

Corporate Societal Engagement

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 several public, private, and nonprofit boards.



Daryl Brewster

ORGANIZATION BRIEF CECP (cecp.co), a global nonprofit organization, is a coalition of 150 CEOs from some of the world's largest companies across a wide range of industries who are united in the belief that societal improvement is an essential measure of business performance. CECP fosters executive leadership, collaboration, innovation, and measurement among more than 200 affiliated leading global companies striving to solve some of the world's most pressing problems through their skills and resources.

How has the organization evolved and how do you define the value of CECP?

CECP was founded by Paul Newman and leading CEOs 15 years ago with the notion that business could and should be a force for good in society.

In the early days, the focus was on corporate philanthropy, but this has evolved into the more strategic practice of corporate societal engagement and investment. Companies are creating programs that align with the values and purpose of their employees, stakeholders, and customers and identifying measurable goals for these programs as they would for any investment they make.

CECP has evolved as the world has evolved. Today, we are a leadership voice in corporate societal investment. We foster best practices, networking, innovative solutions, and measurable results for business to be a driving force for change in society.

What approach does the organization take to that mandate today?

We look at the role as a dual-mandate. The first mandate is to support the over 200 companies we have which represent more than \$7 trillion in annual revenue and \$20 billion of yearly giving. The second mandate is to advance the movement, so as to get a deeper and broader array of companies to engage in both the U.S. and abroad.

We engage through two audiences. The first are CEOs, who are critical to creating a culture that prioritizes and values corporate societal investment. This includes more than 150 current CEOs and an additional 60 graduate CEOs, some of whom are among the top directors in the world right now. The second very important audience is the lead responsible for company giving. The title of this individual varies company to company from "Head of Corporate Social Responsibility," to "Foundation President" or "Director of Community Relations."

Each company is a bit different, but the strategic work is often done at the CEO level while the operational responsibilities are at the CSR level.

Should corporate responsibility be so intertwined with the business?

Different companies have different strategies, but in general, yes. More of the investments by companies back into society today come from cash directly out of the business and are not run through a foundation. As a result, it's increasingly treated like any other investment that a company might make. As long as companies are solving problems and can do so in a sustainable way, it is a good thing for business to get involved this way. In fact, the Edelman Trust Report finds that over 80 percent of citizens expect businesses to help society while earning a profit. We firmly believe that by harnessing the resources, people, and assets, a business will create higher quality solutions to these challenges.

Does it all need to start with an engaged CEO and a top-down approach?

What we have seen is that corporate societal investment accelerates when CEOs are engaged. They set the tone, purpose, and culture to make it a priority. CECP Excellence Award winners Indra Nooyi (PepsiCo) and Bob Moritz (PwC) are excellent examples.

Sometimes, this desire starts with the DNA of the company and grows through the grassroots of an organization. It is driven by generations of leadership at a company where it has become embedded into the organization, as at CECP companies like Merck and Allstate. Often, it is the CEO who gets it started, but if they're going to make it sustainable and advance society, it must be embedded and ingrained within the organization.

What are the different levels of engagement that you have with member companies?

CECP works on several levels with companies and each company engages with CECP in a slightly different way.

It starts with our Strategic Engagement team, where CECP works to understand each company's top priorities. We now have feedback on priorities from some 200 companies through more than 100 conversations with companies each quarter. This team also provides fast-track consulting where we connect companies to issues and accelerate their process at the CEO and corporate citizenship/CSR level.

CECP also offers proprietary trends data through its Research and Measurement team. This gives CECP fact-based credibility and the most extensive database in the space, containing the analysis of hundreds of billions of dollars of community investment. More than 300 companies participated in CECP surveys last year in the U.S. in partnership with The Conference Board, and also abroad.

CECP conducts hundreds of customized data solutions for its companies, and also shares general trends and insights more broadly as to how companies invest, where they invest and, increasingly, the impact they see.

A third area involves CECP's ability to draw upon people to network and create groups to address challenges collaboratively. CECP's signature events are well known. The CECP CEO Board of Boards, now in its 10th year, has been ranked as one of the top three CEO events by *Forbes*. CECP will also hold its 13th CECP Summit for corporate citizenship leaders this spring in New York and now holds a West Coast Summit each fall. In addition, CECP also holds roundtables at multiple levels. These focus on industries, issues, or by community/region.

A fourth approach is through our Marketing & Communications team, where CECP helps companies tell their stories both internally and externally, celebrates the best in the field, and also shares insights and trends. Last year, CECP generated more than three billion impressions through media like *Harvard Business Review*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes*, *Bloomberg Business Week*, and *LEADERS*.

With years of data, hundreds of case studies and thousands of company touch points, CECP is seen as the go-to expert in corporate societal engagement. This provides CECP with an unparalleled vantage point to see the major trends and their implications. CECP shows companies how they can be a "force for good in society" in a way that advances society and helps companies. We call it "winning on purpose." As a result, CECP is increasingly asked to share these insights with companies and at conferences around the world. ●