Founder’s Syndrome:  
An erroneous belief on the part of an entrepreneur that goes like this: “Because I know the most about the technical aspects of my business, I am the one best suited to run the company and manage my people.” This belief can have costly consequences.

Why Does Founder’s Syndrome Occur?

There are five primary causes:

1. Most entrepreneurs are technically adept individuals with great ideas and great vision. They typically have not had the time (or the inclination) to hone the skills necessary to lead and manage people.

2. It is difficult for most entrepreneurs to believe that the quality of their idea alone will not guarantee sustainable business results. (Success requires the integration of a good idea, a good product and developed leadership skills)

3. There is a fear in the minds of entrepreneurs that if they don’t keep their hands on every aspect of the business, something will go wrong. It is very difficult to let go of control.

4. Most entrepreneurs will say that they look forward to the day when they don’t have to do everything anymore. In reality, they end up micromanaging and alienating capable, talented employees.

5. Most entrepreneurs are unaware of how important good leadership and management are to the success and growth of a business because, in the start-up phase, this is rarely the focus. An assumption takes hold that causes many businesses to fail: “We got this far without paying attention to these things so why should we start worrying about them now?”

The Hard Facts on the Soft Stuff:

The costs of Founder’s Syndrome are many:

- Unwanted turnover.
- Cost of recruiting and training replacements.
options that will help the company to move forward.

Another strategy that can be helpful is to bring in an advisor or executive coach. Sometimes an objective perspective can get the Founder’s attention. The bottom line is, if no one helps the founder to see his or her blind spots, the business is likely to fail, and that is not an outcome anyone wants.

Final Thoughts
Every business requires a good leader in order to be successful. Entrepreneurs typically possess the skills necessary to start a business – not those necessary to run the business. Entrepreneurs can avoid the pitfalls of Founder’s Syndrome by:

- Recognizing their blind spots.
- Accentuating their strengths.
- Recognizing the strengths of their employees.
- Adding new skills, behaviors and attitudes to their repertoire.

This requires self-reflection, self-awareness and the ability to hear feedback. One of the most widely used methods for achieving this is executive coaching. Coaching can help the Founder to make the transition from **business creator** to **business leader**.

**Turning Things Around**
Most founders are not purposefully trying to make their businesses fail! They simply have blind spots and are not seeing the truth of the situation.

It takes courage to bring these issues up with the founder and most people shy away from it, choosing to put up with the situation or leave rather than have a difficult conversation.

However, taking the risk to do so can reap great rewards. Just be aware that it will take persistence and more than one conversation.

Present the facts. Share data about your research on how other companies grew and succeeded. Present your ideas for