

# CEO EXERCISES



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EXERCISE 1

# **Which Wheel Is Turning Slowest?**

# Which Wheel Is Turning Slowest?

The CEO role is defined by balancing the natural tensions of the business. The Two Triangles of Tension provide a model for this balance:



Each of these six points can be thought of as a wheel on the vehicle of your business. If one wheel is turning slower than the others, the entire organization is dragged down. The CEO's job is not to remove these tensions but to ensure that none of the wheels are neglected.

The question for you is simple: **Which wheel is turning slowest right now?**

On the following page, reflect on the six areas. Which is creating drag on the business? Where is the imbalance most acute? Write down your answer along with why you believe this wheel is underperforming, what you will do to accelerate it, and how you will balance tradeoffs in the other areas.

Remember: once you accelerate that wheel, another may naturally become the limiting factor. This is not a one-time diagnosis but a continuous leadership practice.



## EXERCISE 1

How can you tell which wheel is slowest? It might manifest in the following ways:

**Sales:** Are bookings and pipeline velocity strong, or is revenue growth lagging?

**Marketing:** Is positioning clear, with strong demand generation, or is the brand underpowered?

**Product/Service:** Is quality and deliverability strong, or are you falling behind in what the market needs?

**Customers:** Are you consistently creating value and satisfaction, or do churn and complaints point to trouble?

**Employees:** Are your people engaged and performing, or are morale and retention at risk?

**Shareholders:** Are you delivering returns and building confidence, or are expectations not being met?

The wheel turning slowest in my business currently is:

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Why is this wheel turning slowest? Have other areas been prioritized?

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If I accelerate this wheel, what might the tradeoffs or risks in other areas be?

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What steps will you take to accelerate this wheel while balancing across the others?

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## EXERCISE 2

# Create an Org Chart

# Create an Org Chart

Keeping an up-to-date organizational chart is wise for many reasons. It helps employees at all levels understand the company and its reporting structure. It can also serve as a guide to whether certain decisions should be escalated or made by the employee.

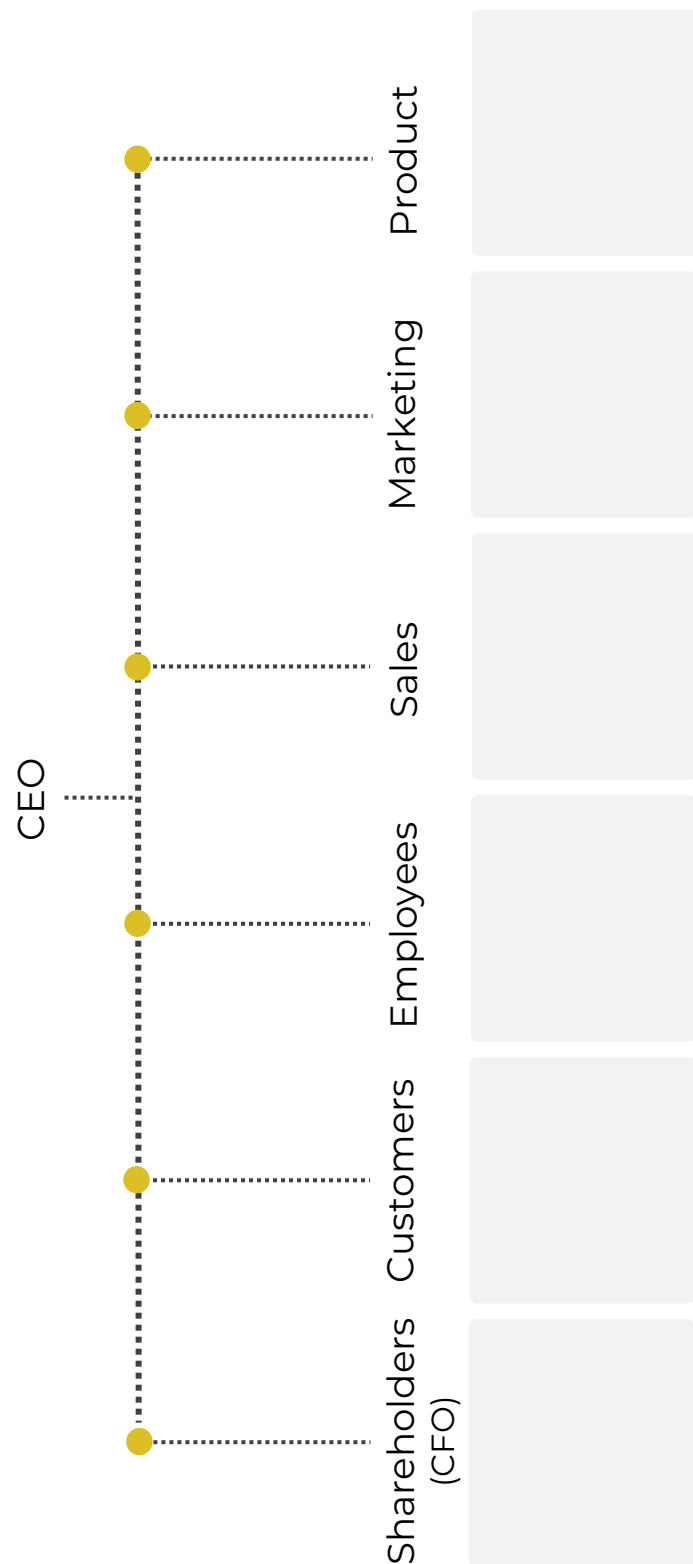
For the CEO, filling out the top level of the org chart is also a good way to think through the natural tensions we have discussed. Each point on the two Triangles of Tension represents a function of your organization, one you may have an executive to oversee:



