



How to Become CEO: The Rules for Rising to the Top of Any Organization

Jeffrey J. Fox

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Now Updated and with New Success Tips for Everyone, at Any Level! Vision, persistence, integrity, and respect for everyone in the workplace--these are all qualities of successful leaders. But Jeffrey J. Fox, the founder of a marketing consulting company, also gives these tips: never write a nasty memo, skip all office parties, and overpay your people. These are a few of his key ways to climb the corporate ladder.

How to Become CEO: The Rules for Rising to the Top of Any Organization Details

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Download and Read Free Online How to Become CEO: The Rules for Rising to the Top of Any Organization Jeffrey J. Fox

Shawn says

This is a nifty little book with a lot of good advice for anyone interested in getting along well and productive in any organization - not just aspiring CEOs. There is a lot of good life advice here, too.

The rest of this review is just summary notes of key point that I want to remember, so it is NOTHING BUT SPOILERS from this point on.

The following is mostly quoted verbatim from the text of the book:

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the book:

ALWAYS TAKE THE JOB THAT OFFERS THE MOST MONEY.

Bonuses are on %, you are more visible to upper

management, and the more you are paid the more they

expect of you (a good thing). Higher paid candidate

always gets the promotion.

AVOID STAFF JOBS, SEEK LINE JOBS (jobs that directly

bring in \$ for the company.

DON'T EXPECT THE PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT TO PLAN YOUR CAREER

Your destiny and your career growth are your

responsibility, no one else's. You have to know what you

want. You have to design the plan to get there. You have

to determine what skills and functional expertise are

needed... Your responsibility is to acquire that

experience.

GET AND KEEP CUSTOMERS

The customer is king and the kingmaker (paraphrase)

KEEP PHYSICALLY FIT

DO SOMETHING HARD AND LONELY

This will give you a feeling of toughness, a certain

self-elitism. It will mentally prepare you for the battle

of business. (writing counts here)

NEVER WRITE A NAST MEMO

Never give a company rival a smoking gun. Spend your

energy on positive things.

THINK FOR ONE HOUR EVERY DAY.

KEEP AND USE A SPECIAL IDEA NOTEBOOK.

DON'T HAVE A DRINK WITH THE GANG.

Never get tipsy with anyone connected with your company.

It is a sign of weakness. It shows you are out of

control.

DON'T SMOKE.

Nothing good happens to the people around you when you

smoke cigarettes.

SKIP ALL OFFICE PARTIES.

FRIDAY IS "HOW YA' DOIN'?" DAY

"Find out who you need, no matter how low in the

organization, and let them know you know you need and

appreciate them. Make one good ally in your company every

month.

MAKE ALLIES OF YOUR PEERS' SUBORDINATES.

KNOW EVERYBODY BY THEIR FIRST NAME.

MAKE ONE MORE CALL

(paraphrase) The best always put in a LOT of extra effort

just to be a little bit better - extra batting practice

or writing one more draft.

ARRIVE 45 MINUTES EARLY AND LEAVE 15 MINUTES LATE

Earlier & later than most. That is an extra 31 days per

year.

DON'T TAKE WORK HOME FROM THE OFFICE.

EARN YOUR INVITATION CREDENTIALS.

There is always an inner circle, and you must acquire

the same credentials as those in it. If you can't, switch

companies, because even if you become CEO you won't last

(paraphrased).

AVOID SUPERIORS WHEN YOU TRAVEL.

They are busy (paraphrased). Work instead.

EAT IN YOUR HOTEL ROOM.

Work. (clearly a theme here - work a LOT.)

WORK, DON'T READ PAPERBACKS ON THE AIRPLANE.

Have a specific work objective for each trip.

KEEP A "PEOPLE FILE".

Mail them all a note every 6 months if you don't see them

(you do this in Outlook, paraphrased).

SEND HANDWRITTEN NOTES.

DON'T GET BUDDY-BUDDY WITH YOUR SUPERIORS (OR YOUR

SUBORDINATES)

He is big on not mixing business with pleasure. He says

to know them really well and be of assistance whenever

possible in work or personal lives, but only be buddies

when you work at separate companies (paraphrased).

DON'T HIDE AN ELEPHANT.

The hiders always get burned, regardless of complicity.

Define the problem and suggest solutions, ask for help

and position yourself as the independent reporter, in

control, as if you were not previously involved. Note how

John F. Kennedy handled his Bay of Pigs debacle.

Preemptively, publicly, on television, "my fault, we blew it, any questions?" Kennedy emerged unscathed, actually strengthened. (my addition: Except of course the part where he was assassinated for it.)

BE VISIBLE: PRACTICE WACADAD.

Words Are Cheap And Deeds Are Dear. Ideas are nothing without execution.

ALWAYS TAKE VACATIONS.

