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"Quotes"

"What we're looking at is a comprehensive plan..., not so much a Band-Aid approach."
 ~Jarrod Agen

*"The alternative would be that you're dealing with this thing all year long. *** I'm hopeful that ...we got to the root of the problem and fixed it."*
 ~Geno Auriemma

"You're either part of the solution or you're part of the problem."
 ~Eldridge Cleaver

"There is an increasing awareness of the interrelatedness of things. We are becoming less prone to accept an immediate solution without questioning its larger implications."
 ~Arthur Erickson

"I don't think there is any simple solution to this. What this is about is taking a long-term view and developing long-term strategies. We're not trying to put the finger in the dike today."
 ~David Hartwell

"Surely there comes a time when counting the cost and paying the price aren't things to think about any more. All that matters is value -- the ultimate value of what one does."
 ~James Hilton

"There's no corners to be cut that don't cost you in the end."
 ~Scott Mitchell

"You can't put a Band-Aid on every boo-boo you've made[;] some just need time to heal."
 ~Christina Montano

Dear Friend,

Ouch!

As a little girl, I had a fascination with band-aids. Oh, my goodness, they were like accessories for me, and I displayed them with as much pride as others did rings, barrettes, or scarves.

Now, mind you, we're talking about the days before the decorative band-aid. There were no Scooby-Doo, Hello Kitty, or neon colors in my time. Nope, my band-aid collection was of the old, tan, generic variety. We're talking *u-gu-lee*! Nonetheless, for me, band-aids had an inexplicable appeal. Whenever I had a real, possible, or even feigned boo-boo, the closest adult was dispatched quickly to the medicine cabinet...for it was *Band-Aid Time!*

I'm not exactly sure when it happened, but somewhere along the line, band-aids lost their luster for me. (And, that's a shame because I could do some real damage with the variety on the market today!)

On the other hand, not everyone seems to have forsaken my childhood friend. While not always sporting a preference for band-aids externally, many folks still opt for them. And, this preference becomes evident in their willingness to invest valuable resources into "fixes" that merely address surface issues...in their lives, in their careers, in their teams, or in their businesses.

Fixes...maybe. But, fixes that fail to cut to the core of what's really going on.

Band-aids...

In this month's edition of *EA Insights*, let's consider the topic of "*Band-Aids vs. Cures*." Hey, I've given up my boo-boo-hiding fetish. Have you?

All the best,

June

June Melvin Mickens
 Executive Advantage, LLC

Band-Aids vs. Cures

June Melvin Mickens
 Executive Advantage, LLC

You've seen it just as I have. Perhaps you've experienced it. Maybe you're facing it right now.

There's a problem. A fix is settled upon. But, that "fix" does little. There's no measurable or lasting change to the underlying challenge.

What just happened? It's likely that the selected "fix" was a band-aid, not a cure.

The Symptoms

When in the midst of a mess, people often miss the signs that point to the fact that they're about to apply a band-aid rather than dig deep to discover a cure. But, signs there are!

To borrow from Jeff Foxworthy, **You know you're about to apply a band-aid, when:**

...your greatest concern is an easy fix.

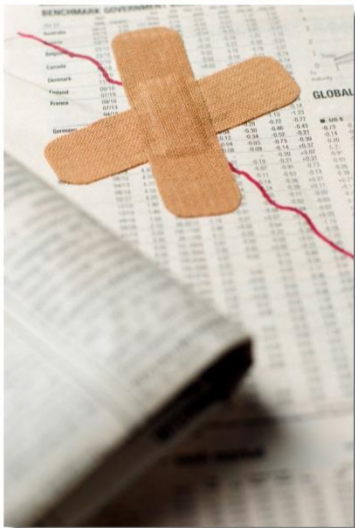
When the ease of the solution is the highest priority, you're marching straight to the medicine cabinet for a band-aid. Now, not all cures are hard to put into action. However, when the deciding factor in choosing a solution is its *ease*, rather than its *results*, you've committed yourself only to skimming the surface. And, that's a sign that you've opted for a band-aid.

...you want to get it done fast.

"Fast" is closely akin to "easy." When you hear, "*Just get it done fast!*" this is fertile ground for a band-aid rather than a cure. That's because not all quick solutions are of the thorough, lasting, or properly targeted variety. So, you may do *something* fast, but is it the *right* thing?

...you're looking for a cheap fix.

Attempts to fix things "on the cheap" scream band-aid! Solutions don't have to be costly to be effective. Yet, when the focus is on *cost*, at the expense of *content*, the impact is likely to be questionable.



...you don't want to ruffle feathers.

If you want to fix a problem, but you don't want to disturb anyone in the process, any solution you arrive at is sure to be a band-aid. True cures typically require some level of change -- like it or not.

...you take certain behaviors, projects, or people off the table.

Band-aids permit the existence of sacred cows.

Cures mandate that everything be on the table for consideration and for change, as appropriate.

The Causes & The Costs

If band-aids don't get the desired results, why do we keep applying them? Good question. Think about why *you* tend to use band-aides.

