



13 COMPETENCIES OF CEOs

Each time we engage in an executive search for a nonprofit organization, we are reminded of the multiple and varied tasks a nonprofit CEO must perform. The expectations of volunteer board members are often unrealistic, and the demands for superb performance often lay beyond human capability.

So what knowledge, skills and expertise are essential for the nonprofit CEO to possess and what are realistic expectations? Following are 13 competencies that contribute most to the success of the CEO in managing a nonprofit corporation. The CEO must be, in a sense, both a quick-change artist and a juggler, donning a different hat for each competency and sometimes juggling several at one time!

1. **Visionist** – The ability to passionately espouse the future of the organization.
2. **Manager** - An understanding of nonprofit corporate structures, legal accountability, policy development and the necessity for compliance with governing documents.
3. **Environmentalist** - The ability to create a harmonious environment in which to work with a volunteer board of directors, staff and other key stakeholders.
4. **Financier** - Assuring financial accountability under the Federal Tax Code and State requirements for maintaining tax exemption, as well as budget preparation, accounting procedures and risk analysis.
5. **Fundraiser** – A working knowledge of the various methodologies to raise charitable funds including Grantseeking, planned giving and major gift solicitation.
6. **Strategist** - Ability to plan, organize, coordinate and implement programs and activities that build organizational capacity.
7. **Communicator** - Ability to communicate effectively, both in writing and presentation, to various audiences.
8. **Volunteer** - An understanding of the value of volunteers within the organization, the willingness to voluntarily “roll-up” ones’ sleeves when needed and the ability to implement creative and rewarding volunteer programs.
9. **Technologist** – A working knowledge of computer technology to encourage strategic usage of the Internet and technology-supported programs and administration.

10. **Coach/Conductor** – Familiarity with contemporary staff development practices to recruit, train, supervise and evaluate employees.
11. **Leader** – Establishing committees that are productive for the organization and personally rewarding for participants.
12. **Negotiator** – Serving as a mediator/negotiator when conflict arises; or, if embroiled in the controversy, the willingness to obtain counsel from a disinterested third-party.
13. **Integrationist** – Seamlessly integrating the 12 competencies into a single user-friendly role.

How does the CEO of your organization measure up to all of these tasks? Use this list of 13 competencies to evolve an evaluation process to evaluate the CEO's performance. You'll probably find that s/he does well, because most nonprofit CEOs do! And it will provide an opportunity to identify and fine-tune certain areas where capabilities can be strengthened.

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