



Can You Really Turn Over the Reins?

O.K. It is time to really look at yourself in the mirror and answer the question – “Can I really turn over the management of the company to...?” This is a very tough question to consider, and has all sorts of implications. Think about the following questions and how you would answer:

1. Are you afraid that if you no longer run the day to day activities of the company, you will have no self-worth...no identity? Do you think your spouse and friends will think you are a loser?
2. If your children work for you, do you have confidence that they have what it takes to run the company?
3. If your children do have what it takes, based on outside counsel and your own gut feelings, can you quit being the parent and just base your decision on the fact that you are an owner who is selling the business to management?
4. Have you built your company, during the lean years, on weak promises (written or verbal) to your management team, that one day you would step aside and then sell the company or a share to them, only to have second thoughts when the time comes to begin the formal process?
5. If you have no children, or if your children cannot or do not want take over the business, and your management team is not capable of taking the business to the next level, do you conclude that there is no reason to look for an outside buyer because you are the only one that can run the company anyway?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you might compare yourself to old Ebenezer Scrooge. He was always working, thought his partner could have worked a little harder, and no one ever measured up well enough for him. He perceived his value based on his position in the business world alone. Do you remember what the ghost of Christmas future showed him? What happened to his business? As I recall, it did not do so well. Is this what you want for your business...the business that you have put your heart and soul into?

Why are you working so hard every day *in* the business rather than *on* the business? Why are you not making concrete decisions about the future? You are not doing any of your employees, your children, or the economy any favors. If your management team or your children can't handle the job, then set them free and let them go find something else where they will excel and make a difference in the world!

If you are the only one who can run the company, then make sure to tell your employees that you have only created a job for yourself and you're really not too concerned about their well being once you die. Be honest...don't tell lies.

So why am I hitting you "upside the head" with a 2x4? Because those of us who are entrepreneurs often fail to focus on anything except the first few levels of the business, forgetting about the long term effect of what will happen to the entity we have created.

There are many different legacies you can leave in life. Think about what legacy your company can leave. You are planning the course.

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Capital Endeavors, Inc.

P.O. Box 895, 232 Crogan Street, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046

Web: www.capitalendeavors.com Email: davidstill@capitalendeavors.com

Phone: 770-962-8399 FAX: 770-962-8640