

rites of succession
Copyright 2013, Paul Spite
For one time use by churches, all other rights reserved

Lights come up on boardroom scene. Board members sit around table, drink coffee, eat donuts. On wall is a sign / logo reading "Housing for the Homeless". Near front of room is series of charts, by which president stands. Attention of board members on president. All frozen in place till president speaks.

President: *(Paces)* Members of the Board, Thank you for coming on such short notice. As always, your loyalty to the company is commendable. As time is short, let me get right to why I called an unscheduled meeting. *(All focus on note pads)* As I reflect back on our three years, I'm both disappointed and elated. At what we've accomplished. Disappointed, because we've not totally met the housing needs. Granted, mainly because many refuse to admit they need decent housing. Elated, because as a non-profit corporation, we've far surpassed what the general public expected of us. Charts behind me reflect this success. It's been an exhilarating three years. But before I make an announcement, I want your input. *(Members all look at each other)* Most have been with me since we started. I'm curious. Why do you feel we've been successful?

BM1: *(Hesitantly raises hand)* Well, Sir. If I were to look for primary reason, It would have to be the government expanding our charter. Letting us meet all primary needs, in addition to our main service.

President turn, writes on flip chart "UNLIMITED AUTHORITY TO MEET NEEDS"

BM2: Of course! And word of that got around.

President: Advertised?

BM2: By the best and cheapest kind. Word of mouth.

President turns, writes on flip chart "WORD OF MOUTH ADVERTISING"

President: What else?

BM3: I think it's because we truly offer equal opportunity. Don't prefer any client over another.

BM4: Or prequalify them. So no one is exempted because of past mistakes.

President: That's good! *(He turns and writes, "EQUAL OPPORTUNITY" and "NO PREQUALIFICATION")* Anything else?

While president writes, a junior clerk eases into room, asks if anyone needs anything. He is completely ignored by board members, turns and leaves.

BM5: *(Hesitant)* Well, it helps that our product is completely unique. If they want it, we're the only one who provides it.

President: That's powerful! (*Writes on flip chart "UNIQUE PRODUCT"*)

BM6: (*Gushes*) Well, no one's said it yet, but it's also because of your brilliant leadership!

Obvious frowns at this on the part of the other members.

President: It is all right to call me brilliant. I am! However, that leads me to the announcement I need to make. (*Everyone leans forward expectantly*) After tonight, I will no longer lead this company. I have other responsibilities to fulfill. So, (*He must speak louder above hum of whispered conversations*) before we finish here, I must determine my successor!

At this point, mild uproar as members begin to discuss who would be the best choice. Actors ad lib this. Should include things like "I was the second in management here" "It's only logical I take over the reins" or "I the one who's been privy to all his decisions. It should be me" or even, "Excuse me, but who holds the most degrees here?" Amidst general uproar, junior clerk slides into room, asks again several times if anyone needs anything. He is completely ignored again. He sighs and begins to collect trash, cups etc. The President turns, takes off his coat, rolls up sleeves, begins to help clear table. After a couple moments, BM6 notices.

BM6: Sir! What are you doing? (*At this point, all watch in shocked silence*) That is beneath you. A job for underlings. Janitors.

President: (*Continues to work*) Yet, this man is not a janitor either. (*He addresses the clerk*) Why are you doing this?

Clerk: (*Nervous*) I just thought you guys needed it done.

President: And your name is?

Clerk: Daniel, Sir!

President: Well Daniel! Sit here at the head of the table. (*Eases the clerk into seat, turns to board members*) You have all forgotten. The primary reason for our success is our service to others. Daniel knows how to do that. So he will be your new president. Effective now (*Turns to clerk / president*) If you ever need advice or anything, don't hesitate to call me! Sir!

President shakes hands with Daniel, gathers a few more cups, walks off stage amidst stunned silence as lights fade.