On the following page, create a fresh org chart. For each of the six functions, put in the person who owns that area of the organization. If you do not have an executive dedicated to a function, put your own name in that box. Until you hire someone for that role, it belongs to you.

Once you are back to the office, be sure to also create and share a full chart of the organization. This can be done using CEO Software.

# Organizational Chart





EXERCISE 3

# Strategic Objectives

# Strategic Objectives

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Once the mission, vision, and values are firmly established, the CEO must lead the process of developing well-defined strategic objectives looking out over a 2- to 3-year period. In writing them, you want to answer this question: *If we execute our strategy successfully, what tangible outcomes should we be able to attain in each functional area of the business?*

Start the goal-setting process with the two Triangles of Tension every CEO must manage:

- External tensions that exist between shareholders, customers, and employees.
- Internal tensions that exist between sales, marketing, and product.

Consider the most important thing the organization needs to accomplish in each of the six areas in the next 2–3 years. Establishing a strategic objective for each area provides a roadmap for the entire organization.

On the following page, write down your strategic objectives. Remember to:

- **Include a clear measurement for each objective.** There should be no ambiguity about whether the goal was met or not met at the end of the 2–3 years. It is often helpful to specify the exact deadline within that period as well.
- **Limit to 1–2 objectives per area.** This is not a glorified to-do list. It's a record of the top strategic priorities. True priorities are inherently limited in number. Some objectives may cover overlapping areas—for example, a sales goal could also relate to shareholders.
- **Aim for a balance of challenging but realistic.** These are not pie-in-the-sky goals but objectives you believe the organization can achieve if it aligns and focuses.

Once the strategic goals are refined, they will go in the **1-Page Strategic Plan** (p. 33) and form the starting point for developing shorter-term goals each quarter.

# Strategic Objectives

2–3 Years

Shareholders

1

Customers

2

Employees

3

Sales

4

Marketing

5

Product

6





## EXERCISE 4

# Personality Comparison

# Personality Spectrum

"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom," said Aristotle. To build that wisdom and function as a strong leader, you must understand your natural inclinations and working style, including your placement on the spectrums below.

Note where the DISC assessment placed you on each spectrum and review the suggested guidelines for working with you. Did the assessment get it right? Where would you place yourself? What additional information should you give the people who work with you? How does your placement on these spectrums affect your relationships with your executive team, your board, your customers, and other stakeholders?



EXERCISE 5

# Strength Distribution

# Top Strengths

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Just as individuals have their own strengths and weaknesses, so do teams. Once your executive leadership team has completed the CliftonStrengths assessment, analyze strengths across your team.

Gallup categorizes strengths across the four domains shown below. For each executive on the team, place them in one of these domains based on which category most of their Top 5 strengths belong to. Then step back and look at the whole. Do you have many executives in one domain? Which domains have the least names in them? What might this distribution across domains mean for how the executive leadership team operates?

Share your findings with the team and see what they have to say as well.



## EXERCISE 6

# Motivating Employees

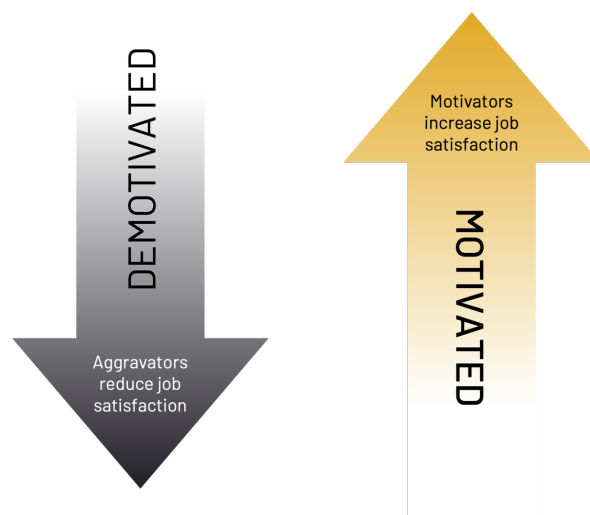
# Motivating Employees

Motivating employees is not as simple as handing out the occasional bonus or saying “Good job!” A great deal of research and practice has shown that two separate sets of factors affect employee motivation:

1. **Motivators** are the factors that cause employees to be satisfied with and engaged in their jobs. Leaders must ensure that the motivators are present if they want employees to be intrinsically motivated in the long term.
2. **Aggravators** are the factors that destroy motivation. When an aggravating factor is present, the employee experiences an obstacle to full satisfaction with and engagement in their job.

