

PURPOSEFUL LEADERSHIP REAL RESULTS

Leading Change That Lasts
With Shareé McKenzie Taylor, JD

Chief Executive Officer
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Can this leader drive transformation?

Can a leader question decades-old business models, challenge overreliance on familiar revenue streams, and confront outdated approaches to staff and culture? This has been at the core of nearly every C-suite search we've conducted in recent years.

But it turns out that finding the right executive is only one part of the equation.

Many organizations aren't actually ready for transformation. They want innovation without disruption, change without conflict. That's what keeps them running in place, cycling through leaders, and coming back to the same issues again and again.

We asked Shareé McKenzie Taylor, JD, how she helps organizations navigate the uncomfortable space between established mission and transformative opportunity. What separates those ready for change from others that aren't quite there? And how do you move an entire culture forward when there's so much tension between the old and the new?

With equal measures of hope and pragmatism, Shareé shared not so much a playbook as a set of ideas and principles that guide her work. What follows are highlights from our conversation.

The Inflection Point

Shareé has built her career identifying organizations that are ready for transformational change and leading them through it. And she's not afraid to walk away from those that aren't. Over a decade leading turnaround strategies at Consumer Reports, More in Common, International Justice Mission, YPO, and more, she's developed an instinct for spotting the moments where real transformation is possible and places bridge building and culture at the center.

When she talks about nonprofit and social impact work, her passion could light up a room. As keynote speaker at [FAR's inaugural program honoring the next generation of nonprofit leaders](#), she began with a short statement that speaks volumes: "We don't do jobs; we live missions." She went on to share the personal and professional stories behind her work, and by the end, every person in the room felt more connected to her, each other, and the work they do to serve others.

Shareé communicates with humble authenticity, asks for, elevates, and celebrates the contributions of others, and is the strategic powerhouse behind transforming narrow, traditional models into dynamic, inclusive brands.

Shareé is drawn to organizations at an "inflection point," when the cost of staying the same outweighs the cost of change. In those moments, leaders become more willing to rethink not just their business model, but their culture too, which is central to Shareé's approach to transformation.



You can't change an organization unless you have the culture to do so.

Strategy sets direction; culture determines whether people move in that direction. You can't work on one without the other.

"I'm one of those leaders who believes you can't change an organization unless you have the culture to do so. And without those moments of inflection, even if an organization is willing to change strategy and even though they are looking at their business model, they hold fast to cultural norms that prevent change."

Clarity on Mission Comes First

The inflection point is an important signal that transformation is possible, but even then, plenty of organizations claim they're ready for change while their actions tell a different story.

Shareé has learned to read between the lines to figure out which is which.

An organization's leadership can say all the right things. They can champion a growth mindset. They can even fund innovation work. But if they punish risk-taking, operate with rigid structures, or lack alignment on fundamental questions, they aren't ready.

Shareé shared an example from a past interview for a CEO position. The organization had a longstanding reputation, with established stakeholder trust and a mission she believed in. But when she spoke to the board, their misalignment on purpose was hard to ignore. "You can get around the

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tactics. If you're talking about how to get there, that's fine. I can deal with that. But this board didn't agree on the mission of the organization and what it needed to be at this moment.”

That was her cue to pass. Disagreement on tactics can be worked out. But clarity around the mission has to come first, “Clarity on mission is the north star and your next step.” That's one of the key principles that underpins her approach.

Beware the Unlikely Gatekeeper

If you want to know whether an organization will actually move instead of just talking about it, there's one person whose mindset matters more than you'd think:

“What many CFOs forget is that risk isn't just about the numbers.”

the chief financial officer. “I always know an organization is ready if they have a CFO that is part of that change mindset—who agrees that change is important and risk is part of it,” Shareé says, “I know that's not the conventional answer, but it's been true in my experience.”

She's learned this lesson the hard way. At one organization, the CEO was a genuine change agent who knew exactly what they wanted to accomplish. But the CFO wasn't willing to take risks. He controlled

the budgets. He blocked funding for innovation. And he made other leaders afraid to move forward. “The CFO made the CEO and board feel that if they moved too quickly, they’d be putting the organization in peril. He became the biggest impediment to change.”

