

College of Business Book Review by Robert Carton

Title: "E-Myth Mastery: The Seven Essential Disciplines for Building a World-Class Company"

Author: Michael Gerber

Publisher: HarperCollins; Reprint edition

Length: 464 pages

Price: \$16.95 (Paperback)

Reading time: 12 hours

Reading rating: 7 (1 = very difficult; 10 = very easy)

Overall rating: 4 (1 = average; 4 = outstanding)

"E-Myth Mastery" takes the reader through a course in how to work on your business, rather than work in your business, to create lasting value both for owners and for customers. This book is another in a series of books that Michael Gerber started in 1985 that offers solutions to common small business problems. While many books for entrepreneurs are either "how to" or theory-based, "E-Myth Mastery" blends both seamlessly to give the current or future entrepreneur a basis for what to do and why you should do it to create a successful business.

The theme of "knowing how to do the work of a business has nothing to do with building a business that works" permeates Gerber's writing. To build a world-class company, entrepreneurs must first know what it takes to be world-class in their industry and for their target market. If this prescription was obvious, every entrepreneur would be successful. However, the successful business model is elusive and the search for it must be systematic and thorough. When the entrepreneur has "discovered" their keys to success, they must practice, practice, practice to become the best in their target market (not necessarily the world) so that customers will consistently select their business over rivals.

Gerber provides details and worksheets for how to create a successful business based upon seven key leadership functions of the entrepreneur. These include being the enterprise leader, the management leader, the financial leader, the marketing leader, the lead generation leader, the lead conversion leader, and the client fulfillment leader. The worksheets are available for free online and instructions for how to use them are easy to follow.

For some readers, the first 66 pages of the book will seem a bit sugary and soul searching. However, the reward for plowing through his sometime syrupy discussion with his imaginary client Sarah, are the remaining 400 pages of the book. I would not recommend skipping the first chapters simply because buried in his philosophy are gems about what it takes to be an entrepreneur. Just be prepared to skim through the text to find the valuable nuggets.

Gerber is a trained business coach. By the end of the book, the reader should feel that they have received a valuable set of coaching sessions. As with any coach that attempts to teach skills, it is practice and determination on the part of the athlete that leads to success.

Perhaps the most important lesson in the book is that to achieve success, entrepreneurs must understand the value proposition of their business to customers. How customers view your product or service is what matters, not how the entrepreneur views the value proposition. A business owner or manager must build an organization that delivers and reinforces this value proposition in every function of the business. Further, since what gets measured gets done, performance metrics must be developed for each key function of the business, and monitored.

It is not often that academics use a "popular" book as the basis for a class. However, I believe that Gerber has made the concepts of being a successful entrepreneur so understandable in this book, that it is the basis for one of my classes in Entrepreneurship. Consistently, students comment that they were surprised how much they actually enjoyed reading a business book and, rather than resell the book at the end of the semester, they were going to add it to their personal library. If you want to be an entrepreneur, you would be well served to do the same.

Bob Carton is an Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship in the College of Business at Western Carolina University. For previously reviewed books, visit our Web site at www.wcu.edu/cob/.