

THE COUL & GOLD GROUP · COS READINESS ASSESSMENT

Am I Ready for the Chief of Staff Role?

An honest, directional answer. Structured, practitioner-reviewed, and built on twelve qualities that actually predict success in the role.

THE COUL · GOLD GROUP

THE QUESTION

The Deceptively Simple Question This Answers.

What actually determines whether someone will succeed in the Chief of Staff role? Not what looks good on a résumé. Not what impresses in an interview. What actually determines it.

The answer is twelve qualities. They do not sort neatly by job title or years of experience. They sort by layer, and most people who don't get an honest answer to am I ready? don't know which category their gaps fall into.

“Most people who don't get an honest answer to ‘am I ready?’ don't know which category their gaps fall into. They don't know if they're facing something fundamental or something fixable. That uncertainty is expensive, and it's entirely unnecessary.”

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THE FRAMEWORK

Twelve Qualities. Three Layers. One Honest Picture.

The assessment is built on a layered model of what the role actually demands: from the foundational wiring that nothing else compensates for, to the teachable skills that improve with deliberate practice.

LAYER 01 · FOUNDATIONAL WIRING

The Ground You Stand On

Ego management, self-regulation, the ability to operate without a formal mandate, and discretion as active judgment. When these are absent, nothing else compensates for them. Not intelligence. Not work ethic. Not charm.

ASSESSED VIA

- Situational scenarios designed to surface how you actually operate under pressure
- Written responses across discretion, recognition, and hostile-environment questions

LAYER 02 · OPERATIONAL CAPABILITIES

The Work of the Role

Getting ahead of what a leader needs before being asked, reading patterns across an organisation rather than within a single team, holding positions under pressure, moving between strategic and operational work in the same day, building systems that function after you have moved on.

ASSESSED VIA

- Scenario-based performance tasks
- Written case construction on real examples from your experience

LAYER 03 · SKILLS

The Translation Layer

Communication range, stakeholder management, and narrative construction: how you translate complexity into something a decision-maker can use. The most teachable of the three layers, and the ones most likely to improve with targeted development.

ASSESSED VIA

- Format-adaptation exercises across audiences
- Analytical reasoning on contradictory, incomplete inputs

WHAT YOU RECEIVE

A Report That Treats You as a Professional.

The report is five sections, practitioner-reviewed, and written to be useful to the specific person it describes. Not a generic read-out. Not a template. A directional picture of where you are, built from two data sources, with the gaps and strengths named openly.

Where the data did not produce a readable signal, the report says so. Where the sources diverged, it explains why. The goal is to give you an honest answer to a question that is usually answered either too politely or not at all.

01 Your Capabilities & Skills Profile

What the data shows across the operational and skills layers: the areas where written responses and scenario performance together produce the clearest signal.

02 Your Foundational Read

The wiring layer. Both sources provide a read here; the interview goes deeper into any of these you want to examine further.

03 Where the Sources Agree and Diverge

Where your written responses and scenario performance tell the same story, and where they don't. The divergences often carry more information than the agreements.

04 The Directional Signal

Your readiness outcome and what it means for the decision in front of you. One of four tiers, with the specific factors that placed the read there.

05 Next Steps

Two or three areas most worth your attention, with specific, named starting points, not generic advice.

THE PROCESS

Four Steps. About a Week. One Clear Read.

The assessment is designed to be rigorous without being taxing. About 90 minutes of your time, completed in one or two sittings, with the written report delivered within three to five business days.

01

Written Scenario Responses

Twelve questions across the three capability layers. Not a test. Structured reflection on how you have operated in the situations the role actually produces: discretion, hostile environments, operating without a mandate, ego management, building systems, reading a leader. Typically 45 to 60 minutes, at your own pace.

02

Situational Judgment Test

A set of realistic Chief of Staff scenarios designed to surface how you actually think and decide under pressure, the signal self-report alone cannot produce. Approximately 30 to 45 minutes, completed in one sitting.

03

Practitioner Review

Every report is reviewed by a practitioner before delivery. Where the two sources agree, the finding is stated directly. Where they partially agree or diverge, the report says so and explains why. Where the data did not produce a readable signal, the report names that openly.

04

Report Delivery & Optional Debrief

You receive the written report within three to five business days of completing both inputs. A 30-minute debrief call is available to every candidate. It is not a sales conversation. It is a structured follow-up, yours to use however is most useful.

READINESS OUTCOMES

Four Tiers. One Honest Placement.

The directional signal is a single outcome (one of four tiers) placed with a clear explanation of the specific factors that put the read there, and what it would take for the tier to move.

The tiers are not grades. They are positions on the question the assessment is built to answer: how ready are you for this role, right now, with the information available to us.

Every tier comes with the same practitioner care. A Strong Foundation read tells you the role is a natural next step and what to make sure of before you take it. A Not Yet read tells you what is genuinely getting in the way, and what wouldn't.

TIER 01

Strong Foundation

Real capability is present across the assessment. The role is a natural next step. The report focuses on what to make sure of before you take it, and which dimensions most warrant conscious attention in the first six to twelve months.

TIER 02

Development Needed

Real capability is present in several areas; two or three specific questions remain unresolved. The report is explicit about which ones, and what would need to be examined or built before the read strengthens.

TIER 03

Significant Work Before Ready

Material gaps across more than one layer. The role is achievable, but not in the near term. The report names what the work is, and where to start, honestly, and without softening.

TIER 04

Not the Right Fit Right Now

Foundational gaps that are either structural or would take longer to close than most candidates have time for. An uncommon outcome, delivered with care. In many cases, the more useful question is what role the strengths here are a fit for.

INVESTMENT

An Entry Point That Pays Forward.

The entry assessment is designed to be a genuine product in itself, priced to be accessible to any serious candidate, and credited in full against the full assessment if you decide to proceed within ninety days.

If you decide after the report that the Chief of Staff role is not the right move right now, that is a legitimate outcome, and the assessment will have been worth having. If you decide to proceed, the fee becomes the first step in the full assessment, not a precursor to it.

The assessment is reviewed by a practitioner before delivery. Every report. No exceptions.

ENTRY ASSESSMENT · PILOT PRICING

\$599 / \$799 regular

Practitioner-reviewed report · 30-minute debrief included · Fee credited in full against the full assessment within 90 days.

FULL ASSESSMENT · SELF-PAID

\$2,500

Extends the entry read with a live interview and public-profile analysis. Entry fee credited.

FULL ASSESSMENT · RECRUITER-SPONSORED

\$3,000

For recruiters or hiring organisations commissioning the read on behalf of a candidate.

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