

ASSESSMENT OF EXECUTIVES LONELINESS IN THE COMPANY GROWTH PHASE

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Abstract. Working well in a team is a difficult and demanding job, and both executives and employees need to work responsibly for the success of the company. Executives, as those responsible for the overall success of the company, face many challenges that they have to deal with alone, which can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness. This paper aims to explore the executive loneliness in the growth phase of a company, and to answer the key questions of the topic: why do executives feel lonely; what impact does loneliness have on their life; how to solve the loneliness problem? The paper reviews the literature on executives' loneliness and the impact of loneliness on the individual and the company.

Keywords: executives, loneliness, isolation, company, workplace, team, leadership.

Introduction

This article aims to describe the executives/CEO loneliness and to analyze the impact of the company's development stage on loneliness. Despite growing awareness of the challenges of modern executives, as well as increasing evidence that leaders' work is hectic, fragmented, subject to excellent performance pressures, operating in a challenging environment, with lack of certainty and emotional intensity, the literature and press emphasize the image of rationality and efficiency of directors (Tengblad, 2012). Presented realistic image: “The common expectation among scientists, the public and even executives themselves is that managers should be enlightened, deliberate, rational and always in full control” (Tengblad, 2012), may explain this expectation the absence of empirical evidence on executive stress, which can make them feel isolated or lonely. Being at the top of a company is inherently isolating since it separates executives from others and leaves them without peers. And during the growth phase of a company, executive disengagement is much more pronounced, as the manager has not yet had time to build relationships with his/her subordinates. While the company grows, directors habitual reliance needs for communication, support, and reassurance increase and it can overwhelm them. Speaking of leadership, the term “managerial loneliness” is frequently used. The inability to check one's own perceptions, the inclination to lose touch with reality as a result of one's position at the top, is a risk to which anyone in a position of leadership can face. According to the Harvard Business Review, 50 percent of CEOs feel alone, and 61 percent say it impairs their work performance, implying isolated at the top might really affect decision-making and leadership (Saporito, n.d.). This study, carried out in 2012, shows that managerial loneliness does exist.

1. Executive responsibilities

The company only has one distinct role: executive, the most powerful and coveted title in business. The Cambridge English Dictionary (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.) describes executive in several different ways:

- someone in a high position, especially in business, who makes decisions and puts them into action;
- someone relating to making decisions and managing businesses, or suitable for people with important jobs in business;

- the part of a government that is responsible for making certain that laws and decisions are put into action;
- a group of people who run a business or an organization.

All generalisations say the same thing, the executive is the person who makes decisions and implements them. Executives has control over is the most important steps in the company’s journey, and it determines a large portion of the company’s performance. The role of manager, no matter how lucrative and appealing, can be demanding, lonely, and stressful, especially when it comes to the company’s growth and development. Directors, shareholders, customers, and employees’ high standards and expectations create an environment of constant scrutiny in which a single move can make or break a career.

At the beginning of a company’s growth, the executive’s main job is to shape the company’s interior, to make the company work in a balanced way and to support the company’s further development, which requires a number of elements that are widely described in the literature: setting strategy, working with board members, aligning the organisation, being the face of the company to external stakeholders, leading the team and managing one’s own time and energy. These are critical elements for every company, and in these elements it is possible to distinguish between the 18 different responsibilities that the highest-ranking executive (CEO) is responsible for (Dewar et al., n.d.). As can be seen in Figure 1, the executive’s (CEO’s) responsibilities cover a broad spectrum, from getting the team right and the culture of the company to delivering the strategy and the image of the company, and this leads to a wide range of responsibilities. In these responsibilities, executives face many challenges in trying to keep up and balance everything, which inevitably has an impact on his/her life.

Executive work has positive benefits, but also negative ones: with a high volume of work, there is a lack of time for other things outside of work, poor time management can affect executives’ personal and professional lives, and changes in circumstances and relationships can lead to feelings of loneliness.

