

ZERO TO PROVE · BUSINESS INSIGHTS GUIDE

The CEO Playbook

How the executives featured on Zero to Prove approach hiring, culture, decision-making and their own sustainability at the top.

Compiled from real conversations with founders, CEOs and innovators on the Zero to Prove podcast.
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On Building Your Team

1 Hire for the organisation you're building toward, not just today's workload

Design your structure before growth outpaces it — scaling a 1,000-plus person team requires systems and delegation, not heroics. — *Al Lindsay, Former Head of Engineering for Alexa*

2 Delegate to reclaim your time, not just to offload tasks

The goal of delegation is to protect your own focus and capacity for the decisions only you can make — not simply to clear your inbox. — *Cary Bowman, Co-founder, Lucky Bastard Distillers*

3 Place people, don't just fill roles

Great executive hiring is relationship-driven and long-term — the best placements come from years of trust, not a single transaction. — *Katie Shannon, Partner, Heidrick & Struggles*

On Culture

4 Lead with values over ego

Culture compounds from consistent, honest behaviour at the top — not from stated values that aren't lived day to day. — *Steve Mosko, Former Chairman, Sony Pictures Television*

5 Choose clients and partners based on values alignment

Being selective about who you work with — not just chasing every opportunity — protects the culture you're building long-term. — *Dave Peinsipp, Technology Attorney*

On Decision-Making

6 Bias toward action under incomplete information

Waiting for certainty often costs more than making an imperfect, well-reasoned decision and adjusting as you learn. — *Peter Mills, Former Partner, CMGI @Ventures*

7 Apply investor discipline to your own decisions

Treat major strategic bets the way a good investor treats a portfolio — expect some to fail, size them accordingly, and stay disciplined about the downside. — *Charles Grimsdale, Co-founder, Eden Ventures*

On Sustaining Yourself as a Leader

8 Know when to step away from peak success

The best leaders recognise the point where continuing to scale no longer serves their own goals, and are willing to make a deliberate change. — *Al Lindsay, Former Head of Engineering for Alexa*

9 Build a life the business supports, not one that consumes it

Long-term performance as a CEO depends on designing a business model — and a life — that can run without constantly consuming your time. — *Cary Bowman, Co-founder, Lucky Bastard Distillers*

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