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Manage Your Household Like a CEO With These 9 Tips

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[Libby Kane](#)

Posted on Mar 12, 2012



What does a company's CEO know that you don't?

Usually, top executives have an arsenal of tips and tricks for managing their employees most effectively. And, if a household is like a business, you, as Mom, are the top executive of your household, or MCEO, if you will.

We spoke to some women who pull double-duty as both Mom *and* CEO to find out the most useful, effective tips they've brought home from the office.

From managing babysitters to finishing to-do lists, their insight can help your household (not to mention your office) run at peak efficiency, saving both time and money.

1. Be Solutions-Oriented

Instead of just refusing your kids' request or disapproving of their behavior, be clear about what they *should* be doing. "Don't just say no, or accept no," says Deborah Michael, founder of [North Shore Pediatric Therapy](#). She points out that blaming and screaming won't get an executive, or a mom, very far. (Work-wise, employees respond better to "Do this instead" than to "That's terrible. You shouldn't have done that.") We went more in-depth about her preferred method of managing underlings, which involves the ABCs of behavioral training, [here](#).

What Tricks Do You Use at Home?

Do you find yourself using work tactics to deal with your family at home? Or do you try to keep your work and family life separate?

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2. Always Have a Backup

Always have a Plan—or Person—B. Margelit Hoffman of [Hoffman Productions](#) keeps her ear to the ground, always looking for new talent. In the workplace, it means keeping an eye out for promising new hires, and at home it means staying on alert for great babysitters, lest her go-to sitter fall through. “Always be looking. I’m learning the hard way to use this idea when it comes to babysitters. There always comes a time when you need backup.”

3. Limit Your To-Do List

Chandra Clarke, co-founder of [Scribendi.com](#), recommends keeping ‘to-do’ lists short. “If you set yourself (or someone else) a task list that has ten items, and eight items get crossed off, that is actually an 80% success rate, but it still somehow feels like a failure,” she says. “We keep it to a ‘top three,’ which is updated daily. If you get your top three done, then you feel great, and anything else you get done feels like a bonus. Restricting it to three items really forces you to prioritize.”

4. Go High-Tech

In her office, [Fashion Forward Maternity](#) CEO Erin Lewis uses Google Calendar to sort out competing schedules, travel and appointments. Now she’s instituted it at home as well. “My husband and I both travel for work, and I’m currently finishing my MBA,” she says. “We have two children, two part-time nannies and a daycare schedule to follow, so we give everyone access to Google Calendar. That way we can plan ahead *and* look back and make sure we’re planning enough fun family time.”

5. Be a Winning Team

Nellie Akalp, the CEO and co-founder of [CorpNet.com](#), finds that operating as a team provides the most success, especially in her family of six. “At the office we work as a team. Then, when things go right, we all get to share in the company’s success. It’s the same at home—every member of the family fulfills his or her responsibilities (like setting the dinner table, cleaning the house, making beds, taking out trash, cleaning up after the dog), and we all get to share a comfortable home.” To encourage the teamwork mentality, she rewards good behavior by allowing the family to choose a fun activity they would like to do as a group instead of rewarding individual members.

6. Get the Information Upfront

Ask for all of the information before making a decision. At work, Sandi Webster, a Principal at [Consultants 2 Go](#) and former Director at American Express, needs all of the information and total cost upfront to see if there’s room in the budget for what her employee wants, and when raising her niece, she asks for the same. She started asking *why* her niece needed the requested treat/toy/outing at age three. “By the time they’re teenagers, they’re used to you explaining when, where, how (How do they expect to get there? How much will it cost?) and who (Who is going to chaperone? Who is going to be there?).”

7. Stick to the Schedule

[Petplan](#) co-founder and co-CEO Natasha Ashton finds that her employees work best when they know exactly where they stand and what to expect. She structures the office to disrupt her employees’ schedule as little as possible, and applies the same diligence to her son’s schedule: When he was only six weeks old, she created a spreadsheet detailing his routine, and has been similarly conscientious for years. “Children hate nothing more than uncertainty,” she explains.

“Even when we’re traveling for work, we make sure his routine isn’t disrupted. He always has the same mealtimes, bath time, story time and bedtime. Relying on his schedule gives him the reassurance he needs to thrive.”

8. Treat Personal Finances Like a Departmental Budget

Linda Drumright, CEO of [DecisionView](#), treated her children’s spending like a company budget when she sent them off to college. “Before they left, we sat down and listed every single expense we could think of in an Excel spreadsheet, estimated the monthly cost, and I gave them the appropriate amount of money. They were able to take ownership over the funds and choose how the money was allotted. We re-evaluated the expenses every summer and, surprisingly, it was easy for them to stick to the budget.”

9. You Have to Be Trusted to Be Trustworthy

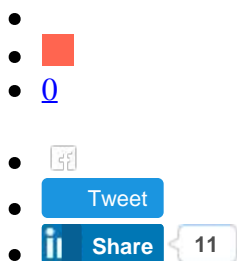
Don’t be afraid to trust your kids with challenges. Raising four teenagers, Drumright found that she had to take the leap and trust them when it came to curfews and driving, even when she was nervous. In the workplace, that means trusting an employee to take on a challenge so she can grow professionally; at home, it means trusting your children to take on increased responsibility and prove that you were correct to trust them in the first place. “If you’ve done your job as a parent, you should be able to trust your children. The only way to find out is to try,” she says.

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Believe it or not, your child’s discipline can affect your finances. [Here’s how.](#)

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Kerry • 4 years ago

Instead of Google Calendar, I use Cozi-- a free, online calendar, that easily tracks schedules by person, and sends reminder texts or emails (based on preferences). The free app is also available on multiple smartphone platforms. Additionally, there are To Do list and Shopping List sections. Give everyone the

username and password and everyone can add to it. The 2 adults also get sent a weekly calendar email each Sunday. If you sign up through FlyLady.com you also get a meal planning section available only through the Internet, not the apps.

My mother lives close by but can't drive. I added her as a family member. She puts on the calendar when she needs a ride and can make appointments without asking me because she can see when I am available to take her. Mom also adds her groceries to the shopping list so I shop for both of us at once with a single list. An added bonus is that she sees what her grandchildren are doing when so she is current on their activities when they talk.

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