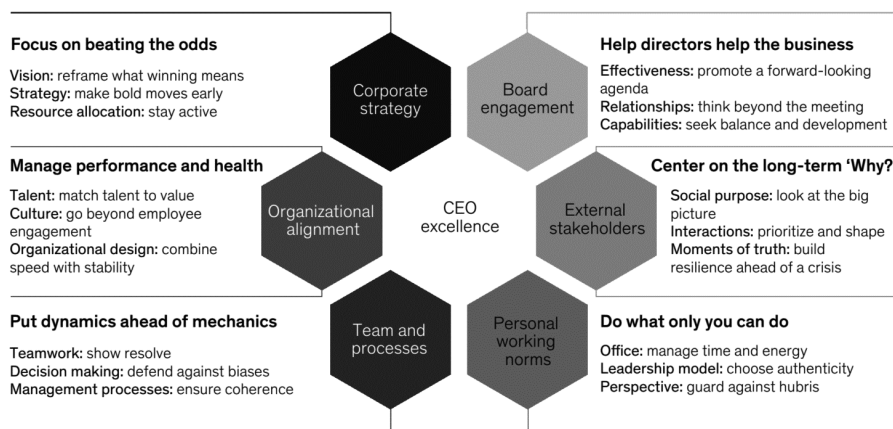


Figure 1. Excellent CEOs approach the role’s six elements with certain mindsets and adhere to 18 practices when fulfilling their unique responsibilities (Dewar et al., n.d.)

2. Company growth stage

Not all companies have the same development cycle. However, researchers have observed that the life cycle of companies has similar characteristics, and most companies can be classified into 5 stages of growth (Churchill & Lewis, 1983), these stages shown in Figure 2:

- Existence. The key issues of the firm at this stage are gaining clients and delivering the product or service agreed for. The organization is straightforward: the owner handles everything and directly manages subordinates, who should be competent. Systems and formal planning are either non-existent or minimal. The company’s strategy is to just stay alive. The owner is the business, performs all of the main responsibilities, and is the primary source of energy, direction, and capital, together with relatives and friends.
- Survival. By reaching this point, the company has proven that it is a viable corporate entity. It has a significant number of clients and sufficiently satisfies them with its products or services to keep them. As a result, the primary issue shifts from mere existence to the connection between income and expenditures. The arrangement is still straightforward. The company may have a small number of employees who are overseen by managers. Which do not make big decisions on their own, but instead follows the owner’s relatively well-defined commands. The development of systems is minimal. Formal planning is essentially monetary forecasting.

- Success. At this point, owners must decide whether to capitalize on the firm's achievements and grow, or to keep the company steady and profitable, creating a foundation for alternative owner activities.
- Then owner maintains the business's stability and profitability, which is described as the Success-Disengagement substage; the company has achieved true financial strength, has sufficient size and product-market penetration to assure economic success, and generates average or above-average profits. The company can remain at this stage indefinitely as long as environmental change does not disrupt its market niche and poor management does not impair its competitive abilities.
- The owner then decides to expand the company, which is known as the Success-Expansion substage. During the Success-Growth substage, the owner consolidates the business and marshals' funds for expansion. The owner risks the company's cash and establishes borrowing ability in order to fund development. Among the critical tasks are ensuring that the core business remains profitable so that it does not exhaust its cash reserves and developing managers to meet the needs of the expanding firm. This second step necessitates choosing managers who think about the company's future rather than its current state.
- Take-off. The organization is decentralized and, to some extent, divisionalized – typically in sales or production. To manage an expanding and complex business environment, top executives must be extremely knowledgeable. Growth is causing the systems to become more refined and extensive. Specific managers are involved in both operational and strategic planning. Although the owner and the business have separated, the company is however controlled by the owner's presence and stock control. This is a critical time in the life of a business. If the owner rises to the difficulties of a developing company, both financially and managerially, it has the potential to become a bigger company. Or else, it can usually be sold for a profit if the owner understands his or her limitations early on.
- Recourse Maturity. The primary priorities of a corporation entering this stage are, first, to consolidate and control the financial gains brought on by rapid growth, and second, to retain the benefits of size, such as flexibility of response and entrepreneurial spirit. The corporation must rapidly expand its management force to eliminate the inefficiencies that growth can cause, as well as professionalize the company through the use of tools such as budgets, strategic planning, management by objectives, and cost systems – all while retaining its entrepreneurial qualities. A corporation at this stage has the personnel and financial means to conduct in-depth operational and strategic planning. Management is decentralized, well-staffed, and experienced. And the systems are comprehensive and well-developed. The owner and the company are financially and operationally distinct.

