Rule No. 15 — Work on you business, not just in it.

Why? So that you build systems, not a self-employed prison.

Rule Summary:

Most entrepreneurs don't build businesses—they build traps. They start with a skill, launch into doing the work, and before long, they're drowning in tasks, chained to the very thing they thought would give them freedom.

Rule No. 15 draws a hard line: if you're always working in your business, it will never grow beyond you. But if you step back, systematize, and lead strategically, you can build something that runs without your constant presence. This isn't about working less—it's about working on what matters most.

Successful businesses aren't built by overworked operators—they're built by owners who step back, see the big picture, and design systems that scale.

The wake-up call: If you're stuck doing all the work yourself, you're not building a business—you've only bought yourself a job. Working **on** the business means shifting from technician to architect, from doing the tasks to designing the machine that gets them done.

Recommended Reading

The E-Myth Revisited, by Michael E. Gerber

"The problem is not that people fail to work hard enough. The problem is that they work hard at the wrong things." - Michael E. Gerber

Key Executive Takeaway:

Don't just work harder in your business. Work smarter on your business, so it can thrive without you.

Ask Yourself —

What's the one improvement that would make your work easier next month?

"What's the one part of your business you're still clinging to because it feels safer to do it yourself—and what's the real cost of not letting it go?"

Where am I acting as the technician instead of the owner?

If I stepped away for 30 days, what would fall apart—and why?

Do I have documented systems for the parts of my business I touch most?

What parts of my business still rely solely on me—and what's the cost?

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This Rule will help you:

- Escaping the Operator Trap
- Building Systems That Scale
- Shifting to Strategic Thinking
- Preserving Sanity and Sustainability

Action Step

Simply block two hours this week for strategic planning, not daily operations.

💡 Actionable Strategies

Here are **3 actionable strategies** that drive this rule from theory into practice.

1. Systematize One Core Process Every Month
Pick one recurring task—client onboarding, sales follow-up, invoicing, whatever eats time—and document it step-by-step. Test it with someone other than you. If they can run it without questions, it's a usable system. Do this monthly and, within a year, the business runs on process rather than personality.

2. Delegate the Highest-Value Task You Still Control
Not the easiest task—the highest-value one you refuse to hand off. Audit your week, identify the responsibility that's keeping you in the weeds, and assign it to the most capable person on your team. Provide clarity, guardrails, and the authority they need to own it fully.

3. Block Weekly Strategy Time—and Protect It Ruthlessly
Reserve a 90-minute block each week dedicated to working **on** the business: reviewing systems, monitoring leading indicators, studying the pipeline, and planning ahead. No urgent tasks, no interruptions. If you treat this time casually, everything else will continue to own your schedule.