



**New Chamber CEO Fast Start Kit:
Your First 90 Days**



Dear New Executive:

On behalf of the Colorado Chamber of Commerce Executives, congratulations on your new position! We look forward to working with you in the years ahead.

CCCE is here to help you succeed. For a fast start in your new job, we are providing you a “New Chamber CEO Fast Start Kit: Your First 90 Days.” It has some value insights and contact information that you should find useful. In this kit you will find: a CCCE Board roster, ‘Keys to a Fast Start,’ ‘First 90-Days Checklist,’ and a list of Professional Chamber Resources.

Feel free to contact me or the other CCCE board members, if you need assistance. A board member will be in touch with you soon.

Again, congratulations!

Sincerely,

Jack Llewellyn, Chair
Colorado Chamber of Commerce Executives

Your First 90 Days

Keys to a Fast Start

- Have a plan! This transition period is an important time that will help you succeed over the long-term.
- There is nothing magical about 90 days or 100 days per se. However, there is something magical about having a specific period of time to devote an intense amount of focused time and energy to getting command of your new position and putting your stamp on the organization. Take advantage of the ‘new guy / gal thing’ while you can.
- The goal of your ‘90-Day Plan’ is to get a quick, strong start in your new position by learning what is on people’s minds, assessing people and situations with your own eyes, making new impressions about the chamber and its CEO and building relationships that will endure during your tenure as CEO.
- If you’re new to the chamber profession, welcome! Leading a chamber of commerce is intrinsically rewarding and you can have a positive impact on your community. Chambers are not charities, they are not clubs and they certainly are not government. They are local associations of business and professional people working to accomplish common goals. To learn more about chambers of commerce visit the American Chamber of Commerce Executives website: <http://www.acce.org/faq/information-office>.
- Managing and leading a chamber of commerce is a profession and there are many professional resources available to help you succeed. A list of other chamber / association resources is attached.
- Depending on the size of the chamber, you may be inheriting a staff. Every circumstance is different but it’s typical for the staff to be excited about a new start and worried for their jobs. Find a balance between being ‘easy to get along with’ and imposing your will. You are the boss but you need them to get you started right. Do be careful about making quick decisions in the early days at the request of a staff member or the overall staff until you understand the circumstances.
- Listen twice as much as you talk. Your learning curve is steep and it’s hard to learn while you’re talking.
- Work hard during this time and put in the hours. You have a lot to learn about the community and the chamber and this time investment will payoff. If you moved to the community and your family has yet to join you, this is an ideal time to for guilt-free hours on the job.

Your First 90 Days

First 90 Days Checklist

- ___ Prior to your first day have the interim president and executive committee members provide you with a **list ‘key people to meet’ and have someone begin scheduling them for you.** The list will include key members, news media, local government officials (city, county), education officials, past chairs, other key business groups (economic development, tourism, downtown association, other chambers in the area, etc), other influencers.
- ___ **Talk to all board members.** Get to know them. Key issues? Key people I need to know? What do you think the top priorities are? Is the board expecting status quo or big changes? What’s the balance between the two? How is the chamber perceived in the community? With members? Other things you think I should know? What do I need to get done over the next year to be considered successful? Are there any discontented board members or staff that I need to be aware of?
- ___ **Get clear on expectations.** What is in the Chamber’s current plan of action? Is it realistic or do you have recommended changes? Lay out what you plan to accomplish over the short- and long-term and get input and concurrence from your leaders. Also review your job description and propose revisions if appropriate.
- ___ **Meet with each staff member one-on-one.** Have them brief you on their job descriptions, ask them what needs to get accomplished in the next 90 days. What is on their calendars for the next 90 days?
- ___ **Meet past chairs.** Invite past chairs to breakfast or lunch as a group to get acquainted. They will be surprised and flattered that you asked. You’ll gain some insights about the chamber and develop a group of supporters.
- ___ **Hold a staff planning session.** Have key staff members brief the full group on their department’s goals, key issues and what needs to get accomplished in the next 90 – 180 days. This is an opportunity for you to take the measure of your team and to begin shaping the Chamber’s priorities in your image.
- ___ **Identify key meetings** of committees, membership events, public meetings that you should attend and get them on your calendar.
- ___ Depending on the circumstances of their departure and their relationship with the chamber, **contact your predecessors to get their feedback** and advice.
- ___ **Get a briefing on top government affairs issues.** What are the Chamber’s top priorities? What are the Chamber’s positions on issues? How is policy set at the Chamber?
- ___ Read the Chamber’s **bylaws.**

