

STERLING CONSULTING

Founder & CEO Transitions

"The transition of a founder or long-term CEO is like an organ transplant – and it gets more complicated with longer tenures. It's not a simple matter of securing a new leader and popping them into place cleanly like a missing puzzle piece. There are a number of interdependent systems and connections to consider, understand, map out, and address. And there are important interventions that must happen before and after the recruiting in order to ensure success. There are common risks to mitigate against, and major ramifications for failing to do so.

- The Sterling Report, April 2019

Don't let your blind spots around transition jeopardize your mission

When most organizations are faced with the departure of the founder or long-term CEO, they automatically think, "We need to hire a recruiter." This can be a very valuable component -- and yet, it is only one of many complex factors to consider in a successful transition.

The greatest risks to recruiting and retaining a new CEO almost never reside in the recruiting process itself. The risks lie undetected in the many blind spots organizations have by failing to look at the entire ecosystem that is affected by a CEO change. The good news is, nearly all of these risks are preventable when an organization knows what to look for and how to address them proactively.

Search firms can be very good at recruiting. Virtually none of them, however, are specifically trained or have deep expertise in the other critical skills needed to bring the entire complexity of the transition to a successful conclusion.



Contact

✉ emily@emilysterling.org

☎ (650) 591 - 4155

🌐 www.emilysterling.org

We help insulate your organization from risk and prepare for transition success by bringing expertise into important areas such as:

- Assessing the organization against the most important readiness factors when entering a transition

- Surfacing opportunities and conversations that may be uniquely triggered by a CEO transition (e.g. mission shift, restructuring, merger, or strategic alliance)

- Identifying risks and opportunities presented by the transition, and identifying actions to address them

- Creating or updating emergency and longer-term succession plans

- Supporting the evolution of vision, strategy, business model, governance, org design, culture, and other crucial areas to advance success in the next chapter

- Examining compensation, the market, and what is "Fair and Reasonable" standard for the IRS

- Exploring options for short-term and longer-term Interim CEO as needed
- Defining how the new leader's success will be assessed
- Exploring shared leadership models
- Identifying the Board's ideal partnership with a new CEO and implications for governance
- Understanding the dynamics of internal candidates
- Staff, stakeholder, funder, partner, and community engagement
- Effective orientation and onboarding
- Coaching for the departing CEO, incoming CEO, and Board Chair

We no longer do recruiting, but have over 25 years of nonprofit CEO recruiting experience so we know how to work in close partnership with a search professional. If your organization decides to engage a recruiter, we can help with the selection of a recruiting firm, and informing the optimal search process based on the organization's unique dynamics.

Emily Sterling has over 30 years of experience as well as extensive training in change management, organizational dynamics, group process, governance, and executive and founder transitions -- exclusively in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors

✉ emily@emilysterling.org
 ☎ (650) 591 - 4155
 🌐 www.emilysterling.org

A failed search, or a series of placements that don't last, can be extremely detrimental – resulting in loss of trust and credibility, reduced fundraising, demoralized culture, staff departures, board burnout, eroded mission delivery, and depleted reserves. By only looking at this narrow slice of the issue, leaders unnecessarily open the organization to these risks – and also potentially erode their own credibility and legacy.

Sterling Consulting opens an organization's perspectives to the full picture, and more importantly, to how to navigate the entire arc of the transition successfully.

Please ask for a copy of the April 2019 Sterling Report for a comprehensive review of the six most common but hidden risks that prevent transition success.

Transition Services Summary

A full 12 months of support through the arc of a transition - readiness assessment, option mapping, implementation of critical success factors, coordinating with the recruitment process, and onboarding and coaching for the new CEO. See sidebar for typical areas covered.

Includes an average of 8 hours of support/month, including: attending Board meetings; working with senior leadership team; all-staff conversations; serving as non-voting advisor on the Search/Transition Committee(s); continuous coaching/advising.

One discounted annual payment of \$50,000 upon commencement of the contract, OR two payments of \$27,600 – the first as contract begins, the second at six months.

Option to contract for more or fewer hours as needed.

Emily is also available for one-off engagements on an hourly basis. These typically include informational sessions with Board and/or Staff; readiness workshops; leading a transition-focused retreat; and speaking engagements.