CONCEPT

Chief of Staff and Executive Office Leadership: Operating Rhythm, Decisions and Priorities

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Technical depth: Conceptual · **Practical mode:** Case study

Introduction

Top teams lose time and momentum when the executive office runs as a diary and mailroom rather than as the engine of the leadership agenda. Decisions stall between functions, priorities multiply, executive papers arrive unready and the principal becomes the bottleneck. This Core Concept course equips chiefs of staff and heads of executive offices to set the mandate, operating rhythm and decision rights that let a leadership team execute strategy. Working on case material from several sectors, participants produce an Executive Office Operating Plan for their own principal.

Course Objectives

- Define a chief-of-staff mandate and principal partnership that sets authority, boundaries and success measures
- Direct the translation of strategy into executive priorities using OKRs, the Balanced Scorecard and Hoshin Kanri
- Establish decision rights and a leadership operating rhythm that reduce escalation and meeting overload
- Judge the quality of executive papers and briefings and set a standard for decision-ready content
- Oversee risk escalation, crisis coordination and confidentiality within the executive office
- Present an Executive Office Operating Plan to a principal for adoption

Target Audience

- Chiefs of staff accountable for the agenda and effectiveness of a chief executive or top team
- Heads of executive offices leading teams that support senior leadership
- Directors of strategy management and transformation offices serving the executive committee
- Senior executive advisers accountable for briefing and decision support to the principal
- Directors of corporate affairs who coordinate board, executive and external interfaces

Course Outline

Day 1: The Executive Office and the Chief-of-Staff Mandate

- Chief-of-Staff Mandate Charter and Principal Partnership Agreement
- Executive Office Current-State Diagnosis with the McKinsey 7-S Framework
- Principal Time Allocation Audit Using the Eisenhower Matrix
- ISO 37000:2021 Principles and the Executive Office Interface with the Board
- Executive Stakeholder Landscape Mapping with the Power-Interest Grid

Day 2: Strategy Execution and Decision Frameworks

- OKR Cascade from Enterprise Strategy to Executive Priorities
- Balanced Scorecard and Strategy Map for the Leadership Agenda
- Bain RAPID Framework for Executive Decision Rights
- RACI Matrix for Cross-Functional Executive Initiatives
- Hoshin Kanri X-Matrix for Annual Priority Deployment

Day 3: Leading the Executive Office

- Leadership Operating Rhythm: Weekly, Monthly and Quarterly Cadence Design
- Executive Committee Decision Paper Standard Using the Minto Pyramid Principle
- Priority Portfolio Triage and Initiative Stage-Gate Review
- Executive Briefing Note Using the SCQA Structure
- Executive Office Team Design and Delegation Matrix

Day 4: Risk, Confidentiality and Problem Cases

- Risk Escalation Protocol to the Executive Office Aligned to ISO 31000:2018
- Crisis Coordination Cell Using ISO 22361:2022 Guidelines
- Confidential Information Handling Controls Aligned to ISO/IEC 27001:2022
- Gatekeeping Dilemmas: Access, Influence and Gifts Under ISO 37001:2025
- Principal Transition and 90-Day Executive Onboarding Plan

Day 5: Case Work and the Executive Office Operating Plan

- New Chief Executive Case Study: Rebuilding the Leadership Operating Rhythm
- Post-Merger Case Study: Resolving Executive Decision Rights Conflicts
- Executive Office Operating Plan Drafting
- Executive Office KPI Dashboard Design
- Principal Briefing Panel and Plan Defence

Skills You Will Gain

- Executive Agenda Management
- Strategy Execution Oversight
- Decision Rights Design
- Leadership Cadence Design
- Executive Communication
- Principal Advisory
- Crisis Coordination
- Organisational Diplomacy

Why Attend This Course

- Return with an Executive Office Operating Plan for your principal, already challenged by a panel of peers
- Free the principal's time for the decisions only they can take by redesigning the flow of papers and meetings
- Hold functional leaders to agreed priorities without formal line authority over them
- Compare executive office models with chiefs of staff from other sectors and countries

Conclusion

An executive office earns its place when the leadership team decides faster, executes more consistently and is surprised less often. This course moves from defining the chief-of-staff mandate and diagnosing the current office, through the frameworks that turn strategy into priorities and decision rights, to the operating rhythm, paper standards and risk, crisis and confidentiality controls that sustain them. The final day turns that material into an Executive Office Operating Plan that participants take to their principal as the basis for how the top team will work.