



Placing Better Bets on Talent & Succession

Interview with MacKay CEO Forums member [Rocco Rossi](#), President & CEO, [Prostate Cancer Canada](#)
Prostate Cancer Canada is the leading national foundation dedicated to the elimination of the most common cancer in men through research, advocacy, education, support and awareness.

Why did you decide to transition from running a beer business to become the CEO of PC?

I was a high-flying senior exec in the beer business when my boss and mentor died of a heart attack in his sleep at age 44. That caused me to reassess everything and led me to the Not-For-Profit sector to try to make a difference in another way. I have been in this sector since 2003, which included 4 years of consecutive years of record fundraising as CEO for the Heart and Stroke Foundation; I am now President & CEO of Prostate Cancer Canada where I work with our team to continue to have a positive impact on health.

Tell us about the talent transformation that you've lead over the past 3 years and the impact on the results of the organization?

When I arrived, there were 42 employees and more titles than you could shake a stick at, many of them exhibiting crazy silo behaviours, and there was no legitimate internal succession candidate for the CEO position. In addition, they had rapidly declining revenues and decaying partnerships.
Three years later, we have 40 employees and only one layer of VPs - and 20 of the 40 are new to the organization. We now have a great internal succession candidate for CEO who I recruited externally, using my philosophy to request & contact references in advance of the interview. In addition, our net revenues for investment in mission is up 58%, which is the result of a combination of enhanced revenues and greater efficiencies.

What do you do to place great bets on talent?

To achieve truly extraordinary results, today's CEO first and foremost needs to be the "Chief People Officer". We've gone through a major talent transformation and the three key strategies that I use to place great bets on talent are:

1. I always ask for references up front & contact them in preparation for the interview. This practice helps me to answer my initial questions and to design better questions for my interview with the candidates. For senior positions, I am really looking for the candidate's ability to build, maintain and motivate teams. Search firms can test for technical expertise, but I want to hear from people they have worked with and how they have accomplished what they say they have accomplished. When I hire a senior team member, I am not just looking at that job, but whether or not they can grow to take my job.
2. I look for a successor (internal/external) the day I start any new job. I found a great external candidate by partnering with a recruiter but not abdicating my role in the process to them.
3. I'm prepared to make tough decisions on talent in order to ensure that the organization is set up for long term success. I do this by holding people accountable for mutually-agreed-upon goals.

What is your favourite book pick on this topic?

My favorite book on transformation is Jim Collins' [Good to Great](#).



CEO Succession

CEO Succession is more than a governance issue; it is now a key leadership skill for CEOs and a business imperative. Here are 4 tips for developing your CEO prospects:

1. **Engage the board early** in the discussion, some CEOs start as early as their first week on the job. With an early start, succession conversations are primarily about implementing a business process rather than loaded discussions about your future career. The earlier you start the less emotional it will be.
2. **Test candidate's potential**, but don't assume they want the role. The earlier you identify potential successors and give them well thought out developmental assignments, the more opportunity you have to evaluate potential. Take people for a "test drive" and ask them what they want.
3. **Avoid politics** by being clear about how you will ultimately select the future CEO and communicating this to everyone involved. When candidates don't know where they stand, they describe it as a "dark hole," creating retention challenges. Trust will lead to candor.
4. **Make it a priority**. Ask yourself: How can we make this happen knowing we have many competing priorities? There will always be competing agenda items. Look at your CEO succession pipeline at least twice a year, and don't fool yourself into thinking a succession plan is a name on a spreadsheet.

Contributed by [Natalie Michael](#), Vancouver Forum Chair with MacKay CEO Forums and Executive Coach & Succession Management Consultant with The Karmichael Group.

CEO Health Tip



Tips & Tricks for Healthy Eating on the Road

Despite numerous barriers (scheduling, time changes, poor sleep, prolonged inactivity, and social demands), maintaining a healthy lifestyle while travelling is crucial and possible. Research shows frequent (20+ days/month) business travelers are more than twice as likely to be obese than those who travel less than 6 days/month. Frequent travelers are also at higher risk for high blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

So how can you take action?

Be diligent with your alcohol intake. Studies show alcohol is correlated with increased Body Mass Index (BMI) and waist circumference, the place with most implications to your health (diabetes, heart disease, and cancer risk).

Strategies to moderate alcohol:

- Plan ahead - if alcohol is anticipated on your trip, go alcohol-free the week before;
- Choose a beverage you will drink slower;
- Make every second drink water;
- Switch to light beer, cut white wine with sparkling water, choose soda water over juice and pop for mixing.
Note: tonic water contains as much sugar as pop;
- Avoid alcohol on an empty stomach which may trigger overeating.

Choose meals wisely. Eating breakfast prevents over-hunger and cravings during the day, helping you make wiser choices later on and prevent overeating. Try to include a protein source, such as eggs (with veggies and whole grain toast) or milk/yogurt (with oatmeal and fruit). Make protein and vegetables the stars of lunch and dinner - keep starches, dressings, and sauces on the sidelines.

You are what you eat. Make your fuel a priority.

Contributed by [Copeman Healthcare](#)

New Forum Chair Opportunities

At MacKay CEO Forums, our vision is to populate the world with better leaders and we are currently inspiring over 600 CEOs/Executives across Canada to accelerate their performance. Our BHAG is to become the dominant player in Canada by 2017 (1000+ members) and then begin the global journey to 10,000+ members around the world.

In order to achieve our BHAG, we will continue to add new forums, but we must first identify and partner with new Forum Chairs. Please consider your network and reach out to anyone you think may be interested in this dynamic opportunity.

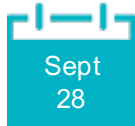
We are interested in partnering with Forum Chairs in: Toronto/GTA, South Western Ontario, Calgary, Edmonton, and Vancouver/Fraser Valley/Richmond/Surrey.

[Read More](#)

Events



Breakfast Events:



Oakville, ON 7am-9am
Driving Sales in Today's Economy

PANELISTS:

Ray Pineda Partner, Deloitte

Andy Vivian President & Owner, Solis Foods & SunRise Warehousing Company

Kevin Brady Director, NFP Canada & Founder Advica Health

Brad Walker President, Callisto Integration Limited

Note: this event is for CEOs + Executives

[Email Nancy for details](#)

Co-hosted with Jan Kelley Marketing



Edmonton 7am-9am
Navigating Through Turbulent Economic Times

PANELISTS:

Paul Blais Managing Partner, REMAX Elite

Dean Bosch Regional VP-Edmonton, CGI

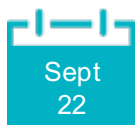
Todd Guy President & CEO, IEC Group

Glenise Harvey Principal, A&H Steel Ltd.

Note: this event is for CEOs + Executives

[Email Nancy for details](#)

Save the Dates:



Vancouver 7am-9am
Game Changing Customer Experience
Strategies



Burlington, ON 7am-9am

Co-hosted with Mercedes-Benz Burlington

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](#).