The key point to remember is that **removing aggravators does not create motivation**. CEOs and other leaders should work to eradicate these aggravating factors, but they should not mistakenly believe that doing so will result in a motivated workforce. Instead, they should remove aggravators while also ensuring that the motivators are present. Aggravators tend to be things like poor company policy, pay structures, and work conditions; the CEO and executive leadership team are most responsible for directly addressing these. Meanwhile, motivators are factors like achievement, recognition, and opportunity for growth, which managers at all levels can affect.

Salary is a good example of an aggravator. If the employee is not paid enough, they will have an obstacle to motivation. But salary should not be thought of as a *motivator*. Once an employee is paid the amount they deem fair, pay does not become a source of intrinsic motivation.



# Strategies for Motivation

What follows are lists of the top motivators and aggravators of employees as identified by two-factor theory and outlined in *Harvard Business Review*. Think through each one and write down an action you and/or other leaders in the organization can take to reinforce motivators and remove aggravators.

## Motivators

Achievement

Recognition

Work Itself

Responsibility

Opportunity for Advancement & Growth

## Aggravators

Company Policy

Supervision/Relationship with Supervisor

Work Conditions

Salary

Relationship with Peers





## EXERCISE 7

# Create Your User Manual

# Create Your User Manual

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One of the best ways to grow awareness is to compose a User Manual and have your team do the same. The User Manual is similar to the manual you get when you buy a new car, only it tells you all the ins-and-outs of working with a particular person. User Manuals help you:

- Share how you like to work, while also growing your self-awareness
- Understand how your employees like to work (so you can practice the Platinum Rule, treating them how *they* want to be treated)
- Learn how to work with people more quickly, with fewer misunderstandings

The concept of a User Manual is simple: On one page, you write down a series of points that describe your preferences and idiosyncrasies in the workplace. As you write, limit yourself to covering:

- **Your quirks, the things that make you unique.** Don't list attributes shared by most people. Show what's unusual about you, and don't assign "good" or "bad" value judgments to them—just tell people how you're different.
- **Items that are actionable.** Saying "I like to hear the truth" doesn't tell your colleagues much at all—who doesn't like the truth? Make it more actionable: "If you see me doing something and think it could be done better, tell me! I live for constructive criticism and would enjoy the debate. It's almost impossible to offend me."

On the following pages you will find (a) several prompts you may want to consider in writing your User Manual, (b) a blank page to free-write, and (c) Joel Trammell's actual User Manual. Pair this written content with your assessment from **MyUserManual.co** to create a full User Manual to share with your team.

A final note before you start: Writing a quirk in your User Manual is not an excuse to indulge that quirk when it hurts your leadership. As CEO, you're the leader of every person in your company and must balance and tailor your approach to meet those broad needs. Let people know your inclinations and expectations, but seek to be a well-rounded leader as well.

# User Manual

## Topics to Consider

What are some common misconceptions about you and/or your leadership style?

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What personal values are most important to you?

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What baseline expectations do you have for executives who work for you?

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What is your natural style of communication, including your style of giving feedback?

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What personality traits, including your DISC type and/or CliftonStrengths, typically show up in your leadership style?

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# User Manual

More About Me...

# User Manual: Joel Trammell

1. I assume you know what you are doing unless proven otherwise. I won't hound you about details or constantly check on your progress. I think you are better at the job than I would be. I expect you, as an executive, to be autonomous and perform at a high level.
2. I don't hand out praise profusely (I am sure it has something to do with my childhood). If you don't feel you know how you are doing, you may want to ask. I will tell you. If I say you are doing great, I mean you are doing great, no BS.
3. This doesn't mean I don't pay attention to your performance. I will judge your performance in three fundamental ways: (I) your performance as a member of the executive team—we are going to run the company, not just me, (II) your ability to attract and retain great talent in your organization, (III) the performance of your department based on the metrics and goals that we agree are important for your success.
4. I am highly competitive and expect to win in everything we do. Just because I don't run around yelling and screaming doesn't mean I am not passionate about the cause. I believe the race is a marathon, not a sprint, but I DO believe it is a race. I expect to see you compete and win.
5. I expect that you, as an executive, will be able to balance the concerns of shareholders, employees, and customers and not just represent the view of your department.
6. If you never disagree with me, you are not adding value. When you disagree, I need to hear your opinion.
7. I am busy, but that is not a reason for you not to engage me. Your performance is my number-one responsibility, so engage me whenever appropriate.
8. Don't complain to subordinates about other groups and how they do their job. It reflects poorly on you as an executive. Executives solve problems. If you have a complaint about another group, bring it to me immediately. If you think something can be done better, let me know now.

