

Are You the CEO, or Head Worker Bee?

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*Think about how you operate day-to-day in your business. Do you have a "worker mentality" or a "CEO mentality?" In this issue, I'll talk about the advantages of approaching your business as a CEO, even though that may not be your official title or position. **If you own or run your own business, I suggest you take 90 seconds to read this article-- it may shift your thinking about how you operate.***

What Do You Actually Do in Your Business?

What are your personal responsibilities in your business? Do you do project work? Management? Sales? Marketing? Admin? Customer relations? Strategic planning?

If you're in business for yourself, the chances are that you perform most or all of these duties. If you do, I bet you're extremely busy all the time and that you frequently feel as if you're being pulled in multiple directions. If you're responsible for just about everything, you are, as the saying goes, "the chief cook and bottle washer." My name for a business owner who does a lot of everything is **the head worker bee**.

Steve's Transformation from Head Worker Bee to CEO

Like many business owners, my client Steve realized that he was very good at a particular skill, so he decided to quit working for someone else and start his own business, in this case an ad agency. Steve is a great concept person and copywriter. After two years as a business owner, he still did 100% of the ad concept, design, and writing. In addition, he handled the books, sales, billing, customer service, administration and practically everything else.

When I started coaching Steve, he was working 80-90 hours a week. Despite the fact that he was the president of his company, he approached his business as a worker bee, doing anything and everything that came up. He had no real long-term business strategy or boundaries about his own activities. Needless to say, he was running ragged and scattered. Because he had his hands in everything, he became "the chief bottleneck" to getting projects completed, and the business was barely staying afloat.

Through our coaching, Steve realized he had to make the tough choice between being the head worker bee or the CEO. I worked with him to develop more of a CEO mindset and spend his time directing the company instead of doing all the busy-work.

Like many entrepreneurs, Steve was reluctant to give up control of all the details. In his mind no one could measure up to his standards or care as much as he did. He finally realized that to control the destiny of his business, he had to *let go of control* in several areas. Now he has three creative people, an account manager, an assistant and a part-time salesperson. Though he still oversees the design and concept of certain key projects, Steve focuses most of his time on strategic planning and running the business at the highest level.

Many small business owners and professionals have similar stories. They start out doing everything. Eventually they begin to burn out and realize they must choose between being the CEO at the head of the business and being a worker bee.

The Top 8 Differences Between a Worker Bee and CEO

1. The CEO prioritizes her time around strategic activities that affect the company's growth and direction. The worker bee spends most of her time buzzing around doing projects and managing the details of the business.
2. The CEO thinks big and out into the future. The worker bee thinks in terms of short-term deadlines and constraints.
3. The CEO is clear about his role, responsibilities, and duties--he knows when to delegate, farm out, or hire. The head worker bee doesn't make the distinction between being a worker and a manager. His boundaries are fuzzy and this often gets him, and the business, into trouble.
4. The CEO takes charge of building the company's reputation, image and trustworthiness. He is externally focused and "outward facing." The worker bee is more internally focused--on the tasks, projects, and problems at hand.
5. The CEO realizes he must invest in himself, his company, and his people to make the business thrive. He readily invests time and money in coaching, education, training, etc. The worker bee typically sees himself as too busy or strapped for cash to invest in himself.
6. The CEO is bold, visionary, optimistic, and takes calculated risks. The worker bee worries about getting through the current workload and may be afraid to take risks because things "may not work out."
7. The CEO builds the capacity of the business ahead of business growth. The worker bee is reactive--he builds business capacity in response to business growth. He usually adds people and other resources way late in the game and struggles to bring them up to speed while managing the work that has been piling up.
8. The CEO sees herself as a leader in and outside the company. She is aware of her responsibility to inspire and motivate people and takes it seriously. Most worker bees don't see themselves as leaders.

How do you stack up? Do you think and act like a CEO, a worker bee, or a little bit of both? It doesn't matter whether you're the head of a large company or a one-man operation, if you want to *be* the CEO of your business, you must first *think* like a CEO.