APRIL 6-9 2026 MILWAUKEE WISCONSIN

NCEO 2026 ANNUAL EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP CONFERENCE

The Next Chapter:

Critical Steps to Ensure a Smooth CEO Transition

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2026 Annual Conference
Milwaukee, WI

CE Requirements

1. Engage in the session content for all 60 minutes.
2. Input the secret word in the post-session evaluation survey. The secret word will be revealed at the end speaker's presentation.
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- Provides specialized education, therapeutic and community support services for nearly 2,000 high-need individuals
- Over 150 program locations in Wisconsin and Indiana that serve people from more than 20 states
- 100% ESOP since 2016 with almost 2,000 Owners
- #81 on the NCEO 100
- Fourth largest employee-owned health and human services organization in the nation

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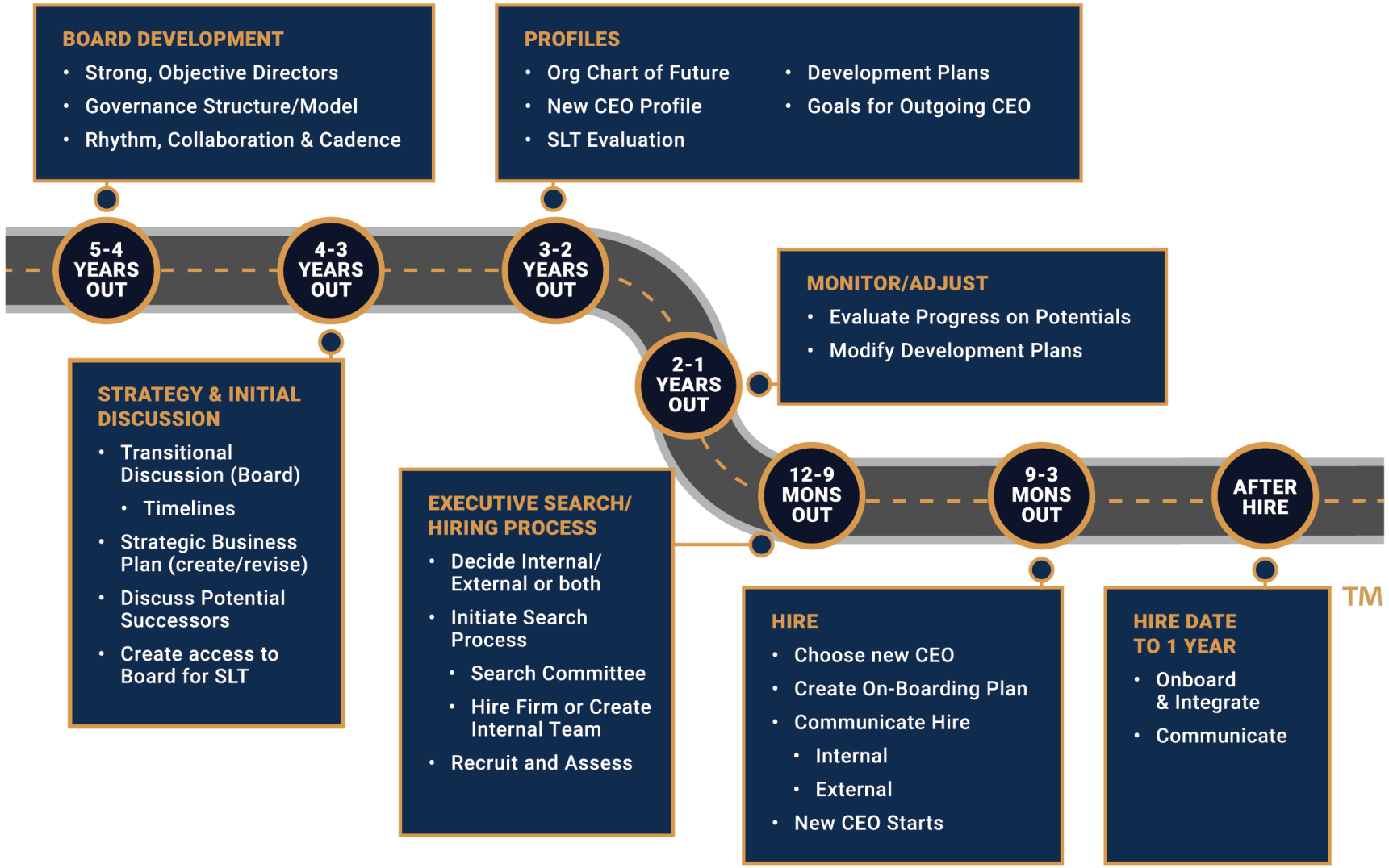
ESOP CEO Transition Roadmap