ALWAYS SAY YES TO A SENIOR EXECUTIVE REQUEST (regardless of what it is).

No matter what the request, give him more than he wanted, sooner than expected, and with your own touch of personal innovation. People who get the job done are the ones who get the top jobs.

NEVER SURPRISE YOUR BOSS.

MAKE YOUR BOSS LOOK GOOD, AND YOUR BOSS'S BOSS LOOK

BETTER.

You make these people look good by anticipating their needs and problems and by doing the extra work needed to get answers. Always keep them informed. Always finish work ahead of schedule. Always do a bit more. See their job through their eyes. Help them by doing the project and making suggestions as if you were in their place.

Don't let them make a mistake.

NEVER LET A GOOD BOSS MAKE A MISTAKE.

Never imply that it is their fault; use the royal we.

Tell everyone everyone who works for you - inside and outside the organization - that they must never let you make a mistake. Be sure your boss knows you have that rule.

GO TO THE LIBRARY ONE DAY A MONTH.
Get a bunch of admin stuff done all in one day - you will feel emboldened.

ADD ONE BIG NEW THING TO YOUR LIFE EACH YEAR.
Demonstrate your ability to grow.

DRESS FOR A DANCE.
"Dress for football, you play football. Dress for a dance, you dance." The same lesson holds for business.

Dress for business, you do business.

OVERINVEST IN PEOPLE.
Pay them more than they are worth. Give the winners trust, independence, praise, freedom, encouragement.

People are mirrors - they give what they get. Hire people according to the three I's:
Integrity, I can do it attitude, Intelligence

(paraphrased).

STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN.
Learn to listen. When someone is speaking, stop what you are doing, look at the person, and listen. Good listeners are considered great conversationalists. Listening is equated with intelligence.

BE A FLAG-WAVING COMPANY PATRIOT
Cynicism about one's own corporation is the hallmark of losers, not future presidents.

FIND AND FILL THE "DATA GAPS"

Identify what you don't know and what your organization doesn't know.

HOMEWORK, HOMEWORK, HOMEWORK

The homework guy breaks the chapters [that he needs to study for an exam:] apart, synthesizes the information, and memorizes eight chapters in seven hours. (As opposed to just reading them.)

NEVER PANIC...OR LOSE YOUR TEMPER

"Nothing gives one person so much advantage over another as to remain cool and unruffled under all circumstances."

(Thomas Jefferson)

At a wine making facility the employees came to the CEO in a panic since the winemaker had quit at a critical moment. The CEO stayed calm, thought for a moment, then asked, "What would you do if the winemaker had died instead of resigned?" The managers said they would make so-and-so the winemaker. "So be it," said the CEO, and the new winemaker carried on the winery tradition for 15 more years (paraphrased).

If a colleague makes an unkind comment to you, do not respond, but it is OK to laugh. Your supporters will be as offended as you. Your detractors will sense your control. Anyone else will see you as above the fray. Do not get angry. Even when anger is justified, observers are put off by the angry person. School yourself not to panic. Tell yourself to "stay calm." If you have ten seconds to make a decision, think

for nine.

LEARN TO SPEAK AND WRITE IN PLAIN ENGLISH.

Business communications must be precise, complete, and

totally comprehensible.

TREAT ALL PEOPLE AS SPECIAL.

People can do a lot if it is appreciated, and they can do

more if they are motivated and thanked.

BE A CREDIT MAKER, NOT A CREDIT TAKER

Give everybody 100% credit for the work they do. If you

have 5 people reporting to you and they each get 100%

credit for the work they do, then you get 500% - that's

the way it works. Give proper credit and you will become

known as a credit maker, somebody who gets things done, a

person to work for. Your people will work very hard

because they know they will be fairly recognized.

GIVE INFORMAL SURPRISE BONUSES.

This is that irregular reinforcement theory that gets

people to work hard since they never know when they might

just get a bonus.

PLEASE, BE POLITE WITH EVERYONE.

No smoking, cursing or pulling rank. Treat everyone's

place and stuff as if they are your own (paraphrased).

Always be on time, and don't waste others' time. Always

say please and thank-you.

PEOPLE WHO FEEL GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THEIR JOBS WILL

CONTRIBUTE AT HIGH LEVELS.

So make people feel good about themselves, and feel good

about yourself (I summarized here).

THE GLORY AND THE GLAMOUR COME AFTER THE GRUNTWORK.

If you begrudge the gruntwork, you will not get the

glory.

KEEP TRYING THINGS, NEW THINGS. PERSISTENCE IS THE KEY.

(This is completely paraphrased, and may not be what he

meant.)

HASTE MAKES WASTE.

Learn the difference between revocable and irrevocable

decisions, and don't screw up the irrevocable ones by

making hasty decisions.

