



How to Make Smart Strategic Decisions

Interview with MacKay CEO Forums member [Allan Russell](#), President & CEO, [McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd.](#)

McElhanney Consulting Services Ltd. is an employee-owned company with 20+ offices across Western Canada providing a wide range of integrated services.

What do you do as CEO to ensure that you are making smart strategic decisions?

McElhanney is one of the largest, independently owned engineering and survey companies in Canada. As an employee-owned company, the key to making smart strategic decisions is to look for business opportunities where "1+1=3." In other words, we try to derive multiple benefits from each initiative. They must positively impact on our people, our clients and partners, our communities, the delivery of our projects, and, ultimately, our financial success. New opportunities are often linked to other services offered, geographic regions and markets served, and identified as needed by existing key or new strategic clients. They are championed by senior McElhanney leaders. By planning in this way, we increase the probability of long-term success. This is part of what's kept us in business since 1910.

How do you involve your senior leadership team in making smart strategic decisions?

Our senior leadership team actively plans and implements our strategic direction. McElhanney's guiding principles remind us to stay nimble, think ahead of the curve, embrace and adapt to change, innovate, remain solution-focused, and always be committed to our clients and communities. We follow an iterative planning process that involves reviewing global to local economic trends and forecasts, upcoming technology changes, the impact of mergers and acquisitions, government and industry priorities and funding initiatives, and our financial performance. Regional plans are then developed, with key common initiatives and opportunities considered at a corporate level. These are then prioritized and assigned champions and resources. Status updates are reviewed quarterly.

What do you learn from your successes and mistakes?

A key to a successful strategic plan is to ensure it is easily understood and instills a sense of employee pride; and that its implementation is directly linked to staff's performance assessments. This helps ensure that we are all vested in our success. Part of this includes widely celebrating our successes, such as receiving industry awards, major project wins, or closing on a new acquisition. However, despite our best efforts, we must be willing to acknowledge when something is not working out as expected or hoped. In these situations, it is sometimes necessary to reverse direction and start again. We must be willing to objectively review the updated real data and not simply get trapped by the "trying to save face" situation.

What is your favourite book pick on this topic?

Much of my leadership style has been developed and fine-tuned over the years by keenly observing the behaviour of successful people, and by my willingness to test and refine theories using limited and controlled "trial and error." However, a couple of reference books that remain classics for me are [The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#) by Stephen R. Covey and [Good to Great](#) by Jim Collins.



Developing your CEO Character

[Tom Dutta](#), Forum Chair, CEO, Speaker and Leadership Expert, works with CEOs and Executives to find pathways for improved healthy relationships both inside and outside of their work environment. Being a CEO and happily married himself, Tom says "no one loses a job or fails in a marriage because of their strengths". Tom gains insights into a CEO's personal story to understand the motive behind why they do what they do.

The foundation to accelerating CEO performance is to develop your CEO character. This requires a journey of 3 key steps that Tom has followed himself, and teaches others:

1. Get Yourself: Understand the motive behind "Why", not "What" you do. Getting self and how you impact those around you is the cornerstone of emotional intelligence.
2. Get Others: Understand the motive behind "Why" others do what they do and develop skills to speak their language.
3. Get Character: Few take the path of knowing their personal strengths and limitation then developing strengths not innate to themselves. Walking the Charactered Path is the roadmap to healthy relationships. Not becoming Charactered is the pathway to the CEO graveyard.

CEO Health Tip



Exercising your Mind and Body

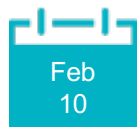
If you are looking to change up your exercise routine, why not try something that exercises your body and your brain. Studies have shown that exercises that incorporate cardiovascular workouts with memory and coordination - such as ballroom dancing, martial arts or other choreographed routines - provide benefits to physical and cognitive health. With time so scarce in the C-suite it may be worth considering combining workouts that aid physical well-being and mental acuity.

Contributed by [Copeman Healthcare](#)

Events



Breakfast Events



Toronto 7am-9am

Engaging a Multi-Generational Workforce

CEO PANELISTS:

Mark Healy Vice President, Black & MacDonald Ltd.

Steve Levschuk President, Talbot Promo

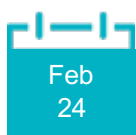
Clint Sharples President & CEO, Modu-Loc Fence Rentals

Mark Whitmore Vice Chair and Managing Partner, Deloitte Private Canada

Note: This event is for CEOs only

[Email Nancy for details](#)

Co-hosted with CIBC and Deloitte



Vancouver 7am-9am
Game Changing Growth Strategies

CEO PANELISTS:

Ken Beasley President, Key Food Equipment Services Ltd.

Matt Lewis President, Trend-Text Fabrics

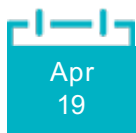
Jim Murray Managing Partner, Brian Jessel BMW

Debbie Samsom President, Back in Motion Rehab

Note: This event is for CEOs only

[Email Nancy for details](#)

Co-hosted with Brian Jessel BMW



Cambridge 7am-9am
Engaging a Multi-Generational Workforce

CEO PANELISTS:

Chantel Broten President & Chief Strategy Officer, Jan Kelley Marketing

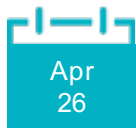
Paul Keery COO, Flanagan Foodservice Inc.

