

TECHNICIAN, MANAGER OR ENTREPRENEUR – E-MYTH REVISITED

DO YOU EXPERIENCE EXHILARATION OR EXHAUSTION DAILY?

What are you? Technician, Manager or Entrepreneur?

Too often people start businesses with great enthusiasm, then before you know it, the passion is gone and its just hard work.

Michael Gerber's "The E-Myth Revisited" book makes the point that to be successful in business we need to be master juggler of three functions Technician, Manager and Entrepreneur.

Technicians – live in the present: Experts in doing stuff, craftsman at their trade. Their ethos is captured by the statement "you want it done right, do it yourself".

Managers – live in the past: Pragmatic in nature, planning order, creating predictability

Entrepreneurs – live in the future: They turn a trivial condition into exceptional opportunity, true visionaries and catalysts for change. They are focused on the bigger picture continually questioning the business and its place as opposed to operating it.

The E-myth refers to the Entrepreneurial Myth that businesses are started and lead by entrepreneurs, rather than the truth, most businesses fail because the founders are technicians. Their entrepreneurial traits only appearing for a small moment in time at inception, only to be quickly replaced by the dominant behaviour of a technician.

The acts of a technician lead businesses, inevitably lead to what Gerber describes as "entrepreneurial seizure, that point when the business has enslaved the owner".

The classic sign or precursor to this "seizure" being when the technicians abdicate tasks they dislike or do not have skills in, rather than delegating. Typically this plays out as employing someone for a while to do all the stuff they dislike. Slowly they become disconnected from the business they started and after a while the new manager they employed gets pissed off and leaves them in the poo (poo being my technical word not Gerber's).

"Too many entrepreneurs start out with passion and drive, to only find themselves with a lousy job a few years later, working their butts off for little or no reward."

The e-Myth Revisited is a great read and is available on Kindle well worth an afternoon on your deck chair.

More wisdom from Gerber ... "A mature business knows how it got to be where it is and what it must do to get where it wants to go". Shifting from adolescence to maturity as a business usually coincides with a crisis or getting outside help, you choose.

The fact that these technicians (craftsman) are not strategists or skilled in some basic business skills, is very evident in the NZ landscape.

How do you balance the technician, manager and entrepreneur hats?

Coincidentally, or not, I have recently just re-enthused a couple of businesses owners, who had lost their way, just as Gerber describes in his book.

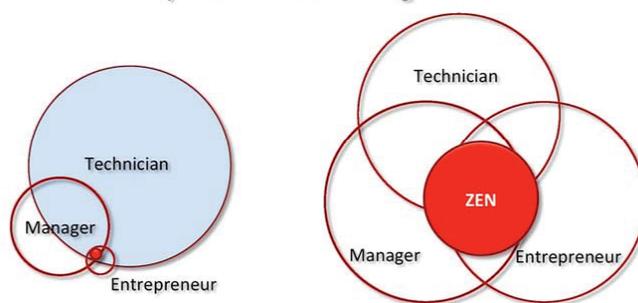
Fixing this type of dilemma takes two steps best done with outside help:

1. **The Awakening** – some form of strategic review and tool kit, where you can see your business from the outside looking in.
2. **Getting Clarity** around how to best take advantage of this new strategic viewpoint with a new simple strategy and mode of operation that recaptures motivation, clear direction and business opportunity. Rather than doing lots of more technical stuff.

So for pragmatists – some tips:

- **Work on obsoleting yourself from your business** – "if your business depends on you, you don't own a business you own a job"
- **Be conscious of your natural tendencies or biases towards being a technician, manager or entrepreneur.** Challenge yourself to perform the two roles you do not have a natural affinity for. When was the last time you revisited your strategy? Who are you being today?
- **Delegate, don't abdicate:** Do not abdicate tasks that you should have accountability for e.g. finance just because you don't like it or don't understand it. Can you lay your hands on an up to date (end of last month) P&L and balance sheet within the next 10 mins? If not you have abdicated.
- **Learn some more business skills to complement your skills** so you can delegate with full knowledge and respect for specific technical skills specialists provide. E.g. basic finance is not hard to learn.

Reality Vs Zen – Balancing Roles



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