



Avoid business roadblocks - Take Preventative Action

“What happens if you walk out the door and get hit by a bus?” It is not unusual when dealing with leaders in our coaching conversations when a question similar to this surfaces. There’s usual a bit of chuckling involved and an exchange of humorous comments before we get down to where the client wants to go... (the serious five-sixths of the iceberg below the surface of the initial discussion). There is a tendency for some leaders (not you of course) to feel infallible and indestructible. This can get in the way of building greater capacity in those who report to us.



The metaphor of ‘the bus’ comes in many forms. If a version of ‘the bus’ does in fact unexpectedly run over you (keep in mind Schultz’s Law: Murphy’s an optimist), then who can you count on who is able to seamlessly step into your shoes should you find yourself temporarily out of the game... on the sidelines as

it were? Are you ready for such an event? Quickly filling the leadership pipeline is one of your major responsibilities... your firm should not expect less!

As an executive coach who works with clients around the world, I have the slight luxury of a broader perspective of organizations; private, public and not-for-profit sectors. In fact, this year to date I have seen three key senior leaders be unexpectedly moved over to the sidelines in their respective companies. One leader, a Vice President - Operations, recently reflected on just such an experience. They shared just how thankful they were for the executive coaching support they received. It helped them see the value of changing their leadership behavior – shifting from a high need for absolute control to that of developing a greater capacity in others to grow, develop and increase their skills and abilities to take on increased accountability and delivery of high quality results... not to mention dramatically enhanced levels of professional and personal satisfaction.

The value of succession planning for this particular leader has taken on a whole new level of importance, not to mention for the firm.

Letting go of the reins of control can be exceptionally challenging for any leader, yet the return on the invested time and resources for the leader, key staff, other stakeholders and the company typically exceeds all expectations when (not if) the inevitable reality of an unplanned highly stressful event occurs and readily takes the leader out of the game.

Should the inevitable surface for you, are you or your firm able to operate at the most effective levels? Are you truly able to successfully step back and confidently address the presenting issue when temporarily sidelined? I would be most interested in hearing your thoughts, your truth, when the bus comes screaming through your world.