

The Five Temptations of a CEO

List of Five Temptations

Temptation #1: Status over Results

- You do not consider it a professional failure when your organization fails to meet its objectives
- You often wonder how you'll top this position in your career
- You feel overlooked when, in spite of exceeding your company's objectives, you remain somewhat anonymous relative to your peers in the industry

Temptation #2: Popularity over Accountability

- You consider yourself to be a close friend of your direct reports
- It bothers you, to the point of distraction, when they are unhappy with you
- You often find yourself reluctant to give negative feedback to your direct reports
- You water down negative feedback to make it more palatable

Temptation #3: Certainty over Clarity

- You pride yourself on being intellectually precise
- You prefer to wait for more information rather than make a decision without all of the facts
- You enjoy debating details with your direct reports during meetings

Temptation #4: Harmony over Conflict

- You prefer your meetings to be pleasant and enjoyable
- Your meetings are often boring
- You get uncomfortable at meetings if your direct reports argue

Temptation #5: Invulnerability over Trust

- You have a hard time admitting when you're wrong
- You rarely share personal values and experiences
- You try to keep your greatest weaknesses from your direct reports
- You are uncomfortable accepting compliments

Overcoming the Temptations

Overcoming the five temptations is not about "curing" yourself of your temptations. It is about taking action to minimize their negative impact.

Temptation #5: **Invulnerability**

Strategy for Overcoming: Build trust

- Acknowledge your own weaknesses and mistakes
- Allow direct reports to see your human side

Temptation #4: **Harmony**

Strategy for Overcoming: Establish productive conflict

- Draw out differing opinions and perspectives from staff members
- Engage in – and allow – passionate discussions about key issues

Temptation #3: **Certainty**

Strategy for Overcoming: Provide clarity

- Set public deadlines for making key decisions
- Practice making decisions without complete information around less risky issues

Temptation #2: **Popularity**

Strategy for Overcoming: Hold people accountable

- Confront direct reports immediately about behaviour and performance
- Clarify expectations up front to make confronting direct reports easier

Temptation #1: **Status**

Strategy for Overcoming: Focus on results

- Publicly commit to measurable results
- Evaluate your success based on these results alone