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# Ex-CIA Consultant: Alleviating Pain Points of Prominent C-Suite Execs

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## Alleviating Pain Points of Prominent C-Suite Execs: How Ex-CIA Consultant Helps Them Juggle It All

While anyone can struggle with work-life balance and prioritizing their health, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a wake-up call for employees around the globe. The Great Resignation caused 47 million Americans to quit their jobs for better, healthier opportunities. Within these demographics, many analysts overlooked C-suite executives who might feel the same.

Becoming a business executive is often one of the most glamorized positions in America. However, leading multinational organizations and managing thousands of employees can be overwhelming. Last June, Deloitte uncovered this issue in *The C-suite's role in well-being*. The article reports on their survey of over 2,000 executives in the US, the UK, Canada, and Australia. They found that almost 70% of participants are looking for other roles that will better support their well-being.

Although executives may be more committed to their workplace, they still have pain points. They all struggle with their workload and responsibilities, so how can fresh or seasoned executives manage their work without falling victim to burnout? Ex-CIA agent and serial entrepreneur Rupal Patel has some advice to offer.

Working in the CIA for over five years and building a successful real estate investment company has allowed Patel to accumulate vast knowledge. The CIA taught her how to stay disciplined, ambitious, and resilient in the face of challenges. Her experience in starting and scaling a business gave her first-hand experience of the struggles executives face. With this combination, Patel has learned how to transform the lives of highly accomplished leaders. When she accepts a new client at her consulting company *Entrepreneur*, she familiarizes

herself with the client's perspective. Patel does this to understand what the leader sees as the problem and compares that with the reality of the situation. Patel's approach and consulting time vary since she operates based on people's unique circumstances.

"My consulting work is focused on unlocking performance. Either through an individual or an organization, my mission is to meet teams, get the full picture, locate performance blockers, and remove them. The process sounds easy, but sometimes we don't realize how our behavior can hold us back. But once I enter with an unbiased perspective, I see the gaps and find ways to bridge them," says Rupal Patel.

Patel's five agility levers, I-C-E-squared™, can be helpful for executives, leaders, or any individual that wishes to maximize their success in life. Most of them provide solutions to the pain points executives experience every day.

One of the most common struggles executives experience is decision fatigue. When so many options are available, making decisions becomes draining. This leads to a sluggish attitude and excessive reactivity. Instead of building strategies to solve their objectives, executives get pulled down by each new decision they must make. By applying Patel's first lever of Intentional Constraints, executives can minimize distractions and unlock adaptability.

Patel's second lever, Exposure, can be a simple way to prevent burnout. It can allow executives to take a holistic view of the energy, time, and resources their role requires. While it may seem like this amount never fluctuates, executives often over-dedicate themselves when faced with challenges. Exposure utilizes CIA principles to help decipher between stimuli. Once mastered, you will recognize what's an important signal and what's irrelevant noise.

Jobs can become predictable, which causes personal dissatisfaction and mental stagnation. Patel's third agility lever of Intuition can be transformational when applied in this circumstance. Targeted meditation, visualization, and reflection allow you to realize what needs to change, instead of making changes that may not be necessary.

The Intuition lever can also facilitate succession planning. Executives often see the future as farther away than it is, which forces them to stay in an organization - longer than is beneficial for them or their organization - due to the lack of a talent pipeline or forward planning.

Patel's last two levers involve curiosity and intentional experimentation and can keep executives flexible and mentally agile when forced to respond to internal or external shocks.

Patel's book *From CIA To CEO* delves into these and other frameworks that she developed throughout her high-intensity career, and arms readers with the tools to unleash personal excellence.

*Members of the editorial and news staff of the USA TODAY Network were not involved in the creation of this content.*