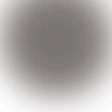




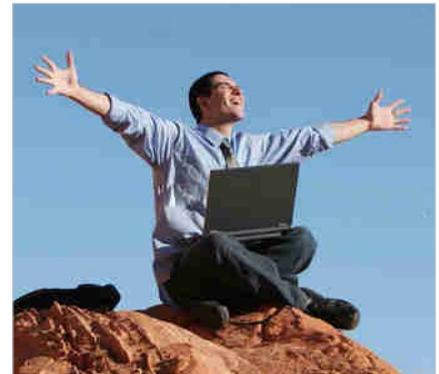
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Growth Focus: Self-management

# CEO-Tip *of the Month*

by Guido Quelle

## The CEO—Autonomous or Externally Controlled?



Apart from hearing time and time again that CEOs, in particular, often spend up to 40 percent of their time protecting their own position—because once again someone is boycotting, torpedoing or simply rejecting an initiative, or because someone wants their job, or because someone just wants to cause trouble—I also repeatedly hear from CEOs that they are externally controlled. Schedules fill up rapidly and there’s hardly time to catch their breath, let alone think. Everyone wants something, and everything becomes important, because everyone knows: The CEO only has time for the important matters.

Caution is called for here, because the real value of a CEO doesn’t consist in making decisions that others would be better qualified to make. It isn’t in pushing through senseless compliance regulations within the company, and it certainly isn’t in focusing on day-to-day business. The real value of a good CEO lies in thinking things out, in expanding the company’s horizons and ensuring that it ventures into new areas. In order for this to happen, they need to get the top management on board to avoid “not invented here” situations, but, above all, they need to invest time.

I am—not just in principle, but also through my work with several dozen managers, board members and entrepreneurs—convinced that the degree of autonomy, pow-

er over the appointment book and freedom to act can be dramatically increased for virtually any CEO. You have to take part in a routine meeting? Why? The first question after, “Is a meeting necessary?” is, “Do I have to attend?” The answer is, often enough, “No.” Does the appointment book have to be so full, usually with no real breaks to let you catch your breath? No.

If you get the feeling that you’re being controlled, bear in mind that you are the one who allows it to happen. There are no actual constraints; we impose our own constraints. If the CEO can’t control their own schedule, then who can? You create value when you develop the business, when you discover new talent and make sure that it is encouraged, when you spot business opportunities and sound them out, when you bring together your top team and work with them to develop a binding strategy and accompanying actions.

Set yourself free from the ever-increasing control mania, ignore pointless invitations to meetings, remove appointments from your schedule, discuss with your assistants what is really important, and make sure that you waste your most productive time on unimportant tasks. Once you do, you will already have taken a big step. Start today.

# Strategy & Leadership

by Guido Quelle

## Self-management and Corporate Growth—Is There a Link?



If you can't manage yourself, you shouldn't be allowed to manage others. How often are the fundamentals of self-management, which we are now all familiar with, brought up in discussions? The list is long: only do A tasks in the A time; introduce "quiet hours" and stick to them; don't over-plan your day; include buffers, and allow time between appointments just in case; make time and space for strategic topics and don't set your email account to automatically receive mails, especially not with alerts; only have meetings when absolutely necessary, and think about having them standing up so that no one gets too comfortable; be prepared... Do you need any more?

Employees are constantly reminded to stick to these rules. But success often remains elusive. The real question has to be: How do the bosses behave? How do those who make these rules act? Do they abide by the rules themselves? Or more precisely: Do YOU abide by them?

I regularly come across chaos in organizations at the senior management level, caused not by sloppiness or reluctance, but by lack of discipline. How can we take to heart all the rules listed above—and those are just a few of the things expected in self-management—when we are used to "freestyle" organization? The comprehensive program of change may look good on paper, but has its limitations when it comes to implementation; the

change from chaos to focused self-management can't be brought about with knowledge alone. Action is needed, too. This is where we see acceptance and a resulting change in behavior: If we want to improve self-management, we need to change our habits. You can't do just a bit more self-management. You can't time-manage a little. And you can't act one way today and another way tomorrow—at least not if you work with others. If you want to improve your self-management, you need knowledge, understanding, action and perseverance. Life won't be the same again.

Is that asking too much? I don't know. What I do know is that "a little self-management" doesn't work. The measures that you accept as being right for you have to be consistently practiced. That's why I advocate making changes one at a time. Only when managers have experienced the effort required to take a step towards self-management will they have the sensitivity necessary for dealing with employees.

