

THE CEO AGENDA 1

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A team-dependent tough job. Are you up to it?

This message aims to help provoke the CEO's thinking toward better resource utilization and more explicit career decisions. The verbal responses are more accessible than the actions; if you are not going to act on any of this, then do not even plan it; otherwise, learn and grow, personally and professionally.

Topic One: **Priorities**

In a recent study amongst about 200 successful CEOs, it was evidenced and agreed that the most critical CEO responsibilities center on internal company management-related issues, specifically:

- **Building a strong executive team** and preparing for succession.
- **Establishing and communicating the company vision** often at all levels.
- **Establish the company structure** and mode of operations.

In so far as external issues are concerned:

- We evaluate the competitive environment and control the position's value in the marketplace.
- It leads to the generation of new value for the company's shareholders, clients, and employees.

List the most recent activities you have regularly done that demonstrate your attention to these issues. How often do you do them? How does your executive team perceive you on account of these issues?

Specifically, look at your team. Are you satisfied? Do they meet your standards of excellence? Are their values, transparency, and the culture you aspire to instill in the organization? Do you track them beyond the completion of specific tasks? This is a team game. They are your safety net. Are you ready to be rescued by all and each one of them? It is not the efficiency or the completion of tasks; these are minimum requirements so that you can take them as a given; instead, it is the value system, the trustworthiness, and the modeling of the proper behavior that makes the difference it is the attitude, not the aptitude.

Leaders state their vision clearly and decisively. It is not for the masses to determine it or define it. As CEO, it is up to you to stage the tone, direction, and rhythm by which you expect all to march jointly toward achieving this vision. State it at every opportunity and use it as a yardstick to select decisions and set priorities. Your motivational vision should be challenging and conceptual; the numbers and details will be part of the objectives and action plan and will follow your positive and enthusiastic future vision.

The CEO is responsible for everything: Operations, marketing, strategy, financing, creation of company culture, management style, human capital, hiring, firing, compliance with safety and environmental regulations, sales, PR, information, etc. It all falls on the CEO's head.

The responsibility cannot be delegated; the things the CEO wants to get done can be delegated. However, what relates to creating culture, management style, building the senior management team, financing the road, and leading this is hands-on, day-to-day issues that the CEO must deal with from the outside inward, from all other things the CEO can directly do the delegation and then supervise the execution.

After setting the vision and strategy clear, communicating it repeatedly becomes imperative to find ways to build a new culture. You are the cheerleader who must support the effort; you, the CEO, must set the tone. Every action, inaction, communication, or lack thereof sends a strong message. *If you are open, enthusiastic, accessible, and available, look at the large picture, and do not get bogged down by daily operational details, you will be followed rather than obeyed. With this behavior, you will model a style to follow and create a positive and contagious atmosphere.*

For team building purposes, nonnegotiable solid messages must be sent, qualify the expectation for performance, and follow up on them ruthlessly. Non-performers must be dealt with strictly and swiftly. All team members must be kept at bay, working together in a common direction, no questions asked. “This is a war out there. You can only win with the best soldiers and the best officers.”

You must move human hearts, challenge people, and make them want to scale steep peaks. In addition to showing the ability to achieve economic results, you must demonstrate integrity, provide meaning, be positive, avoid moodiness, set an example, and coach others.

None of the above is trivial. It requires careful planning and execution. Often, it needs outside help and support. You, the CEO, cannot be in a reactive mode. Opening your mind to learning and as many constituencies as possible would be best. The ten-member executive committee must become an army of 1000 people in a constant strategy conference about entrepreneurial possibilities, which is the only way to drive people forward.

People take the long-term view when they perceive leaders as trustworthy, have no fear, and are treated with equal respect and dignity. They see that decisions consider their needs, interests, and careers, and therefore, they feel included in plans and company

strategy. This makes them believe their CEO and trust that they mean what they say. The long view must be shared; it must reach two directions, embodying wisdom and values from the past and hopes and dreams for the future.

This is food for thought. How do you deal with these subjects? They primarily reflect behavioral issues. Most CEOs seek supporting factors for themselves and their team, and they listen carefully, are not judgmental, and act upon what they learn. This is what differentiates success from mediocrity. Everybody can develop knowledge, but attitude differentiates between standard, superior, or total failure. You decide!