

Thinking Managers

Robert Heller of www.thinkingmanagers.com looks at the job the CEO should be doing.

Time for the CGO

The over-managed company is often said to have “too many chiefs, and not enough Indians”. Whether that’s true or not, management definitely has more Chiefs than it did in the past. There is now the Chief Information Officer, or CIO; the COO, with the middle O standing for Operating; the Chief Financial Officer, or CFO; and, last but by no means least, the CEO, the Chief Executive Officer, master of all he surveys.

I wrote a short article for The Thinking CEO, the cyberspace management magazine incorporated on the Thinking Managers website, which suggested an alternative name for the CEO: the CGO – Chief Growth Officer. The incumbent, though, needs to double up as another CIO, or CIO2, the second “I” standing for Ideas instead of Information - the two I’s, in fact, should work together, which they notoriously often fail to do.

CEO is somewhat of a misnomer. The boss is certainly chief and an executive director. However, “execution” is exactly what the CEO shouldn’t even attempt: heading up all the day-to-day “executing”, taking direct responsibility for the activation of all plans, controlling all product lines and apparatus of production, driving all others into performing their individual roles.

The CEO is short on time and there are too many voices crying out for his or her attention, internally and externally. The title “CEO” gets the emphasis wrong, even though the incumbent must also be the CSO – the Chief Supervisory Officer, responsible for making sure everybody else is in the right job and performing to standard.

But that responsibility should be delegated and structured. Top managers have to feel happy with the people who, in turn, are responsible for the staff working below them. As the Chief Internal Systems Officer (CISO), it falls upon the CEO to help build a living organism that bypasses bureaucracy and substitutes a quick and effective chain of command.

The CEO is also the Chief Ideas Officer, but that should not mean that the incumbent has all or even most of the ideas. The CEO/CIO2 has the essential task of making all the people in the organisation feel and act like important members of a truly creative team.

The CEO who cannot withdraw from running operations to concentrate on strategy and structural transformation simply falls between two stools.



About the author: Robert Heller is one of the world’s best selling authors on business management.