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The Next Chapter

BUSINESS INSIGHTS

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After more than 30 years running Clientek I am now facing my most challenging and fascinating business endeavor: turning over the CEO position to a new leader. As the owner of the company, this will be the ultimate delegation and will succeed only by following the guidelines of true delegation. Here is the checklist I am working with.

1. Don't assign the job in name only. I must trust the new leader to make decisions and set the tone of the company in their own way. Some ideas will be rather different from mine. Some won't work at all. Many will work better than mine. I have already chosen a leader that I trust, so my challenge will be to prove that trust. I must make sure that everyone else in the company can see that trust in action.
2. Delegate don't abdicate. On the flip side, simply washing my hands of every decision and letting leaders

struggle with their own challenges is just, plain mean. My experience will remain valuable to the new leadership team. They need to know they can count on me and that I am counting on them. When they ask for help, they must get it. Quickly and without grumbling.

3. Be very clear about the responsibilities and freedoms of the executive role. As I remain the owner there are some decisions I will still make. What kinds of decisions those are and the reasons for my retention of those responsibilities must be very clear. If it seems arbitrary, then rule #1 is violated and trust fades.
4. Enthusiastically celebrate every win. There have been countless times when I solved a snarly business problem or made a difficult decision. Many of those times I was the only one aware of the details and the thought processes I used to get the job done. In a way,

there was no one to tell. I need to pay attention to the leadership team and make sure they know when I've seen the good thing happen.

5. A long-time business mentor of mine would say "Don't Get Cute". He was talking about communication. Sometimes on purpose and other times, accidentally, one can speak in riddles. Then silently watch while others try to make sense of what you said. I can be guilty of enjoying a little word play, myself. I need to keep that to a minimum - be clear, be direct, and engage in purposeful communication. Save the wordplay for the golf course or the beer after work.

I have always looked forward to business challenges. I enjoy the thought processes involved, making a decision, then seeing the positive results of the hard work. Now, I've set myself on to the next business challenge. Maybe the most important of the many I've faced in 40 years. I am looking forward to that process just as much.

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