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happen to your firm? Would things run smoothly, or would it be utter chaos?

Jim Boomer • Apr. 22, 2013



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proper attention being paid to developing the next wave of leadership in these areas as well?

The 6-Month Sabbatical

This topic of discussion came up at both of our CIO Advantage group meetings earlier this year. The question was posed to the groups, "You have 30 days to prepare to leave for a 6-month sabbatical, what would you need to do to hand off your job duties?"

This obviously requires a little more thought than your standard week long vacation where you get all your ducks in a row to make sure things are covered until you get back.

In this scenario, you really have to assess your current skillset and job duties. Evaluate your vulnerabilities and look at the documentation of the firm's systems and recovery processes should one of those vulnerabilities become exploited. Further, you have to think through all your relationships – both internally and externally with vendors and partners.

Could those be handed off seamlessly? Then there are those projects you're currently leading and the budget you're in the middle of finalizing. Who is capable of managing those in your absence?

No One Else Knows/Does That

At first glance, this seems too daunting to take on and many people simply say they don't have anyone on their team who could do what they do. We all like to think we are irreplaceable, but the truth is we arrived where we are in life through opportunities to learn and advance that were afforded to us by others in our past.

Are you offering your team members those same opportunities? If we are true leaders, it is our obligation to our team and our firm.

One of the CIOs in the group shared his philosophy to constantly develop his team

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The Multiplier Effect

In Liz Wiseman's book, *Multipliers: How The Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter*, she distinguishes between multipliers and diminishers. Multipliers are leaders who look beyond their own genius and focus energy on extracting and extending the genius of others, thus getting more from their entire team.

Diminishers, on the other hand, appear to believe really intelligent people are a rare breed and they are one of the few smart people. They then conclude other people will never figure things out without them. I think this concept plays in perfectly with what we all need to be doing within our roles and organizations to prepare for the future.

We need to stop acting like diminishers and start becoming multipliers – treat people like the intelligent people they are and give them challenging tasks that develop the skills that will prepare them to eventually replace us. This will ultimately create the human redundancy necessary to allow us to take that 6-month sabbatical, without causing chaos.

Where to Start

There is no time like now to get started. Take yourself through this mental exercise. What if you had 30 days to prepare for an extended absence? What would you need to do to prepare? Start by developing your list of items that no one else in the firm can do.

Then look for opportunities to challenge others to take on responsibilities in those areas so that you can train and coach them up. By adopting the multiplier mindset in your role as a leader within the firm, everyone will benefit. The firm. Your team. And, most importantly you.

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