## User Manual: Joel Trammell (cont'd)

9. I don't need to be engaged if you are making a decision within your area of responsibility that won't sink the ship. If you want my opinion, I will give it, but don't feel the need to get approval within your scope.
10. I expect you to work for me if it is in your best interests to do so. It is my job to always make it in your best interests. If you find it is not, please let me know. You don't owe me your loyalty. I will be happy to provide my honest opinion of what is best for your career.
11. If I leave during the middle of a discussion with you or your team, it is not because I don't care or am upset. It is because I don't believe I have anything to add, and I have confidence in you to solve the problem.
12. I am very direct in my conversation. Some people overreact to this style and try to read between the lines; there is no space between the lines. "I don't like the report" means "I don't like the report," not "I am about to fire you."
13. I prefer face-to-face communications. My second choice is email. My least favorite is phone. I like being able to confirm visually that I am understanding what you are saying.
14. Be simple and clear in communications. If you need me to make a decision, call it out. Don't make me read a novel to figure out the punchline. Give me the punchline, and then include the novel if you like.
15. I favor action over strategy; do something even if it is wrong. Fail fast and then correct course.

## EXERCISE 8

# Create Your Mission, Vision & Values

# Create Your Mission, Vision & Values

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As CEO, you must own your company's mission, vision, and values. You may not be solely responsible for creating them, but it's your responsibility to hone them, communicate them, and make them part of the organizational DNA.

A compelling mission, vision, and set of values influences all the outcomes you care about, from attracting new customers to bringing in top talent to ensuring that all parts of the organization are aligned around a shared understanding of success.

We encourage you to evaluate your current mission statement, vision statement, and values using the following guidelines, or to create them afresh if they are old or nonexistent. Once refined, they will go at the top of your **1-Page Strategic Plan** (p. 33).

## 1. Mission Statement

The mission statement is an expression of the organization's core purpose. The mission statement should be memorable and easy to restate. It should be something that helps any stakeholder quickly identify with the organization and see exactly why it needs to exist. For example, Hyatt's mission statement is "To provide authentic hospitality by making a difference in the lives of the people we touch every day."

Key questions to consider as you draft your mission statement include:

- *Why do we go to work every day?*
- *What makes us different from everyone else?*
- *What is the essence of what we're trying to achieve?*

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## 2. Vision Statement

The vision statement expresses the idealized state your organization will create if it achieves its mission. It should be both aspirational and inspirational, as well as easy to remember. Consider for example Habitat for Humanity's vision statement: "A world where everyone has a decent place to live." In a few simple, memorable words, this describes what the world will look like if the team executes its mission.

Key questions to consider as you craft or edit your mission statement include:

- *What role in the world do we want this organization to play?*
- *How will people live differently if our organization is successful?*

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## 2. Differentiating Values

Your organization's values are the principles that guide decisions and actions at every level of the workforce. A good set of values promotes autonomy while also building a sense of relatedness.

We call these *differentiating* values because we want you to choose values that are specific and unique—and not just general virtues. Rather than writing down generic and expected concepts like honesty, integrity, or quality, think about the trade-offs your employees must make day to day and what values should guide their decision making. Remember, these are values (someone else might choose to do the opposite), not virtues (everyone agrees on and expects these).

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EXERCISE 9

# Create Your 1-Page Strategic Plan

# 1-Page Strategic Plan

Mission \_\_\_\_\_

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Vision \_\_\_\_\_

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Differentiating Values

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Strategic Objectives (2–3 Years)

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Quarterly Goals

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## EXERCISE 10

# Draft Your Quarterly Goals

# Draft Goals for the Quarter

In previous exercises, you have set down the organization's mission, vision, and values and established strategic objectives for the next 2–3 years. But as the graphic below shows, we must now further break the strategic objectives into goals for the quarter.

While objectives for the next 2–3 years are critical, they alone are usually not sufficient to drive execution. For most organizations past the startup phase, goal setting at the quarterly level is most appropriate. This helps people see what the company is trying to achieve in the next 90 days. It also allows the team to feel gratification when these quarterly milestones are achieved and to learn lessons and adjust when quarterly goals are missed. The quarterly goals you establish for the company should go in your **1-Page Strategic Plan** (p. 33) and will lay the foundation for similar goals set at the executive, middle, and frontline levels of the organization.

As you draft the quarterly goals:

- **Use strategic objectives as the starting place.** Quarterly goals result from breaking down strategic objectives into pieces that can be achieved in the next 90 days. Ask the question “What is the most important thing to achieve this quarter to get us closer to the objective?”



- **Ensure everyone can contribute.** As with the strategic objectives, think through the six areas of the business and what goals may be appropriate in each area. If you only set sales or financial goals, other parts of the organization will likely feel left out of the plan, and you won't have clarified what success looks like for the group as a whole.
- **Choose relevant measurements.** Each goal should incorporate a measurement or proof point that specifies exactly how you will know the goal has been achieved. For example, you can measure sales goals many different ways: a dollar amount in bookings, growth in recurring revenue, conversion or win rates, accuracy of sales forecasts, etc. You will need to decide which measurements reflect the most value for your business right now.
- **Use SMART as a final check.** The classic SMART guideline is a good way to validate that you have written strong quarterly goals. Each goal should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. (Because these are quarterly goals, they are inherently time-bound, though you may in some cases need to set a deadline that occurs before the end of the quarter.)