This Master's Thesis focuses on the loneliness of executives by concentrating on the Growth stage, or in other words Success stage.

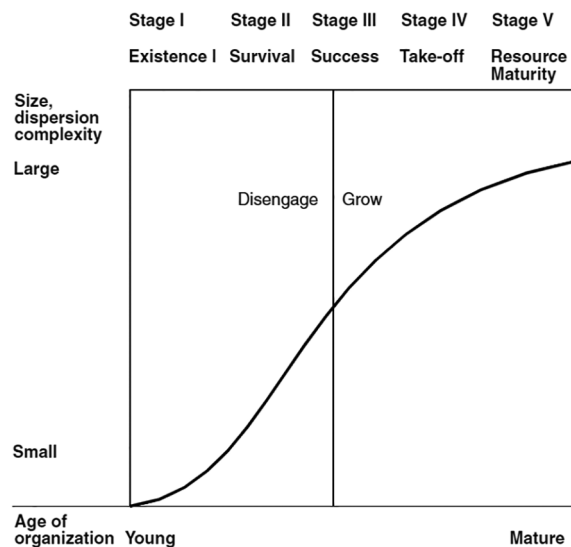


Figure 2. Growth stages of the company (Churchill & Lewis, 1983)

The life cycle of a company can also be defined in terms of phases, which follow the successive stages of the company's growth (Figure 2). These phases show the internal difficulties of the company and the positive changes as the company develops. The latter are more telling when analyzing executive loneliness. Figure 3 shows that

the firm faces autonomy and control crises during the growth phase, and that the firm grows through delegation and coordination. Autonomy and control crises create additional challenges for the executives working in the company, who have to devote a large part of their energies not only to the company's growth strategy, but also to the employees, to their management, to the even distribution of responsibilities and to other tasks related to the control of employees.

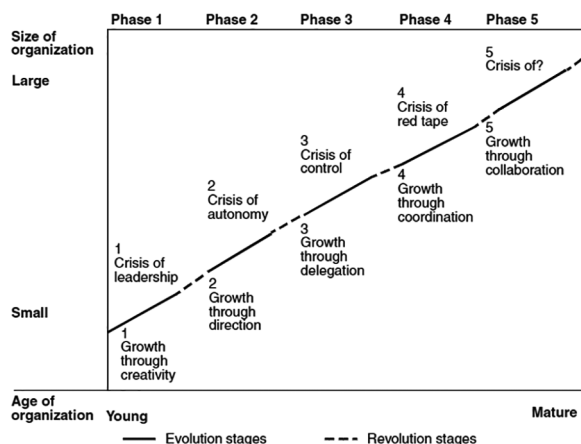


Figure 3. Growth phases of the company (Churchill & Lewis, 1983)

In a period of growth, there is a need not only to plan future strategies and manage the existing business, but also to focus on the people. To ensure the growth of a developing organization, it is necessary to keep workers enthused and excited about assisting to go to the next level. Managers and staff are on the front lines of business growth. Communication, Collaboration, Continuous Improvement, and establishing Company Culture are the main points that can help to keep teams strong, and businesses fortified during times of rapid development and change. A strong team is also necessary for the overall communication of the company; a united team means a more pleasant working environment, which reduces isolation and loneliness at work.

