

The Success Trap

When the System That Built Your Success
Becomes the Bottleneck to Growth

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Why the system that built your company can become the constraint to its next stage of growth

Most successful companies begin with a founder who is exceptionally good at making things happen.

You see the opportunity.
You make the decision.
You solve the problem.
You raise the standard.
You take responsibility.

That's how you built the company.

What works when the company is small can become the bottleneck as complexity grows.

More people. More decisions. More complexity. More dependencies.

And suddenly:

- decisions keep coming back to you;
- problems wait for you;
- your management team isn't operating as independently as you expected;
- you spend your time in the business instead of on it.

You may conclude:

"I need to delegate better."

"My team needs more ownership."

"We need better leaders."

Maybe.

But there may be a more fundamental problem.

The company has entered a different game.

When success becomes the constraint

The behaviors that created your success can become the behaviors that limit your next stage.

The Solve Game

“I solve the hardest problems.”

The team learns: **bring difficult problems to the founder.**

The Approval Game

“I make the important decisions.”

The team learns: **wait for the founder before committing.**

The Excellence Game

“I know what great looks like.”

The team learns: **adapt their work to the founder’s standard.**

The Pressure Game

“I create the urgency to get things moving.”

The team learns: **wait for the founder to create the pressure.**

These aren't failures.

They are intelligent strategies that worked in a previous game.

The problem is that the game has changed.

Don't fix the players. Change the game.

When behavior isn't producing the results you want, the natural response is to work on the people:

"Take more ownership."

"Make decisions."

"Communicate better."

But behavior is shaped by the system around it.

Repeated interactions create incentives.

Incentives make certain behaviors rational.

Those behaviors produce results.

And the results reinforce the interactions.

That's the game.

If you want different behavior, don't just tell people to behave differently.

Change the conditions that make the current behavior rational.

Awareness comes first

You can't redesign a game you can't see.

The first step isn't another leadership technique.

It's seeing the pattern:

What are you and your management team repeatedly doing together?

What does that make rational for everyone else?

And what is it costing the company?

You cannot change the game you can't see.

The first step is to see which game is operating in your company.

Take The Pulse

In a few minutes, The Pulse will show you the game that may be shaping the interactions between you and your management team—and what that game may be making rational for everyone to do.

See what's behind current results—in minutes, not months.

[**→ Take The Pulse**](#)