- ___ Read past year's worth of the Chamber's **newsletters and electronic newsletters**.
- ___ Read member **surveys**.
- ___ Read the past 3 years worth of **Executive Committee and Board meeting minutes**.
- ___ **Request feedback from your Executive Committee informally every 30 days**. 'You know what I've been working on and who I'm meeting with. What else should I be doing?'
- ___ Read the Chamber's past 3 **annual reports and plans of action**.
- ___ Read the Chamber's **strategic plan**.
- ___ Review the **past 3 audits** and the all of the **past year's monthly financial statements and the budget**. Regarding the budget, review it in detail to understand how realistic it is, especially the income projections. If they are not realistic, work with your bookkeeper / staff accountant and staff to develop a revised budget to present to your treasurer, finance committee and executive committee.
- ___ Read **committee minutes**, 1-2 years worth.
- ___ Ask that a **financial audit be performed**. You are inheriting someone else's finances. Are they an honest reflection of the current situation?
- ___ Read the Chamber's current **contracts** and understand the practices the Chamber uses to secure contracts.
- ___ Develop and implement a plan to **introduce you to members** – use of an already scheduled general membership meeting, newsletter, mail, email, electronic newsletter and social media (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc).
- ___ **Call at least one member per day to introduce yourself**, ask about what the biggest issues are with their firm and in the community.
- ___ **Make contact with key Chamber professionals and resources** to say hello and introduce yourself:
 - Call CCCE's Chair, Donna Evans, Colorado Women's Chamber, 303-458-0220, devans@cwcc.org
 - Visit CCCE's website, <http://cochamberexecs.com/>
 - Call Chuck Berry, President, Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry, (303) 831-7411
 - Visit CACI's website, www.cochamber.com/
 - Call Dave Kilby, President, Western Association of Chamber Executives (WACE), (916) 930-1202
 - Visit WACE's website, www.waceonline.com/
 - Call Mick Fleming, American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE), 703/998-3553
 - Visit ACCE's website, www.acce.org
- ___ **Send a brief email to the Chair and Executive Committee each week** to update them on what you've been doing.
- ___ Read resources on transitioning to a new chamber.
- ___ Keep a running list of 'to do's', questions and possible changes.

Professional Chamber Resources

In the Chamber of Commerce profession, we have professional organizations at the state and national level that provide services to us, including these eight:

Professional Societies (professional development and services)	Chambers of Commerce (lobbying)
<p><u>State:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorado Chamber of Commerce Executives (CCCE) • Colorado Society of Association Executives (CSAE) 	<p><u>State:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry (CACI)
<p><u>National / Regional:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) • American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) • Institute for Organization Management (a program of the U.S. Chamber) • Western Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (WACE) 	<p><u>National:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States Chamber of Commerce (USCC)

Professional Societies for Chamber Staff

The chamber profession has several state and national professional societies that provide services to people working for chambers of commerce. The most common services include professional development and peer networking.

Colorado Chamber of Commerce Executives (<http://cochamberexecs.com/>)

The Colorado Chamber of Commerce Executives (CCCE) is an organization of local Colorado chamber professionals whose purpose is to improve the professionalism of chambers in Colorado and provide a forum for the exchange of ideas.

Colorado Society of Association Executives (www.csaenet.org)

The Colorado Society of Association Executive's mission is to support association executives in the ongoing pursuit of knowledge, wisdom and continued professional excellence.

American Chamber of Commerce Executives (www.acce.org)

The American Chamber of Commerce Executives' mission is to enhance the professional effectiveness and personal well being of chamber employees. A great place to learn about chambers of commerce in general and to access the rich online resources of ACCE is through its Information Office <http://www.acce.org/faq/information-office/>

American Society of Association Executives (www.asaenet.org)

The American Society of Association Executives provides services and professional development for people working in the nonprofit / association community.

Institute for Organization Management (<http://institute.uschamber.com>)

Institute is a professional development program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for those in the association, chamber of commerce, and other related nonprofit industries.

Western Association of Chamber Executives (www.waceonline.com)

WACE's mission is to enhance and promote the professional growth and competence of Chamber of Commerce Executives. They've been around since 1924 as the association serving chambers professionals in California. In 1995 the association dropped its California boundary and became the Western Association of Chamber Executives (W.A.C.E.).

State and National Chambers

Your chamber of commerce is an independent organization that works on behalf of its members at the local and regional level. There are chambers at the state and national level also. It's good to have a positive working relationship with them but keep in mind that your chamber is independent from the state and national chambers. You may voluntarily work with them to advance issues important to your members but you are not required to.

Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry (www.cochamber.com)

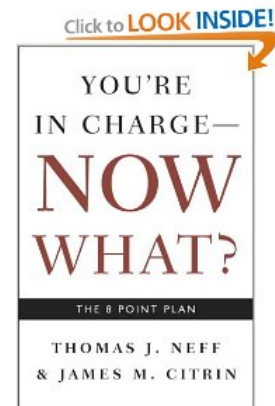
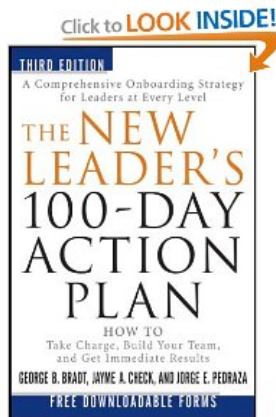
The Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry's purpose is to champion free enterprise, a healthy business environment and economic

prosperity for all Coloradans. CACI is the ‘state chamber of commerce’ and its primary focus is to lobby state government.

United States Chamber of Commerce (www.uschamber.com)

The mission of the US Chamber is to advance human progress through an economic, political and social system based on individual freedom, incentive, initiative, opportunity, and responsibility. Their staff of experts—policy specialists, lobbyists, and lawyers—make up a not-for-profit business federation, representing businesses, state and local chambers, associations and 103 American Chambers of Commerce abroad. Their members include businesses of all sizes and sectors—from large Fortune 500 companies to home-based, one-person operations. 96% of their membership encompasses businesses with fewer than 100 employees.

Other Resources for Over-Achievers



Edition 1 – March 2014