

Book Review on
“The E-Myth Revisited” by Michael E. Gerber

(Review by Gary Tomlinson)

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Entrepreneurship is the theme for this month’s issue of Business Leader magazine. Michael Gerber’s, *The E-Myth Revisited – Why Most Small Businesses Don’t Work and What to Do About It*, was an easy choice for this month’s review. If you own a small business, or if you want to own a small business, Michael Gerber has written this book for you.

To understand the E-Myth Revisited, it’s important to take a closer look at the person who goes into business. Not after he goes into business, but before. Gerber says that most of the people, who have started their own business, use to work for somebody else. And typically, they were doing some type of technical work. They were a carpenter, a mechanic, a bookkeeper, a computer programmer, a plumber, a salesperson, etc. And they were quite good at it. But still, they were doing it for someone else. Then one day, they were stricken with what Gerber calls an Entrepreneurial Seizure. And during this Entrepreneurial Seizure, they fell victim to the most disastrous assumption anyone can make going into business. They assumed that if they understood the technical work of a business, they understood a business that does technical work. This is a fatal assumption because it just isn’t true. “The technical work of a business and a business that does technical work are two different things!” Not understanding this is the root of most small business failures.

Gerber says that people who go into business for themselves must be three-people-in-one: The Entrepreneur, The Manager, and The Technician. If these three roles were equally balanced, we’d be describing an incredibly competent individual. “The Entrepreneur would be free to forge ahead into new areas of interest; The Manager would be solidifying the base of operations; and The Technician would be doing the technical work. Each would derive satisfaction from the work he does best, serving the whole in the most productive way. Unfortunately, our experience shows us that few people who go into business are blessed with such a balance. Instead, the typical small business owner is only 10 percent Entrepreneur, 20 percent Manager, and 70 percent Technician.” And this imbalance is the reason why most small businesses fail.

Gerber’s main message in this book is to “go to work *on* your business rather than *in* it.” He says you must ask yourself the following questions:

- How can I get my business to work, but without me?
- How can I get my people to work, but without my constant interference?
- How can I systematize my business in such a way that it could be replicated 5,000 times, so the 5,000th unit would run as smoothly as the first?
- How can I own my business, and still be free of it?
- How can I spend the time doing the work I love to do rather than the work I have to do?

Gerber says that if you ask yourself these questions, you'll eventually come face-to-face with the real problem: *that you don't know the answers!* And that's been the problem all along!

In *The E-Myth Revisited*, Michael Gerber dispels the myths surrounding starting your own business and shows how commonplace assumptions can get in the way of running a business. Next he walks you through the steps in the life of a business – from the entrepreneurial infancy, through adolescent growing pains, to the mature entrepreneurial perspective. He goes on to show you how to apply the lessons of franchising to any business, and gives you the reasons why this is so important, regardless of whether or not your business is a franchise. Next, he shares with you the seven steps necessary to build your entrepreneurial organization. And finally, Gerber draws the vital, often overlooked distinction between working *on* your business and working *in* your business.

If you own a small business or if you are thinking about starting your own business read this book. And when you finish, go get his next book, entitled *The E-Myth Manager – Why Management Doesn't Work and What to Do About It*. You'll be glad you did!

Enjoy this month's selection, *The E-Myth Revisited – Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It* and share it with others in your life because as Alvin Toffler says; "*The illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.*"