

Escape from the Boardroom

How well do today's CEOs know their own businesses?

We take them out of the boardroom and put them through their paces to see what they can learn



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Programme running: 5 x 45 mins Production: Twofour Series Producer: Kent Upshon

Over a working week, our CEOs are given a corporate workout: a series of three challenges that gets them out of the boardroom to explore their organisation, staff, customers and the competition. The tasks are decided and set from within the organisation. The CEO also sets themselves a challenge – what have they always wanted to crack or understand but have never had the time?

Episode One: Spyker Cars

Charismatic CEO Victor Muller is a man on a deadline. He plans to unveil his new luxury car, the Spyker B6 Venator at California's Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance automotive event. His new £100,000 concept model has already wowed the automotive world at the Geneva Motor Show, but he faces a race against time to get his hand-built luxury production model ready for show. A self-confessed control freak, Victor fancies himself as creator, designer, marketer and salesman. In seeking to guide Spyker to global acclaim, will Victor's hands-on approach do more to strangle progress and creativity than aid it?

Episode Two: Semsom

Christine Sfeir is one of the Middle East's most successful entrepreneurs. At the tender age of 22, she introduced the American coffee chain Dunkin' Donuts to Lebanese society, their first encounter with donuts and filter coffee. One year and thirty Dunkin' Donut branches later, Christine is now hungry to return the favour by introducing her country's cuisine to the American people and expanding her own restaurant chain, Semsom, onto the global stage.

Episode Three: Oxfam

Mark Goldring has been CEO of Oxfam for just three months, but already the size of his challenge is abundantly clear: In 2013, what does Oxfam stand for? Known as a charity that fights global poverty, the lines between acceptable fundraising and aid-giving have become increasingly blurred. Meanwhile, the public's perception of just how their hard-earned donations are spent has become that much more cynical.



Episode Four: IHG (Intercontinental Hotels Group)

Over the past two decades India has transformed itself into one of the world's most powerful economies with an ever expanding middle class. Jan Smits makes his way to Delhi to find out about the modern Indian consumer. With plans to open 150 hotels in India by 2020 IHG will need to hire an enormous number of new staff at every level of their business. Jan travels to IHG's new training academy to see first-hand how staff are being recruited and what the training consists of. With a plan to target the domestic traveller IHG are rolling out the Holiday Inn Express in great numbers. With currently only one in the entire country Jan heads to the hotel to see if what IHG are offering is suitable of the modern Indian consumer.

Episode Five: Woolworths

Woolworths, the favourite food and clothing retailer of the South African middle-class, are at a vital point in their history. Although profits are up, the stagnant state of the South African economy along with competition from rival stores suggests that the task of expansion couldn't be any more challenging for CEO Ian Moir. Since taking the helm of Woolworths, Ian has transformed the brand into a desirable 21st Century store. However, his key challenge is to communicate this change and to tell South Africans how the brand has transformed itself with a fresher, modern look that appeals to a younger market and to families across South Africa.

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