Small Business Research Institute

Process and handoff template

Document one recurring task, identify a possible backup and rehearse a safe handoff before relying on it.

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Choose a bounded task

Start with a task that has a clear trigger, source and expected output. Write the steps as they are performed. Ask another person to follow them with a sample record, then record exceptions and limits. Use aliases and document references; keep credentials and confidential records elsewhere.

Fictional completed example

Task and output. Fictional example: prepare the weekly order-status draft. Output: a draft for the operations lead to approve.

Steps and source. Read the current job board, confirm changes with production, draft an update and flag any uncertain delivery date. The job board is the source of truth.

Roles and boundaries. Coordinator drafts; operations lead approves. The proposed backup has no authority to change customer commitments.

Test and gaps. In a fictional tabletop, the backup drafted two updates. One job had an unclear production date; no update was sent.

Next action. Operations lead clarifies who confirms production dates before the next rehearsal.

Your process record

Task name and responsible role _____

Trigger and expected output _____

Source of truth and where the current version is kept

_____

Proposed backup and availability _____

Steps and checks

Step	What the person does	Source or check	Exception route
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Authority and access boundaries

What this role may decide _____

What requires permission or escalation

_____

_____

Rehearse and follow up

Sample task and rehearsal date _____

People observing and their roles _____

Success criteria agreed before the rehearsal

_____

_____

Stop conditions and safe fallback _____

_____

What happened

Observed step or exception	Evidence or source	Gap and next action

Responsible person and next rehearsal date

_____

When this process should be reviewed again

_____

Use the record

Revise the instructions after the rehearsal. Map other tasks that still depend on one person before assuming the business has reliable coverage.

Owner dependence guide
https://smbri.org/guides/owner-dependence

Process handoff online
https://smbri.org/tools/process-handoff

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