MIGHTY LEADERSHIP TEAM
PARTICIPANT NOTEBOOK

FOR: ____________________________
(enter your name here)

MIDSIZED COMPANIES ARE DIFFERENT

For CEOs and the executive team, leading a steadily or rapidly expanding company can be exhilarating – that is, until the unique demands of running midsized companies envelop the team and put strain on financials, damage operations, and grind growth to a halt.

Midsized companies are particularly susceptible to threats that are not the type of concerns experienced by start-ups or mega-large companies. These silent growth killers of midsized companies can drain momentum, sap energy and resources, and even put long-standing firms out of business.

TODAY’S AGENDA

1. Introduction
3. The Evolution of a Leadership Team
4. Leadership Team Assessment
5. Making Your Leadership Team Mighty
6. The Leadership Operating System

Robert Sher is the founding principal of CEO to CEO, an advisory firm specializing in helping midsized businesses accelerate performance. As a midsized company management thought leader, he is a regular columnist on Forbes.com and contributes to Harvard Business Review online. Author of two books, he is a veteran CEO who cofounded and led a business that grew into midsized.
Exploring the 7 Silent Growth Killers

#1 Letting Time Slip Slide Away
Time—or rather, lack of appreciation for it—is the first silent growth killer. In order to overcome this killer, leaders must create a sense of urgency around deadlines by tying projects to the calendar—combining time boxing, expectations, prioritization and intermediate deadlines. This creates clarity and ongoing pressure, thereby leading to greater appreciation for time and better results.

*Pick Your Winners and Make Them Shine.*

#2 Strategy Tinkering at the Top
For midsized companies, tinkering with the business’s core strategy can be deadly, particularly when changes are made without proper research, planning and testing. Any changes made should be necessary, well-planned and in alignment with organizational goals. To ensure this is true, leaders should conduct strategic planning and operational planning as separate tracks and with a high level of discipline.

*Invest in the Future. Reconnoiter, then Plan.*

#3 Reckless Attempts at Growth
In the effort to scale, organizations face increased risk and expense. If the attempt at growth costs too much and the revenue doesn’t match the expense, growth won’t materialize, but a cash crunch will. To determine the optimal spending velocity, leaders must objectively assess their level of confidence in market acceptance, execution ability and forecasting ability.


#4 Fumbled Strategic Acquisitions
Acquisitions can be a vital part of a growth strategy, but they can also derail an organization. Successful less than half of the time, acquisitions are less about the deal and the closing and more about what happens afterward: the integration process and execution of the acquisition plan. To beat the odds against acquisition success, leaders must carefully consider four critical factors: alignment with the buyer’s core strategy; the M&A experience level of the buyer’s executives; the fit between buyer and seller as to scale, culture and operations; and lastly, the discipline and focus of the integration process.

*Don’t Play to Lose. De-Risk or Pass.*
Exploring the
7 Silent Growth Killers

#5 Operation Meltdown
A rapidly growing bottom line and a rigorously lean operation can be a death sentence under the cover of success. Leaders must be able to recognize four early signs that an operational meltdown is looming. They are: an overbearing sales culture; an outdated IT or physical infrastructure; a skills shortage; and too many eggs, not enough baskets. Further, leaders should reduce the organization’s risk of an operational meltdown by creating operational resilience and gaining a firm handle on budgeting and forecasting.

*You Become What You Deliver: Mighty or Melted.*

#6 The Liquidity Crash
Running out of cash can happen to any organization—particularly those making reckless attempts at growth and those suffering financial erosion or a shock to the system. To sidestep this growth killer, leaders must learn to manage their balance sheet, aggressively cut costs upon sensing market weakness, maintain tight bookkeeping standards, relentlessly scan critical business performance metrics and ensure owner liquidity and alignment.

*Your Balance Sheet is Your Airbag.*

#7 Tolerating Dysfunctional Leaders
Having a strong, high-performing leadership team in place is critical to growth and to overcoming the other silent killers—or better yet, avoiding them in the first place. Organizations must not tolerate high-maintenance leaders or those that are consistently underperformers—regardless of their popularity. Leaders must regularly assess the strength of the leadership team, and strive to reduce the range between the lowest and highest achieving performers.

*If You Misplace Your Loyalty, YOU Become Dysfunctional.*

The book is available on Amazon
Calculating Your Leadership Team Effectiveness

A+C (___ + ____ =_____)  
B+D (___ + ____ =_____)  
Multiply the two sums (____*____ =_____)  
Divide by 4 (____/4=_____% effectiveness)
Making Your Leadership Team Mighty
The Performance Environment
Existing Org Chart
Making Your Leadership Team Mighty

The Performance Environment

Future Org Chart

First Name (CEO)
Big challenge next 1-2 yrs

Level: CXO, VP, Dir, Mgr
First Name Function/Dept
Big challenge
____ Experience (N, 1,2,3)
____ Performance Grade
____ Tenure - years @ firm

Level: CXO, VP, Dir, Mgr
First Name Function/Dept
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Y / N – Fire CEO?
Y / N – Active Governance?
Put action items (and names) for:

- What leadership promotions should you make next?
- What hires do you need to make to fill in gaps?
- Who needs (and deserves) a repair effort? When?
- Who should be replaced? A bad fit, or too broken to repair?

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<th>Activity or Action</th>
<th>Priority</th>
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Making Your Leadership Team Mighty Operational Plan
A Building Block of the Leadership Operating System

The Leadership Environment Counts

• Is there a crystal clear plan?
• Do we measure performance of each leader appropriately?
• Are there rewards for leaders who succeed and discomfort for those who fail?
• Is success and failure clearly defined?

