

1. Immediate Risk & Coverage (establish urgency)

These surface exposure created by losing the Head of HR.

- “Since your Head of HR left, **what decisions are currently slowing down or getting stuck?**”
- “What HR-related issues are **landing on your desk right now** that weren’t before?”
- “Are there any employee situations, compliance items, or manager escalations that feel **uncomfortably unresolved?**”
- “If nothing changed for the next 90 days, **where do you see the biggest risk** — legally, culturally, or operationally?”

Signal: You’re thinking about continuity and risk, not just HR tasks.

2. Leadership Bandwidth & Distraction (COO pain)

These make the case for interim executive support.

- “How much time are you or the CEO currently spending **acting as the HR decision-maker?**”
- “Which HR decisions do you wish you had a senior thought partner on — versus having to figure out solo?”
- “Where is HR absence **pulling leadership away from growth priorities?**”

Signal: You protect executive focus.

3. Org Design, Talent, and Growth Readiness

These elevate the conversation beyond ‘coverage.’

- “What parts of the org feel **overbuilt, underbuilt, or unclear** right now?”
- “Are there any roles or leaders you’re **not fully confident will scale** with the company?”
- “What talent decisions are coming up in the next 6–12 months that feel high-stakes?”

Signal: You operate at the system level, not just people ops.

4. Manager & Team Effectiveness

COOs care deeply about this but don't want therapy language.

- “Where are managers **struggling the most** — performance management, feedback, accountability, or hiring?”
- “Are expectations and decision rights **clear enough**, or do you see friction showing up repeatedly?”
- “What would you want managers doing differently if HR were functioning at its best?”

Signal: You translate HR into execution.

5. The ‘Why Fractional’ Test

These help you position your model naturally.

- “Are you looking for **coverage while you pause**, or are you still figuring out what the *right* long-term HR role looks like?”
- “What went well — and what didn’t — with the previous HR setup?”
- “What would ‘success’ look like for you in the first 60–90 days of interim support?”

Signal: You reduce the risk of a bad re-hire.

6. Close with Alignment (very strong)

End with one of these.

- “If I could make HR a **non-issue** for you over the next few months, what would matter most?”
- “What would make you say, ‘this was absolutely the right way to bridge this gap’?”

