

WORDS *to* LEAD BY

101 WAYS TO LEVERAGE AN
INTERIM EXECUTIVE



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senior**management**worldwide

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ISBN-13: 978-1-7335026-1-0

ISBN-10: 1-7335026-1-0

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“

Cerius was incredibly responsive and professional in this process, and they provided flexibility in the way we managed the transition... I have recommended Cerius to numerous CEOs with the same need. Cerius is a strategic solution for key functions.”

BILL MOORE

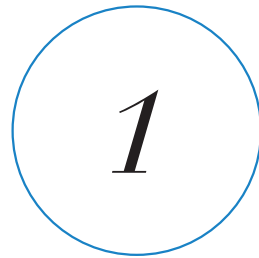
President, PacMoore

“

The Interim Executive completed several of the initiatives and made significant progress on the remaining initiatives. His involvement and leadership of these initiatives over sixteen weeks was integral to getting them completed.”

LINDSAY MONGE

Chief Administrative Officer, Magnaflow



Building watertight linkages between
your organization's accounting and
inventory systems?

That's a job for an interim executive.



2

A disorganized department is the interim executive's natural habitat—bringing order to chaos is just one superpower for hire.

3

Obsolete systems can accumulate in any business, creating drag and inefficiencies; interim executives are the solution.

4

When it's absolutely critical to reduce turnover in sales staff and nothing else has worked, an interim executive can deliver.

5

Got a huge project that's
six months overdue?

No internal champion with the
bandwidth to bring it home?

An interim executive can carry
it across the finish line.



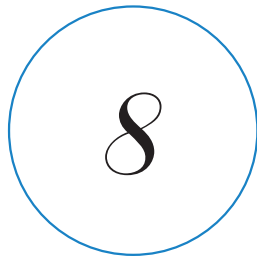
6

Get to the bottom of the crazy-making quality issues that have been plaguing the production line with the laser beam focus of an experienced, expert interim executive.



Health care and personnel costs
eating into the bottom line?

An interim executive can drill into
the numbers and the operations and
solve those issues once and for all.



Employees all bouncing off the walls,
doing their own things?

An interim executive can get them
all in the same boat, rowing in the
same direction by fully documenting
processes and procedures.

9

Maximize management's strengths, focus on process improvements, build bench strength, and build confidence in staff effectiveness with an interim executive who brings CEO experience to a rapidly growing startup.

10

Instability and rapidly changing market conditions can cause unexpected headaches; an interim executive can assist with getting the high cost of goods and inefficient SKU mix under control.

11

Nobody can do it all forever; we've seen executives with too many direct reports, and downstream quality declined. Distribute accountability and responsibility in critical areas like customer service with an interim executive.

12

Company losing money due
to outdated business process
management software and systems?

Let an interim executive lead you out
of the dark ages and into the Cloud.

13

When the bottom line has to be cut on an urgent basis, that's the perfect time to bring in an interim executive to do painful, necessary work (responsibly).

14

Every organization needs strategy and standards; an experienced interim executive can help the whole team grasp the big picture, paint it vividly, and map the way to get there.

15

Our client had been experiencing a lack of sales growth and high turnover in its sales and channel network. Did the interim executive turn it all around?

Every bit.

16

Does the Board of Directors want a strategic plan they can get behind?

An interim executive can put that together for you (and even present it with assurance, confidence, and flair.)

17

You've worked 24/7/365 to get your startup where it is; Now that you're ready to seek real funding, do you need a marketing plan?

An interim marketing executive can do that for you, complete with SWOT, Goals, Objectives, Strategies, & Tactics.

18

Still basing business decisions
primarily based on instinct?

An interim executive can put strategic
planning, data, and reporting into
your decision-making process.

19

Seeking objective advice and an overall assessment of the business?

Critical decisions, along with internal management information, are the waters in which interim executives swim.

20

An interim executive can expand your distribution channel at the right time, to the right size, with the right expertise—leaving newly created value in the capable hands of internal resources.

21

Expanding into new markets is a perfect short-term assignment for an interim executive with strategic and tactical knowledge of market conditions, positioning, and players.

22

There's nobody more qualified for your next independent review and assessment than an independent executive, whether it's a CEO, COO, CFO, or CMO.

