



What I Learned in Two Decades as a Nonprofit CEO

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My Career

- 54-year work career
- 21 years as a chief executive
 - 4 in military
 - 6 in academia (nonprofit)
 - 10 in a well-known mid-sized nonprofit
 - 1 as interim CEO in a small nonprofit
- 11 years as consultant to nonprofit boards and executives

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My Time As a CEO Is Now Over



So, What Did I Learn That Might Be of Interest to You?

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#1 Our Organizations Are Always Changing



1912



2017

Or They Should Be!


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Because The World Is Changing

- Changing society (aging, more diverse)
- Rapid technological advances
- Changing workforce (less middle management, younger employees, multiple career changes)
- Changing corporate climate (more social awareness, involvement)
- Globalization (business, climate, diseases)

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“ . . . in a period of upheavals, such as the one we are living in , change is the norm. . . . But **unless it is seen as the task of the organization to lead change, the organization . . . will not survive.**”



Peter Drucker

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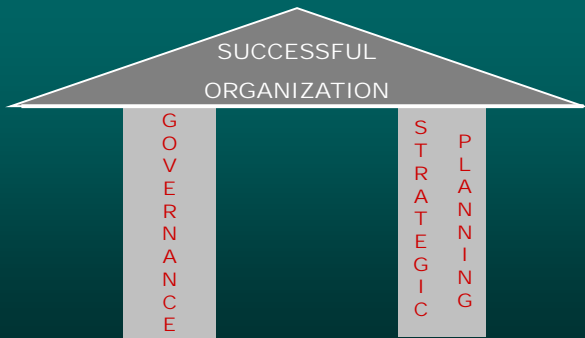


“One cannot *manage* change. One can only be ahead of it.”

Peter Drucker

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Pillars of Success



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Pillar #1

Good Governance

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Governance

- Responsibility of the organization's board of directors
- Carrying out their proper responsibilities
- Must focus on doing the right tasks well



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Governance and Management

Not the same



Governance

Management

But both essential

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Governance Versus Management

- **Governance (Board)**

- Strategic direction
- Policy development
- Resource allocation
- Oversight



- **Management (Exec Dir/Staff)**

- Program planning and execution
- Organizational administration
- Resource utilization
- Board support

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Pillar #2

Effective Strategic Planning

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Strategic Planning Is a Process

- To visualize the road ahead
- To focus organizational vision and priorities
- To build commitment among stakeholders
- To ensure everyone is working toward the same goals



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But This is How Board Members Often Look at Strategic Planning



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Strategic Planning Primer

- Review the organization's mission for currency
- Determine current reality
 - Conduct a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
 - Identify performance gaps in the present
- Envision the desired mid-term future
 - Consider future challenges and opportunities
- Identify obstacles to achieving your vision
- Develop organizational strategies to achieve vision
- Create detailed implementation plans for each strategy

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#2 Managing Change Is Critical

“It is not the strongest of species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”

Charles Darwin

But leading change is not easy!

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You Will Need Strong Leadership

- With:
 - Courage
 - Strong inter-personal skills
 - Positive perceptions within the organization



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Make The Case for Change Absolutely Compelling



This May Require Educating Others on the Need!

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Expect Opposition, Even When It's Not Rational!



Must Deal With This Opposition

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Communications Are Critically Important in Leading Change

- Board meetings
- All member meetings
- Special newsletter
- Interactive forums
- Personal letters/calls



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Track and Publicize Improvements



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External Consultant Might Help



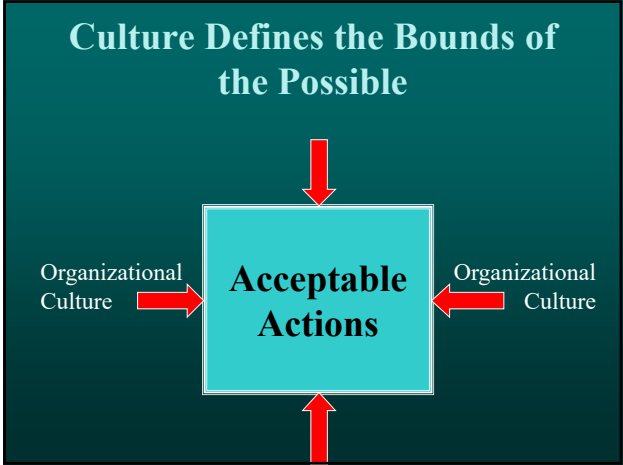
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#3 Every Organization Has a Culture



