

# Bill Kennedy Developing Young Professionals to Lead

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By Bill Kennedy

## **Bill Kennedy 00:11**

Hi, I'm Bill Kennedy. I'm the chief financial officer of Securityplus outside of Baltimore, Maryland. I also am on the board of the George Washington University Credit Union initiative, which has been in progress to get charter for about four years. And I also sit on MACUMA and I've mentored quite a few young professionals in my career.

## **Bill Kennedy 00:32**

So last spring, I noticed that a number of young professionals that I'm connected to were leaving the movement. And it really puzzled me because I really felt that given the future retirements of many CU folks that they were quitting before the blessing and and this was before the term the Great Resignation came to bear. So I endeavored with Lisa to create an article to address this issue, but maybe focus in on one solution to that, that we can stem the retirements and perhaps even stem some mergers that were happening.

## **Bill Kennedy 01:17**

This article reached more folks than I could have ever imagined. It broke CUES records and the comments, public comments were numerous. And the private comments, comments, were also numerous. Folks didn't want to put their comments out there. So therefore, the number one goal of the article win-win-win was awareness. And I think we nailed it.

## **Bill Kennedy 01:36**

What I'm trying to do is to address, in this our this meeting today, the future articles that we're going to be writing, but particularly the obstacles that were thrown out as. Conflict of interest was one. Conflict of interest is a tough thing to address. It seems to throw is like a term thrown out there without really taking a look at it. Certainly there are conflicts of interest if the credit unions are competing, but we made it very clear that the there are many credit unions that don't compete. So we are we must recognize that the credit union community is losing credit unions at a very rapid pace, to the retirements and the mergers of credit unions.

## **Bill Kennedy 02:19**

And the fact of the matter is, which is really sad, is that the number one goal of a board of directors is the successful, relevant, ongoing continuity of their credit union, and is for the executive team as well. And so we need to have succession plans. NCUA has come out and said they recognize this. Now how it transitions, I don't know. But they've put that pronouncement out there that there needs to be

transitions, there needs to be a transition and a successful successful plans. Okay, so I'll so while CEOs, and it's just this has been publicly announced, it's written out there, that CEOs who have been in positions of leadership for 10, 15, 20 years, they're merging, because they can't find they don't have an internal candidate to take over. That's really sad. And it's sad that the board allowed that to happen. And boards need to have succession plans.

**Bill Kennedy 03:20**

Another thing that has come up is the zero sum game. Frankly, a lot of credit unions hire, if they don't merge, they hire executives from other credit unions. So it's really kind of like it's not totally but a zero sum game. You're taking another executive from another credit union. What we really need to do is we need to develop a farm system, sort of like baseball. And we also have to have internal I can see a succession plan internal. So we can stop this stealing other executives from credit unions. We are a cooperative movement. And and we need to be cognizant, and I will also say that many hires, if you're hiring a C-suite executive from another credit union, one of the questions you need to ask is, will your current credit union have an internal candidate that is going to fill your position? And how do you and if that's, you know, how have you played in that? And if the answer is not satisfactory, they need to say, well, how are you going to change that? Why should we expect you to change? If you didn't do it now, why would you will you have a succession plan here.

**Bill Kennedy 04:25**

So other things that were said, quickly, why would a CEO want to report to any 30-something person? Some CEOs said that they they don't want to get their young professionals involved in outside events because for instance the crashers, which is a phenomenal program, because 50 They've seen that 50% of crashes quit their existing job within three years.

**Bill Kennedy 04:50**

So what are some of the things we can do? Denise Wymore has formed a national leadership group to address the succession planning, among other critical topics. The African American Credit Union Coalition has a board training platform and they have a solid mentoring program. Working with colleges, I understand, you know, COVID has kind of stopped that. I've done that all my career. For the last two years because COVID I haven't, but I've reconnected with Bouey State, and Loyola College to start internship programs, management training programs, and two projects for their MBA program. Their Cornerstone capstone project for MBA programs is usually to go out into the community and to do a project to help. There's no reason credit unions can't do that. CUES, has great training, you know, their governance training, they have a boatload of that. They have the CUES Emerge program. Filene has the I-3; they have great programs. So hopefully, we as a cooperative, can get together, brainstorm ideas, and to come to solutions to how we can address developing younger leaders so that we don't have to have as many mergers occur.