

# The Sin of Pride

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## HOW CEOS GET PAST THE FEAR

By Nozer Buchia

Most CEOs are not yet ready for success because, while they say they want to be internally successful, too often all they desire is to be externally famous.

CEOs are ultimately responsible for the lives and fortunes of people. Most realize very quickly that growing a business cannot be accomplished without first learning to lead and it soon dawns on them that while managers are appointed, leaders are selected – leaders do not create followers, leaders create more leaders.

### Leadership Behavior or a Leadership Trap?

Research and client experience suggests that half of all efforts to transform organizational performance fail either because the CEO doesn't act as a role model for change, or because they permit people in the organization to defend the status quo. It is the first job of the CEO to address pervasive mind-sets and focus strictly on business outcomes. CEOs need to look inward while driving organizational change using their skill and ability to call on the right executive at the right time, harnessing specific strengths and skills to meet every situation. Often business leaders have to tell hard truths and take painful steps while driving organizational change by restructuring the pyramid layers and promoting an entirely new business model.

Most CEOs struggle to change their vision because they are limited by their deep insecurities . . . they are not good enough and may be unmasked. This then blurs the limitations of their leadership style, masks destructive mind-sets at lower levels of the organization, and generally distorts what's going on outside the executive suite.

### Is the CEO Truly in Control?

When getting into a car and driving to a new location all the traffic signs along the way that tell us what to do, or better still, what not to do—slow down, one way, wrong way. These signs are there to guide and deliver us to our destination.

When a business plan fails, there are signs along the way that the CEO has neglected to observe and reflect. These signs should raise warnings that the plan has not worked as effectively as expected and there needs to be a slow down, stop, turn around, don't be afraid to ask for directions from the team, restructure and forge ahead, once again.

The CEO can get back in control by creating a new road map, a better strategy, and a more realistic business plan. To get back in focus, these issues need to be addressed:

Why is the organization going there – *purpose of the business?*

What is required to make the business successful – *products and services?*

Is the organization moving in the right direction – *strategy and business plan?*

Does the organization have enough capital?

The CEO constantly needs to stop and ask for directions along the way, re-evaluate the organizational path and the speed at which the business is growing, and revisiting strategies for survival and success. The one way the CEO regains control is by involving the team – the true experts in their own fields – in organizational decisions. Then and only then can the CEO be in control.

### **The One Sin a CEO Must Avoid**

**Pride** – It has been called the sin from which all others arise . . . and most CEOs fall in this trap.

Pride in business is the excessive belief in one's own abilities that interferes with the individual's recognition of the abilities of others. It is simply the, "I know what to do – I am the best – If it is not done my way, it is wrong." That is not ability talking... that is status and title talking! And the time that pride gets in the way is normally admitting that one is wrong, or that the other person's way is much better at achieving the desired result. As has been so aptly said by the English Osteopath Dr. Andrew Taylor Still, "The job of a physician is to put his pride aside and find health; disease anyone can find." The job of a CEO is to put his pride aside and listen to the opinions of the team and involve them in organizational decisions. After all, the Chief Executive never runs a business – they lead the people and they, in turn, run the organization.

Pride in the business world comes only after something has been achieved. The world will not let anyone feel good on past performances, and they will kill your pride in minutes if not at the top of your game – each and every time.

### **Moving On...**

This unforgiving world of business simply judges CEOs by the decisions they make and not by the options they had to choose from. People will try and pull the leader down because the leader is at the top . . . they will try and stab those in the back for being ahead of them. If you think you are beaten, you are – for you can never rise above the level of your thinking.

For a CEO, the greatest fear in business is the opinion of others. The moment you are unafraid of that, you are on your way to success. Do not place the key to success in someone else's pocket. For it is not how hard you can hit that matters, it is how hard a hit you can take that counts.

CEOs are the organization. Everything you want in business is on the other side of the word FEAR!

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