

CEOs are insecure, too

Your CEO might be your company's greatest limitation

Top dog. Head honcho. Big shot. Truth be told, just like anyone else, CEOs can be insecure. In fact, they're often far more insecure than they let on. And it's easy to see why.



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There's a common perception that the very nature of being CEO must mean that they're also the smartest person in any given room. It's a misperception that CEOs often buy into themselves more than anyone else. This can build into insurmountable pressure for the CEO, who feels that they must constantly live up to the expectation that they're the smartest, most accomplished or all-around best talent within the organization. Proving worthy of being CEO often clouds actually *being* CEO.

But it's the great CEOs who know how to refute that dangerous, self-imposed pressure. They resolve these insecurities by recognizing and openly declaring that they're not the best at anything. And who says they have to be anyway?

Limiting factors

Famed CEO Steve Jobs once said, "It doesn't make sense to hire smart people and then tell them what to do. We hire smart people so that they can tell *us* what to do."

The CEO should be thought of as a conductor of an orchestra. Although the conductor may have mastered one or even several instruments, they are rarely the best or most accomplished musician. Still, it's the conductor who's best suited to hear the music as a whole. They know where the music needs to

go and what each section must do to get there.

The CEO is every organization's single most limiting factor. And it's unlikely that they arrive at the job knowing that. They're likely to spend their first 100 days pinpointing operational, market, competitive or other limitations facing the organization. But if a CEO has any chance at making a lasting impact on the firm, they must ultimately let go of their own personal ego and insecurities.

Be the best equipped

Here's a test that works for any CEO. If you can't say that you've got people working for you who are better than you in their given area, then you've got a problem. You've either hired the wrong people or you're incapable of leading the right people. Either way, it's your problem.

Great CEOs learn to build organizations made up of people who are individually brighter, smarter and sharper in their respective areas than the CEO alone. Being the best CEO is about being the best-equipped CEO, not the best at all things.

That's not to say that as CEO you can't be the best at some things — after all, you're CEO. You didn't reach that height through mediocrity. But you also must have learned that you've made it this far by pushing people to be their best and ultimately to be the best. Remember none of that should change when you become CEO. ●