
INTERIM MANAGEMENT: KEY POINTS FOR SUCCESS

Şermin Şenturan

Bülent Ecevit University, Zonguldak, Turkey, senturansermin@gmail.com

Abstract : Interim management is defined as the temporary provision of management resources and skills, which can be seen as the short-term assignment of a proven executive manager to manage a period of transition, crisis, or change within an organization. In other words, interim management is the engagement by an organisation of a senior independent executive for a limited contractual period in a line management, staff or project role. The first phase in the interim management position is considered to be the “expectation, infrastructure, and exploring phase.” Expectations are high and team members are supportive and hopeful that interim manager will help them through change. If they've gone a long time without a leader, they may be hesitant and skeptical to get too close or share too much. It's truly the stage of golden opportunity where colleagues offer help and assistance to make the transition successful, even if it's temporary. Although the search for a permanent replacement continues, interim manager will begin to problem solve, organize, and stabilize the environment.

Humility becomes the interim leader's best asset, especially if the role is outside his/her typical experience or comfort zone. The longer the interim position continues, the sharper the reality becomes. Expanding responsibilities from overseeing one unit or department to multiple units or departments at the same time can become overwhelming and short-term daily operational issues may seem to be handled without long-term thought, commitment, and passion. The last phase is one of accommodation to the situation, developing solutions, and problem solving at an operational versus an institutional level.

Interim leadership roles filled from within an organization require leaders who take on additional responsibilities to effectively manage priorities, staffing, and, most of all, their time. There will be multiple competing priorities and deadlines in light of the additional responsibilities. If at all possible, interim manager should delegate some of those simple tasks to direct reports and accept the help of his/her colleagues. It will make them feel like they're contributing to the greater good and may spark a strength or project that may have gone undetected.

Keywords : interim management, leadership, temporary hiring

INTRODUCTION

Businesses are facing increasing pressures to overcome numerous financial and workplace challenges, which have resulted in the rise of the interim leadership role. There's a greater demand for veteran leaders to fill the gaps while permanent replacements are found for vacated positions (Chapp, 2014) Interim management is defined as the temporary provision of management resources and skills, which can be seen as the short-term assignment of a proven executive manager to manage a period of transition, crisis, or change within an organization.

Workforce changes are occurring at a rapid pace. Finding long-term replacements for key leadership positions is becoming increasingly complicated and may take an extended period of time. This can ultimately affect the business facility's financial and workplace outcomes. An organization can't flourish or deliver quality product or service without qualified managers efficiently leading the facility. A development dimensions survey of approximately 5,000 human resource leaders determined that as many as 82% of organizations experience a difficult time recruiting qualified managers (Collins and Collins, 2007) Filling the gaps that exist when a position has been vacated and open for an extended period of time is crucial to customer safety, staff development, and institutional success. The quickest and least disruptive way to fill these gaps is by identifying resources within the organization's facility, developing that talent, and promoting from within the organization.

If an organization had a hard time recruiting for manager positions or experienced a large number of leadership vacancies that remain open for numerous months, a year, and sometimes even 2 years, there are basically two solutions to fill those vacant positions. One of them is dividing the roles and responsibilities among the current members of the organization's leadership team. The other solution is recruiting for an interim manager from an outside firm.

Hiring someone from an outside firm to fill a leadership position in a large organization has the benefits of objectivity, coaching, and mentoring; knowledge of best practices; and an unbiased perspective (Collins and Collins, 2007). Tapping resources from within the existing leadership team can also have many benefits, including knowledge of the daily operational needs of the facility and team that promotes staff retention, satisfaction, safe patient care delivery, and fulfillment of the mission and vision of the organization. In addition, it can also result in

exposing an unidentified talent or a professional growth opportunity for leaders who've become disengaged due to the daily routine of their work or excite those leaders who've been seeking additional responsibilities.

Both interim leadership choices require careful thought, oversight, and management to ensure success. Depending on the circumstances, the choice requires careful consideration regarding the current goal and the final outcome. If a person has been identified as an interim leader, there are typically a few phases that he/she will experience to manage multiple departments and competing priorities during the interim term.

