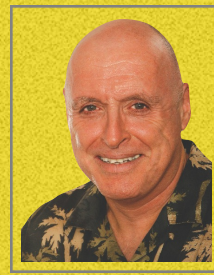


# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1257 When is the Right Time for a Leader to Step Down?

You're the leader of an organization. How long will that last? How long should it last? When is the right time to step aside and hand the reins to your successor? I'm Jerry Roberts, and this is one of the most difficult issues that a CEO or business owner will face. Let's shine some light on this topic, next on The Extra Point.

Whether it's a corporation you lead, a small business, or a non-profit organization, the time will come when you and the job are no longer the great fit you once may have been.

Hopefully, you'll realize this before others do. Those others could be your employees, your customers, your vendors, and your investors. If they know it before you know it, things may get a bit sticky.

In a recent [bloomberg.com](http://bloomberg.com) article, James Lemoine, professor at University of Buffalo's School of Management, claimed "There are two reasons why a leader should consider stepping down: 1) When the leader is not capable of serving their stakeholders well, or 2) When the role is not, or is no longer, aligned with the leader's own goals and values."

The first reason is going to be hard for many leaders to admit. Most will say they can turn thing around. They just need time and the right resources, and they can deliver results.

As for the second reason, when a leader admits that the job is no longer connected to their goals and values, he/she is also admitting that this has been the case for a while. People don't get out of alignment with goals and values overnight.

Let's talk about some reasons why the leader may delay finding a successor. This would apply more to someone who is the CEO of a corporation, pretty much of any size.

The third reason we can talk about is that the CEO has no plans beyond the current job. "Hey, if I give up this job, then what am I going to do?"

Here's another one: the CEO wants to hang on longer because the job is their ticket to the spotlight. If they leave, will they ever be able to be relevant or "as" relevant again?

Let's say they're well set financially. Perhaps they'll travel, do family things, work for a worthy cause, and even take up a hobby. All that's good, but there may always be a question mark — "If I want to get back in the game at some point, what are the chances I'll be able to find what I have now?"

This is a very real issue for a lot of people who head up organizations.

There are also people who are ready to step down, and are actively working on a plan to find the right person who can take over. They might be burned out, or looking to transition to a new opportunity. When is the right time for them? When will they be ready to pass over the baton?

John Maxwell gave the best answer for this at last year's Live2Lead event. He said that it's not when the existing leader is ready, it's when the new leader is ready.

So many leaders hang on and hang on, and hang on. For them, it's never the right time. Often, this will lead to a great candidate for the job giving up and moving on, not wanting to wait for an indefinite period of time to advance.

I'll have more on this tomorrow, how leaders can make succession work for themselves and their organization.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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