Band-aids help you feel good...for a while.

After all, when you apply that band-aid, you can show you're taking action. You're doing *something!* So, the band-aid, even though its results are questionable, can make you feel better because you're showing concern, or leadership, or movement.

The problem is that the feel-good feeling usually is short-lived. Because you're only dealing with the surface, the real problem isn't being addressed. Yes, you may see some quick wins. Yes, you may feel good for a time. Yes, people may applaud your leadership for a season. But, then what? The problem -- in the same old form or in some other iteration -- raises its head, and you're back to Square 1 again...if not Square -1.

Band-aids help you steer clear of conflict...for a while.

Band-aids that don't ruffle feathers or that safeguard sacred cows often are based on a desire to avoid conflict. After all, it can be hard to have difficult conversations. It can be uncomfortable to engage folks around finding solutions to deep-seated problems. It can be a challenge to face up to personal habits, even those that stifle progress. So, resorting to a band-aid offers a way to quiet, if not entirely dodge, conflict.

The problem is that sidestepping conflict may keep the peace for a time, but it doesn't solve the problem. You may dodge a fight today with a band-aid; however, the war hasn't been won. A new battle -- possibly nastier -- is waiting because of the long-neglected core matter.

Band-aids help you to take the easy path...for a while.

Most band-aid solutions involve responses that come easy. They don't force you to step outside of your comfort zone and dig deep. Band-aids start and stop at the surface. They typically don't require you to invest time, effort, and/or resources into working through what's really happening as well as the causes, impacts, possible solutions, and aspects of the matter warranting ongoing attention.

The problem is that employing surface fixes often yields only short-lived outcomes. The underlying problem isn't fixed; it's patched. Instead of being rooted out, it festers, grows, and frequently spreads. Thus, a challenge that could have been tackled, with a small or reasonable effort at the outset, now is a much larger, more complex, and deeper ingrained issue whose impact is more far-reaching and whose resolution is more difficult to achieve.

The Solution

The good news is that band-aids aren't the only option for addressing problems that arise. Cures are, indeed, possible...and preferable.

As we work with **Executive Advantage** clients, we've developed an approach that helps them to move beyond the surface and to target the causes of the challenges they're facing. We call it **A-C-E**.

FIRST, it's important to ASSESS.

When you realize that something is off kilter, you need a trusted partner to help you look objectively at your situation and its causes. It's critical to assess what's really happening in your business or career (actual issues...not just symptoms), what's causing and contributing to the situation, and how it's impacting the business and/or you.

SECOND, it's important to CORRECT.

After pinpointing the real challenge and its root causes, the next step is to identify possible solutions. The aim is to zero in on practical fixes that are designed to yield the short- and long-term results you seek. With options in hand, you can make informed decisions about the right solution to settle the real problem, and you can engage in action planning to determine how to accomplish the desired results.

THIRD, it's important to ESTABLISH a sustainable routine.

If you're like most people, your goal is to realize progress that you can build upon for the long term...not something that is here today and gone tomorrow. With that in mind, it's vital that you develop benchmarks so you can measure your improvement. It's important to build new habits and skills so you can replace and/or continue growing in order to be more productive and to make adjustments as you go along. It also is crucial to have a focus on implementation; planning is good, but constant attention to (and support around) action is essential for success.

Are *you* opting for a band-aid instead of a cure? Isn't it time to take the first step and put that issue to rest...once and for all?

Just use the links that follow to contact us today. Explore how **Executive Advantage** can partner with you to help you **A-C-E** your **business** or **professional** challenge.

"Learn the fundamentals of the game and stick to them. Band-Aid remedies never last."

~Jack Nicklaus

"The ... system needs real changes and real solutions to underlying problems, not attacking symptoms with band-aids."

~James Seals

"You have to shut it down and identify the reasons.... So many times teams are forced into a situation of treating the symptoms because they don't have the time. But [that] is a red flag of a symptom. If you don't get the problem addressed, you still have the original problem and now you have a second problem that was only a symptom before."

~Mackie Shilstone

"We don't need a solution that comes from a pressure cooker. We need a solution to come about from a crock pot. It has to be thought about slow and deliberate."

~Jay Taylor

"We commend [them] for stepping up, being very cooperative.... Our investigation is ongoing, and we intend to keep it open because we want to find the root cause of the failure and make sure that we've identified the totality of the problem."

~Rae Tyson

"Nothing great is lightly won; nothing won is lost. Every good deed that's nobly done will always repay the cost."

~Unknown

"These negotiations were done in a positive, cooperative, problem-solving spirit.... While it may have taken some time to reach this cooperative solution, I think it was time well-spent."

~Rick Wagoner

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About Executive Advantage

At **Executive Advantage**, we are committed to providing results-based business and management consulting, leadership development, and coaching support. We partner with business leaders to build healthy, well-functioning organizations, where goals are met and people thrive. We also partner with individuals to create professional (and personal) lives with clearer direction, improved results, and greater balance.

To learn more about **Executive Advantage**, contact us [online](#) or at **(301) 280-5950**.

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