3. Executive loneliness and isolation

Loneliness is a universal emotion that has been recognized by everyone. Loneliness is defined as “A complex set of feelings encompassing reactions to the absence of intimate and social needs” (Ernst & Cacioppo, 1999). According to Rook (1984), loneliness embodies a variety of undesirable emotions and has been related with “feelings of sadness, anxiety, boredom, self-deprecation, and marginality”. Individuals have an intrinsic desire to socialize and be with others, and prolonged loneliness can result in physical and/or mental health problems. The comparative advantages and positive aspects of interpersonal connections are frequently discussed in the literature, but the negative impact of work relationships has received little attention. Loneliness is defined in various settings as a lack of or unsuitable social contacts, which can result in a variety of negative outcomes such as anxiousness, depression, and mental diseases. Competitive and unfriendly organizational settings are a main cause of loneliness and isolation, according to (S. L. Wright et al., 2006).

Individuals who are socially isolated and lonely are linked with dispositional characteristics, such as pessimism, depression, shyness, low self-esteem and is strongly negatively correlated with happiness and life satisfaction, they are at a higher risk of developing dementia, Alzheimer's disease, having lower cognitive ability, and having memory problems (Wilson et al., 2007).

- Studies have found a correlation between loneliness and health problems: lonely leaders are more likely to eat calorie-dense and fatty foods, have sedentary lifestyles, have high blood pressure, and gain unhealthy weight (Lauder et al., 2006).
- Loneliness has been repeatedly established as a risk aspect for depression (Cacioppo et al., 2006). Leaders who are depressed cannot be expected to operate well and be a good leader to their subordinates.
- Lonely people report more sentiments of powerlessness and tension than non-lonely people (Hawkley et al., 2003). While stress can encourage people to challenge themselves and develop, lonely leaders are unlikely to see the growth-promoting qualities in stress (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2007).

Schoenmakers et al. (2012) believe that loneliness emerges when there is a mismatch between actual and desired relationships, and that maintaining a balance between these interactions is very difficult. Psychologists' standpoints to this day differ on whether loneliness is a unidimensional or multidimensional experience, but they all agree on a few key points about loneliness:

- It is a sensation of separation;
- It is related with the invalidation of meaning;
- It is painful and thus difficult to accept;
- It encourages humans to seek meaning and relationship;
- It most likely has an evolutionary basis;
- It indicates the opportunity for growth as well as new possibilities.

People who are lonely have a harder time forming social ties or making contacts, and they have a low perception of organizational support. Loneliness is influenced by a person's self-esteem, self-confidence, sensitivity, and ability to comprehend circumstances. Lonely workers may be slower or missing from social ties at work due to risk aversion and low trust in others (Lam & Lau, 2012). Because they experience more alienation and less contact with other employees, more lonely or isolated people are more likely to feel a sense of belonging at work, which reduces their commitment to the organization, which allows the person to feel attachment to the organization, a psychological bond demonstrated through affection and affinity, attachment that provides pleasurable work experiences. If employees are lonely, their work experiences will be less emotionally gratifying, lowering their sense of belonging. Individuals who lack suitable connections with colleagues feel lonely; these lonely individuals believe that their organizations are failing to provide their "belonging and social requirements", and are hence less likely to be psychologically committed to them. Employees are more committed to their co-workers and work harder and more efficiently. As a result, it's considered that lonely people don't want to work. Given the paucity of research on the connections between loneliness at work as well as alienation at work, the article "Loneliness at Work: Its Consequences and Role of Moderators" (Mohapatra et al., 2020) contends that the link between loneliness at work and alienation at work is significant and obvious, implying that if employees experience loneliness at work, they become alienated at work. There is a significant gap between what causes people to feel lonely and how they view the deficiencies of work relationships. As a result, Wright et al. (2006) discovered that qualitative social deficiencies at work, such as a lack of social support at work, are not the only cause of loneliness, but personal characteristics of the individual also can impede the establishment of preferred relationships and interpersonal bonding.