“**When they see risk only in one way, they become the risk.**”

Shareé acknowledges that managing risk is part of every CFO’s job, but there has to be balance. Fear risk too much, and you can actually create it. “What many CFOs forget is that risk isn’t just about the numbers. Risk is about growth, about brand, about your place in the market. It’s about change and innovation. It’s about knowing who your customer is. When they see risk in only one way, they become the risk.”

The Real Work Begins: Redefining What You Measure

Once you’ve found an organization with clarity on the mission and leadership willing to take strategic risks, the real work begins. Transformation requires shifting cultural norms around how teams interact and get the work done. That starts with how you approach metrics and time.

Ask These Questions to Gauge Readiness for Change

- What is your budget for innovation and change management?
- What is the CEO’s relationship with the CFO around taking strategic risks?
- Who is the final decision maker?
- What is my sphere of influence in terms of change?
- How does the organization respond when initiatives fail?

At one organization Shareé joined, every department had its own metrics. None of them aligned. Teams worked in isolation, tracking different goals, measuring success differently. Meetings were spent translating the logistics and details of one team’s work to another.

“People were measuring how busy they were, not how effective they were,” Shareé recalls. “That creates silos.”

She overhauled the entire framework. In her new approach, individual KPIs had to roll up to team goals, which rolled up to organizational outcomes. Everything went into a shared dashboard that anyone could access. “If people can see how their work contributes

to the bigger picture, there's less fear about their place in the organization. They feel connected to the mission."

The impact of the change was striking. Previously disconnected teams started talking daily. Meetings moved from status updates to strategic collaboration. Silos began to dissolve.

But metrics alone aren't enough. Organizations also need to rethink how they structure time.

During another transformation, as Sharee's small team expanded to more than 80 people, she introduced a new structure: no Monday meetings so the team could plan and prioritize, and Fridays dedicated to networking with partners and members.

"It helped break down silos because we were all doing this together, connecting with members, convening with people from other departments. We were able to make decisions in the best interests of the organization versus thinking about how many hours or how many meetings."

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If you don't create intentional structures, teams will focus on activity instead of impact. They'll treat metrics as the "destination rather than the means to the mission." In an activity-focused culture, any change to how work gets done feels threatening. But when there's transparency across teams and explicit connection to purpose, teams can adapt because they're anchored in why it matters.

Make Metrics Meaningful

- **Structure time for collaboration and planning.** Focus on how teams work together, not just hours, meetings, or deliverables.
- **Connect goals across levels.** Ensure individual and team metrics roll up to organization-wide outcomes so everyone can see the connection.
- **Foster transparency and accountability.** Use shared dashboards to make progress visible and build trust across departments.
- **Pair metrics with narratives.** Show why the work matters, not just what got done.

Building a Bridge Between Generations

Every organization has people who carry its institutional memory and hold deep ownership of the mission they helped build. When transformation begins, they can feel displaced or undervalued. Newer leaders, meanwhile, often feel blocked by unspoken rules about how things are done. Fear runs deep on both sides: seasoned leaders afraid of losing relevance, and new leaders afraid of never getting a fair shot.

Shareé addresses this tension by reframing the role of long-tenured staff. “I don’t call them legacy leaders—I call them bridge builders,” she explains. “You can’t get to the future without a bridge.” They’re then more open to learning new technology and processes because they see themselves as facilitators and part of the transition.

But the reframe only works if it comes with real accountability. Bridge builders should actively create pathways for emerging leaders. That means rethinking what mentorship actually looks like.

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Too often, mentoring amounts to an occasional coffee chat where senior leaders share stories about a career path shaped by a different era and set of values. That’s not mentorship. That’s performative, a box to check.

What young leaders actually need—and what bridge builders are uniquely capable of providing—are professional on-ramps. They need opportunities to lead projects, present to the board and important stakeholders, and weigh in during strategic conversations.

“You can’t just create slogans around culture and mentorship,” Shareé says. “Create opportunities to bring young leaders in. Ask them about change. Ask them about innovation. Use their contributions. Make sure that handoff and succession are baked into your leadership metrics.”



Make Mentorship Count

- **Lead by example.** Advocate for emerging leaders and bring them into strategic work. Model trust in your team.
- **Find a champion.** Identify respected leaders who can open doors to key projects, strategy discussions, and board interactions.
- **Hold senior leaders accountable.** Build mentorship and succession planning into leadership metrics, just like other performance goals.
- **Share the stories. Make it personal.** When young leaders rise to the challenge, make sure others see that success.

