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## The Demise of Key Government CEOs – What’s the Real Reason?

An article in this week’s ODT made my blood boil. Headlined, ‘Govt Quiet on Chief Executives’, asks the question as to why the Government has not given us an explanation, or a reason why these two highly ranked employees are no longer employed?

In the first case, a joint announcement by the Minister and the board chairman said the CEO of Transport NZ had tendered his resignation.

In the second case, the KiwiBuild CEO has not been at work for over a month. Speculation is a riff that he has ‘left the build’. However, his replacement reports that the said executive has not resigned. Then twenty-four hours later the temporary replacement explained the CEO’s absence was based on an employment dispute. So, what’s going on?

These are two highly paid positions in the public service and the public who stump up for their large salaries are entitled to an explanation, particularly given the short length of employment.

On top of this, the Minister for both departments had said, “I don’t hire public servants – they are not my responsibility to manage, I simply get advice from them.”

OK, Minister, I agree that it is not your responsibility for the daily management of CEOs, but you are also saying you do not hire these key people. So am I to assume, the first time the Minister met these executives was after they were appointed?

Come on; if I am appointing a person to give me advice, I would certainly want to be very close to the total hiring process. Isn’t one of the key personal attributes how the CEO and Minister will work as a team? I’d be interested to know if each person had their [innate abilities](#) tested and a solid background and reference check completed.

I think there is an unlying reason for silence. Is it because both of these appointments [were poorly conducted](#), and nobody wants to take the blame?

As an expert in the science of hiring, I bet thorough due diligence was lacking, a common practice particularly within the public service as it is very easy to cover up mistakes – well say you resigned, here’s a golden handshake and a confidentiality agreement. Case closed.

As in any organisation, if the CEO is not performing and has to be 'managed out' it is usually the fault of the Chairperson/Board of Directors who hired him/her. I wasn't the candidate's mistake; it was their mistake; the buck always stops at the top.

So in our above scenario, I want to understand, were the two gentlemen 'managed out' and why? How much did that cost us? Moreover, who decided to hire and how was this process conducted.

Over the years, I constantly see sloppy hiring practices in Government departments. The money and time wasted, not to mention the impact on staff must be huge.

It seems we have many people protecting the terminated CEOs to hid their own inefficiencies, just one man's thoughts!

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