The common phrase "it's lonely at the top", introduced in the 1930s to describe the loneliness of executives, perfectly expresses the challenges that directors and managers confront on a daily basis. These pressures, which are often the result of the high-level positions they hold, often lead to feelings of loneliness. In one of the first attempts to describe this phenomenon, (Jackson, 1977), argued that the work of a top manager creates a psychological sense of isolation from others. In *Lonely at the Top: Observations on the Genesis of Administrative Isolation*, the author draws on his own experience to analyze loneliness and its causes, describing why chief administrators "are more vulnerable to feelings of loneliness and isolation than the average person on the street", and in a study, he identifies the main causes of loneliness, and breaks it down into five main elements (Jackson, 1977):

- Busyness. Busy schedules make leaders hard to reach. Leaders recklessly avoid face-to-face contact with other people in an attempt to save time, preferring to use the telephone or other means of remote communication, even if the person they are communicating with is easily accessible in person. This pressure from the manager can increase loneliness by increasing the social distance between the executives and his or her followers (Magee & Smith, 2013).
- High-level responsibility for decisions. According to the author, decision-making is a solitary activity, and managers are often alone in making decisions, especially when the decisions concern uncomfortable and sensitive topics for the company, such as the allocation of resources, budgeting or personnel issues.
- The availability of confidential information. Access to and possession of secret information are described as psychological distancing factors. The inability to share information often leads to an 'I know and you don't know' feeling, which causes executives to develop closer relationships with the few people with whom they can talk about confidential topics, and to have weaker relationships, or to disengage from others altogether.
- High visibility. Leaders and managers are visible to the public, often attending public events and interacting with media agencies, thus constantly raising their profile. Being in the limelight only increases isolation, as the leader is alone in front of crowds of people.

- The need for pretence. The need to pretend. This element of loneliness is strongly linked to the manager's visibility. The author points out that directors are often required to isolate their true feelings, to keep them inside and not show them to others in order to cope with difficulties and criticism, and to show self-confidence even when it is not felt. Such pretending can ultimately have many negative characteristics, such as losing the true self or becoming alienated.

The elements described show how a executive's daily work and activities affect his/her well-being and relationship with others.

"It is not only lonely at the top, but it may also be disengaging" (S. Wright, 2012). Leadership positions in organizations frequently do not establish a work atmosphere suitable to friendships and social closeness, which can contribute to loneliness. Executives' social isolation frequently contributes greatly to their feelings of loneliness. According to (S. Wright, 2012), social isolation is an occupational hazard in high-level professions. Some of today's businesses promote individualism and success through independence and competition, eroding a sense of belonging, community, and engagement with others. Yilmaz (2008) offered another possible predictor of loneliness, arguing that executives' loneliness may be caused by the perception that others are threatening. Threats might range from unhappiness from relatives to dissatisfaction among colleagues, which can affect the company's future actions. This perception can cause anxiety and alienation, which will undoubtedly influence the leader's job connection with the organizational structure and subordinates. This can have an impact on performance and organizational commitment, which is described as when a manager begins to value the benefits of the organization more than his own.

In summary, there are many different reasons why managers may feel lonely, mainly due to their busy schedules, which leave little time to interact with loved ones or to build closer relationships with colleagues. Prolonged loneliness or isolation can eventually lead to health problems.

3.1. The impact of surrounding relationships on executive loneliness

When it comes to an executive's loneliness, it is important to pay attention to the influence of the people around him, whether colleagues, employees or family. Everyone around them has different opinions and expectations of what can and should be expected from someone in an executive position.

