

THE FOUNDER'S CALLING: Step Up or Step Aside

Daniel is the founder and CEO of what's been a successful and profitable company by most measures; it has an enviable 20-year history, products and services that have been in demand, a stellar customer list, and for the most part, a loyal team of managers and employees. In the last few years he's noticed that growth has stalled, different from the normal ups and downs he's experienced over the years. To compound this, his management team is not as engaged as it was, and in the last six months, three key customers have made the move to a competitor. While Daniel looks at his team and the marketplace for insights into his next steps, he might consider whether he's become a victim of his own success – Founder's Syndrome may be at play.

What is Founder's Syndrome? It can be described as a state of being where a founder – once dynamic, driven, and decisive with a clear vision – becomes inured by his or her own success and subtly and over time, simply stops seeking or becomes resistant to feedback or outside perspectives about their leadership. Decision making often remains in control of the founder, the same problems in the organization recur over and over again, and often the organization struggles from one crisis to another. The founder can become anxious and defensive, blaming others for the difficulties. In turn, many direct reports do not speak up as they fear reprisal from the leader. Ideas no longer bubble up, contribution lessens, and innovation stops.

It's important to know that Founder's Syndrome isn't necessarily about the actual founder of an organization. The central figure could be the person who took over from the founder. Or it could be someone who took over in a time of crisis, and led the business to clearer waters. Or, it could just be someone who has been at the helm forever.

Founder's Syndrome often plays out in the small to medium-sized enterprise where the company reaches the inflection point between entrepreneurial, often chaotic growth, and the need for well planned and managed development, and then again from the well managed enterprise to the next stage where renewal and revitalization are needed to keep the company thriving. When founders or extremely tenured leaders don't navigate these life-cycle transitions, the company remains managed more according to the personality of the founder or leader, than in a manner that provides the best products or services to customers or supports the growth of individuals within the firm.

Leaders of lasting, well-developed organizations are courageous in leading through the business life cycle, and manage to develop their organizations and themselves along the way. Best-in-class at this are Microsoft, Apple, and Google, great companies whose founders were proactive in charting a course that allowed others to take over to ensure long term innovation and relevance of the business and organization.

So as a leader, what can you do to prevent Founder's Syndrome and ensure that you can grow your company to its market potential? The remedies are many, and here are a few suggestions:

- Acknowledge that over time, you'll need to move on or back away from daily involvement in the business. You can't be there in the same way "forever", and you never know when that "forever" will occur. Create a succession plan that will proactively ensure the viability of the organization whether you're there or not.
- Accept that another leader or leadership team will introduce changes you may not have been prepared to make; this is as it should be and is not a reflection of your earlier gift of transforming a dream into reality.
- Secure a mentor, Board of Directors, or advisors and an advocate from within. Founder's Syndrome comes from doing what's natural for you. Changing your leadership approach may be rather unnatural. Seek and accept help.

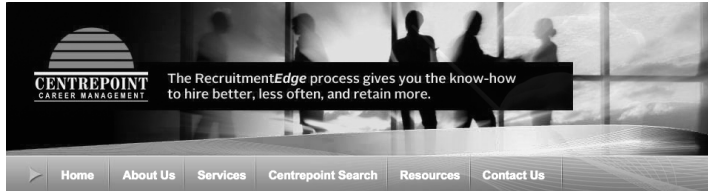
When leaders stay on for the "good of the organization", they may be orchestrating certain decline for the business. Founder's Syndrome can be prevented and minimized with foresight, preparation, and a willingness to embrace an uncertain future.

“You must listen for the future. But you cannot listen for the future if you are deafened by the present.”

- Bob Johansen, Author of *Get There Early*



Centrepoin News



centrepoincareer.com

A new web experience is here: www.centrepoincareer.com.

This year we celebrate our 15-year anniversary! The world and the workplace has transformed during this time: through the internet revolution, dotcom, 9/11, demographic shifts, boom times, several recessions, the enormous impact of social media, and next generation workers. Wherever business strategy and people connect, we've thrived on walking the way with our clients to strategize and scout the road ahead, choose different approaches, and engage people in deep, visceral conversations around what they really, really, want to do.

Our journey continues with the launch of our new website. You'll find enhancements in navigation, ease of use, and graphics, with page designs that now offer more white space to enhance the navigation and online viewing experience.

Aside from essential information about why, how, and what we do, you'll find talent trends, research notes, commentary, and recent articles all conveniently located on our *Centrepoin of View* page, with further resources and our newsletters available on the Selected Resources page.

You'll find our LinkedIn profile links useful in the world of networking for professionals. It's easy to add us to your LinkedIn connections, as you stay informed about business contacts and industry news. Or you can become a fan on our new Facebook page.

Add a bookmark for Centrepoin Career Management today.

A New Face at Centrepoin:

We are thrilled to welcome Wendy Smith to the Centrepoin team as Senior Consultant. After a long awaited move from Calgary to the west coast, Wendy brings her business savvy and outgoing nature to support the growth and development of our business. A proven top networker, Wendy prides herself on adding value to companies and individuals in sharing business intelligence. An expert advisor on social media as it relates to career and talent management, Wendy brings an intimate understanding of the mutual benefits for organizations and individuals in connecting with others, developing personal brands, talent sourcing, and learning from the experience of other professionals and groups. Wendy's full bio is on our website and you can also check her out on LinkedIn!



Coming this Fall

The RecruitmentEdge Workshop Putting Value Back into your Hiring Practices

If you're recruiting today you're part of a new game – the dramatic shift to more mobile talent, changing workforce demographics and new mediums for sourcing the best candidates. How do you attract and hire quality candidates in this evolving marketplace? Fresh approaches and tactics are needed to play this new game, but how do you start? Where do you invest to get the most value from your efforts?

The RecruitmentEdge Workshop is designed to help you address today's new reality - that the entire game of talent acquisition has changed. In this full-day interactive learning event, you'll learn about:

- Current recruiting trends in BC and Alberta and best practices in recruiting
- Building better internal hiring practices within your company
- Leveraging your employer brand to attract the best candidates
- Talent sourcing using cutting edge techniques and social media tools
- Landing good candidates and creating a positive offer experience

We'll show you how to succeed at the recruiting game and put value into your hiring practices – and substantially improve the performance of your organization! Details coming soon at www.centrepoincareer.com.



Connections strives to keep you informed on the latest trends and best practices to help you develop and align your people for improved business performance. And because we want you to personally succeed, we always include tips on how to manage your own career, too!

Visit us at www.centrepoincareer.com; and give us a call at 604.985.5072 to learn more.

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