

CEO to CEO Newsletter  
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The Job Description of a CEO

Dear Fellow CEO:

I just got done moving the sprinklers that serve to keep our office lawn green and our flowers bright and perky. It takes more than two hours of sprinkling to assure that every strip of lawn is watered and that all of our flowers are happy and as colorful as they like to be. I change the position of the sprinklers about every half hour as I've got time and reluctantly admit enjoying the opportunity to get outside. But, is this what I should be doing with my time? Since I run the company and get to write my own job description, what should it look like? If watering the lawn shouldn't be on my to-do list, what should be? What is the job description of a CEO?

Since the personality profiles of CEO's encompass the entire spectrum of possibilities, and the morale of an organization does follow a trickle down route, it is important that all CEO's craft job descriptions for themselves that satisfy their needs. Anyone running a company should assure that the job they craft for themselves is one that will satisfy their own individual needs first, because if that person is not satisfied with the job they give themselves, the other people in the organization will all be weighed down with the burden of a dissatisfied leader.

That said, are there specific things that all CEO's need to do in order to be successful? I believe that there are. In order of importance, these are the things that every CEO needs to do:

- 1. See that there is a direction for the organization and that everyone understands what it is and follows it.** Previous letters have touched on the importance of having a strategic plan, but this goes beyond that. Whether there is a strategic plan or not, an organization needs a direction and purpose for business that is clear, consistently and constantly communicated and resolutely followed. When people lose the direction, they should be nudged back in line. An organization only has strength when it is harnessed and aimed.
- 2. Make sure that the people in the organization are the right people.** This means being deeply involved in the hiring of senior management and in, at the very least, the processes that hire those at every other level. It means setting cultural standards of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, living by them and assuring that others live by them as well. It means using tools like Predictive Index and intelligence testing to assure that people are pre-disposed to succeed in the jobs you're giving them to do. When talented, committed people are suited to successfully accomplish the work they're given, excellent results are achieved.
- 3. See that realistic performance standards tied to the corporate direction are established for every job.** Corporate direction is only solidified when everyone doing work within the organization knows, in a defined, measurable way, what their role is and how that role ties to achieving overall corporate goals. People like to work in an environment where their work helps accomplish something. When people see their work tied to broader goals, it creates the sense of satisfaction one gets from accomplishment.
- 4. See that the above standards are monitored and that regular feedback is provided to people on their work.** When people are meeting the work standards that are set, you can't give them enough positive feedback. More is always good. Where rewards are appropriate, that's good too. People who are not performing according to standard also need to receive immediate feedback. Top notch performers like to work in an environment where everyone is working as hard as they do and excellence is expected. When poor performance is tolerated it breeds more poor performance. When leaders' don't deal with failing performance soon enough or at all, this corporate cancer can take hold and grow. (As a note, this is probably the most easily understood and least executed of a successful CEO's job functions. Almost all CEO's are guilty of tolerating poor performance in certain circumstances for too long.)

**5. Establish a work environment where people feel they are cared for as people, not work units.**

The teachings of P. I. are a big part of this. Everyone's individual drives have to be paid attention to in order for an individual to feel as though they matter. But, it's more than just P. I. People want to feel cared about, regardless of their profile. As a CEO, the more you establish this with everyone you interact with, the more that standard will be accepted throughout the organization. People like to work in a place that provides the comfort of family, regardless of the individual person's profile. When people feel cared for, it makes coming to work a more pleasant occurrence and as a result, people look forward to coming to work.

**6. Take vacations and demand those around you do as well.** People need regular breaks over the course of a year of work to sustain performance. Many times, leaders feel the organization cannot live without them. However, when leadership gets burned out, this casts a pall over the organization that more work doesn't alleviate. Morale trickles down and when people don't take vacations, morale sours. No matter how busy you or the people around you are, demand they take their vacation.

**7. Build the rest of your job around you and what you both enjoy and are good at.** If you like to sell and are good at it, make sure selling is a part of your job. If you like to manage data and do it well, make sure that is something you devote a significant piece of time to. Even if you like to move the sprinklers and you fancy yourself as pretty good at it, put that in your job description. As mentioned above, morale trickles down and as CEO it all starts with you. Whatever your profile, do your best to see that as much of your time as possible is directed at doing work at which you excel and that satisfies your needs. The resulting personal satisfaction yields a sanguine corporate environment. Besides that, it establishes a good precedent.

Thanks for reading. You'll have to excuse me. I've got to go move the sprinklers.



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