Let's go back to the title: Is there a link between self-management and corporate growth? I can't scientifically prove it, but in my consultancy work and from experience with several hundred businesses and thousands of managers, I have observed that good self-management almost always has a positive effect from both a qualitative and a quantitative point of view.

Maybe the start in the New Year will give you the chance to exchange ideas on some of the aspects of self-management with your team, and take two or three specific measures to become more effective. The rewards are obvious: real, mutual progress towards personal growth. That's what I call an incentive.

Here are some suggestions that set an immediate example and have a direct or indirect effect on corporate growth:

### 1. Meetings

- o Even the most senior participant is on time. The organizer starts the meeting punctually (one of my clients, the chairman of the board of a large company, once locked the meeting room of a large hotel, leaving latecomers outside to stew for a while—very therapeutic!)
- o Everyone, including the CEO, keeps to the agreed-upon meeting rules: Smartphones turned off, no files brought along, etc.
- o Goals are agreed on before the start of every meeting.
- o Meetings end as punctually as they start.

### 2. Time discipline

- o Do not disturb if the door is closed. If the door is open, disturbances are not only allowed, but also welcome.
- o No interruptions in the quiet hour (if it has been introduced). This applies for employees and not just for management
- o No "back-to-back" appointments. We've seen the way doctors' appointments get later and later as the day goes on.
- o Include time buffers for the unexpected.

### 3. Projects

- o Don't permit any project that doesn't make a clear contribution to corporate growth, unless it's a legal requirement.
- o Project managers: When it comes to sub-projects, less is more.

- o Sub-project managers: When it comes to work packages, less is more. But: Work packages have to be sufficiently concrete.
- o Contractors: You must be available to the project manager for briefings and decisions that can't be made at a project level; otherwise you are a bad contractor.

### 4. Communication

- o Be concise, even if this means thinking things through a bit longer. It keeps the communication process short.
- o E-mails are a great medium, but not suitable for discussions.
- o Phone calls, like meetings, need planning: What is the goal?
- o If you work in international project teams, keep improving your language skills. It's astounding the misunderstandings that occur in projects because of an inability to communicate.

### 5. Fundamentals

- o Leave things out. If you attend regular meetings where your presence isn't really needed, start only going to those where you are important. Or only go every two or three months.
- o Only expect of others what you are able to do yourself. If you don't, your employees will not only not do what you expect of them, you will gradually lose credibility, and they will do their own thing.
- o Talk regularly with your team about self-management—it really raises awareness.

# Profitable Growth—Release Internal Growth Brakes and Bring Your Company to the Next Level

Almost every company wants to grow—at least officially. Shareholders are demanding further growth and no management team would deny that the growth of their company is one of the top issues they are working on every single day. However, there are barriers to growth, and these are not only external barriers. Most often it is not the economy, not the market and not the customer who just “hasn’t got it.” The main barriers can be discovered inside every company, because growth always comes from within. If the organization is not ready to grow, initiatives to increase market share, to enter new markets, and/or to increase profitability are destined to fail. This book systematically addresses the main internal barriers to growth and provides practical guidance not only for discovering these barriers, but to systematically overcoming them.

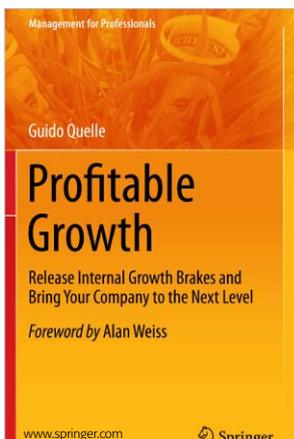
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Professor Dr. Guido Quelle, “The Growth Driver,” is one of the rare people worldwide who focuses on creating profitable and sustainable growth as an entrepreneur, consultant, author and speaker for more than 20 years. His clients are active CEOs, general managers, senior executives, and entrepreneurs who are committed to consistent growth. With his consulting firm, Mandat GmbH of Dortmund, Germany, he successfully conducted more than 350 projects with 120+ renowned private and listed companies. More than 5,000 people were involved just in those projects that he himself managed. Prof. Quelle is always in demand when companies are seeking the support that will enable them to continue on a course of sustained profitable growth.



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***“The nuance that distinguishes this book is the orientation that growth is measured, planned, and pursued in an orderly fashion, never growth for growth’s sake. Guido wisely takes the reader through a strategic approach which leads to intelligent tactics, not a frenzied tactical charge that undermines strategy.”***

Alan Weiss, PhD, President Summit Consulting Group, Inc., Author Million Dollar Consulting and The Consulting Bible

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