## Quarterly Goals

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
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EXERCISE 11

# **Write an Executive Performance Profile**

# Write an Executive Performance Profile

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The people on your executive team are high-level professionals. As their CEO, you are required to work with each one as their direct manager. This includes clarifying their responsibilities, scope of authority, and key performance indicators.

On the following page, you will find a template for an Executive Performance Profile. The EPP is essentially a condensed job description for the executive. We recommend putting these in place for each executive on your team and revisiting/updating on a quarterly basis. While the executive's responsibilities, authority, and key performance indicators may need to be adjusted only occasionally, the executive's near-term goals should be updated each quarter, following a review of whether the previous period's goals were or were not achieved.

The Executive Performance Profile includes:

- **Responsibilities.** This is a concise statement of the business value created by the executive in their role. You can think of it as a statement of what the executive owns, whether that's an outcome, a business function, or a relationship.
- **Authority.** This specifies the decisions the executive can make and the actions the executive can take without input from the CEO. It may often include, for example, a dollar amount the executive can approve or spend without prior approval from you.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).** These are the core metrics that, on a continuous basis, define whether the executive and their department are meeting their responsibilities. What are the 3 things we can measure to ensure you are doing a good job overall?
- **Quarterly Goals.** These are the 4–6 SMART goals the executive and their department commit to for the quarter. They should align with the company's quarterly goals. No more than one new initiative per quarter as part of these goals.
- **DISC Type / Strengths.** Include personality assessment information like DISC type and CliftonStrengths as a reminder for yourself and others.

As an exercise, pick one of your current executives and fill out their performance profile on the following page. Then have them write their own and compare notes. You may be surprised by the varying assumptions between you!

# Executive Performance Profile

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibility \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Authority \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Quarterly Goals

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DISC Type / Strengths \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Executive Performance Profile



Name: Joel Trammell

Title: VP Customer Service

Responsibility: VP Customer Service is responsible for ensuring the highest possible level of customer satisfaction with available resources.

Authority: VP Customer Service is authorized to approve all departmental budgeted expense items or unbudgeted items less than \$5,000.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

1. Customer satisfaction as measured by NPS
2. Percentage of customers renewing maintenance
3. Number of customer referrals

Q1 Goals:

1. Increase NPS score from 40 to 45
2. Reach 90% customer renewals within the quarter
3. Provide five customer referrals to sales and marketing
4. Reduce average trouble ticket solution time to 3 hours

DISC Type: Dc

CliftonStrengths: Learner, Relator, Competition, Intellection, Responsibility

EXERCISE 12

# **Eulogy Exercise**

The eulogy exercise is a valuable starting point for reflection and action. What do you need to change for your vision to come true? Is your current approach to your job and to the other parts of your life enough? What do you need to work on first?

BONUS EXERCISE

# **Rate Your Executives: A-B-C**

# Rate Your Executives: A-B-C

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Measuring the performance of your people is every bit as important as measuring financials and other areas of the business. To create a standard for how individuals' work performance is rated, we have long recommended that companies implement a simple A-B-C rating across the organization.


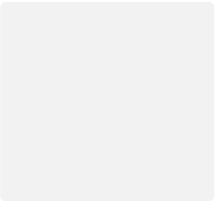
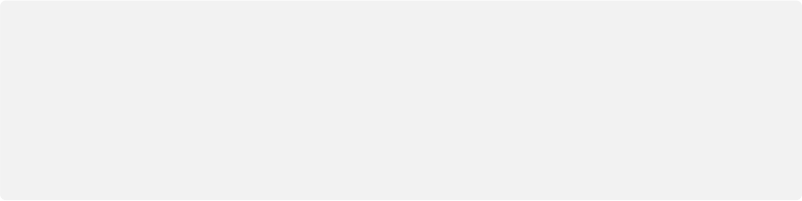

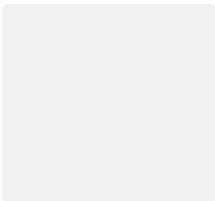
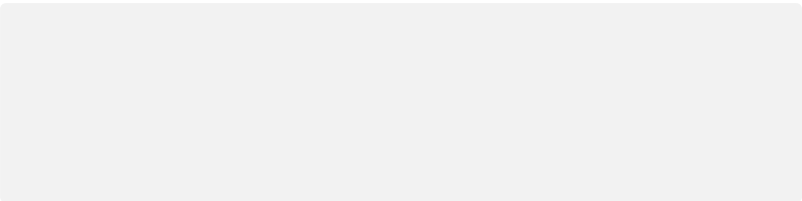

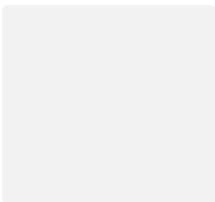
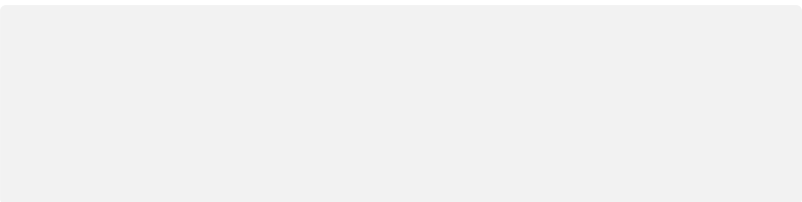

