

# The Bastardization of the Title CEO: Why Everyone and Their Dog is Now a "Chief"

There was a time when being a **CEO** meant something. It wasn't just a title—it was a badge of honor, a recognition that you had climbed the ranks, earned your stripes, and....



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# Introduction: What Happened to the CEO Title?

There was a time when being a CEO meant something. It wasn't just a title—it was a badge of honor, a recognition that you had climbed the ranks, earned your stripes, and were now leading an organization through the rough waters of business. It symbolized leadership, responsibility, and authority.

Fast forward to today, and it feels like everyone is a CEO. Run a small business from your bedroom? CEO. Selling t-shirts online? CEO. Have a social media page with followers? CEO.

Somewhere along the way, the title has lost its exclusivity, and its meaning has been watered down. This isn't just a small issue—it's a shift in business culture that has real consequences.

So how did we get here? And does this democratization of the title empower people, or does it diminish the credibility of real leaders? Let's break it down.

**Back in the day, you wouldn't dare call yourself a CEO unless you were truly commanding a corporate empire.**

Hello, everyone! I'm Cole Samuel, the guy steering the ship at Ditrop Inc ([ditrop.ca](https://ditrop.ca)) and Ditrop SME ([sme.ditrop.ca](https://sme.ditrop.ca)).

Have you ever wondered what it means to be a CEO? Why is this title so coveted, and what has changed recently?

Today, let's explore the evolving meaning of being a CEO and how this affects everyone, not just those in the business world.

# Introduction: What Happened to the CEO Title?

## The Origin of "CEO": A Title for the Elite

The CEO role wasn't always a thing. In the early 1900s, businesses were run by owners, presidents, and managing directors. The rise of large corporations—especially in industries like steel, oil, and finance—led to the need for a designated leader at the very top. This person had to manage different departments, communicate with stakeholders, and set the company's vision.

The CEO title was born out of necessity. It wasn't a name someone gave themselves for fun—it was a position that came with experience, credibility, and responsibility. People like Henry Ford (Ford Motors), Steve Jobs (Apple), and Jack Welch (General Electric) set the gold standard for what a CEO should be: a visionary leader, a decision-maker, and the driving force of a company. Being a CEO was not just about having an idea. It was about execution, strategy, and managing a team that could bring that idea to life.



Henry Ford



Steve Jobs



Jack Welch

# The "CEO Boom": Why Everyone's a CEO Now

Today, the landscape is completely different. With the internet making it easier than ever to start a business, people don't have to wait years to get a leadership title—they can give themselves one on day one.

Several factors have contributed to this:

1. **Social Media Status Culture –** People want to appear important. Titles like "CEO" carry power, so many entrepreneurs slap it onto their social media profiles for credibility—even if their business isn't fully formed.
2. **The Startup Explosion –** The rise of startups has made "CEO" a flexible term. A teenager launching a dropshipping business from their bedroom can claim the same title as the leader of a billion-dollar corporation.
3. **Motivational Culture & Hustle Hype –** Social media influencers preach ownership and leadership. The "be your own boss" movement has encouraged more people to embrace titles that traditionally took years to earn.

4. **Ease of Business Formation –** Unlike in the past, where it took huge amounts of capital and industry experience to run a company, today, anyone with a website and a product can start a business. This has blurred the lines between self-employed entrepreneurs and corporate executives.

While this explosion of entrepreneurship is great, it also has some side effects that we can't ignore.





# The Problem: When Titles Lose Their Meaning

Words have power. Titles carry expectations. When the title of CEO is used too loosely, it leads to:

- **Confusion in Business Hierarchies** – In companies like Ditrop Inc ([ditrop.ca](https://ditrop.ca)) and Ditrop SME ([sme.ditrop.ca](https://sme.ditrop.ca)), we work with businesses and entrepreneurs at different levels. But it's often difficult to tell whether someone calling themselves a "CEO" is leading a structured business or just running a side hustle. This can create unnecessary confusion in partnerships and investments.
- **Investor Skepticism** – Investors and banks look at leadership when deciding where to put their money. If anyone can call themselves a CEO without actual leadership experience, it becomes harder to determine which businesses are genuinely investable.
- **Workforce Misalignment** – If a company has five employees and three of them are calling themselves "CEO," who is actually making decisions? It's easy to see how this can create leadership chaos.
- **A Loss of Respect for the Role** – In the past, when you heard the term "CEO," you associated it with power, strategy, and years of expertise. Now, the title has lost some of its impact, making it harder to distinguish real business leaders from self-proclaimed ones.

# The Other Side of the Coin: Is This a Good Thing?

But let's not ignore the positives. The democratization of business titles has also led to:

- More Entrepreneurial Confidence – More people believe they can start businesses and take ownership of their work. This is a good thing.
- New Kinds of Leadership – The traditional CEO role often belonged to wealthy, corporate-trained individuals. Today, younger, more diverse entrepreneurs are claiming leadership roles and bringing fresh perspectives to business.
- Faster Business Growth – When people take on leadership roles earlier, they develop management skills faster, potentially leading to more successful businesses in the long run.

There's no doubt that the CEO title is being used loosely, but it's also encouraging more people to think big and take leadership seriously.

## Final Thoughts: What's the Solution?

We're not saying people shouldn't call themselves CEOs.

Entrepreneurship is evolving, and titles are becoming more flexible. But we do need to recognize the difference between using a title for branding and actually embodying what it means to be a CEO.

Here's what needs to happen:

- Real CEOs Need to Lead by Example – Those who hold the title need to show what true leadership looks like. It's not just about calling yourself a CEO—it's about accountability, strategy, and execution.
- Businesses Should Be More Transparent – If you're a startup with one employee, be honest about it. There's nothing wrong with being a founder or small business owner. Not everyone needs to be a CEO on day one.

# The Real Takeaway

- Companies Like Ditrop Inc and Ditrop SME Must Continue Supporting Real Leaders – At Ditrop Inc and Ditrop SME, we focus on business growth, leadership development, and helping entrepreneurs move from title-holders to actual industry leaders. That's the difference between a flashy business card and real, impactful leadership.

The title "CEO" used to be rare, prestigious, and associated with business giants. Today, it's thrown around so casually that it has lost some of its weight.

But here's the real truth: Titles don't make leaders—actions do.

You can call yourself whatever you want, but at the end of the day, being a CEO isn't about the name on your LinkedIn profile. It's about vision, decision-making, and execution.

So if you're leading something—big or small—own your role, do the work, and let your leadership speak louder than your title. That's what real CEOs do.

## Let's Keep the Conversation Going

At Ditrop Inc and Ditrop SME, we work with business owners at different stages—helping them build, scale, and refine their operations.

Whether you're a first-time founder or a seasoned executive, our focus is on real leadership, not just titles.

Check us out at [ditrop.ca](https://ditrop.ca) and [sme.ditrop.ca](https://sme.ditrop.ca) for business solutions that actually work.

What's your take? Has the title of CEO lost its value, or is it just evolving? Let's talk in the comments.



Cole Samuel

# Where We At

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