



New Executive Director Resource Guide

Welcome to the most exciting job you will ever have!

We have resources and connections for you and we are here to help you succeed. Lean on your peer advisors. We were all where you are now at one time.

Take advantage of these first couple of months to get organized and learn as much as you can about your organization. Boards, volunteers, key players, sponsors, events, etc.

As you talk with key players in your organization, ask them questions about their business, about their involvement in the Chamber and the Community. Build strong relationships right from the start by listening and asking them about their pain points in their business. Ask about how the Chamber is perceived by your members and by the Community.

As the new Executive Director, you may have inherited a team of employees, or a team of volunteers. With new leadership, some employees and volunteers can be nervous about new leadership and fearful of their job and changes to come. Take care in making changes in the organization too quickly.

Listen more than you talk. Your learning curve is a steep one, whether you are new to the chamber world altogether or new to a community. You may know in your mind the changes you want to make, but take care in making sure you understand the environment fully before doing so.

Take time to learn the database and accounting program that you use. Understand the budget and the financials inside and out. If you have never read a profit and loss statement before, it is okay, call us here at CCCE and we will teach you. Again, we have all been where you are.

Does your organization have a Strategic Plan? If so, read it and understand it. Learn from your team where your chamber is in achieving its goals. Where are you falling short and where are you making great things happen?

Perform an Environmental Scan and a SWOT analysis. Understand your chamber's strengths and weaknesses.

The first couple of months you are in this position, many people will want to meet with you and you may have inherited a lot of seats on Boards of Directors in the Community. It is important to manage your time wisely and schedule administrative/learning time in your calendar so it does not get overlooked.

Get a list of key people to meet and begin to schedule meetings with them. This list can come from the previous exec or the Board of Directors. This list should include sponsors, elected officials, other business groups (economic development groups), the city manager, downtown associations, neighboring chamber execs and other influencers.

When you meet with your Board of Directors individually, find out the top priorities of the business community and of the chamber. What are the expectations of you? Are there any discontented board members or volunteers that you need to be aware of?

Meet with your team one-on-one. Have them brief you on their job description, ask them what needs to be accomplished in the next 90 days. Find out what is on their calendar in the next 90 days.

Get clear on the expectations. What is your chamber's current plan of action? Is it realistic or are there recommended changes? Lay out what you plan to accomplish over the short-term and long-term and get input and concurrence from your leadership.

Once you have a 90 plan, that your leadership is on board with, meet with your team to brief the group on their goals, key issues and what needs to be accomplished during that time frame.

Identify important meetings of committees, membership events, public meetings that you should attend and get them on your calendar.

Understand your Government Affairs policies. What are the chamber's top priorities? What are the chamber's position on issues? How is policy set at the chamber?

Read the chamber's bylaws.

Read the chamber's past year's newsletters and e-communications.

Read member surveys.

Read the past years' worth of Executive Committee meeting minutes and Board meeting minutes.

Review the last audit and all of the past year's monthly financial statements.

Read and understand any contracts that your chamber has in place.

Develop and implement a plan to introduce yourself to the membership (e-communication, social media, events, etc.)

Call at least one member per day to introduce yourself and ask about what the biggest issues are facing their business.

There are many professional resources available to you. Reach out to us at CCCE. Here is an updated list of our Executive Director and our Board Members. <https://cochamberexecs.com/officersboard/>
National resources include: American Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE), American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), Institute of Organizational Management (a program of the US Chamber), Western Association of Chamber Executives (WACE) and the Colorado Society of Association Executives (CSAE). Legislatively, you can reach out to the Colorado Chamber or to the US Chamber of Commerce.

The Colorado Chamber of Commerce Executives is here to help. We hope to hear from you soon and are looking forward to watching your successes in the position.