23

Bank pushing back about renewals
or increases for lines of credit?

Finances flagged ahead
of a potential exit?

An interim finance executive
can absorb the headaches
and hassles and get the books
into bankable shape.

24

Train your young, hungry sales force the right way: An interim executive created formal structures to support a sales pipeline, along with accountability to help a young sales force achieve their aggressive targets.

25

Let an interim executive patch up a strained relationship with your banker; it's one of the best investments a business can make.

26

Growing and changing businesses spring leaks in leadership skills when founders and early leaders leave; interim executives can step in and bridge caps *within a matter of days*.

27

The best organizational problem is outgrowing your internal leadership skill set: Interim executives can hold the fort until there's a strategic, comprehensive executive staffing plan rather than one intended to put out fires.

28

Big ambitions and limited resources?

That's not unusual. Get more for your money with a short-term or part-time interim executive who executes and manages important new strategic initiatives and programs.

29

Restructuring your management team sounds like a week in the dentist's chair, but an interim HR executive can help absorb and redirect the uncertainty and negative energy into success.

30

Owners and executives can do a lot, but they can't replicate themselves quickly; interim executives expand and extend bandwidth and capabilities to get more done in less time during times of increased demand and transition.

31

Improve systems and reporting
with interim executive experience,
expertise, and capabilities.

32

Stop making do with outdated and inadequate management information systems and reporting. Let an interim executive bring you up to date, up to speed, and up to the minute.

33

No budget available for busy season?

No financial reporting or
processes in place?

An interim executive can drill down
and find organizational areas where
pennywise = pound foolish.

34

In the twenty-first century, data drives decisions, and if you have no transparency in systems and data, you lack adequate decision-making tools. An interim executive can create proprietary business intel sources for a fraction of the cost of software suites.

35

Let an interim executive cut to the heart of inaccurate financials and deliver a clean, clear picture of what's really going on in your business.

36

How does an interim executive create a new sales team from the ground up in a limited amount of time?

Same way any executive does, but faster: Set goals, lead, train, and track.

37

Interim executives are key resources in the succession planning process, from early in the planning stage to filling gaps during the active transition.

38

Family businesses may have no succession plan when founders retire; interim executives can step in while internal resources' capabilities are assessed with appropriate due diligence.

39

Sudden executive departures can wreak havoc on unprepared organizations, creating unexpected leadership voids that interim executives can fill almost instantaneously.

40

Interim executives' unique outside perspectives, experience, and capabilities are irreplaceable before, during, and after mergers and acquisitions.

41

For businesses considering a sale, the fresh view of a 100% outside interim executive offers a “dry run” of the company through the savvy eyes of potential suitors.

42

For recently acquired companies with significantly disparate cultures, an interim executive with integration expertise can significantly smooth the transition period.

43

Obvious but not to be overlooked:
Interim executives can bridge the
gaps left by resigning executives
when there is a vacant executive
position in any organization
during a formal search.



As truly disinterested third parties,
interim executives are the most
natural, honest brokers of
inter-departmental conflicts.

45

Interim executives in several disciplines have resolved communication and operational conflicts between technology and business units in chronic conflict.

46

Unexpected deaths, illnesses and other incapacitating events create leadership voids that must be filled for the company to continue operating; interim executives provide continuity during difficult times.

47

Sometimes the most stubborn leadership team silos need an outside resource to come in and knock them on their sides; sometimes that outside resource is an interim executive.

48

When trust is an issue and inter-department sharing has ground to a halt, an interim executive with a mandate to access all the information in an organization can be the first step to solving the problem.

49

Interim executives can design,
build, and optimize critical
infrastructure for growth at any
stage of an organization's evolution.

50

Quickly growing companies can extend their internal capabilities in operations, finance, leadership, sales, marketing, HR and more.

51

Tensions between the business side and the IT side of the house can be brokered, bridged, and brought to closure by a skilled interim executive with expertise in data-driven decision-making and facilitation.

52

In midcycle companies, an interim executive can step in to spearhead initiatives in specific areas where resources have outgrown their charge: HR systems, processes, manufacturing, distribution, etc.

