

A Force for Good

An Interview with
Daryl Brewster, Chief Executive Officer, CECP

EDITORS' NOTE Daryl Brewster has served as the turnaround CEO of Krispy Kreme Doughnuts, Inc.; 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's U.K./European operations. In addition, Brewster founded a boutique consulting firm, served on the board of E*Trade Financial Holding Company, and currently serves on the board of several privately held companies and nonprofit organizations.



Daryl Brewster

ORGANIZATION BRIEF CECP (cecp.co), a global nonprofit organization, draws together and empowers a coalition of CEOs who believe societal improvement is an essential measure of business performance. CECP fosters executive leadership, collaboration, innovation, and measurement among Fortune 500 companies striving to solve some of the world's most pressing problems through the skills and resources of their companies. CECP includes more than 170 CEOs and chairpersons of multi-billion-dollar corporations representing approximately \$20 billion of annual corporate giving.

How do you anticipate CECP evolving under your leadership?

CECP was founded in 1999 by Paul Newman, the actor, and several leading CEOs, with the notion that the world's corporations could and should be a force for good in society.

The focus in the early days was on philanthropic giving and encouraging companies to give at the rate that some individuals had given.

Over the past 15 years, the organization has evolved as the world has evolved, and led a move beyond philanthropy to the point where we're working with the world's leading companies to help them engage with and invest in society to make this a better world, while driving business performance.

CECP is about societal engagement and investment. This organization has grown to some 200 world-leading companies, which generate \$7 trillion a year in revenue, employ more than 14 million people, contribute more than \$14 billion of annual societal investment, and seek to be a force for good in the world.

Our goal going forward is to build on that great foundation so that CECP and its companies can continue to be a force for good in the 21st century.

At what level do you work with your member companies?

It varies for each company, but there are four levels. A lot of our day-in and day-out interaction is with the CSR, corporate citizenship head, and the foundation head – but it varies. You could call this the Chief Societal Investment Officer today.

Second are CEOs, who are beginning to understand the power of being engaged in society. Millennials are changing the course of what's important as employees, as consumers, and as investors.

Third, we're helping companies overall. Marketing and HR departments are really interested. We have several CFOs who are excited to look at societal investment as an investment option.

Fourth, we're seeing companies partner to address societal challenges, collaborating cross-company or with other nonprofits or public/private partnerships.

Has there been a focus to build CECP internationally?

We are largely U.S. focused, but most of our members are multinationals – 20 percent of our companies are headquartered outside of the U.S. and 90 percent of our companies do business outside the U.S. This is a growth area for us. CECP launched the Giving Around the Globe report this past year and partners with companies and organizations in Brazil, India, Mexico, Korea, and around the world. We are frequently asked to speak at conferences internationally. We also see real interest in non-U.S. headquartered companies as well as companies in the U.S. that have a global reach.

CECP has been the leader in building measurement standards. How do you continue to innovate in that area?

Underpinning CECP's mission has been the proprietary database that we operate and run; we now do that along with The Conference Board, so it is a partnership effort.

Over the past decade, we have tracked well over \$100 billion of corporate societal investment. We know where companies are investing and how. We know companies' interests, which provides CECP and its companies enormous insight on a quantitative basis of what companies are doing. This provides a good foundation, and enables benchmarking and best practices. The analysis of that information, Giving in Numbers, is available free of charge to the public.

We also have a Strategic Engagement team, which connects with our companies to see their needs, priorities, and challenges. In this space, we know priorities and challenges for 150 companies. We know what they're up against; some are day-to-day issues and for others, it's big strategic challenges and how they can work with other companies to solve major concerns.

This offers tremendous insight. I don't know of another organization of our size that touches more companies every quarter – we're talking about having a dialogue with more than 100 companies a quarter, be it via a roundtable or individual conversations to understand what they're doing and exploring. This gives CECP a great opportunity to understand the key issues and best practices.

In addition, CECP holds the CECP Excellence Awards; we have three or four dozen companies a year that enter. It has provided real-world case studies of companies doing some amazing things. It has also enabled us to create some pillars that represent some of the best practices that companies are able to institute.

Beyond that, we provide thought leadership to help address the issues companies are concerned about and advance the available knowledge base.

We also hold conferences at CECP – such as our Board of Boards CEO Roundtable, which Forbes ranked as one of the world's top three “power player” meetings, along with Davos; the annual CECP Summit in the Spring designed for leaders in corporate citizenship and giving; and our growing roundtable series.

We also have a team leading our marketing and communications so we can get the story out and give CEOs and companies the platform to talk about some of the great things going on in the space. Last year, the team's efforts resulted in more than two billion impressions.

It's a comprehensive approach, but built on a foundation of research, measurement, CEO insights, and continued connection with our companies.

Are you surprised by the level of engagement at the top?

The depth and strength of these relationships continues to impress me. One of our opportunities is to provide alternative ways for CEOs to tell their stories, so the companies and others can benefit. CEOs know this is what great companies do, and they're seeing specific business benefits from being engaged and looking to address societal challenges.

It has always been the role of business to meet unmet needs in society. Citizens expect that now more than ever. ●