



Top 5 Things The Best CEOs Do

By George Bradt, PrimeGenesis

In reflecting on PrimeGenesis' work helping senior leaders move into new and complex roles, and our time with new CEOs in CEO Boot Camps, and my own time as a senior leader and chief executive, it's becoming more and more clear that the most successful CEOs do five things well:

1) Translate the organization's shared purpose into an inspiring vision

Task #1 is to get the organization aligned around a vision and a set of values. You can't lead people to a brighter future until they can see it for themselves and can see themselves in it. Each leader must take the underlying shared purpose of the organization and translate it into a cohesive message that motivates the people they come in contact with.

2) Focus resources to strengthen the organization's sustainable competitive advantage

Procter & Gamble's employees aim to "win with winners". They have sold off smaller brands and grown from 9 brands doing a billion+ dollars in sales in 2000 to 23 in 2007, beating all their sales and profit targets and doubling the stock price. The power of focused choices!

3) Get the right people in the right roles with the right support over time

It's not that people are good or bad. It's that each of them has their own particular set of strengths. Play to their strengths and the odds increase for everyone to be happy and successful. Push them into the wrong roles and the reverse is true.

4) Knit together functions and processes to drive disciplined integrated execution

CEOs don't actually do anything of any value themselves. And they don't manage departments or functions anymore. The best CEOs spend their time working "on" the organization and not "in" the organization, driving execution across groups.

5) Deploy a full communication campaign to lead the organization towards the vision

Great communication campaigns are single-minded. Bill Clinton's answer to almost any question was "It's the economy stupid." Ronald Reagan preached his optimistic message around the phrase "It's morning in America." Figure out your message and drive it in a way that is meaningful to each individual and gets them all moving in the same direction.

Key questions in the five areas:

- * How can you make your vision more inspiring in line with the shared purpose?
- * How can you strengthen your organization's focus and sustainable competitive advantage?
- * What people moves should you make now (if not sooner)?
- * What silos can you collapse to knit together functions and processes and improve execution?
- * How can you best utilize signs, symbols and stories to drive your message?

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