

The Association CEO Handbook

The Six Elements of the Association CEO Position

By breaking the CEO position into six separate elements, each with its own set of parts and pieces, ACH will help you to identify the *whats* and *hows* of what you do so that you can continue to learn how to do them better.

Here's *Element I* as it appears in the Handbook

ELEMENT I

Change and Leadership

Yes, *Change* and *Leadership*. But why not *Leadership* and *Change*? Chickens and eggs aside, change and leadership are inextricably linked, engaged. In fact, they have coexisted from the dawn of human time as they will continue to do for as long as there may be human time.

For the association CEO, understanding the relationship between leadership and change is key to professional growth as well as the success of the organization led. In this, we will open with a short reading each on *Change* and *Leadership*-a few directional thoughts, sets of mind, really, just to start us off. Next will be a discussion and graphic depiction of how the make-up and structure of an association differs from that of the corporate model. From there, we'll discuss how and why these differences affect and distinguish the leadership role of the association CEO from that of the corporate CEO.

Change

In real time, the *status quo* is a figure of speech, an inference, and no more than that. Change, on the other hand, is very real, and it is everywhere, every day coming quicker at us - relentless, inexorable, inevitable.

And from where does change come? A hurricane charging a coast? An earthquake breaking across the land? No. These are events, not change. Change comes from us. We change those things we can get to and affect, things we think need fixing.

Moreover, change is not a random process, though the process of change can have random effects. Change is a consequence of human consciousness, that by which we know that we *are*. And, more than this, it is that by which we can understand that we are in a continuing state of *coming to be*.

And how does this process work? There are four steps. First, we see a thing, become *aware* of it. Second, we *examine* it, consider perhaps whether it is heavy or if it would roll if pushed. Third comes *speculation*; since it is easier to roll a rock than to drag it, how about rolling other things? How about a wheel? Then comes the fourth thing, *commitment*, getting the thing made, done, and then taking responsibility for it.

So, we are endowed with a consciousness and consciousness drives change. And in this there can be no *status quo*, not really, only *status changing*. You can change or you can be changed but you cannot remain the same. This does not mean that you cannot have and nurture values over and through time. It means that you have to take action to live and promote these values in a world that is unavoidably changing.

So, the question is not whether there is change. The question is whether change is inclined to make things better. And in this, it will be assumed that we are able to judge whether one state of affairs is better than another, e.g., that a secure and just peace is *better* than a state of unlimited war. What is more, quantification of such a judgment is not unreasonable. Fifty years of peace is better than twenty years. And since this is historically accurate, we can say that the world has gotten better — which it has.

Making things better stems from assessing the current state, identifying inefficiencies and inadequacies and removing them from our path. Planes and trains are faster than foot or hoof. Indeed, the getting better of things is not a random event. It follows from the exercise of human consciousness over time *within the context of the core tenets of this nation's founding*; that each one of us is of *value* and that we each must be *responsible* for the lives we are living, for the actions we take.

So, it is from here that we begin. Change is a human thing. It stems from the actions of others or ourselves. Indeed, those impacted by change have the same power of human consciousness to deal with change as those who initiated it. Further, in adjusting our actions to meet change, these actions, in turn, can initiate change of their own to which others may need to take action.

And for those who would lead? Well, for these, change is the very medium of what they do, either initiating it or reacting to it.

Leadership

There are a great many definitions of leadership, most having to do with directing and impacting the activities and lives of others. In effect, leadership is a *relationship* word, certainly in the context of work.

And there are other relationships in our lives. Parents. Siblings. Friends. Children. Spouses. We rightly attend to these, working to maintain a balance among them that will give us a sense of fulfillment and achievement in the lives we are living.

Within these relationships, though, there is still one that is separate, yet inclusive. It is with *ourselves*. You. You and you. You in time. You (subject) reflecting on you (object) -- past, present, prospective. You reflecting on your own living, on you now and you a nanosecond ago, a year ago, on you a year from now.

As we track through time, we are constantly and unavoidably building a relationship with ourselves, with and within our *persona* as it develops in the course of our lives. Importantly, developing a relationship with ourselves is not a solitary enterprise, nor is it an exercise in narcissism. Quite the opposite.

It is primarily through our relationships with others that our own individuality emerges. As we grow, our actions and thoughts will tend to imitate those of the people we like and differ from those of the people we do not. And though imitative in part, there is throughout a base *self* that is adopting the imitated action or thought, or resisting it, or perhaps developing it according to the *persona* emerging inside.

