and impact

Reflection Questions

- ? Which decisions were harder to give up? Why?
- ? How did team members respond to authority?
- ? What support do they need?

Months 5-6: Create Stretch Opportunities

Your Mission

Design challenges that push team members just beyond their comfort zone. Support their growth through strategic stretching.

Stretch Assignment Planner

Team Member	Current Strength	Stretch Assignment	Support Needed
_____	_____	Lead team meeting	Agenda coaching
_____	_____	Present to leadership	Presentation skills
_____	_____	Manage project	Project planning

Types of Stretch

- Lead a cross-functional project
- Present to senior leadership
- Mentor newer team member
- Solve complex problem solo

Support Strategies

- Provide context, not solutions
- Be available, not hovering
- Debrief failures as learning
- Celebrate courage, not just success

The Three Systems to Implement

1. Friday Learning Labs

Team members teach their strengths. Everyone becomes both teacher and student. 60-minute sessions, peer-led.

2. Shadow Board

Groups of three review each other's decisions, practice presentations, solve problems without you.

3. Lateral Mentoring

Pair opposites: analytical with creative, detail with big-picture. Weekly 60-minute exchange.

Measuring Your Success

6-Month Transformation Metrics

Team capability increase:	40%+
Problems solved without you:	75%+
Ready successors identified:	2-3
Your time freed for strategy:	30%+