**You Must
Know Yours!**

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Discovering the Organizational Culture

- Observe
- Ask
- Study



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Example of Organizational Culture

- Volunteer-led, staff supported
- Deliberative decision making
- Decentralized operational management
- Tradition is precious
- Very brand aware
- Fiscally conservative, minimal risk taking
- Tradition of continual improvement, but change must be evolutionary change not revolutionary



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Culture Can Also Be Dangerous

“When so great a wave of change crashes into the society. . . . The very services, procedures and organizational forms that helped them succeed in the past often prove their undoing. Indeed, the first rule of survival is clear:

Nothing is more dangerous than yesterday’s success.”

— Alvin Toffler



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#4 Never Be Satisfied With The Status Quo

“The minute you think you’ve got it made, disaster is just around the corner.”

Joe Paterno

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A Constant Reminder

“No matter how much you have achieved, you will always be merely good relative to what you can become. Greatness is an inherently dynamic process, not an end point. **The moment you think of yourself as great, your slide toward mediocrity will have already begun.”**

Jim Collins

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The Main Task of Leadership



Fuel the Bonfire of Continual Improvement

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#5 Volunteers Are Amazing



But ...

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They Create Challenges

- **Recruitment**
 - Changing society
 - Competition for diversity
 - Expectations (both ways)
- **Motivation**
 - Real leadership is needed
 - Experience must be satisfying to the volunteer
 - Meaningful work
 - Strong recognition programs
 - A say in the organization

True leadership only exists if people follow when they have the freedom not to
- Jim Collins

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Management Challenges (cont.)

- Management of volunteers
 - Not professional at assigned tasks
 - Training required
 - Watch task size and complexit
 - Discipline
 - Limited tools
 - Cannot be overlooked
 - Ensure policies are in place
- Cultural Impacts



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Change in Volunteer Organizations Can Be Difficult!



Consensus Building is the Key!



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#6 Success Is All About Teamwork



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The Magic of the Team

- The military way
 - Downplay the individual
 - Success is achieved by the team
 - Test the team to its limits
 - Experience becomes very special
 - An amazing transformation occurs
 - Commitment to the organization increases



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The Tougher It Is, The More Satisfying It is



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#7 If Something Can Go Wrong



It Will!

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You Must Plan for the Bad Along with the Good



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#8 Nonprofits Are Businesses



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We Have "Customers"



**With
High
Expectations**

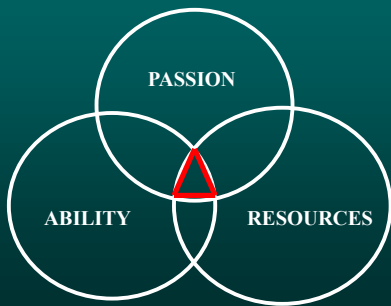
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Always Try To Exceed Expectations



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Need Organizational Discipline



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#9 Begin Preparing for Your Departure the Day You Arrive



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It's Not Paranoia; It's Good Management

- Do you have the right team in place?
- Does everyone know their job?
- Have you appropriately delegated operational authority?
- Have you properly mentored subordinates?
- Is good decision-making institutionalized?
- Are the organization's processes well ingrained?
- Is the organization prepared for the future?
- Does the organization know how it will select your successor?

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#10 Nonprofits Are Great!



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Nonprofit Characteristics

- Incredible People
 - Motivated
 - Dedicated
 - Caring
- Accomplish immeasurable good for communities around the world
- Satisfy human needs



*Nonprofits make the
magic happen!*

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Thank You for What You Do



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Questions?

<https://www.envisionnonprofit.com>

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