

Every Green Builder Needs to Have This Book

A review of an essential book for your business: The E-Myth Revisited



By Michael Chandler | March 2, 2009



In "The E-myth Revisited," Michael Gerber explores "franchising your own business" and developing repeatable systems to save time.

Image Credit: Amazon.com

There are a small number of books that have been so important to me that I buy them in quantity to give to friends. To new parents I give *Kids Are Worth It* by Barbara Coloroso, and to new employees, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. Among the books I give to my fellow green builders is *The E-Myth Revisited* by Michael Gerber.

We're in the sustainable building business, so it's only natural that we would employ sustainable business practices too. To some extent that means working for a triple bottom line that values not just profits, but people and planet as well. Fundamentally, it means following business practices that will ensure your business's future, and there is no future in working sixty hours a week and barely making wages.

Crisis is not sustainable

To be sustainable, your business needs to pay you, the owner, as well as the employees a living wage (enough to send your kids *and* your employee's kids to college). It should have a decent health plan and enable you and your

employees to have nights and weekends at home with family, and it ought to be able to run smoothly without you so that you can go on vacation and even (gasp!) retire someday without having to hand out pink slips sell your tools and equipment.

The E-Myth Revisited was the book that first opened my eyes to the idea that I could achieve this balance by creating systems to automate some of the repetitive tasks of my business: invoicing, product selection, bill paying — the basic administrative things that need to get done on any project. The book uses the concept of “franchising” your business, showing you how to build repeatable systems so you can stop reinventing the wheel and living from crisis to crisis and focus your attention on the things that differentiate your business from the competition.

“Green” is a systems approach to building; this is a systems approach to business.

The book is subtitled *Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It*. His point is that many small businesses are started by craftsmen and technicians who love their work but view the business side as a “necessary evil.” Once they get the business part of their companies systematized (on “autopilot”), they can be free to truly excel at the craft they love. Without those systems, they are condemned to a life of crises, long hours, and cash-flow problems. Gerber also has a thinner book called *The E-Myth Contractor*, which I don't recommend. I think the ideas are presented more clearly in the original.