

A Trusted Advisor to Companies on Their Purpose Journeys

An Interview with Daryl Brewster, Chief Executive Officer, CECP

EDITORS' NOTE Daryl Brewster has served as the CEO of Krispy Kreme Doughnuts; President of Kraft's \$6-billion North American Snacks, Confections, Cereal, and Pet portfolio; President of the \$2-billion Planters Specialty Products Company; and Managing Director of Campbell Soup's U.K./European operations. In addition, Brewster serves on several public, private, and nonprofit boards.



Daryl Brewster

ORGANIZATION BRIEF Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose (CECP) is a trusted advisor to companies on their corporate purpose journeys. Working with CEOs and leaders in corporate responsibility, sustainability, foundations, investor relations, finance, legal, and communications, CECP (cecp.co) shares actionable insights with its CEO-led coalition to address stakeholder needs. Founded in 1999 by actor and philanthropist Paul Newman and other business leaders, CECP is a movement of more than 200+ of the world's largest companies that represent \$7.7 trillion in revenues, \$37.4 billion in total community investment, 14 million employees, 22.5 million hours of employee engagement, and \$21 trillion in assets under management. CECP helps companies transform through research, benchmarking, strategy, convening, and communications in the areas of societal/community investment, employee engagement, environmental social governance/sustainable business, diversity equity inclusion, and telling the story.

Will you highlight the history of CECP and how the organization has evolved?

Since its founding in 1999 by Paul Newman and leading CEOs, Chief Executives

for Corporate Purpose (CECP) has focused on being a trusted advisor to companies on their purpose journeys. Today, more than 200 of the world's largest companies, which represent \$7.7 trillion in revenues, \$37.4 billion in total community investment, 14 million employees, 22.5 million hours of employee engagement, and \$21 trillion in assets under management, are a part of the coalition. The field of corporate social responsibility has evolved from a "philanthropy mindset" into one that's driven more than ever

by overall corporate purpose and work that is rooted in the core business strategy and stakeholder needs.

Given this shift, about 10 years ago CECP started to pivot towards environmental, social, governance (ESG) and sustainable business, focusing on the importance of long-term business strategy. We walk companies through our proprietary Integrated Long-Term Plan framework where they can map their sustainable business strategy over the next three to five years. That plan is tailored to each company and industry.

How do you define CECP's mission and purpose?

Over the last 24 years, CECP's driving purpose is to empower companies to drive long-term business success through positive social impact.

Will you provide an overview of the services that CECP provides to its member companies?

CECP provides its 200+ affiliated companies with a host of services including research, benchmarking, strategy, convening, and communications, as well as opportunities

for deeper engagement such as customized studies and convenings tailored to the company's specific areas of focus. We primarily serve CEOs and leaders in corporate responsibility, corporate sustainability, corporate foundation, investor relations, finance, communications, and legal counsel roles. Our services are structured around five Centers of Excellence:

- Societal/Community Investment
- Employee Engagement
- Environmental, Social, Governance/Sustainable Business
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Telling the Story

Companies looking for support on their purpose journeys and help in advancing their priority areas are invited to explore our website at CECP.co or reach out to info@cecp.co.

Will you discuss CECP's strength and investment in research and thought leadership?

Over 22 years, CECP has created the largest and most historical data set on trends in the industry, shared by more than 585 multi-billion-dollar companies, representing more than \$312 billion in corporate social investments over that time span. One of our key annual reports, Giving in Numbers™, is embraced by professionals across all sectors globally to understand how corporations invest in society, with topics ranging from cash and in-kind/product, employee volunteerism and giving, and impact measurement. From quick questions to presentations to company teams, boards, and CEOs, CECP is a trusted advisor to companies because of its research and thought leadership that includes providing customized insights to advance strategy and measure the business value.

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Will you discuss some of CECP’s recent research findings?

CECP’s Giving in Numbers™: 2022 Edition, found in 2021 that the median total community investment was \$25.8 million. Companies moved away from the scale of community investments they made in 2020 as many of the immediate needs of the pandemic subsided. However, it’s a story of overall growth from pre-pandemic levels to those in 2021; 58 percent of companies increased their total community investment between 2019 and 2021 and 35 percent of companies increased their budgets by more than 25 percent.

According to the 2022 Edelman Trust Barometer, business holds onto its position as the most trusted institution. For example, businesses such as Logitech and Zoetis, both of which were highlighted as CECP Company Spotlights this year, co-founded the Coalition for Gender Fair Procurement which leverages the market power of an alliance of companies asking suppliers to improve on gender equality and align with their values.

Another report, Corporate Foundations: Designing for Impact, finds that corporate foundations are vital levers within society and companies. For example, 28 percent of companies conduct all employee engagement (volunteering and matching gifts) through the foundation and another 45 percent use the foundation for either volunteering or matching-gift programs.

But, as businesses now have higher trust from stakeholders, they also experience heightened expectations. To quote one of CECP’s founders, Paul Newman, companies can continue to “do more.”

CECP has been a convener by bringing leaders together through several events. Will you discuss CECP’s commitment to facilitating conversation and action with these events?

We understand the value of convening others in the corporate responsibility space – including sharing ideas, asking questions, and meeting new and old friends. At the annual CECP Summit, over 200 corporate leaders who drive social strategies at the world’s largest companies come together. This vital corporate network engages and learns together, offering powerful insights on trends, partnerships, and the business case to advance companies’ roles as a force for good in society.

CECP’s Board of Boards CEO-only event is noted in *Forbes* as one of the top three “power player” CEO convenings. This event is a unique opportunity for corporate leaders to share insights and best practices and to help advance the business case for ESG and stakeholder capitalism. By coming together for this event, CEOs demonstrate their commitment to CECP’s mission – to create a better world through business – and to discuss the theme, Purpose-Driven Leadership in a Volatile World. The 2023 in-person event is November 13 in New York City.

And lastly, CECP’s 11th CEO Investor Forum – both online and in person – is focused on climate and will be held November 14-15. CEOs – such as Barbara Humpton, CEO, Siemens USA; Calvin Butler, CEO, Exelon; Mark Schneider, CEO, Nestle, and more – will share Integrated Long-Term Plans including key forward-looking metrics specifically on their company’s future growth, strategy, and risk – three to five years out – with institutional investors and companies.

How valuable has it been to CECP’s work to build such an engaged and committed board of directors?

The board has been invaluable to our growth. Since day one of our coalition, we have had an all-CEO board and CEO advisors who bring priceless knowledge about companies and their operations. As such, they provide respected insight and guidance, as well as an ability to build trust and communication between the board and our management.

What do you see as the responsibility that leading companies have to being a force for good in society and addressing societal issues?

The responsibility that leading companies have today is evaluating and determining what issues matter to them, and how they should speak up. There is a lot of noise in the media nowadays, but one message is coming through clearly and consistently: workers and other key stakeholders want companies to react to the major events that impact their lives. And no matter how much this might unnerve some CEOs or their boards, there is no going back to the old world of companies’ limited role in society. With businesses viewed as the most trusted institution, expectations remain high for its leaders to step up and make positive societal change.

What do you tell young people beginning their careers about the importance of working for a company that is purpose-driven and making a difference?

My advice is to consider not only how you can make a living, but also how you can make the world a better place as you do so. As Winston Churchill noted, “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” ●

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