Executives are supposed to address the organization's strategic and structural needs or to suit employees' dependency needs. Leaders may feel lonely if no one is present to react to their desires for friendship and support. Thus, it appears that one of the reasons why executives feel lonely is because they may become the subject of their employees' ideals, desires, emotions, and fantasies (Kets de Vries, 1989). Employees' attachment to their superiors is one of the reasons of executives loneliness. Transference occurs when employees grow attached to their managers' mystical traits. They interpret the link as if the managers were prior authority, such as parents or teachers. When this happens, the line between the employees' imagined past and present blurs. This transference to the supervisor raises stress and, ultimately, isolates the supervisor (Cooper & Quick, 2003). Transference can manifest itself in a variety of ways, affecting both employees and managers. Subordinates may idealize their superiors in order to replicate the feeling of security and importance they experienced as children when they were cared for by all-powerful parents, resulting in feelings of security and stability. Employees then fall victim to whatever whims their superiors have, agree to everything and complete all assigned tasks, even the illogical ones, and actually allow the supervisor to function in an environment where he or she starts to believe that he or she is as good as the employees who worship him or her make him or her believe. As a result, some executives may begin to disregard their employees, exploit them, and ultimately terminate them if they no longer serve their or the company's aims. When employees feel their supervisor is exploiting them, they may become enraged and blame management for failing to meet their expectations and letting them down. Hostility and a lack of cooperation between management and employee are likely. Managers may be tempted to react, discard people they believe to be "against" them, and concoct all sorts of imaginary conspiracies and vicious attempts to get rid of them in response (Kets de Vries, 1989). As a result, it is understandable that leaders' loneliness can be attributed to employees, and it is simple to see why leaders may feel separated, excluded, and ultimately lonely.

In workplace, executives are faced with several different categories of subordinates, of which there are four: boosters, testers, leavers and passive (Nichols & McBride, 2017). These categories describe the employee's attitude towards the management staff or the company's leader, and how well the employee can accept the leader's decisions or future changes in the company.

- Boosters are people who trust their executives, find their decisions understandable and logical, are usually supportive of their managers, carry out the work assigned to them, and help their colleagues to understand the

importance of their executive's decisions, thus promoting the work of the company. Boosters often create a better atmosphere at work, foster communication and strengthen the team, and are relatively easy for managers to work with.

- Testers are individuals who will constantly question the decisions made by the manager and will constantly try to find loopholes or inaccuracies. Testers are not afraid to ask questions about how the decisions are made and to bring even the smallest problems into the open, thus showing that they may not agree with the executive's management. These individuals are critically important to every company, as they drive the company's improvement and help to identify gaps, even though working with them can be difficult. Executives working with these people can be distressing, self-doubting, questioning of the choices made by executives, and can make executives feel lonely and isolated, as all criticism is directed at them.
- Leavers – employees who leave the company for various reasons. When employees leave, executives do not always get a definitive answer as to the reason for their departure; some employees leave for personal reasons and others leave because of circumstances within the company: salary, team, leadership, etc. People leaving because of internal circumstances can often help the company to grow and help the manager to understand what is lacking, but some people who leave “quietly” may question the executive about whether the work is not being done properly and needs to be improved, potentially leading to managerial self-doubt.
- Passive resisters – employees who express negative emotions about decisions made by the executive to their colleagues, but not to the executive; these employees are in the mood to test the leaders' credibility, but they are not too motivated to express their dissatisfaction with the government. Passive resisters are the most dangerous employees for the company, because they can spread distrust of the company's performance and the executive in front of the executive, thus also antagonizing other employees. It is very important for managers to recognize these employees because their lack of trust in the leader can demotivate both other employees and the executive himself.

In general, all employees working for a company have an impact on the day-to-day running of the company in one way or another. It is important for a executive to know how to react to his or her employees in order to maintain a close enough relationship with them to reduce the leader's feelings of isolation and alienation.

Leadership advancement does not rely on reciprocal connections with subordinates. Leaders are expected to provide support when it is not normally available to them (Moyle, 1998). To avoid experiencing social isolation and loneliness they have to obtain support from subordinates (Johnson & Hall, 1994). Leaders, in order to establish and nurture a company, develop rewarding relationships that assist them in achieving their desired goals. However, once they have achieved these goals, these relationships may be inappropriate, unhelpful, or time-consuming, and they may become detached. Cooper and Quick (2003) proposed that loneliness and isolation can contribute to depression. As depression worsens, it promotes feelings of isolation and detachment, which can lead to inappropriate and even destructive behavior and business decisions, as well as drinking, drug use, and other coping methods.

Workplace alienation might also contribute to executive loneliness. Alienation at work refers to a phenomenal feeling of high detachment in which an employee's self-perception of self-detachment and social alienation is involved (Banai & Reisel, 2007). According to Seeman (1983), alienation is characterized by powerlessness, meaninglessness, and self-distancing. According to Hodson (1996), management alienation at work is a synthesis of three functions: role conflict, social affliction, and unfulfilled career aspirations.

