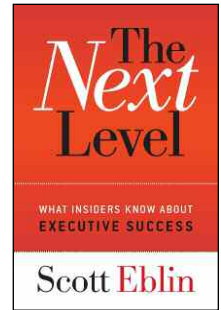


The Next Level

Forty percent of new executives don't last 18 months. A new book from a top executive coach shares insider advice and shows how to increase the odds of success.



“The toughest thing at the next level is to recognize there is still a lot to learn.”

**—Paul McDermott
VP, Freddie Mac**

A failed senior-level hire can cost a company up to \$2.7 million.

So why are organizations allowing nearly half of all new executives to fail?

Perhaps they don't realize that most new executives are set up to sink or swim—and that what it takes to succeed *can* be taught. This is the conviction of Scott Eblin, a DC-based executive coach and author of *The Next Level: What Insiders Know About Executive Success* (Davies-Black, 2006, \$26.95).

Eblin sat down for one-on-one interviews with some thirty executives from many of America's leading organizations, including Avon, Capital One, Clear Channel, Northrop Grumman, and Sprint. In his new book, he shares these insiders' personal stories, including how they stumbled—then succeeded—in their transition to the next level of leadership.

A former Fortune 500 executive, Eblin lived and learned through his own lessons, too. His bottom-line message to new leaders: What got you there won't *keep* you there. You must learn new beliefs and behaviors and, more importantly, let go of old ones—even though they've driven your success up until now.

The basic tenet of Eblin's been-there, done-that advice for achieving “executive presence”: Convey confidence, no matter how you feel inside. Insecure executives, he says, make lousy leaders.

Eblin offers dozens more insights, ideas, and tips in *The Next Level*, including:

- ▶ ***Pace yourself.*** Burnout is common at the top. Develop a routine of recovery and renewal—or else.
- ▶ ***Broaden your vision.*** No more doing—or micromanaging. Create the agenda and let your team get the job done.
- ▶ ***Customize your communications.*** Know the key points for each of your stakeholders. They want their own “need to know” details—not someone else's.
- ▶ ***Look left and right—not just up and down.*** Partner with your peers. They can give you honest feedback, help you determine high-leverage opportunities, and check your overall progress.
- ▶ ***Mind your messages.*** Your low-profile days are over. Think about *everything* you say and do.

— more —

“What really changes at the next level is the immediacy of action that’s expected—you know, that thing of ‘What did you do for me today?’”

***—Catherine Meloy
President,
Goodwill of
Greater Washington***

Scott Eblin is an executive coach, professional speaker, and author of *The Next Level: What Insiders Know About Executive Success* (Davies-Black, \$26.95). A former Fortune 500 executive, he is founder and president of The Eblin Group, where he has coached more than 200 senior-level leaders in some 30 organizations, including America Online, Capital One, Booz Allen Hamilton, Johnson & Johnson, and The World Bank. Eblin is a graduate of Davidson College and Harvard University, and currently serves on the faculty of the leadership coaching certificate program at Georgetown University. He lives near Washington, DC, with his wife, Diane, and their two sons.

**THE NEXT LEVEL
What Insiders Know
About Executive
Success**

Scott Eblin

Davies-Black Publishing

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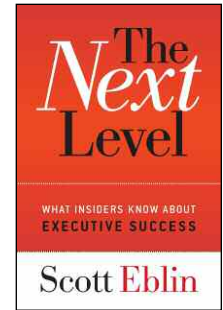
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Interview Topics



“It’s a huge leap to move from focusing on what’s best for your own results to focusing on what’s best for the results of the entire company.”

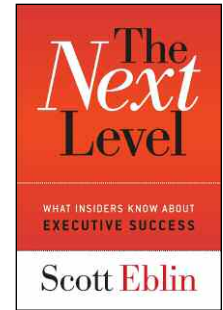
—*Laura Olle*
SVP, Capital One

- ▶ **Succeeding at the next level: What got you there won’t keep you there.**
Forty percent of new executives don’t last 18 months. What’s at the root of this failure, and what can new and even seasoned leaders do to ensure success at the next level? Eblin can discuss the hard realities—nine out of ten new senior-level hires say they don’t have the know-how or tools to do their job—and offer practical advice and tips for beating the odds.
- ▶ **Establishing executive presence: How to make a strong showing**
Insecure people make lousy leaders. Yet most new executives are full of self-doubt in their early days on the job. Eblin can share the lessons from his personal interviews with some thirty leading executives and offer candid, real-world insights for silencing the inner critic and contributing with conviction.
- ▶ **Learning the do’s and don’ts: Nine make-or-break behaviors at the next level of leadership**
Working non-stop and sweating the small stuff can skyrocket a career. When transferred into the executive suite, however, these same habits may cause a new leader to crash. Eblin can present nine opposing pairs of beliefs and behaviors that any executive must pick up—and, more importantly, let go of—at the next level of leadership.
- ▶ **Rising to the top: How to get up to speed fast**
New executives take six months on average to make a net contribution to the organization—and that is if they are in sync with supersized expectations and deadlines, as well as the new boss. Because all systems aren’t “go” for most new leaders, they often wind up quitting, getting fired, or underperforming—without a fair shake. Eblin can discuss how to survive in the early days, from big strategies to small tips.
- ▶ **Developing ESP: Why your future depends on it**
Most companies don’t “get” the need for supporting and guiding leaders as they move to the next level. The good news? That doesn’t mean you’re doomed to fail. Eblin can discuss how to develop your own ESP—Executive Success Plan—to coach yourself, step by step, to success.

