



Mythical E-Myth...

The Tenth in the series: ***An Executive Summary for Busy Managers.***

Oh, to own your own small business... this is the supposed dream of every Entrepreneur. The E-Myth Revisited should be required reading for anyone considering going out on their own.

Top o' the mornin' to you. It might be a little too early for the Irish part of Irish coffee, but definitely not for the caffeinated portion!

How can an entrepreneur best prepare to ward off the horrendous statistical probability of failure?

Michael E. Gerber has some answers for us in his book, The E Myth Revisited. His first attempt was published in the mid-80's. The "revisited" version came in 2001. His tact is typical 1980's fare, "teach through a story" format. In this case we have a woman who owns a pie store and a consultant that helps her to get things back under control. Imagine that, a consultant that makes things better© (*for those of you that are not aware, I am a business consultant in my spare time when I am not in my Bat-Cave writing witty book summaries*)

This book applies equally well to individuals charged with running pieces of a larger organization. The basics of leadership don't change because of the number of direct reports. Small businesses just feel the effects of both good and bad leadership more quickly.

My favorite line in the book is where Gerber quotes Don Juan, "The basic

difference between an ordinary man and a warrior is that a warrior takes everything as a challenge while an ordinary man takes everything either as a blessing or a curse". In this case the warrior is the small business owner that makes his or her own good fortune.

Gerber turns to psychology early in the book to give a high-level understanding of the intrinsic forces that can help and hinder business owners. He talks about three specific personalities that each of us have buried inside: The Entrepreneur, the Manager and the Technician. **The Entrepreneur is the spirit inside that yearns to be free and creative. The Manager is the portion of our psyche that demands order and is always trying to make sense out of every situation. The Technician is the personality that likes to perform the actual task at hand. The Technician would prefer to be tightening the lug nuts and not worry about how to keep a line of customers flowing through the door.** This sounds suspiciously like a psychology class that I once took as an elective. Didn't Freud have some type of the levels of psyche? The Id, the Ego and the Super Ego? Hmm... perhaps Mr. Gerber read the same book I did and just repackaged it into a form that put him onto the business bestseller list!!!

Speaking of Mr. Gerber's style... somewhere around the middle of the book we are taken on a trip through the Purple Haze of his youth. Something about backpacking through Europe, multiple wives and a lot of mind altering drugs (didn't Freud also have a cocaine problem?). It actually gets kind of



weird... really weird. Then to top it off, just when you thought it was safe to really start paying attention again, we are told about a horse galloping through the woods to a beautiful meadow and oh my goodness... I feel sick. These are two sections of the book where you may do well to skim.

On a more serious and practical note, Mr. Gerber begins to share some sage advice with regard to good business implementation. It starts with the story of Ray Kroc and the McDonalds franchise. *His point is that small business owners should attempt to do what is necessary in order to successfully franchise their business.* This does not mean that on every street corner you are going to see the golden sun of BreitIdeas. Rather it means that in order to keep customers happy by providing them with consistent products and stellar results we should try to “procedure-ize” everything that is done in the business. Processes should be documented so activities are repeatable. Gerber wants us to focus on creating job descriptions and work processes in order to be able to hire the cheapest labor possible. I think this guy must have read an early release of an ISO9000 handbook. While I do not necessarily agree about the cheapest labor possible notion, I do believe that his thoughts on process development will make it much easier to manage an organization overall. Thereby freeing up some time for the business owner to pursue and implement new strategy for making the business even more successful.

This book would have gotten a perfect 5 out of 5 “Suns” had we not been forced

to slog our way through the whole “Purple Haze” episode. I am sure that Gerber felt it would add a sense of something to the story, but personally it made me consider putting the book aside. Fortunately I pushed on and found the kernels of goodness that were buried within the text.

Anyone considering starting a business, or even considering moving into management for that matter should read this book.

E-Myth discusses the basics of why it is important to ensure that your people clearly understand what is expected of them.

The book discusses the importance of:

- Business Development
- Keeping score (metrics)
- Making information available to employees so that they are able to see the tangible impacts of their efforts (communication)
- Strategic Planning
- Organizational Management

This book is kind of like a pocket MBA for people who do not have time to pursue a graduate degree.

Just my opinion and we all know what “they” say about opinions...

Thanks

JB

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