Embracing Radical Inclusion

“Radical inclusion isn’t actually radical; it’s just inclusion done right,” Shareé says. But in many legacy organizations, inclusion still feels radical because it challenges traditional patterns of who speaks, who is heard, and who decides.

Shareé recalls one organization where promising young staff were invited to a meeting on innovation. The energy was palpable. They shared ideas that were smart and data driven. But not a single concept made it past that room. All of them left within the year.

That’s what happens when organizations say they want inclusion but don’t actually mean it. Real inclusion requires genuine listening, acting on ideas, and empowering people to make decisions.

Shareé sees today’s rising leaders differently than many in the C-suite do. She sees them embody advocacy and bring conviction. They demonstrate emotional intelligence while showing deep fluency in data and strategy. “They may not show

the ‘executive presence’ you’re used to, but they have the knowledge. They understand the data and how to connect it all to the mission,” she says. “You just have to give them the chance.”

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But giving them a chance isn’t enough on its own. Inclusion needs systems to support it—workshops that establish common principles, training to help leaders enforce norms, and cross-functional teams where people practice building trust.

When organizations create the structures that turn stated values into daily practice, inclusion stops feeling radical and becomes how the work gets done.

Hope for the Way Forward

When asked what gives her hope for the future of nonprofit leadership, Shareé's answer is immediate. "Nonprofit leaders are the ones who remind us of our common cause, the things we're all fighting for."

In times of change, nonprofits serve as guardrails for civil society. They connect people to values, to mission, to each other. They help us remember that we're building something bigger than our individual paths.

What excites Shareé most is watching the next generation step into leadership roles with exactly the skills this moment demands. They understand that culture and strategy are inseparable. As digital natives, they are naturally data fluent. They can talk to corporate partners about shared value while staying grounded in mission. And most importantly, they understand that you can't advance a mission without caring for the people doing the work.

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Real change comes from building on legacy while making space for what's next. Honoring the bridge builders. Creating on-ramps for emerging leaders. Holding onto clarity of mission even when the path forward isn't certain. That's how you lead change that lasts.

About Shareé McKenzie Taylor

Shareé McKenzie Taylor is a mission-driven executive who drives comprehensive organizational change that reshapes culture, brand, and strategic direction. She helps organizations evolve from traditional, siloed models into dynamic, purpose-driven models and brands that deliver both measurable impact and sustainable revenue growth.

Throughout her career, Shareé has led enterprise-wide transformations at organizations including Consumer Reports. As

Chief Impact Officer, she helped to orchestrate a cultural and strategic shift, that broke down silos to create a unified "One CR" culture, significantly increased membership, and expanded the brand to reach younger, more diverse audiences. She championed the integration of AI and advanced analytics to transform decision-making across the organization while securing multimillion-dollar funding and building new revenue streams.

At International Justice Mission, YPO, and

More in Common, she drove similar organizational transformations by restructuring teams, aligning disparate divisions around shared missions, and building strategic partnerships that fundamentally changed how these organizations operate and create value.

Currently, through **Praxis Momentum Partners**, Shareé provides advisory services focused on comprehensive brand and organizational transformation.

Her practice centers on helping leadership teams navigate complex change management initiatives, from cultural transformation and strategic realignment to digital innovation and AI integration. She works with organizations ready to fundamentally rethink their market position, transform their internal culture, and build brands that resonate with modern stakeholders.

She also works with high school and college athletes and their families, providing guidance on brand building, digital presence, and navigating the evolving landscape of

athlete empowerment and NIL (Name, Image, Likeness) opportunities.

Shareé's approach combines strategic vision with practical execution, helping CEOs and their teams transform organizational culture, implement AI-powered solutions, forge game-changing partnerships, and create unified brand strategies that align every level of the organization. Whether working with established corporations, nonprofits, or emerging athlete brands, she specializes in leading transformational change that touches every aspect of an organization, from culture and operations to brand identity and stakeholder engagement.

Based in Washington, D.C., Shareé holds a J.D. from Boston College Law School and a B.A. in Political Science and Economics from the University of Toronto.

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