

You Do Not Always Get What You Pray For...

*****This article is not meant to deter any one from aspiring to be a CEO, but it is meant to be humorous and informative. I would appreciate having your feedback*****



You don't always get what you pray for... The path to becoming a CEO, particularly in the hospitality industry, is often glamorized, but rarely understood in its entirety. Every hotelier dream of becoming the "the Big Boss". However, fulfilling the role of CEO in a major hotel group, especially one that's publicly traded, entails sacrifices that extend far beyond the boardroom. Endless travel, often solitary, disconnects you from the warmth of family life, replacing it with the sterile embrace of hotel suites adorned with impersonal luxury. The crispness of new sheets and the scent of new paint serve as constant reminders of impermanence, echoing the fleeting moments stolen from your loved ones.

Even in rare moments when you can spend time with family, they are often spoiled by constant interruptions of business calls. You are always travelling to cities with bumper-to-bumper traffic or very secluded resorts.

Negotiating with demanding owners becomes a relentless battle where satisfaction remains elusive. You are often plagued by their family members who believe they are God's gift to hotel management and gurus of profit.

You attend tedious, but necessary industry conferences that offer limited opportunity for candid opinions because you fear that any negative comments you offer could adversely affect the company's stock prices downward.

You are surrounded by eager-to-impress employees, all aiming to reach the sky, ready to dive fearlessly to catch your falling eating utensil mere seconds before it hits the floor. Even the simplest tasks become magnified, as all try to impress you for a potential future promotion or increased salary or a bonus.

Under the relentless scrutiny, your every move is watched beneath the shadow of a spotlight that follows you from place to place. And God knows that for you there's no respite; relaxation becomes a distant luxury, with someone always hovering. Even when taking a swim, there is an employee nearby to hand you a towel before you even leave the water.

You are tasked with delivering motivational speeches about the company to employees and potential hires, who only seem to show interest when discussions about a potential raise or compensation arise.

It all becomes a very tiresome routine. So, despite these challenges, whether you claim to do this role out of sheer enjoyment or because "someone has to do it, in the best interest of the company", or even if you swear you are driven by financial gain or the pursuit of respect, I do not believe you.

As senior colleagues retreat to the embrace of family, the CEO is left on to travel through airport immigration, security and then grappling with the exhaustion of crossing multiple time zones, trying to sleep, unable to as you ponder company issues, or responding to emails (even airlines free Wi-Fi haunts you). If you're fortunate, you engage in FaceTime or Zoom calls with your family, friends, and team members, all of whom are probably at home enjoying their favorite TV shows, laughing at a comedy, going out for a meal, or having a new experience, and relishing the simple pleasures of life or simply taking time to smell the roses.

Even if you claim to have time to do the same despite these above responsibilities, I still don't believe you.....

Comments received from CEOs:

"Thank you for sending the article. This is a great insight for those outside the industry and for the new generation.

We have all joined this industry and are in a leadership position for these reasons.

Also, the benefits of working in hospitality cannot be overlooked. We get treated and treat each other like royalty."

"I think all leaders are willing to sacrifice because they feel obligated to the team. Achieving the balance with family and friends is a goal that many never achieve. Your stakeholders only know what they see

not what you have missed. For most leaders it is the passion for people and hospitality that drives them not money and prestige.”

“The joy of travel indeed and yet, I actually do like my job, for the very most part. I know you are too often on the road too.”

“Steve, this is absolutely brilliant-- I felt like I was reading my draft autobiography! Totally hits home and reveals what we each live with almost daily, yet privately. Lately I’ve found myself really out of sorts, largely due to the types of points you raise here. And to be honest with you, if I had more \$\$\$ banked right now, I’d quite possibly walk away from it all. You simply can’t get the time back, and what’s worse, there’s a kind of dulling of the senses, of appreciation for the simple things so important in life.

One such example would be the rain—yes, rain—I LOVE rain-- and clouds, and storms, and mist. A dark thunderhead rolling in over a gray, churning, gorgeous sea. When I was younger, just even the raindrops pattering harder and harder on my car’s windshield would make me pause before turning on the wipers—you know that feeling? In Japan they call it Shinto; a pure, direct emotional, visceral, connection with the natural world. Where did that disappear to in my life?? Just so people can make money, and sleep in unloving quarters?”

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