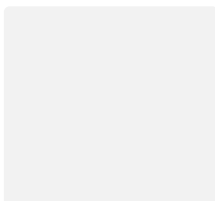
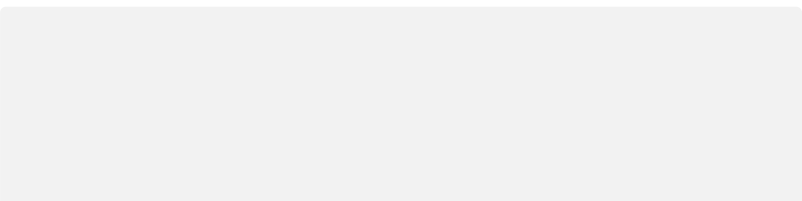

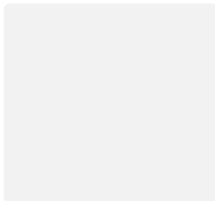
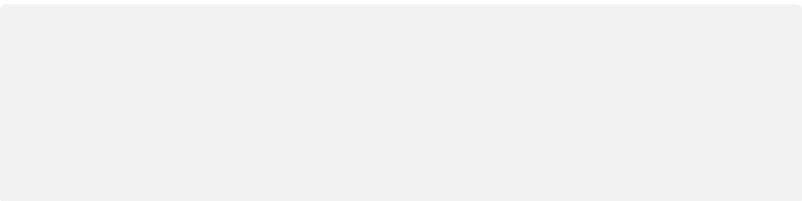

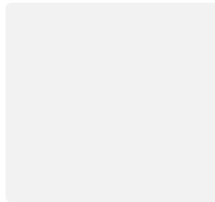
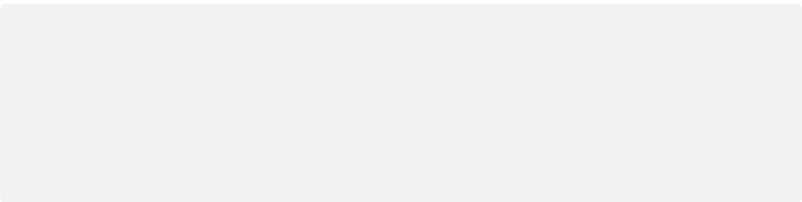
Under this system, each manager rates their direct reports as an A, B, or C each quarter. These ratings are not seen by the employees being rated but are visible up the management chain. This gives the CEO, Human Resources, and other leaders an updated view of where A-players sit throughout the organization. It also shows them where the C-players are—the people who need to be trained up, relocated, or removed from the organization.

- **A-players** are exceptional contributors to long-term profitability because they are among the top 15 percent of their peers throughout the industry. A-players also contribute to competitive advantage by being aligned with and supporting the values of the organization.
- **B-players** are between the top 15 percent and 50 percent of performers throughout the industry in their current roles. B-players are valuable contributors who consistently meet and may exceed expectations in many areas of performance. Management's responsibility is to grow them into A-players in their current roles or move them into roles that best utilize their strengths.
- **C-players** put the company at a competitive disadvantage by being below average relative to their peers at principal competitors. Management's responsibility is to rapidly develop them in their current role or get them into a role where they can be an A-player. If this cannot be done in a timely manner, the individual should not be retained.

The exercise of managers rating their direct reports A, B, or C should begin with you, the CEO. On the following page, consider your current executive team and how you would confidentially rate their performance. If you truly believe they are all A-players, the company should be delivering runaway results every quarter. More likely you have one or two A-players, several B-players, and potentially a C-player or two. Once each executive is setting clear goals each quarter, these should be a primary input into the rating you give them.



# Executive Ratings

NAME	LETTER RATING	WHY?
		
		
		
		
		
		



BONUS EXERCISE

# **Write Down Your CEO Sayings**

# Write Down Your CEO Sayings

CEOs generally repeat themselves less than they should. People often need to hear a message multiple times before it really sinks in. If you have a theme you need the team to internalize and act on, say it and then repeat it. And then repeat it again, until it becomes a “saying” of yours.

Don’t worry about people thinking you’re senile. Repetition is one of the best ways to ingrain priorities in the minds of your team. You may have sayings around the company’s strategy, mission/vision, values, or a key goal. You may also have a saying around your own core values as a CEO, something that reminds people what you stand for as a person.

As Marc Cenedella, CEO of the job site TheLadders.com, puts it, “Until they start making jokes about how often you repeat it, they haven’t internalized it.”

What are your current saying as a CEO? And what sayings might it be wise to adopt for the future? Put down your thoughts below.

