

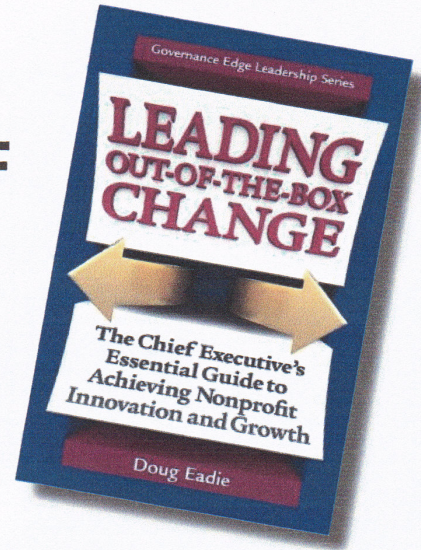
INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP...

The Change-Savvy INNOVATOR-IN-CHIEF



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In his new book, *Leading Out-of-the-Box Change: Essential Guide to Achieving Nonprofit Innovation and Growth*, Doug Eadie deals with three main topics: The leadership role of your chief executive officer as innovator-in-chief; the key elements of a powerful new change planning tool: the Change Investment Portfolio Process; and how to transform association governing bodies into strong advocates for-- and committed owners of-- out-of-the-box change initiatives.



The following article is excerpted from Doug's book.

CEOs who succeed in the Innovator-in-Chief role are what I think of as change-savvy. The change-savvy CEOs that I've worked with and observed:

- Are technically very knowledgeable about best practices in the rapidly changing area of change planning and management, which means she isn't wedded to conventional planning wisdom and out-of-date approaches. You'll never hear a change-savvy CEO extolling the virtues of traditional long-range (or strategic) planning as a change tool, much less catch her fondling a ten-pound five year plan.
- Realize that successfully bringing off out-of-the-box change against all odds requires that she make leading the change planning and implementation process a top-tier priority. In practice, this means that the change-savvy CEO makes a firm commitment of time to leading change from the top and never tries to delegate one piece of another of this leadership role to lieutenants.
- Recognize that leading out-of-the-box change as Innovator-in-Chief of the organization is more psychological and political in nature than technical. Not only does the change-savvy CEO understand that fear is more often than not at the heart of staff resistance to change, she also takes strong, visible steps to allay that fear through the clear articulation of vision and other motivational steps that are intended to inspire and energize participants in the change process. The change-savvy CEO also pays close attention to the transformation of key stakeholders into ardent change champions.
- And command the respect of staff members and key stakeholders, primarily by playing a very aggressive and visible change-leadership role and practicing what she's preaching in the change arena. A change-savvy CEO knows that her leadership credibility depends on walking that talk, never contradiction in practice what she's saying publicly.

In addition to the characteristics I've just described, the CEOs I've observed who have been most successful at accomplishing out-of-the-box change have possessed three powerful character traits: courage; deep emotional self-awareness; and fundamental self-confidence. Being courageous and steadfast in leading change planning and management is a critical CEO trait. It never fails: the farther change planning moves outside the box in your organization, the more fear, anxiety, tension, and often anger you're likely to see. As you've probably already observed, fear (which feel quite weak) is often quickly transformed in indignation (which feel far stronger), and who's a more convenient culprit and target of anger than the highly visible Innovator-in-Chief who's leading the change charge? The CEOs I've seen do a great job of leading out-of-the-box change are loaded with calcium. That doesn't mean they're insensitive Genghis Khans bludgeoning staff into change -- quite the contrary. But it does mean they don't cave under pressure. They expect the resistance and frequent anger; and they withstand it.

The absence of deep emotional self-awareness can seriously limit the impact of a CEO in leading out-of-the-box change. I've seen CEOs who couldn't capitalize on the talents and commitment of strong women on their executive teams because they found such strengths threatening. I've observed CEOs who were unsuccessful in building critical partnerships and joint ventures with other organizations because they saw the world as a dark and dangerous place filled with competitors waiting to do them in. And, I've come across CEOs who need for security and control made them intolerant of the give-and-take or wide-open discussion and led them to impose on their organizations mechanistic long-range planning processes that substituted neatness and order for creative questioning and exploration. In these and other cases, what has struck me over the years is how hidden, unrecognized emotions can sabotage CEOs, causing them to see the world through an internal lens that distorts objective reality, and, hence, leads to inappropriate behavior.

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