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Suggested Interview Questions



“When you are made an executive, it is because you can fix problems. Very rarely are companies problem-free.”

**—Steve Smith
SVP, American
Electric Power**

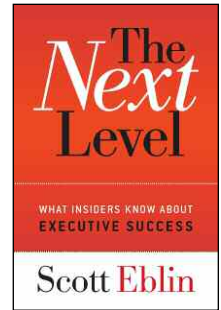
- ▶ Forty percent of new executives don't last 18 months. Why is that? And what skills, specifically, are they lacking?
- ▶ You say success or failure for the new executive is about opposites—picking up new behaviors and, more importantly, letting go of old ones. What do you mean?
- ▶ Why do you say old habits die *hardest* at that “next level” of leadership?
- ▶ You interviewed some thirty leading executives while writing your book. What are some of the common themes of their stories?
- ▶ Define what you mean by “executive presence.” Can any leader achieve this?
- ▶ What steps are involved in shifting from “doer” to leader?
- ▶ You say self-confidence is the “dirty little secret” of the executive suite. What's behind that?
- ▶ What are the warning signs that an executive is about to derail?
- ▶ How can any leader avoid a flame-out?
- ▶ You are a champion of “peer-to-peer” learning. What is it, and why is it especially effective for new executives?
- ▶ What is “ESP”? And how can it help executives plan for success?
- ▶ What can organizations do to grow their leaders?
- ▶ You've created a tool called the “Life Goals Planning System”—or Life GPS, for short. What is it, and how does it support personal and professional success?
- ▶ Who is *The Next Level* really for? And what would you most like them to take away from the book?

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Rising to the Next Level

What got you there won't keep you there.



“I had to make a conscious decision to let go of the need to feel like I was the hands-on expert.”

**—Sid Fuchs
Group President,
Northrop Grumman**

The skills and strengths that sent your career soaring aren't the same ones you'll need to survive and thrive in the executive ranks. That's why 40 percent of new leaders don't last more than 18 months. So how can you beat the odds? Let go of old beliefs and behaviors—and pick up new ones.

▶ **Let go of self-doubt.**

An insecure executive makes a lousy leader. Put confidence in your presence and purpose—even if it doesn't come naturally at first.

▶ **Let go of running flat-out until you crash.**

Working 24/7 may have made you a superstar. Keep it up at the top—where the expectations are enormous—and you'll burn out. Break the cycle by building time for recovery and renewal into your schedule.

▶ **Let go of one-size-fits-all communication.**

Customize every message for the group and goals at hand. Less *is* more, so become a master of the headline.

▶ **Let go of self-reliance.**

Replace “me” with “we.” You may have advanced on your own, but now you're only as good as your team.

▶ **Let go of the urge to tell “how.”**

No more micromanaging. Set the agenda for *what* gets done and leave the *how* to your team.

▶ **Let go of responsibility.**

Don't sweat the small stuff. Responsibility for a *few* results belongs to your team. Accountability for *many* results belongs to you.

▶ **Let go of only looking up and down.**

There's more to consider than what's up with the boss or what's going down with the subordinates. Look left and right, too. Partnerships with peers are key to success.

▶ **Let go of an inside-out view.**

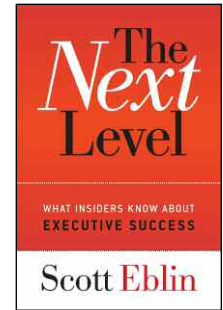
An internal perspective may have served you in the past, but not now. Lead with an outside-in view by understanding the issues in the *external* environment.

▶ **Let go of the small footprint.**

Your days of being “low-profile” are over. At the top, you act and speak on behalf of your entire company. Mind your manners—and your messages.

Establishing Executive Presence

10 strategies to show up strong



“Show up with grounded confidence. Have an agenda, but make sure you understand what it is that you are talking about.”

**—Lucien Alziari
SVP, Avon**

Peak performers are often promoted to the senior ranks and then left to sink or swim on their own. The good news? Successful leadership at all levels—self, team, and organization—is “do-able” if you embrace and establish executive presence.

▶ **Trust your gut.**

Heed your instincts. When that inner voice sounds a warning signal, be sure to look and listen.

▶ **Take action.**

Plan the work and work the plan—yet be willing to execute *before* you feel completely ready.

▶ **Develop a routine of renewal.**

Running flat-out until you crash comes with a high price. Schedule regular recovery time—or your body and mind will do it for you.

▶ **Repeat: “I am not my job.”**

Be true to you. You are an executive because of what you do—and who you are. Realize your potential at work, at home, and in your community.

▶ **Bond with the boss.**

Talk early and often with your boss. Come up with a plan for ongoing communication that is easy and effective for both of you.

▶ **Focus on “we” instead of “me.”**

Get your ego out of the way. Spend time and energy boosting your team—not competing with them.

▶ **Be a master of the what—not the how.**

Don’t be a micromanager. Talk objectives and outcomes, determine what “good enough” looks like, and then let your team run with it.

▶ **Make changes quickly.**

Don’t waffle. If you don’t have the right people on your team, take action immediately—and respectfully.

▶ **Tap into the leadership pipeline.**

Partner with peers to reach broader organizational goals. Success—yours, mine, and ours—hinges on interdependence, not independence.

▶ **Mind your messages.**

Political savvy is a must. Be visible and accessible, but stay mindful of *everything* you say and do.