Wearing All the Hats: Characteristics of an E-Myth Manager

"Who am I here?"

There's a movie in your video store called *The Stepfather*. Until the final 5 minutes of gore, it is a wonderfully constructed psychological thriller. The title character is a man who is forever searching to fulfill his vision of the perfect family; the house in the suburbs, the dutiful child and loving spouse. He wanders from town to town, insinuating himself into households as the "ideal" second husband and father. He creates in his mind the picture of the perfect nuclear family, then goes into violent meltdown when his "families" don't match the movie in his head. There is a stunning pivotal scene in which one of his current wives catches him in a lie. They're in the kitchen, and he's called her by another wife's name.

"What did you say, John?" she asks.

The camera shows John's face in the foreground, his "wife" in the background. We see the deconstruction in his face, the eyes darting right, then left. He says, more to himself than to her: "*Wait* a minute. Who *am* I here?"

After that, things get pretty ugly.

I don't believe I'm stretching the point to suggest that for many business owners, this feeling of "disconnect" is much the same--which is why, unless you own a restaurant, you shouldn't leave sharp objects laying around.

One Size Does Not Fit All

Most business owners wear several hats. They are not interchangeable, and you can't wear them all at the same time. You must continually be asking: "Who *am* I here?" Ultimately, for your business to grow and thrive, you have to settle on the one with the best fit, and pass the others off.

The E-Myth makes strong distinctions between being an Entrepreneur, a Manager, and a Technician. In condensed form, we could say:

- The Entrepreneur creates the Vision.

- The Manager creates the Systems.

- The Technician creates the Results.

Each character requires a different hat.

Participants in E-Myth Mastery are challenged to examine the hats they wear in their business, and the relative value of each. Invariably, someone near the end of the seminar will conclude: "What I really need to do is to hire a Manager."

Well, yes. There needs to be a manager.

What a Manager Needs To Be

Michael Gerber's book, **The E-Myth Manager,** discusses and resolves the dysfunctional nature of management in most companies. Certainly, an effective manager has the potential to take on some of the accountabilities that command so much of your time. But, how is this by itself really going to move your vision any closer to reality--and without bloodshed?

Back to the hats: In the development stage of your business, they're all yours to wear. You must be able to look at your business from each of the three distinctive points of view. As the Entrepreneur, you have the sole authority and responsibility to determine the direction of the business. How will the business be positioned in the world; in the eyes of its customers, employees, lenders, vendors, and the larger community? The Entrepreneur must determine and constantly reinforce the company's *intention*.

The Entrepreneur's Vision is the Manager's marching orders; the Vision is the gold standard. The Manager's duty is to enforce and manifest the Vision. A Manager must have several critical characteristics. One is "know-how." Some managers arrive with some "know-how" intact--knowing what to do and how to do it-- getting work done through other people (Technicians). At a minimum, effective managers will have the ability to find out *how* to do that. Knowing how or knowing how to find *out* how is one of the minimum required skills of a successful Manager.

What a Manager Needs To Do
The other essential characteristic of a successful Manager is the ability to transform that know-how into *processes* and *systems* that will enable people to get the desired results.

The only effective processes and systems are those that will achieve the Entrepreneur's Vision. Those processes and systems are the tools the Technicians use to get the results that fulfill the Vision. The Manager does not manage *people*. The Manager manages *systems*. People are unmanageable. Systems are not.

People respond to orchestrated patterns. Within those patterns (systems and processes), people can manage themselves! Let me say again: People are unmanageable. Systems are not.

An effective business must begin with the Vision. The effective Entrepreneur creates a compelling Vision and infuses it throughout the entire organization. The effective Entrepreneur lives the Vision. The effective Manager translates that Vision into Systems, and delegates the tasks to the Technician. The effective Technician operates within the System to create the Results that move the Vision forward.

Who Are We Here?
The owner of an E-Myth business cannot wear all the hats at once. The owner of a successful E-Myth business must practice the art of *discrimination*. The owner of an E-Myth business must know what hat is appropriate at any given moment, what characteristics are essential when wearing that hat, and when it is time to pass it off.

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