



EPISODE 4

The Succession Logjam — Why Nobody Above You Is Leaving (and What That Unlocks for You)

New 2026 research on the top leadership ranks: teams with high executive turnover fell from **43% to 19%** in two years, and nearly **60% of late-career executives** say they have no plans to leave in the next three years (last year: 11%). The ladder above you is jammed. But the same research names the unlock: the **#1 limiter of executive performance** right now is lack of strategic clarity. Waiting for a seat is a lottery ticket — **creating clarity** is the strategy.

KEY STRATEGIES & IDEAS

The leaders who win in a logjam make themselves the **obvious successor** long before any succession happens. You don't wait for the seat — you become undeniable. Three moves:

1. Become the Strategy Translator

Most strategy dies between the executive presentation and the team meeting because nobody translates it. When leadership announces a priority, write the one-paragraph version: what it means for your team, what changes, what stops. Do it quarterly — senior leaders start associating you with clarity, the thing they say they're missing most.

2. Write the Decision Brief

Senior leaders are drowning in information but starving for decisions they can make. Take one decision your boss — or their boss — is sitting on, and bring a one-page brief: the options, your recommendation, what you need from them. People who do this get invited into rooms above their level.

3. Ask the Two-Levels-Up Question

Every week: *what does the person two levels above me need to be true that they can't quite see yet?* Bring your boss something they didn't have, and you become the person they lean on.



SKIP LEVEL

strategic leadership for leaders ready to think two levels up

EPISODE 4 · WORKSHEET

ACTION & REFLECTION STEPS

- ☐ **Write the one-paragraph translation.** Take your organization's top priority and write what it means for your team — three sentences max. Share it with your team and your boss.

My one-paragraph translation:

- ☐ **Identify one stuck decision** your boss or their boss is sitting on, and draft a one-page brief: options and your recommendation.

The stuck decision I'll brief:

- ☐ **Ask the two-levels-up question out loud** in your next meeting with senior leaders — e.g. *how does this connect to the strategy we committed to?* You're creating the clarity they're hungry for.
- ☐ **Start a succession file on yourself:** the skills, visibility, and relationships you'd need to be the obvious successor two levels up. Update it monthly.

My succession file — skills / visibility / relationships:

Think two levels up. — Maya & Marcus