

Times Up! Knowing When to Leave or How to Stay

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CESSE CEO Transition Survey

- Fielded survey on CESSE CEO Listserv
- Survey open for 7 days
- 165 execs on listserv
- 91 responses
- 55.2 % response rate

The Genesis of the Idea

After about 5 years, many execs start doing what they like to do and not what the organization needs them to do.+

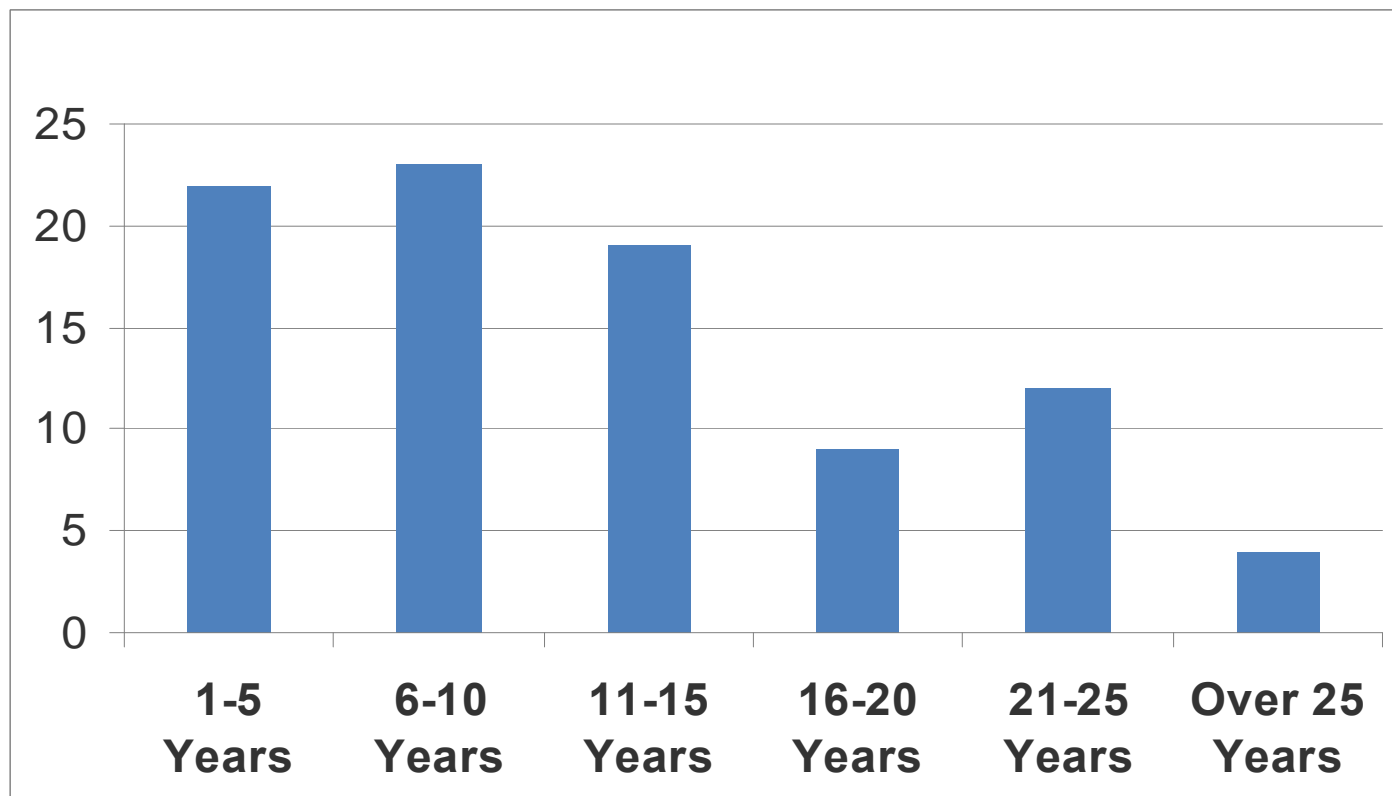
Questions

- Is there an optimal time to stay in a CEO position?
- How long is too long?
- What clues do you have that it is time to leave?
- How do long-tenured CEOs stay fresh in their jobs?
- How can you prepare yourself and your organization for eventual departure?

How many CEO positions have you held?

