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# You're The CEO Of Your Business, But Are You Doing The Job?

The hardest job in the marketplace is the Chief Executive Officer of a small business.

So how could it be harder to be the CEO of Excel Supply, LLC, than the CEO of Exxon? Let's look at the definition.

[Investopedia](#) says a CEO is, "The highest ranking executive in a company whose main responsibilities include developing and implementing high-level strategies, making major decisions and managing overall operations and resources."

For every element of that definition, Exxon's CEO has a cadre of presidents reporting to him about how they're managing battalions of VPs, brigades of managers and armies of employees. Exxon's CEO manages that handful of presidents who bring him performance updates.

The CEO of Excel may have managers reporting to her, but she's never more than one degree of separation from the work, and likely the alpha member of any given task, especially things like capitalization, cash flow, business development, etc.

There is one thing that sets all CEOs apart from every other position and it's the first item in the definition: high-level strategy. A CEO's primary job, which can be supported but never delegated, is to determine the long-term direction of the company. Every business, large or small, must have someone doing this CEO job, whether they use the title or not.

Big business CEOs spend very little time managing and most of their time working on strategy and future direction. Conversely, and unfortunately, most

small business CEOs spend too much time managing and too little on executive thinking.

Recently in our online poll, we defined a CEO and asked small business owners: "How difficult is it to budget CEO time away from managing?" Here's what we learned.

Only 3% said they had "...found a way to balance management and CEO duties," and 8% allowed they were "...inconsistent but getting better at it." Over half of our sample said they "...can't focus on CEO tasks for putting out fires," while one third rejected our premise with, "I'm a small business owner, not a CEO."

Here's a practical way for small business owners to increase their CEO activity: As often as possible – at least once a year – fire yourself from jobs someone else can do and promote yourself to jobs only you can do. This will push you toward more executive thinking and behavior and put you on a natural path toward performing all the tasks of a CEO, including charting the long-term course for your small business.

**Write this on a rock...**Every business needs someone doing the work of a CEO – that's you!

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[Jim Blasingame](#) is one of the world's leading experts on small business and entrepreneurship. He is the creator and award-winning host of the nationally syndicated radio program, [The Small Business Advocate®](#) Show. In addition to his weekly columns, Jim is the author of two books; *Small Business is like a Bunch of Bananas* and *Three Minutes to Success*.

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