



**Author:**

**Bob McRann, Vice President,  
Evaluation and Mentor Assignment  
The Chairmen's RoundTable**

**About Chairmen's RoundTable**

The Chairmen's RoundTable is a non-profit volunteer organization comprised of current and former CEOs with extensive Board of Director experience and diverse industry backgrounds. They provide businesses in San Diego County with priceless business advice and mentorship, free of charge, as a way of giving back to the community. CRT's well-defined mentoring program is ideal for companies at a strategic crossroads that are looking to gain an outside perspective on key business issues.

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

*Question: Am I the right CEO for my company?*

**Answer:** This question is probably the most difficult one for a CEO to answer. There are many CEOs who have successfully taken their company to a certain point, but may not be the right CEO moving forward. How do they know when and if they should step aside?

To answer this question, there are several factors at work and all of them require the CEO to be honest with him/herself. Not an easy task.

The first issue is ownership. Does the CEO hold a majority stake in the company? If so, does he/she believe that someone else can do a better job than he/she has done? And, equally as important, does the CEO really believe that he/she can step aside, let someone else run the show, and clearly separate ownership interests from job responsibilities? Anybody that says they can, and mean it, is truly extraordinary. Most of the time the ownership interest overcomes any rationale to have someone else run the show. It is almost against human nature to release control of your financial welfare.

Next, if the CEO does not have a majority or controlling interest, he/she essentially has to admit that he/she cannot manage the enterprise at the existing level or cannot take it to the next level. Call it ego, pride, self-preservation, whatever, it takes a BIG person to admit that he/she is not the right person for the job. It defies all of the reasoning surrounding why we work, why we push to get ahead and the importance we place on how others view us.

Finally, the CEO who answers the question honestly might ask a follow-on question. What are the skills I am lacking to be a successful CEO? This often leads to the realization that there are people available who have skills in those areas of weakness. Bringing them onto the team may prove to be what is needed to advance the company's business interests. And, in the process, prove that the CEO can manage the business effectively, after all.

Of course if an honest self-evaluation concludes that the CEO is not the right person for the position, then arranging to step aside and finding a replacement to take over the job would be an act of courage. However, that is better than someone else making the decision for you.