

## Interim C-Suite and Departmental Leadership

When organizations are seeking to fill a key leadership role within their organization on an interim basis while they look for a permanent professional, they are most often looking for a different breed of leader with a highly specialized talent. Traditional leaders take a holistic long-term view of an organization's evolution towards fulfilling a stated mission. They concentrate on creating a trajectory of sustainability and success that assures an organization is evolving with the community it serves. Interim leaders have a shorter-term scope of issues, and thus act accordingly, though they typically serve the same cause and work towards similar goals.

As an interim leader the person will be establishing the organization for the next person to take ownership of and charge. Great interims look at all the systems of the organization, help the board to understand what is needed in its next leader, and apply appropriate fixes to organizational issues that are standing in the way of its current functionality and viability. These may include providing a clear planning focus, resolution of operational and financial issues and/or policy reviews. Interims are important third-party evaluators and experienced leaders that help organizations get ready for making the right hire for leading its future with a solid foundation of organizational functionality in place.

*At Cherye Morgan LLC, we place interim leaders that take on projects differently.*

There are few issues that an interim would encounter that would be different from that of a permanent person. It's how the two individuals would go about managing those circumstances that would be quite different. For example, an interim who is helping a nonprofit organization to dissolve or merge with another nonprofit organization would view the entire process differently. A permanent leader might view the situation as the end of his or her career. The interim, on the other hand, would simply see the transaction as a completion of his or her current assignment.

An interim may be hired for particular skills that are most needed for the moment such as fundraising, strategic planning or financial management. The permanent person may be hired to have a more balanced portfolio of skills. The primary difference is urgency.

Interim leaders will tackle challenges in unique ways. ***There are always two challenges associated with interim leadership: providing effective short-term leadership versus long-term leadership, and the management of organizational culture and emotion that goes with that unique assignment.*** An interim works from a perspective of "deliverables" while a permanent leader works from a perspective of "goals." Everyone involved with the organization, including the interim, will suffer significantly, if there is not an understood set of deliverables.

An inexperienced interim is likely to look at the situation as a job rather than as an intervention. Being trained to deliver effective leadership interventions is an acquired skill and a body of management knowledge. If an inexperienced interim leader approaches the position as a short-term job, the greatest suffering occurs when the successor follows an interim and must "undo" many of the things that the interim put into place.

At Cherye Morgan LLC, we have experienced consultants that have built their careers on short term "non-permanent" positions with responsibilities for a portfolio of deliverables. From interim CEO's, COO's and CMO's to Department Directors, we are prepared to support your organization.