



Transition Works

Challenges of the Chief Operating Officer (COO)

The role of Chief Operating Officer (COO) is both complex and critical to organizational success. In fact, some argue that the number two position is the toughest job in an organization. Typically, COOs are the key individuals responsible for the delivery of results on a day-to-day, quarter-to-quarter basis. They play an important role in executing strategies developed in collaboration with the entire senior leadership team and board. And, in many cases, they are being groomed to be the organization's executive successor.

The COOs with whom we interface consistently mention three interrelated issues both as challenges of being a COO and as keys to success in the position: defining the COO role clearly, forging a strong working relationship with the ED/CEO, and managing variety and complexity.

Despite these challenges, the COO role has not received much attention. But as a current COO or EVP, you probably know all of this. But, does your ED/CEO? The short answer is ... "maybe."

We have facilitated a successful CEO roundtable for senior nonprofit leaders for the last three years. Because they have experienced the benefits of a peer roundtable, our CEO Group has suggested that COO's (including their own) could benefit from participating in a similar group program. The peer roundtable provides members with the opportunity to discuss their greatest challenges in a confidential, supportive environment. Participants are able to engage the entire group in problem solving and information sharing, and as a result, increase their knowledge and expand their leadership capabilities.

We are launching our COO Roundtable in the spring of 2010. To learn more about this new roundtable, the benefits of participation, and to help shape its focus, please contact us:

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