Roadmap:
1 per leader
1. Future state
2. Why we exist
3. KPIs
4. Operational strategies
5. Projects
About CEO to CEO, Inc.

We are a consulting firm of former chief executives that improves the leadership infrastructure of midsized companies seeking to accelerate their performance. **We help these leaders rapidly elevate their game and lead their companies to the next level and beyond.**

We work with the senior-most executive at companies or divisions with revenue ranging from $20 million to $400 million that are facing significant opportunities and challenges. Our clients are very talented CEOs and c-suite leaders who nonetheless feel they are still learning their craft, realize their company’s performance depends on improving their own performance and want to enhance their skills rapidly and on the job.

**Our clients typically work in one of three types of companies:**

- Closely Held or Family firms in which the CEO is often the owner/operator.
- Externally Funded firms (venture capital, private equity or public) whose CEOs are often the entrepreneur who launched the business.
- Professional Services firms (law, accounting, IT services, etc.) whose CEOs rose through the ranks and now manage large teams of professionals.

We work with firms whose marketplaces are undergoing change and whose internal organizations have become more complex to manage. They turn to us to raise their skills in three areas: business acumen (competitive analysis, planning, M&A, financial structuring, etc.), leadership acumen (maintaining a high performing team, getting key stakeholders “on the same page”) and interpersonal acumen (listening, emotional intelligence, and relationship management). We help them act with confidence to make critical decisions and lead their organizations.

As a result, our clients are far better able to help their companies meet their growth targets; solve both current and future challenges; gain confidence as leaders; raise the game of their leadership teams; and make them more accountable for results.

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About Robert Sher

Robert Sher is founding principal of CEO to CEO. He was chief executive of Bentley Publishing Group from 1984 to 2006 and steered the firm to become a leading player in its industry (decorative art publishing). Sher and his partners bootstrapped the business, but key successes breathed new life and cash flow into the business. He led the acquisitions of four competitors between 1999 and 2004 and left Bentley two years later. The firm merged with Global Arts in 2011 to form Bentley Global Art Group.

Robert speaks frequently, and has published extensively on the successful leadership traits and skills of CEOs of midsized companies. He is a regular columnist on Forbes.com, authored his first book in 2007, *The Feel of the Deal; How I Built a Company through Acquisitions* (1toPonder), and has written numerous posts for Harvard Business Review online and for many other publications. He also publishes his own newsletter, *The CEO Insomnia Factor*. His newest book is *Mighty Midsized Companies; How Leaders Overcome 7 Silent Growth Killers*, (Boston: Bibliomotion, Sept. 2014).

Robert received a B.S. degree in business administration from Hayward State University in 1986 (during which he ran a small business), and an MBA degree from St. Mary’s College in 1988, where he was the recipient of the Jack Saloma Award for student citizenship. From 1995 to 2000, he taught MBA and executive MBA courses at St. Mary’s on growing entrepreneurial businesses.

Robert and his wife Renee have two children, Ben and Jessie, and live in Northern California. They love sailing and travel.
Thank you for attending!

Join the Conversation

@RobertSher #MakeItMighty
Connect on LinkedIn: Robert Sher

Rob’s column on Forbes:
www.forbes.com/sites/robertsher/

Harvard Business Review:
blogs.hbr.org/search?term=robert+sher

CEO: Think Blog:
http://www.ceotoceo.biz/insights/we-are-published/ceo-think-blog.html

Available at Amazon and B&N
Most Frequent Services

These are the most frequent services we deliver to our clients.

**CREATING A LEADERSHIP TEAM THAT WORKS POWERFULLY TOGETHER**
We help CEOs create an exceptional leadership team whose members work well together and raise each other’s game. Our impact can be rapid: Far better decisions, made much faster; the end of infighting; key initiatives put back on track; much better team performance; and individual performance improvements.

**IMPROVING STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PLANNING**
We help create rigorous and competitively distinctive strategic and operational plans, get your leadership teams aligned on the strategy, and help turn that strategy into concrete operational plans. We help set up or stand up what we call the Leadership Operating System.

**BUYING AND SELLING BUSINESSES**
We help clients reduce the risk in M&A and increase the likelihood of success.

**GETTING EQUITY PARTNERS ALIGNED**
We help partners stay (or become) aligned with each other by helping them agree on strategy and tactics for the business or by acting as mediators to help reduce friction.

**FACILITATING OFFSITE, RETREAT, AND BOARD MEETINGS**
We help you plan the content and objectives of your offsites, retreats, and pivotal board meetings. We act as the neutral, outside facilitator of the event. We ensure that everyone gets heard and that the meeting produces tangible, actionable outcomes for the business.

**BUSINESS COACHING: MAKING BETTER DECISIONS FASTER**
We act as coaches to the CEO and executive team members. Through careful questioning, we help them zero in on their most challenging problems and help them think through answers. We also have consultants who are deep functional experts, and who can work with your CIO, CTO, CMO, and CHRO.

**SUCCESSION PLANNING AND OWNERSHIP TRANSITIONS**
Midsized businesses can outlive their founder and their current leaders, but only if future leaders are in place and ready. We help CEOs and their successors through the process, both intellectually and emotionally. In many cases, ownership interests are transferred, and we support this delicate transaction as well.

Learn more here: [www.ceotoceo.biz/services/how-we-work-with-you](http://www.ceotoceo.biz/services/how-we-work-with-you)