

Stop your stars becoming Ex's

Margaret Beaton 02 June 2013

In May my post '[Becoming an Ex](#)' stirred a good deal of interest. Thank you to those Ex's and those on the brink of becoming an Ex who have shared the resonance and reassurance they felt on reading '[Becoming an Ex](#)'.

One observation from an Ex, now a CEO, sticks with me. "I am a marital Ex and I changed jobs two years ago to take a big step up. But until I read your post '[Becoming an Ex](#)' I had not seen the similarities between a divorce Ex and a work place Ex. The insights have helped me personally; for which thank you. More importantly though, I now realise that one or more of the stars in my management team may be at risk of becoming an Ex and leaving us. We simply cannot afford that so I plan to use the ideas in your post to mitigate this risk."

Retaining and motivating top talent, particularly stars, is a priority for top management. To state the obvious, your top talent has the greatest opportunity to move on. You need to stop your stars becoming Ex's.

[Becoming an Ex](#) describes the stages of transition out of a role. Becoming an Ex takes place in predictable stages. To reduce the risk of your stars becoming Ex's you need to know what to look for and how to act.

Becoming an Ex starts with the *onset of doubt*. Which of your managers or partners is showing signs of being disillusioned? For who, assuming there are no private-life related reasons, is work no longer the joy it once was? Whose discretionary effort is dropping off? Is someone asking "Is this all worth it?" These are possible symptoms and signs of the first stage of becoming an Ex.

The search for *alternatives* represents the second stage of becoming an Ex. If a star is looking around or doesn't tell you a search firm has approached them, it may be a pointer to a search for a place where the grass looks greener—an alternative opportunity. Additional signs are social withdrawal, less initiative and reduced productivity. During this stage there is usually still time to prevent their loss. So act!

If a star reaches the *turning point* stage, it's almost certainly too late. Getting to this point may take a long time, so during the lingering leading up to the turning there is an opportunity to engage the star and find solutions to the reasons for their doubts.

Becoming an Ex danger periods

There are times in the organisational life cycle when a star may be at particular risk of becoming an Ex. These include re-structures, top management change, mergers and takeovers.

Being extra alert at these times can pay dividends and prevent your stars becoming Ex's.

If you enjoyed reading this post you may also find these insightful:

- + [Becoming an Ex](#)
- + [You are who you think you are](#)
- + [Could this be you?](#)

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