

TAX AND WEALTH ADVISOR ALERT: A TOOL TO SOLVE THE FIRST SIN: THE VISIONARY ORG CHART

For those of you who have read this blog, you know that the first of the seven deadly sins of succession planning is not putting leadership first. You cannot have a successful succession planning without answering a critical, threshold question: “if not you, then who?”

Sometimes that answer is simple, oftentimes it is not. Frequently the current owner or owners need guidance and direction in answering that question. In those situations, one of the most helpful tools I use in working with my clients is a visionary org chart. The way a visionary org chart works is that we pick a time in the future—maybe three years out, maybe five. The discussion focuses on what the vision is for the company at that time—what markets will the business be in, what will the revenues be, who will be the competitors, etc. Then, the focus shifts to what roles need to be filled for the company to achieve that vision. Those roles are mapped out on the company’s visionary org chart. In other words, what does the company’s org chart need to look like on ____, 2019 for the company to achieve the vision?

Once we have the visionary org chart created, we begin to fill in the roles with the company’s current talent. As part of that process, a few critical issues almost always come to a head:

- We almost always have critical roles that have no current talent to fill them
- We almost always have talent without a role
- Sometimes we have a great discussion about a currently poor fit between company talent and current roles, and the potential to reemploy that talent into a better role for company success
- Because people will be three years (or whatever period of time in the future we use) older, transition of talent becomes a stark reality
- This process almost always results in a change in the company’s current org chart. In other words, pulling the leadership team out of the day-to-day and having them think about the future success of the business, causes them to recognize issues that need to be addressed immediately

So what does your visionary org chart look like? What weaknesses does it reveal? What opportunities does it highlight? Addressing these challenges will inevitably help maximize the value of your business and best take care of the people you care about.