As in our relationships with others, we encourage and criticize ourselves, admonishing our poor choices while

speaking internal words of praise for our successes. This personal dialogue impels us to improve, to build upon our previous actions working continually with the coach within us.

And this emerging never really stops unless we freeze it, unless we say "I will not learn anything new. From this point forward, I will *not* change." Then, of course, it does become a solitary enterprise, one laced with narcissism and doomed to decline. Human consciousness is like any gift. It can be appreciated, nurtured and engaged, or it can be ignored, left unused. It's up to each one of us to engage it, to do with it as we choose and are able.

Most importantly, it is as we search for the self within that we can come to realize that there is something there, a power within us that can reach beyond where we are in the present, an awareness of our ability, certainly a desire, *to will* something.

Now, while there may be a great many definitions of leadership, what it looks like, perhaps it should first be asked *From where does it come?* For our purposes, the following is offered:

Leadership emerges from the human capacity to take deliberate, willful action combining with a sense of self and purpose to make something happen.

Ultimately, it is human will that drives change. And it is this, human will, that leadership brings—the conscious, deliberate willing into the future of that which does not exist in the present.

Change with purpose.

Takeaways

*Change is not a random process –
though it has random effects.*

Change is driven by human consciousness –
a resource with which we all are born and so equipped.

Within the context of the core values of individual worth
and personal responsibility, change is good.
(How else do we get to *better*?)

Change is the *medium* of those who would *lead*.

The Change/Leadership Dynamic

Absent change, leadership is meaningless.

Think about it. In a steady state world, what need is there for leaders?

Absent leadership, change is chaos.

Without leadership, change has neither mother nor father, neither direction nor purpose. Just a bunch of people and things banging and clanging into one other out into infinity.

Change begets leadership.

Change begets leadership, draws it out, seems even to require or to demand it. Fearsome for the follower, change is-for those who would lead-opportunity, the way to *better*.

Leadership begets change.

Leadership initiates change, infuses it with direction and *purpose*.

The *Change/Leadership Dynamic* captures the reality that they are, in fact, contiguous forces. Change is done/initiated by someone else and you react to it. Or, change is initiated by you with others, in turn, reacting to *that*. This is how the world evolves – action, response, action, response...



CONTIGUOUS, DRIVING FORCES

HOW IT ALL WORKS...

Change is to Opportunity as
Opportunity is to Awareness as
Awareness is to Purpose as
Purpose is to Leadership as
Leadership is to Change...

Leadership as Function

Citing change and leadership as *contiguous* is to say, in effect, that they are different.

Change has more to do with the *exogenous* – incorporating factors or referring to outside or beyond our particular system or village...or control. Someone just produced a widget that can go faster than our widget. Or we just made our widget faster than everyone else's widget. *Exogenous has to do with the outside world where things are done that affect us, or we do things in our world that affect it.*

By its nature, leadership is more of the *endogenous* sphere, having to do with factors or referring to *inside* or *within* the persona of a system or village and those in it, even ourselves. It is something nurtured, *emerging* from the human capacity to take deliberate, *willful* action. It is from leadership that a faster widget emerges, comes to be - or even an entirely new *gadget* that makes everyone's widget obsolete, theirs and ours.

And of the two, which is the more impactful? Silicon Valley was a raging swirl of technological discovery and innovation - a micro world of thousands upon thousands of bits and pieces all harnessed and brought to market by leaders, those it spawned and those drawn to it. It was the leaders who brought application and purpose, i.e., directed, intentional *impact*. While the relative energy and expression of change and leadership will vary over time, one in relation to the other, in worlds both macro and micro, on impact, the edge goes to *leadership* for which change is both medium and venue, imbuing it with *purpose*.

