

THE NEW CHAMBER CEO WORKBOOK



**A LEADERSHIP GUIDE
FOR YOUR FIRST YEAR**

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WELCOME LETTER

Dear New Chamber CEO,

Congratulations on your new role. You are stepping into one of the most rewarding and challenging positions in community leadership.

This workbook was created to help you navigate your first year with confidence. Inside you will find frameworks, checklists, and reflection prompts designed specifically for new chamber leaders.

Remember: you don't have to figure this out alone. Your WCCE network is here to support you every step of the way.

Welcome to the profession.

"Leadership begins with listening."

Andrew T. Mayer, President/CEO
Skagit Valley Chamber of Commerce



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WHO'S IN YOUR ECOSYSTEM?

Map the key relationships that surround your chamber.

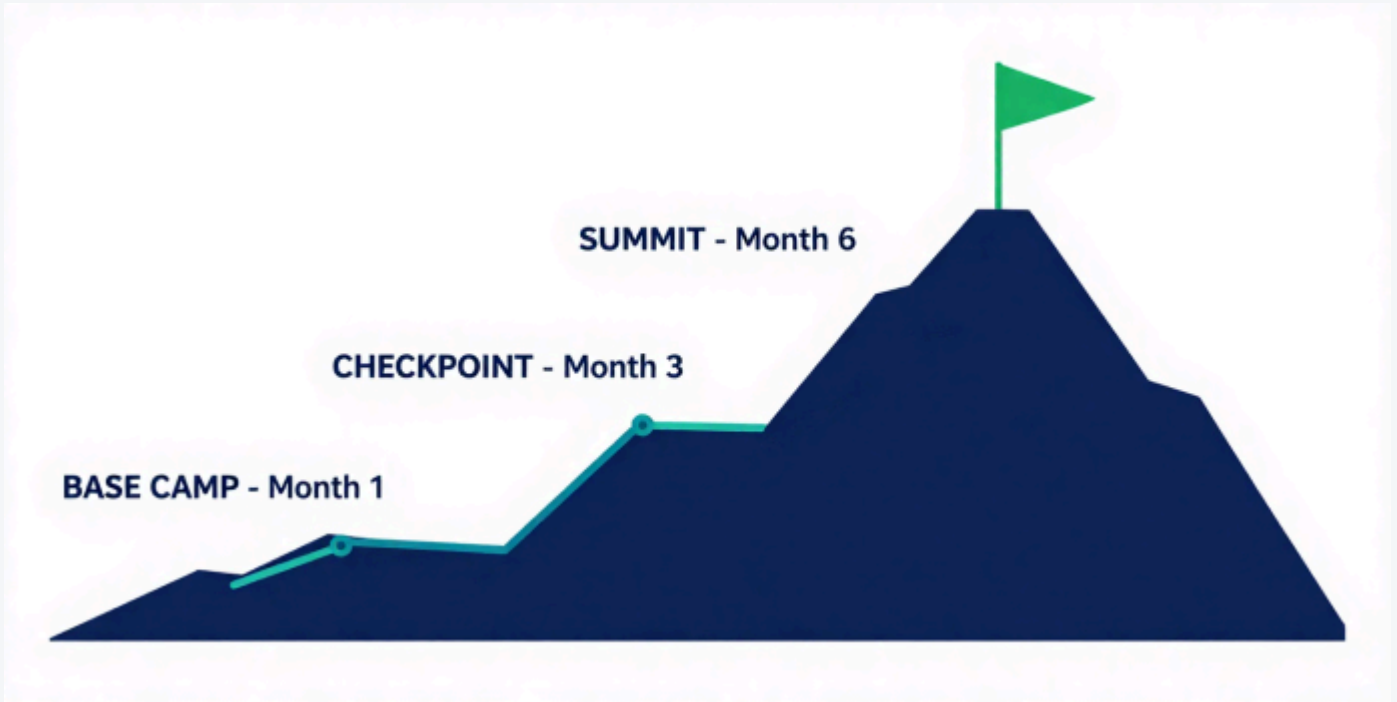


Strongest Relationships:

Needs Attention:

NOTES

SIX MONTH VISION



Priority 1: _____

Priority 2: _____

Priority 3: _____

Success Measures: _____

"The single best value is the camaraderie, networking, and the relationship building."