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It's a Board Thing

"The most important job of a board is to choose the CEO."

"CEO succession is the #1 role of the Board."

"A change of CEO is one of the most crucial events in the life of a company."

Other Key Roles/Players

- Outgoing/Retired CEO
  - Consultative
  - Development
- Service Providers
  - Specific Tactics/To-Do's
- Human Resources
  - Coordination
  - Development

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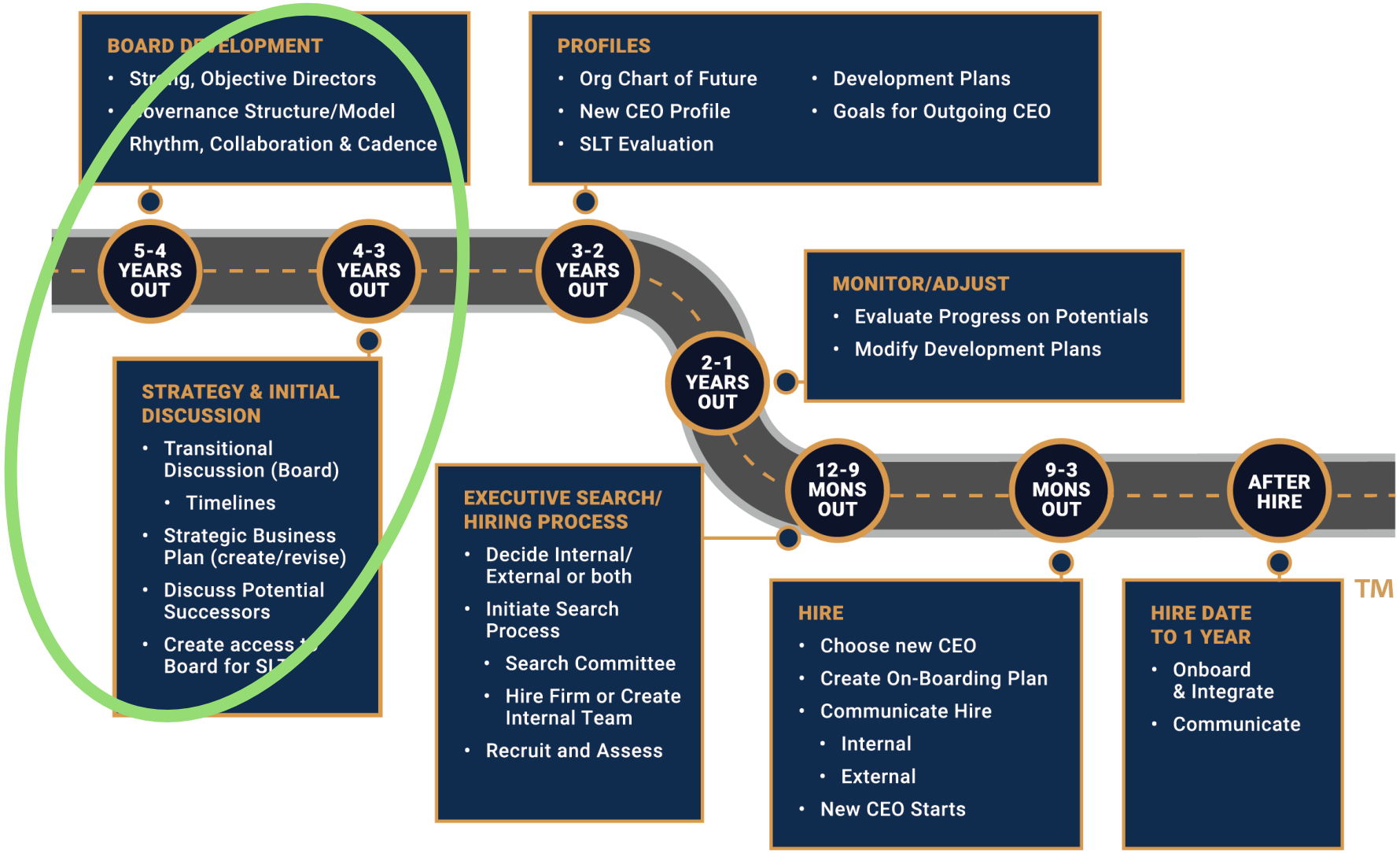
ESOP CEO Transition Roadmap