As for leadership, it is seen and appreciated as it is *expressed* in the human realms about us, the *domains* of the living of our lives. For example:

- » Cultural
- » Scientific
- » Political
- » Organizational

And it is about the last of these that we are concerned, i.e., *Organizational Leadership*. It was this that so consumed management theorists of the last quarter of the twentieth century with the focus migrating from *Theory X* – Command and Control – to *Theory Y* – Empowerment and Accountability. It was from this track that the *Servant-Leader* model was to emerge and, with it, an ever sharpening fix on *value* and *quality*, all leading us to the following hallmarks of *Organizational Leadership*:

- » Value
- » Quality
- » Empowerment
- » Accountability

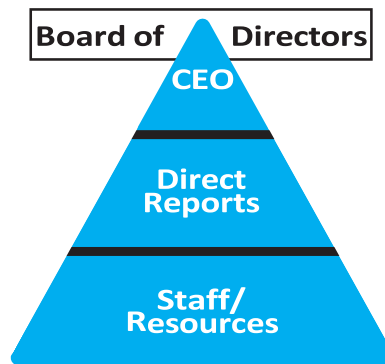
Value	The result or product of an activity fully meets the needs of its intended use; it truly is what it is supposed to be, it truly does what it is supposed to do.
Quality	The activity or process by which the result or product is formulated and made available for use is continually state of the art, cutting edge-and <i>nothing less</i> .
Empowerment	Those engaged in the process of the result's or product's availability are and remain fully drawn into - engaged in and impactful on - the substantive and evolutionary aspects of the producing process' continuing development.
Accountability	Each player/actor in the process takes responsibility for their role and part in the process, i.e., <i>owns</i> it.

The Models

Corporate

In the corporate model, CEO leadership is expressed within a single structure and having executive control over, and direction setting authority on, all matters of significance. Unlike the Association CEO, the corporate CEO plays a direct role in who is to sit on the Board, routinely recruiting candidates to serve on it. And even though most successful corporate executives have moved toward Model Y leadership, the corporate CEO remains the enterprise's key decision maker.

The CEO's impact throughout the corporate structure is *direct*. This is precisely what



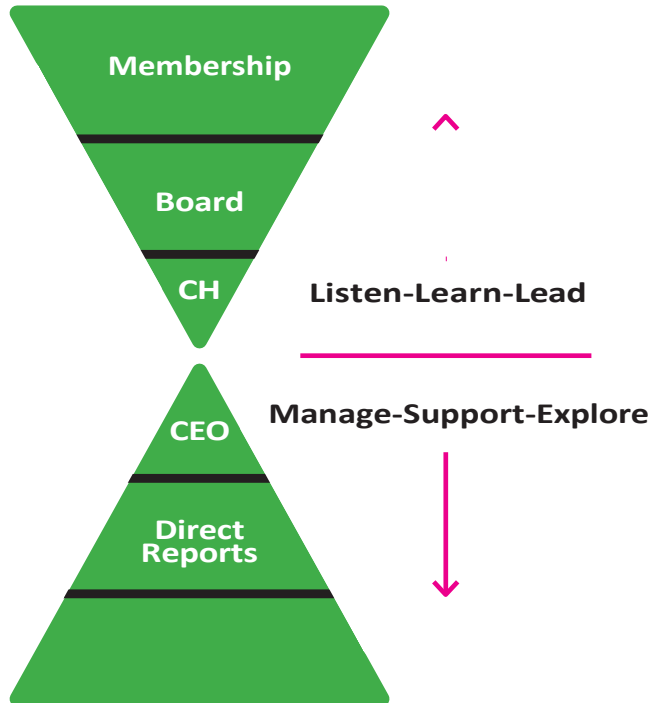
the Chief Executive Officer title was developed to make clear and why it has endured.

And it is here that *Change and Leadership* can be seen as comprising a specific and unique *Element* of the association CEO position. By plan, purpose and effect, the corporate CEO has charge over the entire structure of the enterprise. Again, it is why the term was developed, to assign responsibility for the whole of the corporate structure. An association, on the other hand, is comprised of *two* structures.

First, there is an operational structure over which the CEO has executive leadership authority similar to that of the corporate CEO, i.e., providing *leadership, management, support, resources* and the *drive to explore* new service areas and directions.

Association

Second, there is a *membership structure* comprising a chief elected official (Chair), a board of directors and the membership. For the membership structure, the CEO listens, learns, engages and leads as appropriate to the *circumstances, needs, tradition, culture and dynamics of that particular organization*.



The association CEO's impact on the operational structure of an association can be as direct, or near as direct, as that of the CEO in the corporate model. Within the membership structure of an association, the CEO's impact can range from that of an advisory and inferential role to one of a full partnership, according to the organization's culture and needs, the inclination of its Board, and the ability and strength of its CEO.

It is this *bifurcation* of the association CEO's leadership role that most distinguishes it from the corporate CEO. Understanding and mastering this dimension of the position is perhaps the one, indispensable factor determining success in the position-the one thing at which you can never get too good.