Kevin Martin President, Martin's Family Fruit Farm

Note: This event is for CEOs + Executives

[Email Nancy for details](#)

Co-hosted with CIBC and Deloitte

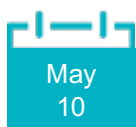


Vancouver 7am-9am
Accelerating Change

Just announced - Save the Date!

This event will be for Executives only

[Email Nancy for details](#)



Vancouver 7am-9am

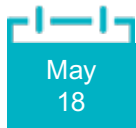
Economic Update: Navigating through Turbulent Economic Times

with **Jock Finlayson** Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer, Business Council of BC

Note: This event is for CEOs only

[Email Nancy for details](#)

Co-hosted with Mogan Daniels Slager, LLP



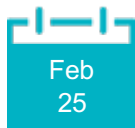
Toronto 7am-9am
Economic Update

with **David Rosenberg**, Chief Economist & Strategist, Gluskin Sheff

Note: This event is for CEOs + Executives

[Email Nancy for details](#)

CEO Summits



Toronto 12:30pm-late
Canada's Most Admired Corporate Cultures & Canada's Most Admired CEO Summit & Awards Gala

This is an exclusive opportunity for our members (CEOs & Executives).

Canada's Most Admired CEO Summit agenda includes:

Keynote speaker

CEO of the Year Panel (hosted by Nancy MacKay) -

How to Develop a Winning Culture: Lessons Learned from Most Admired CEO Winners

Panelists:

Marc and Craig Kielburger

Co-Founders, Free the Children

Wehuns Tan

Managing Director & CEO, Flipp Corporation

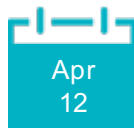
David 'Patch' Patchell-Evans

Founder & CEO, GoodLife Fitness

Chuck Jeannes

CEO, Goldcorp

Executive members will take part in the concurrent Canada's Most Admired Corporate Culture Summit. Session topics will include: Culture as Brand & Brand as Culture, Recruiting from Multiple Generations, Hiring for



Toronto 7am-late
Canada's Best Managed Companies Symposium & Awards Gala

This is an exclusive opportunity for our members (CEOs & Executives). The CEO stream agenda includes:

Economic Update

CEO Forum panel (hosted by Nancy MacKay) - **What Best Managed CEOs know: How to be a Market Leader**

Panelists:

Terry Davis

CEO, Home Hardware

Elaine Gerrie

CEO Gerrie Electric

Jason Pincock

CEO, DynalifeDX

Michael Sneyd

CEO, Skyline International Development

CEO networking luncheon

Best Managed Lab Experience

Keynote Speaker

Executive members will take part in the concurrent Management Stream. Session topics for the day will include: Analytics for Private Business, HR

Cultural Fit.

Trends, Design Thinking, Growth & Succession through M&A, Cyber Security, Exporting, Treasury Management

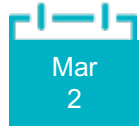
Registration & Information:
[email Jane Matthews for details](#)

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[email Jane Matthews for details](#)

Co-hosted with Waterstone Human Capital

MacKay CEO Forums is a national sponsor of this event.

BC Networking Events

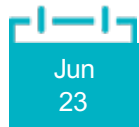


Vancouver 6pm

Family Legacy Series 2016 - celebrating the Harry Rosen Family

Presented by the Business Families Centre at UBC's Sauder School of Business, this is a unique opportunity to learn and hear first-hand stories of Canada's most successful family enterprises.

[Registration & Information](#)



Vancouver 11am-3pm

2016 BCBusiness Top 100 - the province's top networking event

Join Peter Legge as he continues his revealing and insightful interview series with British Columbia's business legends. This year's special guest is CEO extraordinaire Christine Day.

[Registration & Information](#)

MacKay CEO Forums is a Corporate Event Partner of this event.

Welcome to our newest Forum Chairs

[Don Durand](#) - Vancouver, BC - With a career spanning multiple industries and continents, Don brings a rich perspective and body of knowledge that makes an immediate impact on organizational performance. Don specializes in helping executive leadership teams elevate their ability to execute strategy, deliver project objectives, and overcome obstacles to their success.

[Michelle Osry](#) - Vancouver, BC - Michelle is a skilled and certified facilitator, with extensive experience facilitating strategic planning and executive leadership workshops, as well as business family meetings, Forums and retreats. She has over 20 years experience working with business families on generational transitions, family enterprise governance and family dynamics.

[Jason Randhawa](#) - Edmonton, AB - Jason specializes in working with senior leaders in both the public and private sector to understand, grow, improve, and evolve their organizations. He achieves this by embracing innovation and change, by challenging the status quo, and by staying true to the fundamentals of authentic leadership, meaningful communication, and responsible corporate stewardship.

[Mike Verhey](#) - Toronto, ON - Well known for his signature 'insight to performance' approach, Mike consistently improves performance with his balanced approach to sales, business processes and change management solutions. He has extensive experience working with fast paced, high-performance organizations in highly competitive

industries, such as financial services and high-tech.

CEO & Executive Forums

MacKay CEO Forums accelerates CEO performance through the highest impact, least time-intensive peer groups for results-oriented CEOs and top executives in Canada. If you would like to explore a forum opportunity, or refer someone to us, please contact [Nancy](#).