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5-4 Years from Transition: Getting Started

Well-Functioning Board of Directors

- Independent Board Directors
- Diversity of Qualifications
- Solid Governance Structure
  - Bylaws, Articles of Inc., Guidelines
  - Expectations of Board Directors
  - Board Review Process

4-3 Years from Transition

Begin Discussions at the Board Level Regarding Transition/Succession

- Potential Timelines/Formats
- Goals for the Transition Period
- Begin Discussing Potential Successors
- Create Access for SLT Members
- Build/Revise Strategic Plan

4-3 Years from Transition (Cont.)

Strategic Planning

- Strategic Planning is an ongoing process that provides a roadmap for taking us from a well-defined Present State to a compelling and significantly different Future State.

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- Board of Directors
- Strategic Planning
- Interaction with Board

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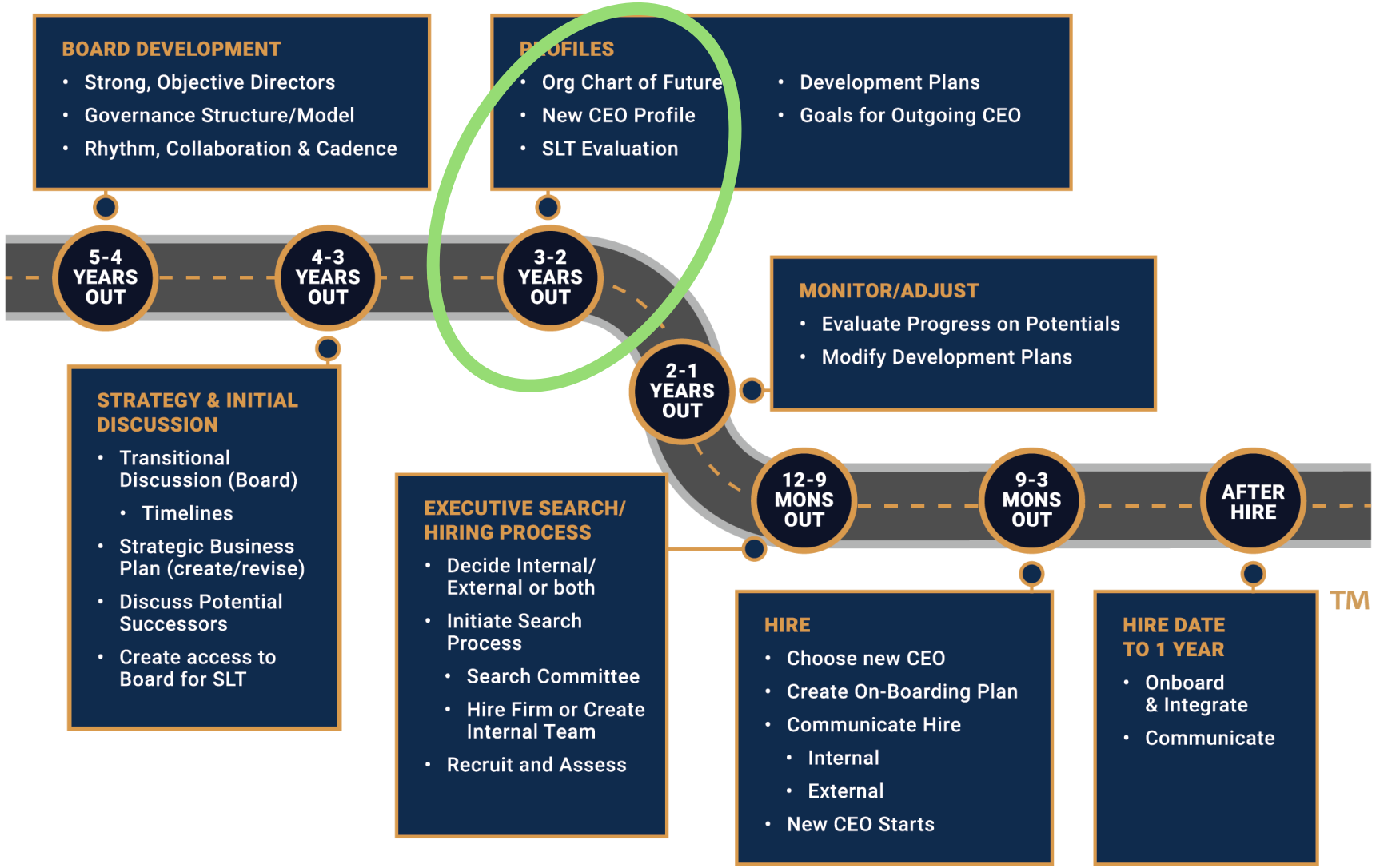

