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Got Growth?

If success causes trouble, nurture new leadership

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When the success you have worked so hard to create becomes reality, problems of the past melt away and new ones begin to grow.

Just yesterday your customers were happy, things were running smoothly, and your staff was doing great. When did you begin to notice some chinks in the armor?

Problems got more complex and time-consuming, and the limits of your team became harder to compensate for. Managers are performing below expectations and unwilling to take on added responsibility. Direct reports focused on the wrong objectives, and your time consumed with the details of the day-to-day grind.

The people you used to depend on are too busy and stressed out. The systems and structure you worked so hard to establish seem to be creating friction instead of focus. Then one day your superstar tells you he is tired and thinking about moving to a slower, less-demanding position ... with another company.

What happened? You achieved success! Some of your key people are moving on, looking for that next challenge. Others seek a less stressful environment, something more like what it used to be before the company began hitting its stride. Who will take their place? You have a lot of new people. How do you prepare them for a seamless transition?

The way your staff must work to be effective today doesn't fit yesterday's model or fit the culture of many who have been around with you through the tough times.

This is the problem with success: As an organization advances through the inevitable stages of its life cycle, things start changing. The need for more people puts pressure on your managers and how they get their work done; the company begins to focus on profit instead

of revenue; the organization begins to implement stricter policies and procedures instead of the free-form entrepreneurial environment that used to exist. And the people who helped get you there probably aren't too happy about the changes.

It is time to start thinking differently, to begin preparing your people for a brave, new world. Time to find new leaders with new ideas that can take your organization to that next level.

Many of our clients have faced, and solved, problems like these using a technique we call Leadership Mapping, identifying your best and brightest and developing them into leaders. This requires a suite of skills you may have not had to use and maybe never even developed. Things like mentoring and cross-training programs, valuing difference and delegation. Many of these are things you know you need to do better and things you need to get your staff to start doing. The questions are how and where do you find the time?

The best place to start is to make sure everyone is connected to your vision. Then you need to find your future leaders, those key individuals who appear to have a deeper connection and passion for your vision. Systems that identify and develop the right people for growth, promotion and management need to be put in place. Bringing those people together to talk about the future of your business creates a Master-Mind that is more powerful than any problem you will ever face.

Look closely at past success and find those things you need to keep doing, the things you used to do and need to stop doing, and the things you never have done as an organization, but should start. Policies and procedures need adjustments as the organization grows and progresses. And if you want to resolve these issues while growing revenue and profit, you have to change the way you and your staff work. You have to become less reactive and more proactive, make faster, more confident decisions (and still be right), cut distractions and interruptions, and find time to focus on your most critical issues.

Tough problems usually have tough answers, and the livelihood of your team, your company and yourself depends on success. Talk to your people, the ones who are committed and want success as badly as you do, and listen to what they say. Include them in your deliberations and planning. Celebrate success and deal with failure as a team. It gets harder from here, so you might as well have fun while you do it.

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