## CEO Sayings

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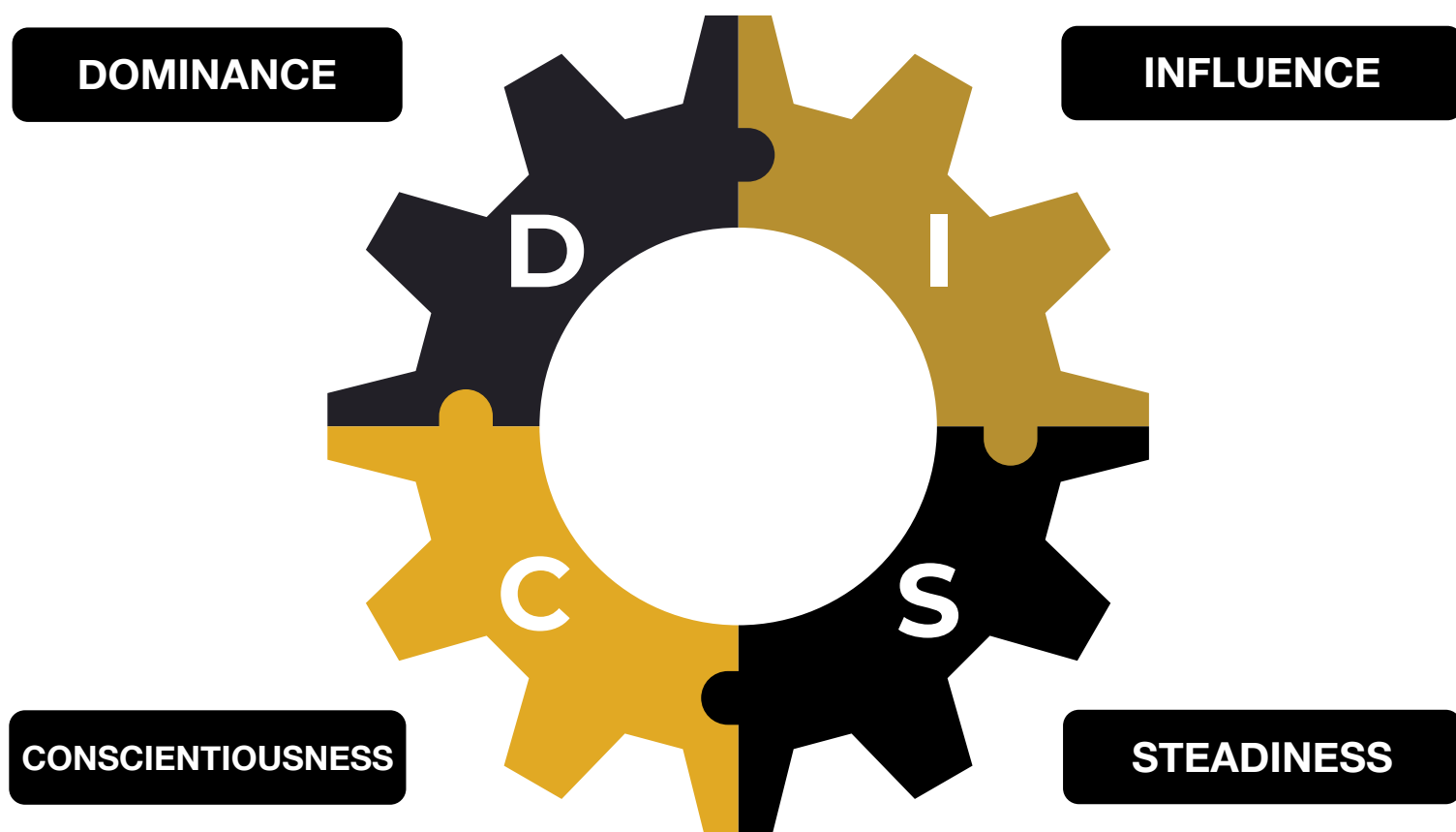
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APPENDIX

# **CEO Challenges by DISC Type**

## How Personality Types Lead to CEO Problems

Each of the four DISC personality types—Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness—represents a distinct set of strengths and blind spots for the CEO. Once you know your primary DISC type, skip to the relevant section in the following pages. Check off the ones you are most prone to. Then look at the suggestions on how to optimize your leadership approach given your natural inclinations.



# THE DOMINANCE CEO

## PHRASE

DO IT MY WAY



The strong D-type CEO is dominant, decisive, and driven. They tend to be confident, assertive, and ambitious. They are often good at taking charge, setting goals, and solving problems. However, these traits can also pose some challenges for their leadership effectiveness.

## Challenges

- ☐ Being too aggressive or impatient with others who are slower or less confident than them.
- ☐ Difficulty listening to feedback or collaborating with others who have different opinions or styles.
- ☐ Making decisions autocratically and expecting others to immediately fall in line.
- ☐ Being overly competitive or defensive when challenged or criticized.
- ☐ Trouble delegating tasks or trusting others to do their work.
- ☐ Coming across as insensitive to the feelings or needs of others.

