



## **Run Your Business Like a CEO**

A few of my most successful clients are business owners that don't have piles of file folders on their desks waiting for action. These business owners move ideas forward by mastering the art of delegation, preventing any monkeys from swinging onto their backs. This particular skill helps these people better leverage the people around them, and model a very effective problem-attack technique.

At a recent lunch, I watched as a business owner was pitched an idea by a manager in his organization. The idea would definitely need some of the CEO's time before, and if, that idea became a reality.

The CEO thanked the manager for the idea, and the three of us talked through some possible upsides & downsides of the idea. Then the CEO asked the manager to further investigate the upsides & downsides and e-mail a short update to him by the end of the week.

Remarkable behavior? Not hardly. But that CEO is a master at not creating a bottleneck by putting work on his own desk, and he can be counted on to hand work to other people that are in the correct position in the organization to flesh out ideas and bring refined recommendations forward. Good business leaders do this effectively with vendors and suppliers; exceptional business leaders regularly do this with most of the key employees in their organizations.

Another CEO that I know makes it a habit to not carry any papers or portfolios to meetings within his organization. (You can bet that all other people in those meetings have been trained to bring their own!) All work discussed and deemed to be of value will be verbally handed off by the CEO to someone else in the meeting, with an agreed-upon time to report back regarding findings & results.



Not having the highest paid employee complete low-cost work may seem obvious, but I don't want to see my business owners & CEOs doing time. A wise business owner may choose to spend some time barbecuing burgers for employees, or choosing to be visible by lending a hand in a department in a pinch. These actions are well-thought out and can pay valuable dividends. But there is very little payback on an idea that gets bottlenecked because a CEO said "That might be a good idea. Give it to me, I'll look it over & get back to you on it.", and then stacked it up with all of the other items that need his or her attention.

### **Is This a Big Ego Issue?**

I am not suggesting that these effective businesspeople believe that they are so important that they shovel all of their work onto other employees. I am suggesting that their time is valuable, and by not bottlenecking ideas or piling up work they are able to spend more time moving the business ahead by:

- 1) Spending more time on message w/ more employees re: priorities & goals
- 2) Growing employees by trusting them to look into new ideas and objectively bring possibilities forward
- 3) Hand out praise for the completion of delegated items completed on time & delivered in a quality fashion.

### **Delegate with direction**

When an employee walks into your office with an idea, ask follow up questions to determine if the project has merit. But the words "I'll think about it and get back to you" should not be an option.

Ask reflective questions to cause people to recognize what work should be completed and focus on what's important. That could include:

- What would it ultimately do for the organization?
- How would this help us grow or achieve one of our specific goals?
- What will it look like in six months if we're doing well?
- What are 2-3 things need to be done if we decide to get started on it?

Ask the employee to write a one-page Executive Summary: One paragraph on the idea, one paragraph that identify the idea, scope, timeline and expected results. These carefully crafted paragraphs should provide CEOs with the information they need to make a decision.



Remember too, that vendors, suppliers, business partners, and selected customers with complimentary needs may also be willing to be delegated to in order to move your business forward.

Ask about the idea. What do you want to know?  
Consider the timeline. How soon do you want to know it?  
Tap your resources. Where might the answers be?

You will be more effective as you help other employees investigate & produce. You will also walk a little taller & breath a little easier without those monkeys on your back.