53

Failing to hit targeted sales growth rates is a death sentence for any company; revenue is life. That's why an interim executive engagement can be the most critical three to nine months of a small- to mid-sized business's lifecycle.

54

Building a strong foundation for future growth is a perfect project for an interim executive; building by design rather than by necessity is a recipe for future success.

55

Need a 100-day plan? No internal resources or time to do it?

That's a perfect short-term project for an interim executive.

56

CEO, CFO, COO, Sales Director,
Director of HR, or another critical
executive on extended leave?

Need coverage who can hit the
ground running, pick up where
they left off, and step away
when they get back?

That's what interim executives do.

57

Long, complex sales cycles feel the lack of sales leadership acutely; an interim executive who can oversee both strategy and tactics for high-ticket, high-technology products and services makes a difference.

58

Family businesses are especially strained when communication breaks down between generations and branches of the family. Interim executives can defuse tensions, offer outside perspectives, and focus on the business—not personalities.

59

Unexpected shifts in the competitive landscape can rock an organization to the core.

Expertise from an interim executive who's been there can help to rapidly respond and conquer new challenges.

60

When it's time to innovate—whether your organization needs new processes, a cultural makeover, or new product and service lines to stay competitive—interim executives who have helped blaze new trails can be your Lewis & Clark.

61

If your HR organization needs to establish or update its comprehensive training, cross-training, and documentation across the board, an interim executive can do that without disrupting daily operations.

62

Interim executives have helped client organizations resolve issues with high turnover in customer base/channel/distribution network.

63

Young, growing startups may not have established internal controls in their financial and accounting systems; an interim executive can come into the organization on a short-term basis and establish the mechanisms and procedures that promote accountability and prevent fraud.

64

Can an interim executive turn
around declining sales?

With the one-two punch of
repairing an inadequate
compensation structure and
accountability, *absolutely*.

65

Executives don't always depart on the ideal schedule. If you have an open position with many issues that need to be addressed and resolved during the formal search, an interim executive can fill the gap.

66

Sometimes it's a short-term crisis:

*We need more revenue and
we need it now.*

An interim marketing executive with industry experience can execute a short-term marketing plan to drive sales and revenue.

67

During M&A, you need industry-specific experience, but where can you get it on a short-term basis without threatening the balance sheet?

An interim executive.

68

Launching a new product is no time to feel your way through the process; an industry expert who's been there and done that is the right interim executive for the job.

69

Moving? Upgrading offices, facilities,
warehouses, production facilities?
Need an operations pro to get
through the upheaval?

Let an interim executive handle the
details from planning to move-in day.

70

You have a two-inch thick five-year strategic plan in impressive binders; nobody can tell you what's in it. An interim executive can turn it into a hymnal and get everybody singing together in harmony from the same page.

71

An interim executive with deep experience in mergers and acquisitions is the expert you need for due diligence when the organization is considering purchasing another company.

72

Even something as “simple” as month-end closing can cause recurring headaches. Takes too long? Delayed? Not smooth?

Interim financial executives get to the root causes, troubleshoot, fix the problems, and empower internal resources to keep things on track.

73

Bringing a full-time executive into a company is a serious commitment. It takes time to find just the right fit. In the meantime, don't feel rushed. Let an interim executive hold the fort while you take as long as you need to find the right one for the long term.

74

Pouring tons of time, effort, cash,
and resources into online marketing,
only to have it underperform?

An interim digital marketing executive
can slice through the analytics and
optimize strategy and tactics for
better result\$.

75

You have a strategy, a plan, a structure,
and staff, but nobody seems to be
holding anybody else accountable.

What's the solution?

An interim executive.

76

You've grown as far as you can as fast as you can, and now organic sales are flat. It's time to penetrate new markets. An interim executive can plan and execute critical launches into new product or service offerings, competitive spaces, or territories.



Audit? Who has the expertise or
internal resources for that?

Let an interim executive take the
helm and guide the organization
through those shark-infested waters.

78

The organization is losing money, but nobody is entirely sure why...until the right interim executive walks through the door with the past experience, industry knowledge, and expertise to peer into the black box and figure it out.

79

Stop the bleeding: During the economic downturn of 2008, a client company used an interim executive to turnaround a sales plunge of 30%.



