



*Looking back on your career, what advice would you give to a startup CEO?*

If you are a startup of an ecommerce business, you will soon find yourself working 70 hours each week, and not getting anywhere with your business.

When you first started your business, you wear all the hats. You are CEO, salesman, customer support representative, and even the janitor. Your official title was “the entrepreneur”, the position with no title and all the titles.

Every business has many different operations. I am not going to get into great detail, but here is a list of the main operations of any business:

- a) Product or Service – Whatever you are selling
- b) Marketing - Getting customers to your website
- c) Sales - Closing the sale after you get the customer to your website
- d) Operations - Customer Service
- e) Finances - Paying bills and budgeting

Here is what happens a typical CEO of a startup. When you first started you probably did not even consider Operations or Finances. You thought you were good in sales, and you were confident you got the right product to sell. The main thing that was on your mind was marketing, and your answer to marketing was SEO! Your perception of successful SEO was to hire someone for a couple of hundred dollars per month and everything will be done for you. Unfortunately, that didn't happen.

So you wonder how is it possible that one year later you are working 70 hours every week and you are not seeing any growth. There is nothing wrong with working 70 hours per week. In fact, I usually say that if you are not working 70 hours every week, than you're not working. However, if you work 70 hours per week, earning less than minimum wage and not seeing any growth, then there is a big problem that you need to solve.

Let me shine the light from the end of the tunnel at you, and hopefully it will give you a direction of where to go.

You are one person, and you have 100% capacity of how much work you can do every week. Some people say I can work at 110%. In reality, 110% is impossible because if you do that extra 10% then something else out of the 100% has to suffer.

When you first started your business you might have been working part time 20 hours per week, and you were mainly focusing on marketing. Soon you realized that you can't finish anything in 20 hours per week. So you took the risk and went into your business working full time at 40 hours per week. You used the extra hours to do more marketing, which in result your business started getting more sales. Just when you found yourself excelling towards bursting through the ceiling and expanding your company to the next level, you had to start to wear other hats in order to sustain your business.

When a product sells, you need to order it, make sure it ships, answer customer service emails, etc. When this happens all your attention shifts from marketing to operations. So you start putting more hours to accommodate for operations of the business. You are now putting 50 hours per week to catch up to everything that you have on your plate. Then as, more orders come in, you have to invest even more time in operations and finances. Finances are important because if you don't pay your bills, check orders for fraud, and pay your suppliers then the company operations can't function. All of a sudden you are working 60 hours per week, but you are producing the same volume of sales as when you were working 40 hours per week. In other words, you put more hours every week into your business without getting paid more and instead of growing you are standing still. This all happened because you underestimated how much time all the different operations will really take and you didn't prepare to scale them. Now you are stuck because you need to learn how to scale them, but you have no time.

Today, you are running around like a chicken without a head. You are doing redundant and boring tasks, and for the few hours that you have available every week you wonder what you are doing wrong and why you are not growing. You try to get help from others expecting them to give you a magic bullet, unfortunately, no magic bullet will help you. Does this sound like you?

Regardless of your company size, we all try to work at 100% of our capacity. It is normal for the owner of a startup to do absolutely everything in their business. It is also normal that as the business grows, the owner will experience their full work capacity which is called "the ceiling". In order for the company to expand the owner must burst through the ceiling in order to reach the next level.

Growing a company is like playing a video game, you need knowledge and tools to get past level 1 and into level 2. **REALIZE** the fact that you are working at 100% capacity and that you are a human being. Which means you can't work more than you can handle. **ADMIT** that you don't know everything because if you did, you would be running a multimillion dollar company by now. Once you come to the realization that you need help because you can't do this on your own. Here is my advice to you:

Most of us do not have time to read books, but everyone has time to listen to one. If you have a

smart phone (If not go get one), you can download an application called [Audible](#) . For \$7.50/mo, you can subscribe to receive one audio book per month. For \$7.50/mo, you can get a book that can cost as much as \$40.00.

A typical audio book is 10 hours long. Audible has an option to speed up the audio by 100% or 200%. This means you can go through the whole marketing book in 3-5 hours. Instead of wasting your time on CNN, reading about politicians and psychos killing everyone, instead of spending hours on Facebook or watching a pointless sitcom, go and read a marketing book that will actually change your life and your business.

I personally listen to one marketing audio book every two weeks. When I can I try to listen to one audio book every week. Most of the books I read are best sellers written by very successful business owners. If I had to pay some of these authors for consulting, it would've cost me thousands of dollars.

These books are my mentors, and I am grateful that I can listen to them on my free time using a service like Audible. You can take the audio book anywhere with you, shopping, driving, waiting, business trips, vacations, etc. To start I recommend that you [get this book](#) . Take a leap of faith and read it, I promise you that you will be thankful that you did. If you prefer to buy this book on Amazon, [here is a link](#)

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Once you know what needs to be done, you need to automate absolutely everything. To automate your online business, you need tools. Shopping Cart Elite core features are 100 times more advanced than from competitors such as Volusion, BigCommerce, Shopify, but this is not a deal breaker. Most companies prefer to stay with their shopping cart because they are so busy running their business that they rather work around the problems they have instead of migrating to another shopping cart that can solve those problems.

What is a deal breaker is the lack of marketing tools that you don't get with your shopping cart provider. For example, Shopping Cart Elite has a tool called Traffic Quality Analyzer, it's a traffic quality management solution that provides actionable insights for click traffic performance. Unlike Google Analytics, Clicktale, and Clickly, Traffic Quality Analyzer provides a visitor threat score for all the visitors and an engagement score only for real visitors. It can identify invalid and low quality traffic which can be traced back to the source giving you instant access to specific and actionable information allowing for swift decision making and increased return on advertising spend.

Another tool Shopping Cart Elite has is called Visitor Generated SEO, Visitor Generated SEO is for companies who are looking to automate their SEO. Visitor Generated SEO is a native application included in Shopping Cart Elite that will turn your visitor keyword search phrases into SEO friendly indexable webpages that customers will find in the Google search results. Unlike Volusion, Big Commerce, and Magento that promotes this application through a third party partner called SLI System, Shopping Cart Elite has this application built-in for all Shopping Cart Elite customers, and it comes with a dozen other SEO applications.

Many companies go with just a Shopping Cart without marketing tools because they feel that it is good enough for them. Their reasoning is that they will stay with it a while and wait to outgrow it before moving to another more advanced shopping cart. The problem is they never outgrow it because they don't have the knowledge or the tools to get it off the ground.

I can go on and on, the point I am trying to make is that a better Shopping Cart might not be a good enough reason to switch, but a better Shopping Cart with game changing marketing tools that can take your company to a whole new level, marketing tools that you would otherwise never be able to afford, is a VERY GOOD REASON to move your website to a better platform like Shopping Cart Elite.

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