The first phase in the interim leadership position is considered to be the “expectation, infrastructure, and exploring phase.” Expectations are high and team members are supportive and hopeful that the interim manager will help them through change. If the employee have gone a long time without a leader, they may be hesitant and skeptical to get too close or share too much. It's truly the stage of golden opportunity where colleagues offer help and assistance to make the transition successful, even if it's temporary. Although the search for a permanent replacement continues, the interim manager will begin to problem solve, organize, and stabilize the environment. Lines of authority will take shape and he/she begin to prioritize to ensure staff success.

Humility becomes the interim leader's best asset, especially if the role is outside your typical experience or comfort zone. For example, transitioning from a leadership role as the regulatory compliance officer to the interim senior manager of a large department, the interim manager learn to ask many questions, rely on the colleagues for help, build consensus around projects, and get input from the team to move initiatives forward.

The second phase is when reality sets in and the manager decides what to take on and what to leave for the person who'll ultimately fill the position. Responsibilities tend to increase and decisions must be made in the best interest of the unit and organization. If the current leader is scheduled to return, it would be wise to get input, feedback, and suggestion on how to proceed. This solidifies trust and a relationship that will be needed when he or she returns. If the search for a replacement is still in progress, managers will act as they would if the position was them.

The interim manager should make decisions with the help of the leaders who support and guide the vision at the level at which he/she is currently working. Increasing workload, especially if he/she still has his/her own unit/department to oversee, will require precision, planning, and delegation to ensure that work gets completed that meets both his/her superior's and team members' expectations.

The longer the interim position continues, the sharper the reality becomes. Expanding responsibilities from overseeing one unit or department to multiple units or departments at the same time can become overwhelming and short-term daily operational issues may seem to be handled without long-term thought, commitment, and passion.

The last phase is one of accommodation to the situation, developing solutions, and problem solving at an operational versus an institutional level. This means realizing that he/she is only in the role to help guide, direct, and bridge the gap to a long-term replacement or the return of the current leader. He/she can't make institutional changes that won't be able to follow through with after someone has been hired and he/she return to his/her previous responsibilities.

In this phase, he/she may experience grieving or feelings of loss, such as loss of relationships developed during your time as interim leader, loss of a vision he/she may have developed with the team, or loss of accomplishment. THE interim manager were able to manage two areas, he/she believed he/she did it well, and now he/she will hand it off to the incoming leader. These feelings are normal; remember, always be proud of what the manager accomplished and help transition the next leader into the facility.

CHALLENGES FOR INTERIM LEADERS

Interim leadership roles filled from within an organization require leaders who take on additional responsibilities to effectively manage priorities, staffing, and, most of all, their time. There will be multiple competing priorities and deadlines in light of the additional responsibilities. If at all possible, the manager should delegate some of those simple tasks to direct reports and accept the help of his/her colleagues. It will make them feel like they're contributing to the greater good and may spark a strength or project that may have gone undetected.

Resentment may also be experienced by the team that the manager left behind or those sharing his/her limited resources. The manager should ensure that he/she touch base regularly with his/her own department. That team, although stable, can begin to act out if they feel they aren't getting enough of his/her time, leadership, guidance, and tutelage.

It may also be difficult for those to whom tha manager directly reported to treat he/she differently in a role that may be of equal responsibility to theirs. Take the time to understand their approach and don't assume his/her relationship is the same.

Time management will be the interim manager's greatest challenge. Initially, when taking on the new interim role, he/she will spend 60% of the time developing relationships, getting access to systems, acclimating to a new

schedule, fulfilling committee responsibilities, and understanding his/her role and place if you're at a higher leadership level than the one he/she currently manage.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESS

The interim manager should approach the first weeks and months assessing the new environment or department(s) he/she is overseeing. This can be done through staff meetings, surveys, or one-on-one conversations with all of direct reports. Determination of the interim manager of what their expectations are while he/she is the interim leader. This will avoid any misconceptions and set the stage for the interim leader to formulate a plan with the input of the team(s) he/she is leading.

