

# Book Review

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## The CEO'S Secret Handbook

The cover story of the July 2005 issue of Business 2.0 magazine describes an unpublished set of business guidelines in an article titled, "The CEO's Secret Handbook":

"It started decades ago as flashes of insight scribbled on loose scraps of paper. Then it morphed into a PowerPoint presentation that distilled years of business wisdom into a handful of easy-to-remember aphorisms. Last year it became a 76-page spiral-bound booklet clad in a plain gray cover. Eventually, Warren Buffett received a copy -- and liked it so much that he asked for dozens more to give to his CEOs, friends, and family.

"The tiny handbook has become an underground hit among senior executives and management thinkers. Written by Bill Swanson, CEO of aerospace contractor Raytheon, Swanson's Unwritten Rules of Management is part Ben Franklin and part Yogi Berra, with a dash of Confucius thrown in."

Here are Bill Swanson's '25 Unwritten Rules of Management'

1. Learn to say, "I don't know." If used when appropriate, it will be often.
2. It is easier to get into something than it is to get out of it.
3. If you are not criticized, you may not be doing much.
4. Look for what is missing. Many know how to improve what's there, but few can see what isn't there.
5. Viewgraph rule: When something appears on a viewgraph (an overhead transparency), assume the world knows about it, and deal with it accordingly.
6. Work for a boss with whom you are comfortable telling it like it is. Remember that you can't pick your relatives, but you can pick your boss.
7. Constantly review developments to make sure that the actual benefits are what they are supposed to be. Avoid Newton's Law.
8. However menial and trivial your early assignments may appear, give them your best efforts.
9. Persistence or tenacity is the disposition to persevere in spite of difficulties, discouragement, or indifference. Don't be known as a good starter but a poor finisher.
10. In completing a project, don't wait for others; go after them, and make sure it gets done.
11. Confirm your instructions and the commitments of others in writing. Don't assume it will get done!
12. Don't be timid; speak up. Express yourself, and promote your ideas.
13. Practice shows that those who speak the most knowingly and confidently often end up with the assignment to get it done.
14. Strive for brevity and clarity in oral and written reports.
15. Be extremely careful of the accuracy of your statements.
16. Don't overlook the fact that you are working for a boss.
  - \* Keep him or her informed. Avoid surprises!
  - \* Whatever the boss wants takes top priority.
17. Promises, schedules, and estimates are important instruments in a well-ordered business.
  - \* You must make promises. Don't lean on the often-used phrase, "I can't estimate it because it depends upon many uncertain factors."
18. Never direct a complaint to the top. A serious offense is to "cc" a person's boss.
19. When dealing with outsiders, remember that you represent the company. Be careful of your commitments.
20. Cultivate the habit of "boiling matters down" to the simplest terms. An elevator speech is the best way.
21. Don't get excited in engineering emergencies. Keep your feet on the ground.
22. Cultivate the habit of making quick, clean-cut decisions.
23. When making decisions, the pros are much easier to deal with than the cons. Your boss wants to see the cons also.
24. Don't ever lose your sense of humor.
25. Have fun at what you do. It will reflect in your work. No one likes a grump except another grump.