The factor that also contributes to executive loneliness is the resources available to executives. They have access to more resources, more information and more power (Mao, 2006). According to Reinking and Bell (1991), persons who aspire to high positions and more information than others frequently separate themselves from others, particularly coworkers. Getting close to those with whom we compete is difficult, if not impossible. As a result, employees and others may want to approach and befriend them with the intention of obtaining resources, information, money, or assistance. In this situation, managers may not initially realize that this is happening, but once it does, the rejection mechanism naturally kicks in and they start to avoid employees because they perceive that subordinate do not have free will to befriend them, which reinforces their sense of loneliness. Executives must therefore be critical of employees and remain biased, which only encourages disengagement.

Another key consideration is the technical capabilities that may allow employees to work from home or elsewhere. This decreases, if not eliminates, informal communication between management and employees, as well as opportunities for relationship development, leading to feelings of isolation and alienation. While distance alone may not trigger feelings of loneliness, it can contribute to them, particularly if the individual and/or the supervisor do not seek support, companionship, and casual connection at work (Mulki et al., 2008).

According to Bell et al. (1990), having a higher position diminishes the social interaction accessible to leaders. Leaders may also discover that with advancement in position to executive, they have greater responsibilities and longer working hours, a burden that may diminish the time available for communication with loved ones. The author argues that executives “may eventually find that his or her relationships and family relations have deteriorated through neglect” (Bell et al., 1990). As family relations deteriorate, it is more likely that a person in a high-ranking position loses a fundamental human connection and is unable to share his or her experiences, leading to a greater sense of loneliness.

Together, the company’s employees and the team around the executive have a major impact on executive well-being. In order to ensure smooth and harmonious work, an executive need to learn how to maintain a sufficiently warm working relationship with his/her subordinates and to uphold the principles of morality. In a changing environment, managers need to value their own well-being as well as the desires and well-being of their employees.

4. How to cope with loneliness

When faced with loneliness or isolation, it is important for every executive to recognise what is causing these feelings and to know what can help reduce feelings of loneliness/isolation. The literature describes many different techniques to combat loneliness (Rokach, 2014), these methods are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Ways to reduce loneliness

Ways to reduce loneliness	Description
Executive coaching.	Executive coaching can be a unique emotional outlet in the life of an organisation. After experiencing organisational loneliness and isolation, managers can seek help from coaches as a possible and safe solution to their emotional and work-related difficulties (Kuna, 2019). The coach is someone who understands the organisation and/or psychological counselling and with whom the executive can speak freely and confidentially (Kilburg, 2000). With counsellors, it is possible to discuss any problem that is troublesome and to get advice on possible solutions, which is particularly important in cases where the executive is unable to talk to family or friends about work-related issues for security reasons. Consultants can help the executive not only to deal with personal problems but can also help to identify what skills the company’s employees lack to develop as a company, which is very important in the development phase of a company.
Peer support of another leader.	Peer support of another leader. Other executives can also help to combat loneliness or isolation, especially in the growth phase of a company, and other executives can be of great help by sharing their experiences, giving advice on what to share and what to avoid. The most important and most difficult thing is to find an executive from a non-competing company, most companies face similar problems, and would ask for help to look for a solution. Executives seeking to find like-minded people can enlist the help of various organisations to bring CEOs together to help each other by sharing their experiences and insights.
Family and friends.	Family and friends. Leaders must discuss their personal lives, emotions, intimate fears and worries, struggles, and failures. A spouse or life partner is a natural confidant for many leaders. A good marriage, a caring partner, and open communication create the environment in which a leader can unload, share, and hear the other person’s insights and advice. “There are things that we discuss only with people who are very close to us. These important topics may vary with the situation or the person: we may ask for help, probe for information, or just use the person as a sounding board for important decisions – but these are the people who make up our core network of confidants” (McPherson et al., 2006). These people have a positive and significant impact on the actions of others. Leaders rely on these individuals to perform at their best both personally and professionally.
Increasing circle of friends at work and outside of work.	Increasing circle of friends at work and outside of work can also assist in overcoming feelings of loneliness. “While little to nothing can be done about the nature of the executive position and the isolation and loneliness that accompanies it, managers and executives can become aware of the risks and potential outcomes that accompany this problem. Each in his or her own way can address this problem by seeking out the type of support that is most beneficial” (Cooper & Quick, 2003). Friendships can have an impact on performance not only by affecting the relationship among executives and subordinates, but also by serving as a decision-making, resource pooling, or data communication system.
Writing a journal.	Writing a journal, which executives can do on a regular basis at work, is one of the simplest and most straightforward ways to overcome feelings of isolation. It can be used to describe situations and emotions that have arisen, it can help an executive to resolve unfinished business, and it can provide a sense of calm at the end of each working day, preventing problems at work from being carried home. Keeping a diary can also be a great opportunity to focus on personal development, to notice recurring work situations, and to find solutions to prevent them from happening again.