The interim leader should recognize his/her own limitations and communicate them with direct reports. The manager isn't super human now that he/she has taken on additional responsibilities outside of normal workload. Honesty goes a long way when someone expects more than the manager knows he/she can deliver. The leader shouldn't take on more than he/she can handle, He/she should take the advice from previous leaders, colleagues, or direct reports to help guide in his/her efforts.

The manager should let it go and know that he/she isn't in the position permanently and he/she will relinquish the responsibilities to someone else he/she may or may not know. The manager should focus on how he/she can help the incoming leader succeed and celebrate all of the accomplishments he/she achieved during his/her interim role.

The interim manager should also take the time to learn from every experience along the way, use the lessons learned to reinvent or reengage himself/herself when he/she return to managing the department for which were hired. He/she should remember that he/she, too, won't be in his/her position forever. If the manager was to leave his/her position, who would to be chosen to take over in his/her absence? The ultimate goal of any organization is continuous leadership development to create a pipeline of future leaders who can easily transition into a leadership role permanently or fulfill a temporary interim role to address retirements, promotions, and other organizational changes.

REFERENCES

- [1] Alewell D., Bähring K., Thommes K. (2005) Institutional Structures of the Flexible Assignment of Personnel between Enterprises. An Economic Comparison of Temporary Agency Work, Interim Management and Consulting, *Management Review*, Vol.16, No.4, 475-493
- [2] Boyle C.J., Chesnut R., Hogue M.D., Zgarrick D.P. (2016) "The influence of interim deans: More than keeping the ship afloat and warning the captain's seat", *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 80 (7), Article 112
- [3] Chapp CA. (2014) "The rise of interim leadership. Trend offers new opportunities to veteran healthcare executives". *Healthcare Executive*, Vol.29, No.5, 58-60
- [4] Collins SK, Collins KS. (2007) "Changing workforce demographics necessitates succession planning in health care", *Health Care Management* Vol.26, No.4, 318–325
- [5] Insead G.C., Luo S., Tang Y., Tong J.Y. (2015) "Passing probation : Earnings management by interim ceos and its effect on their promotion prospects", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol.58, No.5, 1389-1418
- [6] Jas P. (2013) "The role of interim managers in performance improvement: evidence from English local authorities", *Public Money and Management*, Vol.33, No.1, 15-22
- [7] McWilliam E., Bridgstock R., Lawson A., Evans T., Taylor P. (2008) "Who's dean today? Acting and interim management as paradoxes of the contemporary university", *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, Vol.30, No.3, 297-307
- [8] Minto M. (2006) "Interim management as a value generator", *Journal of Medical Marketing*, Vol.6, No.2, 151-152
- [9] Robeson N. (2008) "Interim management: Is it the right career move", *Industrial and Commercial Training*, Vol.40, No.6, 300-302
- [10] Russam C.M. (2005) "Flexible resourcing: the strategic case for interim management", *Strategic Change*, 14, 157–163
- [11] Schleicher T., Walker M. (2015) "Are interim management statements redundant?", *Accounting and Business Research*, Vol.45, No.2, 229-255
- [12] Shirey MR. (2006) "Stress and coping in nurse managers: two decades of research", *Nurse Econ.* 24(4), 193–203
- [13] Smid G., Van Hout E., Burger Y. (2006) "Leadership in Organisational Change: Rules for Successful Hiring in Interim Management", *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 35–51
- [14] Titzer J, Phillips T, Tooley S, Hall N, Shirey M. (2013) "Nurse manager succession planning: synthesis of the evidence", *J. Nurs Manag.* 21(7), 971–979

- [15] Vousden P.L. (2002) "Interim management: now a permanent feature of the workplace", *Industrial and Commercial Training*, Vol.34, No.3, 120-122
- [16] Liang X., Liu Y., Wu S., Zhang S. (2012) "Fending knights or masked kings: toward a theoretical framework of interim CEO succession", *Corporate Governance, The international journal of business in society*, Vol.12 No. 3, 367-377