Guy Ochiogrosso, President/CEO
Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce

MATCH STRATEGY TO SITUATION

Rate your organization in each area to identify where to focus your energy.



Membership



Finance



Governance



Staff Capacity



Community Relationships

	Critical	Needs Work			Strong
Membership	1	2	3	4	5
Finance	1	2	3	4	5
Governance	1	2	3	4	5
Staff Capacity	1	2	3	4	5
Community Relationships	1	2	3	4	5

What does this organization need most right now?

NOTES

COMMUNICATIONS PLAYBOOK

Map how you communicate with each key audience.



COMMUNICATION MATRIX

Audience	Frequency	Method
Board		
Staff		
Members		
Partners		
Government		
Media		
Community		

RESOURCE HEAVY ORGANIZATION

Every chamber runs on five key resources. Assess yours below.



CURRENT STRENGTHS

BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES

NOTES

BUILD CREDIBILITY THROUGH EARLY WINS

Focus your first wins across four key areas.

Operations

Membership

Community

Revenue

QUICK WIN CHECKLIST

- Improve board reporting and transparency
- Meet top investors and major employers
- Increase chamber visibility in community
- Strengthen event sponsorships

MY TOP THREE EARLY WINS

NOTES

ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT

Assess how well your organization is aligned from mission to culture.



ALIGNMENT SCORECARD (Rate 1-5)

Mission Clarity	1	2	3	4	5
Board Alignment	1	2	3	4	5
Staff Alignment	1	2	3	4	5
Strategic Focus	1	2	3	4	5
Accountability	1	2	3	4	5
Culture	1	2	3	4	5

NOTES

CHAMBER CEO SELF-CARE



BURNOUT CHECKLIST

- Exhaustion
- Cynicism
- Isolation
- Decision Fatigue

If you check 2 or more, it's time to pause and recalibrate.

What restores my energy?

NOTES

COMMON MISTAKES NEW CHAMBER CEOs MAKE

1 Trying to change everything at once

Build trust before making big moves. Listen first.

2 Ignoring board dynamics

Understand the power structure before proposing changes.

3 Neglecting staff morale

Your team was there before you. Honor their experience.

4 Over-promising to members

Set realistic expectations early. Under-promise, over-deliver.

5 Skipping community listening

You can't lead a community you don't understand.

6 Avoiding difficult conversations

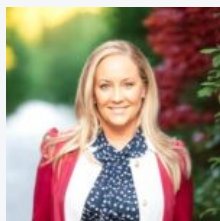
Address issues early before they become crises.

7 Forgetting self-care

Burnout helps no one. Sustainable leadership requires boundaries.

Remember: Every chamber CEO before you made mistakes too. The key is learning quickly, asking for help, and giving yourself grace during the transition.

“You and your team will walk away with ideas that will positively impact your bottom line.”



Janet Kenefsky, IOM Chief Operating Officer
Greater Vancouver Chamber

WASHINGTON RESOURCE GUIDE

Key organizations and resources for Washington chamber executives

WCCE

Washington Chamber of Commerce Executives
Annual conference, peer networking, mentorship

AWB

Association of Washington Business
Policy advocacy, legislative updates, business resources

ACCE

Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives
National network, certifications, best practices

SBA / SBDC

Small Business Administration
Small business resources, counseling, training programs

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

City/County Contacts
Economic development, permitting, planning commissions

TOURISM / EDC

Tourism and Economic Development
Visitor bureaus, economic development councils, grants

Other resources I want to explore:

NOTES

MY LEADERSHIP COMMITMENTS

As I begin this role, I commit to the following principles and actions:

I will lead with...

I will prioritize...

I will build relationships by...

I will measure success by...

I will take care of myself by...

In one year, I want to be known for...

Signature

Date



Washington Chamber of Commerce Executives
www.wcce.org
Supporting chamber leaders across Washington State