Target lists, growth objectives, future direction, priorities; so many moving parts, so much complexity.

Sometimes a few months with an interim executive can bring critical long-term strategic clarity and outside perspective to a team overwhelmed by day-to-day details.

81

So you've decided to sell.
Congratulations. The next three
to five years are going to be
the hardest years of your life as
you grow revenues, pare expenses,
and prep the books.

Let interim executives help you.

82

A promotion for a key employee?
Congratulations! Now...who's going
to replace her? And do you need a
controller or a CFO?

Let an interim executive help assess
the organization's long-term needs
with objective eyes.

83

Declining sales are a symptom, not a cause; an interim sales and marketing executive can quickly diagnose the root of the problem, from competitive pressures to product mix to a need to restructure the sales model.

84

Can interim executives come into an organization and take the reins of new product development?

Absolutely. For as few or as many months as you need them.

85

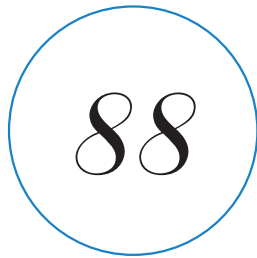
It may sound crazy, but it's true; sometimes a startup or young company is moving so fast, it doesn't actually have a strategy or a plan. When you're ready, an interim executive is the person to turn to.

86

Organizations are organisms made up of dozens of moving parts—pay, benefits, operations, culture, work processes and procedures, finance, and more. Integration is key to efficiencies and fiscal responsibility, and interim executives can take on integration projects from start to finish.

87

Sometimes a CEO simply isn't sure what the internal executive/management team's capabilities are. An outside interim executive can offer a full, objective, unbiased assessment on a short-term basis.



Are your organization's pay and benefits competitive in the region, market, and industry?

An interim executive can complete a full analysis and immediately begin implementing a fix if needed.

89

“Is the system down again today?”

That’s a question nobody should ever ask in a mature company. An interim executive can get to the bottom of recurrent failures and fix them—fast.

90

The organization thrived for decades on reputation and referrals—until it didn't. Then it realized it had outdated and incomplete marketing collateral and a website right at home in the days of AOL. An interim executive can bring them up to date in a matter of months.

91

Hard to believe, but some small companies don't have budget information available on an updated, timely basis; as you grow, an interim executive can set up transparent, real-time financial reporting to drive smarter decisions.

92

It can be painful to let go of nonperforming teams and people who no longer fit an evolving organization's new direction. If a whole-company reorganization is in the cards, an interim executive can help.

93

Expansions are the best reasons to pull from a pool of highly experienced interim executives, whether you need to grow beyond your current client base, snag larger and longer contracts, move into new markets or open additional distribution channels.

94

Seeking growth for the next phase?

An interim executive can help staff up and ramp up your organization's capabilities for the next big strategic and operational moves.

95

Sometimes the owners and executives need to place their focus elsewhere: A turnaround, an acquisition, a merger. But the business still needs to keep running. An interim executive can keep the day-to-day running smoothly.

96

“We’re bleeding cash, and we
don’t know why.”

An interim executive can figure out
why. And stop the bleeding.

97

The owner said, “We need a foundation for future growth,” and the interim executive helped to build it. Then he went on to help other organizations build their foundations—a master builder of young organizations.

98

No organization can sustain declining sales and profit margins for long. An interim executive with expertise in turnarounds knows what needs to be done to rectify these painful situations before they become existential threats.

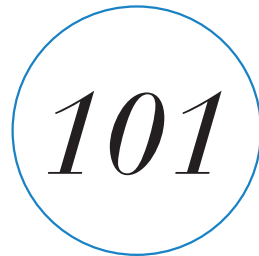
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Objective advice is necessary.

It's also frequently incredibly expensive, especially if it comes from a Big Six firm. Interim Executives can offer the same experience and perspective (and sometimes even come from the Big Six) but without the hefty price tag.

100

At a critical juncture, an interim executive can be engaged to assess the future viability of an organization, along with high-level recommendations for strategic interventions to improve profitability if the owner chooses to remain in business or to exit.



Special projects; skunkworks; process improvements; Six Sigma; from A to Z, if you can think of a wish your Fairy Godmother could grant your organization, an interim executive can do that.