POUR THE COALS TO A GOOD THING.

Once something is working, don't change anything - just

pour the coals to it, and get as much success out of the

system as you can until it doesn't work anymore (summary

paraphrased).

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO THOUGHT OF AN IDEA; WHAT MATTERS IS

WHO IMPLEMENTS IT.

Creative people enhance their probability of getting good

ideas by listening to the ideas of others. If they listen

to 100 people, they multiply their creative capacity 100

times.

STAY OUT OF OFFICE POLITICS

Don't waste your time. Spend your time creating and

accomplishing. Be the last to know. Don't get sucked in.

Don't let people tell you something if they say it's

confidential. Don't ask, don't answer, don't agree. Don't

say anything bad about anyone. Don't gossip. Say, "I

don't know."

Just work.

LOOK SHARP AND BE SHARP

EMULATE, STUDY, AND CHERISH THE GREAT BOSS

DON'T GO OVER BUDGET

Senior managers promote people who deliver what is expected. Tight budgets promote creativity, ingenuity, and inventiveness. Look upon a tight budget as a challenge. Find new and less expensive ways of doing things. The corporation will be improved. You will be appreciated.

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE AN OPPONENT

Assume nothing. Never underestimate an opponent's intelligence, stamina, or skill, their capacity for good or evil, duplicity dishonesty or cunning. If you overestimate an opponent you are merely pleasantly surprised, but if you underestimate them it could mean disaster (paraphrase).

ASSASSINATE THE CHARACTER ASSASSIN WITH A SINGLE PHRASE

When conversation with a colleague turns to the character assassin, if you are the target, simply say, "Of course, with Mr. X, no one is spared." Your colleague, knowing Mr. X's style, will assume he, too, has been a recent target. Assassin assassinated.

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE "SHOULDN'T HAVE CLUB"

This is the winners' circle. Every time you think, "I shouldn't have done that," there will be ten other times

when the results will prove you should have. No guts, no glory.

THE CONCEPT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE PERFECT, BUT THE EXECUTION OF IT DOES

RECORD AND COLLECT YOUR MISTAKES WITH CARE AND PRIDE

Do the after-action reviews. Acknowledging mistakes is a sign of security and confidence. Mistakes are the exhaust of active, doing people.

LIVE FOR TODAY; PLAN FOR TOMORROW; FORGET ABOUT YESTERDAY

HAVE FUN, LAUGH

Business is tough enough not to have fun. If your job isn't fun, you have to change jobs or find ways to add some fun. The manager who is able to maintain a sense of humor and to lighten the mental load of his colleagues will always have a motivated, happy team.

TREAT YOUR FAMILY AS YOUR NUMBER ONE CLIENT

When your family members speak to you, put down the newspaper or book or mute the tv, and turn and look at them while they are speaking.

NO GOALS, NO GLORY

You must have them. Get extremely detailed, and put something on your daily list each day that will bring you closer to your long-term goals (paraphrased).

ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR SUBORDINATES' SPOUSES

The spouse is an important potential ally for the corporation, or frightfully, a potentially virulent enemy.

SEE THE JOB THROUGH THE SALESPEOPLE'S EYES

Selling is the key to the enterprise. Spend time in the

field. Sell if you can. Learn what goes on out there.

Work the trenches, and the trenches will work for you.

BE A VERY TOUGH "HELLER SELLER"

You have to get the order. You must become a very tough,

get-the-order salesperson. They know that the numbers are

in their favor. They know that 25% of all sales closes

are made simply by asking for the order, 75% of all sales

closes are made on the 4th or subsequent call, and that

90% of all salespeople never ask for the order. They know

that 95% of all sales interviews are really conversation

or entertainment, not selling. They also know, therefore,

that there is little competition for the persistent and

tenacious salesperson. They know that MAKING MORE CALLS

AND ASKING FOR THE ORDER IS THE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS.

DON'T BE AN EMPIRE BUILDER

It is the manager who gets the job done with less - less

people and money - who is most needed by the corporation.

Never complain that you are expected to do more than your

budget enables. Don't use the lack of resources as an

excuse. Promotions and power go to producers, not people

administrators.

PUSH PRODUCTS, NOT PAPER

Don't get trapped doing ANYTHING that does not directly

improve your company, period.

TO TEACH IS TO LEARN AND TO LEAD

Teaching will improve your ability to articulate why your responsibility is critical to the company.

DO NOT GET DISCOURAGED BY THE IDEA KILLERS

Don't give in. Don't let up. Idea people build

businesses. Builders get to the top. Consider the idea

killers as a positive, as an incentive. Treat their

negativism as a reason to do more homework. Work harder

on the things necessary to make your idea work.

