



**IGNITING  
LEADERSHIP  
FOR POWER  
PURPOSE  
& IMPACT**

# Managing Founder & Long-Term CEO Succession

---

Jari Tuomala, Donald Yeh, and Katie Smith Milway  
The Bridgespan Group

# Research Questions

- What are the greatest challenges with founder and long-term CEO transitions?  
What impact do they have on their organizations?
- What are different approaches to managing a founder / long-term CEO transition?  
When does it make sense for an exiting CEO to stay engaged after the transition?
- What best practices and common pitfalls exist?

# Methodology

## Financial statements

Random sample of 2000 organizations

Sample includes 106 founder transitions, 161 long-term CEO transitions, and 340 short-term CEO transitions

## Survey

Joint survey with BoardSource, Bridgespan, and GuideStar

Sample includes 202 founder transitions, 110 long-term CEO transitions, and 212 short-term CEO transitions

## Interviews

Interviews with 49 individuals from 31 organizations

Includes founders, successors, and board members

# Presentation overview

## Review of research findings

- Four types of transitions
- The most successful model
- Four necessary conditions for an extended role
- Steps all boards can take now to pave the way for transition success

## Fireside chat

## Group discussion