Ways to reduce loneliness	Description
Self-development and improving emotional intelligence.	Self-development and improving emotional intelligence are integral to a good executive life. Strong emotional intelligence can help to understand and react appropriately to situations and manage feelings. Emotional intelligence has two main parts, one of personal competences and one of social competences, both of which are equally important and necessary to reach the heights of emotional intelligence. Key personal competences are self-awareness and self-regulation, which help to identify and understand the emotions person feels, thus helping to distinguish between feelings of loneliness or isolation or other feelings and to respond appropriately, i.e. to understand whether the emotions are appropriate to express in the here and now. And social competences, which are social skills and social awareness, allow CEOs to consider not only their own feelings but also those of others, defuse stressful or challenging situations and manage conflicts, which influences good relationships, as well as allowing them to detect when others are uncomfortable, disengaged, or aren't saying what they want to say. In general, emotional intelligence can help to understand what is going on around and help maintain healthy relationships with others, thus reducing loneliness or isolation.

In general, directors have many tools at their disposal to deal with sadness and isolation. The main help is to understand where the sadness is coming from, and to find someone to pass on insights to or get advice from, whether that is through journaling or talking to someone else.

Conclusions

The executive loneliness exists, but it is relatively little talked about and needs more attention. Loneliness is experienced by a wide section of society and can be felt by leaders too. Executive loneliness, and loneliness in general, is experienced when desired relationships do not match existing relationships. The isolation and loneliness of executives is influenced by busy schedules and the constant pressure from those around them to lead by example and to succeed in the company. Relationships with colleagues and relatives also have an impact on the executive's well-being and ability to cope with situations and feelings of loneliness. To avoid the consequences, such as health problems, associated with prolonged loneliness, it is important not to keep to oneself and to seek help. There are many different tools to combat loneliness, from communication with family and friends, to therapy and self-improvement or executive coaching.

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I declare that I have not competing financial, professional, or personal interests from other parties.

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VADOVŲ VIENIŠUMO VERTINIMAS ĮMONĖS AUGIMO ETAPE

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Santrauka. Darbas komandoje yra sudėtingas ir daug pastangų pareikalaujantis, todėl tiek vadovai, tiek darbuotojai turi dirbti atsakingai, kad įmonė būtų sėkminga. Vadovai, kaip asmenys, atsakingi už bendrą įmonės sėkmę, susiduria su iššūkiais, kuriuos turi spręsti vieni, o tai gali sukelti izoliacijos ir vieatvės jausmą. Šio straipsnio tikslas – išnagrinėti vadovų vieatvę įmonės augimo etape ir atsakyti į pagrindinius temos klausimus: kodėl vadovai jaučiasi vieniši; kokį poveikį vieatvė daro jų gyvenimui; kaip spręsti vieatvės problemą? Straipsnyje apžvelgiama literatūra apie vadovų vieatvę ir vieatvės poveikį asmeniui ir įmonei.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: vadovas, vieatvė, izoliacija, įmonė, darbo vieta, komanda, vadovavimas.