Number of Positions	Percent	Count
One	69%	59
Two	22%	19
Three	6%	5
Four or more	2%	2

Total # Years as CEO



Years in Current CEO Position

Years in Current Position	Percent	Count
Less than 1 year	3.4%	3
1- 5 years	33.3%	29
6-10 years	31.0%	27
11-15 years	16.1%	14
More than 15 years	16.1%	14

How Do Long-Tenure CEOs Stay Fresh and Effective?

- CESSE, ASAE, seminars, books, etc.
- Challenge of member, science, and business
- Networking with peers
- Staff interactions
- Changing environment and member needs
- Taking care of self . re-creating

Ideas for Keeping Fresh and Effective

- Use outside provocateurs to challenge my thinking and our staff, to help us out of our comfort zone.+
- Dealing with environment, looking for solutions, and leading change.+
- Adopt good ideas and synthesize new ideas.+
- The external environment is changing so rapidly that if you are paying attention ÷ you need to adjust all the time.+
- GESSE meeting always provide stimulation to try new things.+

How Long is Too Long?

- Is there an optimal time to stay in a CEO position?
- How long is too long?

Is there a point at which a CEO has been in their organization too long?

Is there a point at which a CEO has been in their organization too long?

Percent

Count

Yes

63%

54

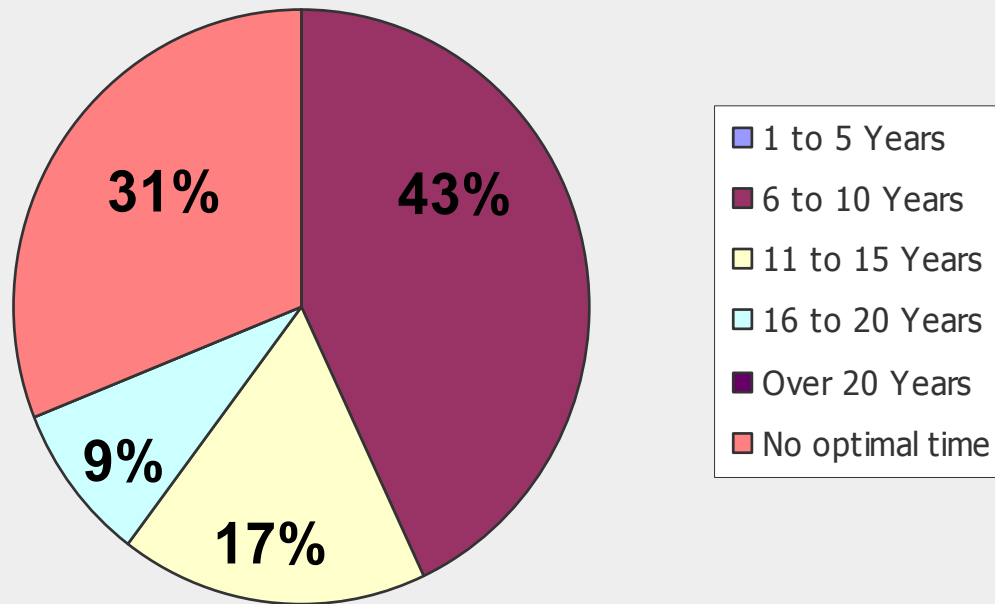
No

37%

32

If yes, how long?

If yes, how long is optimal time for CEO to stay in the position?



Organizational Clues: It's Time to Leave

- Groundhog Day . stuck in a rut, stagnant
- Resistance to new ideas and org change
- Boring . same issues
- Interpersonal conflict with board . declining respect
- Board in the weeds, not thinking strategically
- Staff turnover (long or short) and low morale/energy
- Over importance of CEO

Organizational Clues

No matter how well a CEO is doing, an organization benefits from change in leadership. If you are waiting for clues, you have stayed too long.+

Personal Clues: It's Time to Leave

- Boredom, lack of challenge & excitement
- Impatience & irritation w/Board and Staff
- Defensiveness or resistance to change
- Not excited about coming to work
- Working from home+more often
- Don't want to travel for business
- Chronic tiredness

Personal Clues

When it gets tired or old, it is probably time to at least have an honest conversation with yourself.+

When leaving current position?

When are you planning to leave your current position?	Percent	Count
Within the year	8%	7
1-3 years	29%	25
4-7 years	35%	30
No plans to leave	27%	23

Responded to CEO announcement in the past year?