3-2 Years from Transition

- Build the Org Chart of the Future
  - 5-7 Years Out
- Build the CEO Profile (CEO of the Future)
  - Key Skillsets, Experience, Abilities Tied into Strategic Plan

3-2 Years from Transition (Cont.)

- Evaluate Current Leadership Team Against New CEO Profile; Identify Potentials and Gaps
  - Assessments (Hogan, OMNIview, DDI)
  - 360 Degree Reviews
- Create Training/Development for Any Gaps that Could Be Bridged
  - Mentoring, Coursework, etc.

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- Further Discussions with BOD or Outgoing CEO
- New CEO Profile
- Development Plans

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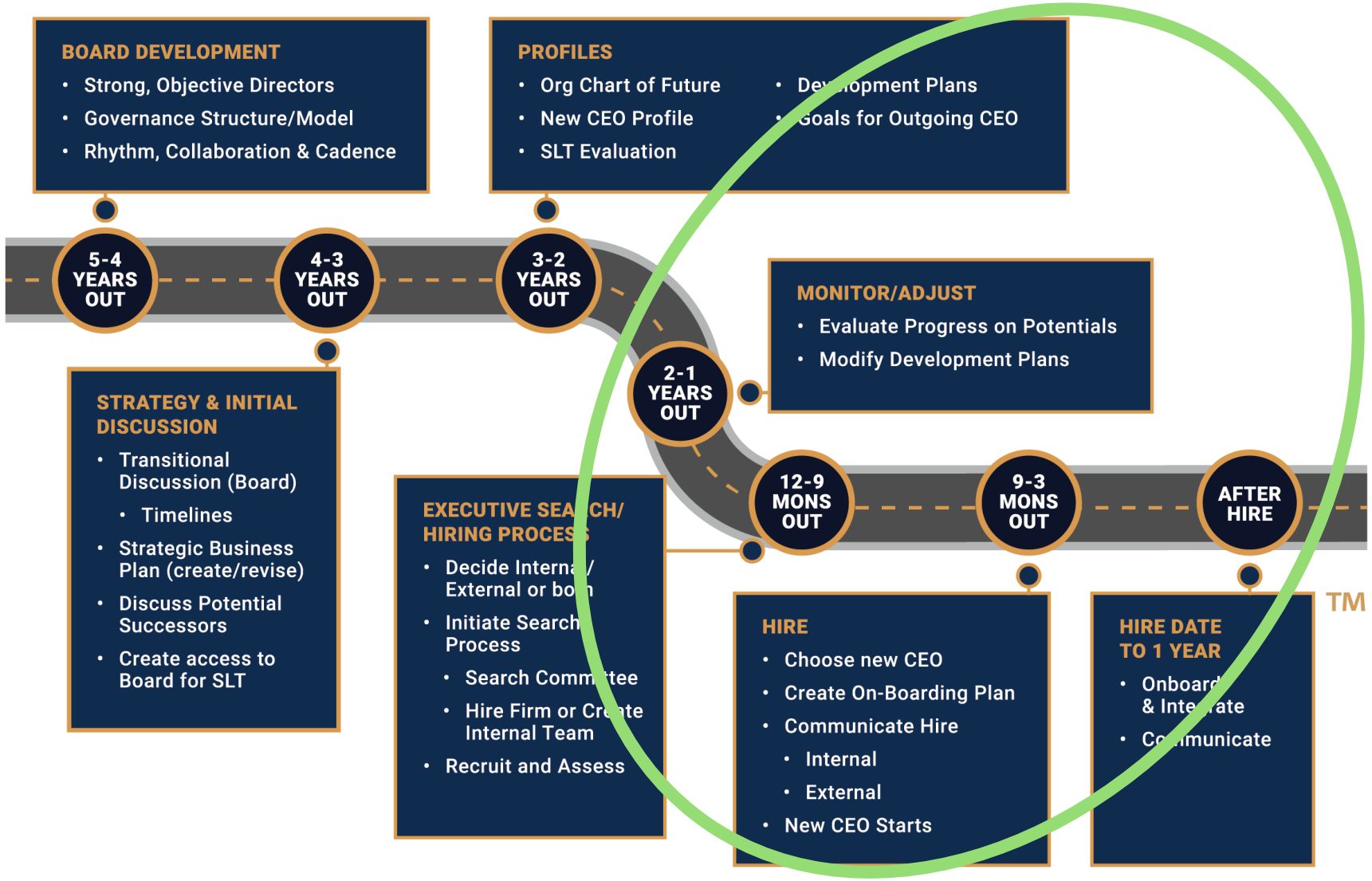

2 Years – 1 Year from Transition

- Monitor Progress
- Make Decision on Internal/External or Both

11-3 Months from Transition

- 9-11 Months Out
  - Begin Recruiting/Search/Hiring Process
- 3-6 Months Out
  - Hire, Internally Communicate, and Publicly Announce New CEO
  - Complete Onboarding Plan
    - Specific Development/Assimilation for New CEO

Post Hire

- 30, 60, 90 Days & 1 Year After Hire
  - Execute and Tweak Onboarding Plan
  - Intentional/Additional Communication with Board Director(s)
  - Potential Coaching & Development Work
  - Ongoing Communication with Employee Owners

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- Communication with Employee Owners
- Communication with Customers, Partners, General Public
- Onboarding/Assimilation Activities

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DO'S

- GET STARTED as early as possible
- COMMUNICATE
  - Board
  - Senior Leadership Team
  - Employee Owners

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DON'TS

- WAIT TOO LONG
  - Wherever You Are, Just Get Started
- SKIP THE BACKGROUND WORK
  - Board; Strategic Planning; Team Evals
- BE PASSIVE
  - Board Members Highest Responsibility is to Make Sure Right CEO is in Place; Don't be Afraid to Discuss Transition; Start Planning
- ASSUME
  - That People Know; That People Don't Know

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QUESTIONS?

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Thank You!

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