Andrew Brown says

Very concise and straight forward suggestions for improving your productivity in the work place and strengthening your career prospects. At times perhaps too concise as further examples to support Fox's views would have been appreciated but this might have resulted in the 'clean and clear' messages being lost. Overall I would recommend as a quick and easy read from a tried and tested book. Chances are even if you only take one or two suggestions away from it you will find it a worthwhile investment.

TarasProkopyuk says

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Jon Humphrey says

This book helped me resolve an internal conflict that I have been struggling with. I started an MBA program this fall. I want to do well in my classes, but I couldn't think of a legitimate reason to want good grades given that I do not plan on using this degree to get a job. I'm already employed and I already have a graduate degree. Why should I worry about my grades? One theme from this little book is that you need to know how to use your time well. Several of the tips are about using time to get work done to show that you can handle the burdens of being a senior executive. If I can do well in my classes given that I work full time, that will

show that I can handle a heavy work load. That insight helps me get through the down times when I would rather not be studying.

Taaj Francois says

I highly recommend this book to those looking to get the gist around what it takes to become CEO or rise up in any organization. I might be giving this book more credit than most because I've been a full-time entrepreneur since 17 and I have a lot of friends in CEO roles around the world. I'm sure you're wondering what that has to do with anything. A good friend and former Chairman of Butterfield Bank Bermuda gave me this book and I started to notice a common trend. A lot, if not all the chapters represented him in some way shape or form. Literally every other chapter if not each one reminded me of him in some way or spot on.

Don't be discouraged to read this book if you see some of the reviews mentioning things like:

"some tips are just a bit far off like 1) While on a business trip, eat breakfast in the hotel room instead of going to the breakfast buffet and (2) Don't attend Christmas parties."

What Jeffery Fox means by #1 is do not get caught up in the hype of being away from home. AKA do not get distracted by what everyone else is doing when you can be getting crucial work done. As a full-time entrepreneur I know this is a MAJOR reason why many of us fail and so little of us actually make it. My Chairmen friend went from Chair of Butterfield Bank to being Chairman of another large corporation within the same month of leaving the bank. I know notice a lot of the reasons why he was able to do this is due to the common points made in this book. Plus he also has a ton of technical skills.

My biggest take away from this book:

1. Think for One Hour Every Day. (ch.9)
2. Don't Have a Drink with the Gang. (ch.11)
3. Friday is "How Ya Doin'?" Day (ch.14)
4. The difference between the successful person and the average is inches.
5. The concept doesn't have to be perfect but the execution does.

Feel free to reach out to me to discuss more!

Mike Shelton says

Another fantastic leadership/business book that is a must read for anyone wanting to improve their career no matter what their role is. This book is executive style (my favorite) which means it has large font, 1-2 page chapters and SUPER concise information. You can read it quickly or just pick it up and read a couple of chapters in 5 minutes every now and then. It will change the way you approach your work and will help you become a better employee and leader (in a management role or not). I have re-read this book several times. It has helped me manage my stress and become a stronger leader. Love it!

Brandi says

For those of you who have an Uncle or Grandfather who constantly offers unsolicited, blunt advice about succeeding in Corporate America, you will love *How to Become CEO* by Jeffery Fox. This book is a quick read and contains a ton of advice I would consider common knowledge for any business professional. Although easy and somewhat predictable, it's still a good read. Don't let the two page chapters fool you. Jeffery doesn't beat around the bush with any of the topics and although I found it quite annoying at times, he somehow still connected with me on a personal level. Soon after reading, I found a notebook and started revising the steps to achieve my personal and professional goals. I see this being that book on your shelf that you refer to maybe once or twice a year because you want to recall a quote you read.

Mike Ncube says

Just completed *How to become CEO* and I've enjoyed reading it. It's a small book and I completed it in a few hours but it has some good and practical points that you can apply to any area of your life. However I'd say it doesn't go into detail about how to actually develop your career through professional development and become a CEO. Instead it is mainly about personal development which of course is helpful for all areas of your life.

K.D. Absolutely says

One of those "airport" books that I read sometime in 2000-2004. The book is concise, most tips are practical but some are just a bit far off like: 1) While on a business trip, eat breakfast in the hotel room instead of going to the breakfast buffet and (2) Don't attend Christmas parties.

Samer Hijazi says

Simple straight to the point advices that is excellent for reference at different times and stages in your career. Very easy read...

Shae says

Reading a 1998 publication in 2018, there's a combination of takeaways and irrelevant information in today's current business trends. This could still provide some essential tools in thinking how a CEO operates in their day-to-day business or even as a top performing employee. While I am sure the job of a CEO is far from simple, the advice is pretty black and white and common sense to deliver good habits on your way to the top.

Buck Dopp says

This book is so good (and short) I've read it at least three times and bought copies for my children. It will benefit anyone who wants to succeed in their chosen profession whether a CEO or not.