## Action Steps

- **Recognize that non-Dominance personality types can offer just as much value as Ds.** Resist the impulse to write off people who question new initiatives and want to slow down and socialize new ideas. Listen to them and get their perspective.
- **Manage your stress levels and your emotions.** This will help you avoid reacting impulsively or defensively when collaborating with people who are very different from you.
- **When you make a decision, pause to consider who might be impacted by it.** Commit to sharing the reasoning behind the decision with the organization—even if you feel you don't have to.
- **Recognize that constructive criticism isn't an attack on you.** It's a way to improve your performance. When you get it, thank the person giving you the feedback.
- **When you delegate tasks, offer micro-training:** Provide clear expectations up front and support along the way. But trust the employee to meet the established expectations.
- **Learn the art of asking open-ended questions and listening actively.** Cultivate your curiosity about the people you work with. Encourage them to dialogue with you and give you feedback.

# THE INFLUENCE CEO

## PHRASE

### DO IT THE FUN WAY



The strong I-type CEO is enthusiastic, optimistic, outgoing, and persuasive. They tend to have high energy and enjoy socializing and collaborating with others. However, these traits can also pose some challenges for their leadership effectiveness.

## Challenges

- ☐ Difficulty planning, focusing on details, and following through on tasks.
- ☐ Relying too much on improvisation and spontaneity, which can lead to inconsistency and unpredictability.
- ☐ Struggling to delegate, give feedback, and hold others accountable.
- ☐ Avoiding conflict and confrontation; prioritizing harmony over meeting deadlines and expectations.
- ☐ Talking too much while not listening closely, especially with more reserved or analytical people.
- ☐ Being overly self-centered and impulsive.

## Action Steps

- **Set clear and realistic goals for yourself and the team.** Enlist your (C)onsciousness-type colleagues to help develop action plans around these well-defined goals.
- **Pick a simple, easy system for organizing and tracking progress toward goals.** Stick with this system religiously. (CEO Software can help here.)
- **Practice being direct with employees when they fall short of expectations.** Treat holding the team accountable as a core part of your responsibilities as a professional CEO.
- **Grow your comfort level with respectful disagreement.** Where conflict exists, talk about it. Focus on solutions without sweeping issues under the rug.
- **Practice active listening, especially with the quieter and more reserved people on your team.** Go out of your way to acknowledge their contributions and ideas.
- **Make a point to be open-minded and curious about how other people see things.** Recognize that people who are very different from you—even the quiet ones who may seem a little boring—have valuable insights about the organization and business.



# THE STEADINESS CEO

## PHRASE

DO IT THE PEACEFUL WAY



The strong S-type CEO tends to be supportive, stable, and steady. They value harmony, cooperation, and loyalty. They are often good listeners, team players, and peacemakers. However, these traits can also pose some challenges for their leadership effectiveness.

### Challenges

- ☐ Difficulty making timely decisions, with a preference for maintaining the status quo.
- ☐ Failure to confront poor performance in others when necessary.
- ☐ Inability to initiate significant changes within the organization.
- ☐ Avoidance of taking appropriate risks on behalf of the organization.
- ☐ Failure to assert their authority as CEO when needed to move the organization forward.

### Action Steps

- **Practice moving quickly on decisions that can be easily reversed.** For more significant decisions, set a time limit for making the decision and stick to it.
- **Practice being direct with employees when they fall short of expectations.** Treat holding the team accountable as a core part of your responsibilities as a professional CEO.
- **Each quarter, set one goal around a new initiative or significant change within the organization.** Seek input from colleagues, particularly (D)ominance types, around what changes might be most needed.
- **Work on thinking bigger than you're used to.** Set aside time each week for big-picture, strategic thinking. Solicit input from more risk-tolerant executives and other employees on opportunities the organization might pursue.
- **Understand that, despite your desire to seek consensus, you have the final say on issues that affect the entire organization.** Express yourself decisively as necessary. Resolve not to be a decision bottleneck. Challenge yourself to seek feedback and continuously improve.

# THE CONSCIENTIOUSNESS CEO

## PHRASE

DO IT THE RIGHT WAY



The strong C-type CEO is characterized by their accuracy and analytical thinking. They value quality, logic, and competence in themselves and others. However, these traits can also pose some challenges for their leadership effectiveness.

### Challenges

- ☐ Being overly critical of themselves and others, leading to low morale and resentment.
- ☐ Difficulty delegating tasks and trusting others to perform them well, resulting in micromanagement and burnout.
- ☐ Failure to express emotions and empathy, making them seem cold and distant to their employees.
- ☐ Resistance to change and innovation, preferring to stick to proven methods and procedures.
- ☐ Being overly rigorous before making any decision.

### Action Steps

- **Prioritize progress over perfection.** Let go of minor criticisms and curb any nitpicking.
- **Push yourself to delegate tasks; offer micro-training when you do.** Provide clear expectations up front and support along the way. Trust the employee to meet the established expectations.
- **Practice expressing curiosity and vulnerability, when appropriate, with your team.** Show them that you care about their feelings—and that you have some of your own.
- **Actively build and communicate an inspiring vision for the organization.** Recognize that existing ways of doing things will have to change to realize the vision in the long term.
- **Work on being adaptable to changing situations and accepting the unknown.** Embrace new ideas and take measured risks.
- **Make decisions before you have all the information.** Recognize that this is necessary, because you never will have all the information. (Remember the 40/70 Rule.)