

CEO: The Toughest Job

by **ANN GOLDEN EGLÉ, MCC**

CEOs behaving badly has been a popular media focus recently. Yes, some are self centered and have made poor decisions. Is there a position within any organization where the same cannot be said?

Due to having worked closely with CEOs for decades, my experience is different. I see individuals who are willing to take on the role of a Chief Executive Officer for a company as heroes.

CEOs are not invincible. They are brilliant, accomplished, human beings trying to do what's best for their organization.

There's a reason why Amazon.com lists over 2,000 products regarding leadership. At any level, leadership is a tough proposition. Being where the buck stops can be exhilarating, but is many times quite painful.

I invite you to imagine stepping into your CEO's shoes. Consider what it takes to make the excruciating decisions they are faced with in this economic climate. To save the company, many top leaders have had to lay off loyal workers, some of whom have become friends and trusted colleagues.

People who don't see the company's total financial picture may consider these cuts to be cruel and unjust. "They sit in that big office making decisions that severely affect me. They don't understand my job. If they did they would not make this cut."

CEOs perform a daily balancing act between their board, their executive team, their employees at large, the media, and general public. Individuals within each of



**Ann Golden
Eglé**

these entities have their own agenda and expectations of this top leader. Each wants to feel important in the eyes of the CEO.

Imagine having so many individuals demanding your full attention, in the moment, often without the courtesy of an appointment. If those individuals are not satisfied, a CEO's words can easily be misinterpreted and that word spreads quickly.

Even though most CEOs are masterful communicators, they are often misquoted. If an administrative assistant makes a comment-in-passing, it's an interesting comment; if a CEO makes a comment-in-passing, it's considered a directive. All eyes are on the CEO; whereas, fewer eyes (and thus judgments) are on the assistant.

Everyone is challenged today. Why not cut your CEO (or a CEO you may be judging too quickly) some slack? Ask what you can do for them rather than focusing upon what they can do (or haven't done) for you.

How can you ease their pressure; what projects can you step up on? When was the last time you thanked them for taking on such a tough role and for all that they do to make your company a success?

Out of the deep respect I've gained for talented, dedicated CEOs. I'd suggest a national 'Hug your CEO Day', but I suspect a simple 'thank you' will suffice.

Ann Golden Eglé, MCC is president of GV&A, Coaching for Success (formerly Golden Visions Success Coaching); and can be reached at ann@GVAsuccess.com, www.GVAsuccess.com or 541/385-8887