Have you responded to CEO vacancy in past year?

Percent

Count

Yes

21.2%

18

No

78.8%

67

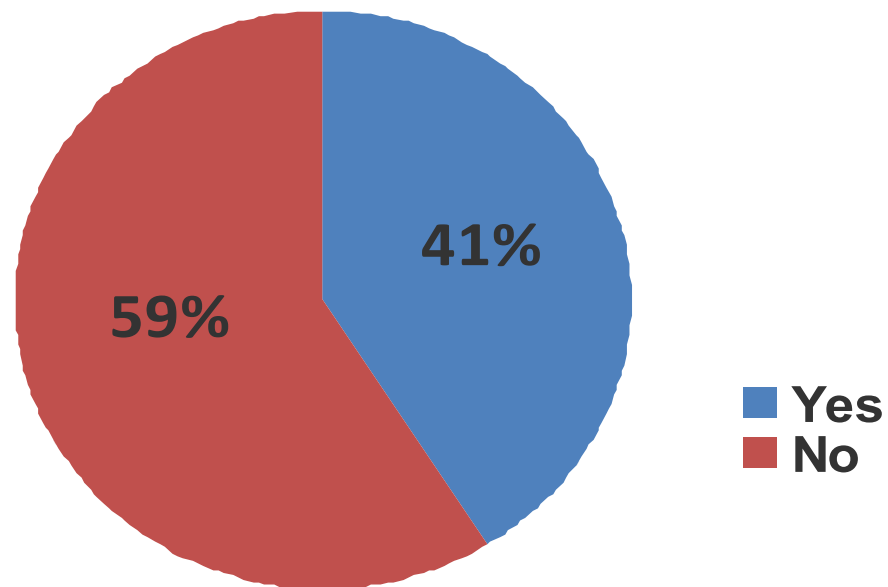
Retiring?

When you leave your current position, do you plan to retire from association management?

	Percent	Count
Yes	39%	33
No	26%	22
Unsure	35%	30

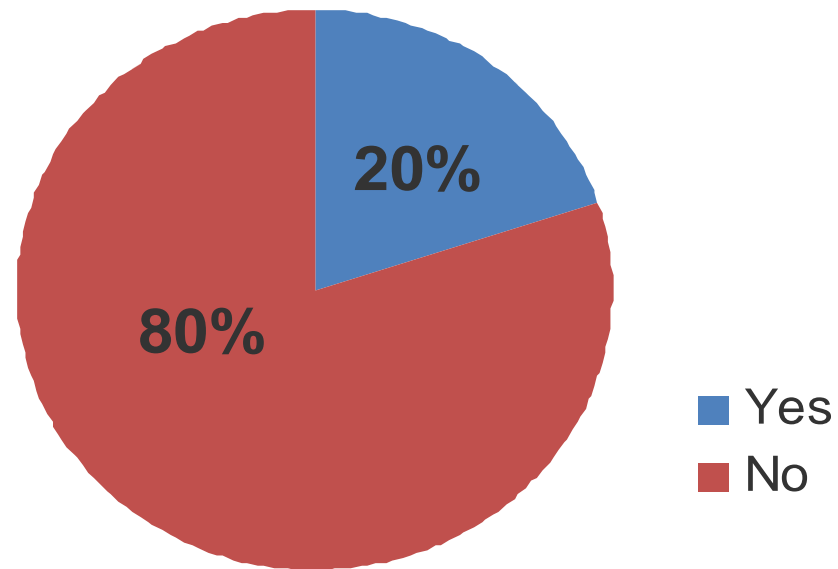
Succession Plan for Unplanned Departures?

Has your organization created a succession plan for unplanned departure/absences?



If yes, reviewed annually?

If yes, is the plan reviewed annually?



Other Comments

- This survey is geared towards professional association managers, not CEO leaders with experience in the science.
- It's hard to train a successor at a small association.
- What should be my role as the retiring CEO?
- Boards make decisions when the transition is about to happen or it happens suddenly.
- Transitioning into a position occupied by a 20-year CEO requires special planning.

Other Comments

The important thing is for the CEO to recognize when it is time to leave, and failing that, for the governing board to recognize it and be strong enough to provide for a graceful transition.+

Thank you!

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