MEDIAKIM



SYSTEMS & EXECUTION

Document Everything: The SOP That Lets You Step Away

If your business only works when you are in the room, you do not own a business — you own a job. Writing down how things are done is how you buy back your freedom.

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Here is a test of whether you own a business or a job: what happens if you disappear for a month? If the answer is everything stops, then the business is really just you, working very hard. The way out is unglamorous but powerful — write down how things are done, so the business can run without you in every room.

The knowledge trapped in your head

In most small businesses, the critical know-how lives entirely in the founder's head: how to handle this client, how to produce that deliverable, what to do when something goes wrong. That feels efficient until it becomes the bottleneck. You cannot delegate what only you know, so everything funnels back to you — and you become the ceiling on your own business.

SOPs: simple, written, repeatable

A standard operating procedure is just a written record of how a recurring task is done well. It does not need to be fancy — a checklist, a short doc, a quick screen recording. The magic is that once a process is written down, it can be taught, delegated, improved and trusted. You stop reinventing the wheel and re-explaining the same thing, and your team can act without waiting for you.

- Start with the tasks you do most often, or hate most.
- Write the steps as you do them next time — capture, do not theorise.
- Keep them living documents; improve the SOP whenever the process improves.
- Hand the SOP to someone else and let them run it — that is the whole point.

> **DOCUMENTATION IS FREEDOM**
>
> Every process you write down is a piece of the business you no longer have to personally carry. SOPs are not bureaucracy — they are how you buy back your time, take a holiday, and let the business grow beyond your own two hands.

The bottom line

If it only works when you are there, it cannot grow and it cannot rest. Document how things are done, build a library of simple SOPs, and turn your know-how into the business's know-how. That is how you stop owning a job and start owning a business.

Sources

- Michael Gerber, The E-Myth Revisited — work on the business, not just in it.
- Standard operating procedure principles for small business.

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