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CR - Fellowship Morning Meeting  
Wednesday, March 14, 2012 – 07:00 to 09:00  
ICANN - San Jose, Costa Rica

Janice Douma Lange:

Get to have members of our community, members of our staff, executive staff board come in and provide some one-on-one just intimate time and our CEO, Rod Beckstrom has since he started in 2009 in Sydney, has every single meeting, found the time to come in and talk to the fellows. And also, as you recognize come to the reception on Sunday and Rod, I thank you for that; and you have been a constant support of this program of the people. I'd like to say good morning and welcome.

Rod Beckstrom:

The reason I come here every time is because I love to be here with you because it's so enjoyable and so great to see new faces and new talent coming to the ICANN community to invigorate the organization and to lift it up. So because you are an important part of the future of ICANN, because this is one of the important sort of inroads or on ramps on to the crazy ICANN highway, and I say the crazy ICANN highway because some highways you know in like Los Angeles are huge and maybe have ten or eight lanes where you can drive and things are going.

I think ICANN, I don't know how many lanes it has, I think like thirty or forty. I'm sure you're learning this as you try to study the organization and all the different things going on. It's a very complex organization with many different lanes, many different threads, discussions and issues and extremely organic. And that's something that I think that you as fellows can really help to chaff and change in the future too because so many of those processes have changed.

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I mean even if you think about big structures in ICANN like the GNSO. The GNSO is in its third form in just twelve years. It's gone through two major reformations and changes, so imagine what you can do whether it's with the GNSO in the future, which by the way it's probably going to have to change again within the next three to five years because once we process the new GTLD applications. We're going to go like from having dozen parties in the registry stake holder group, okay, to having hundreds, or maybe even possibly a thousand members if so many parties wanted to take place.

So think of that change. You've got a political structure that's going to go from ten or twenty members to going to hundreds of members. So that's a huge change. The power dynamics will change, the politics will change, the economic issues, political issues at the table.

I think the fascinating part of ICANN, and I'm still trying to math this out, after almost three years of being CEO is to understand when you are going to a session, when you are going to a table. What are the real issues that are driving people, right? What are the real incentive structures they have, or economic interests they have, or stake holder interests they have, because in ICANN it's very complex and you don't always know. And it's important to know that as you participate in a stream and you seek to affect the policies.

It's also very important from CEO's standpoint to understand that because the staff and the organization are interfacing with the community very often, and the staff needs to make sure, and is doing its best to stay neutral and to work in the global public interest.

I think this model is so very complex; there are a lot of different streams going on. It's also very organic and it changes very quickly, so whether it's a new work group, or a new subcommittee on the board.

So I think the fellowship program is great, because at least you get an opportunity to get a little bit of the road map. How is this big complex thing working and where is it going? But I'd like to turn it around quickly and say are

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there any questions I can answer for any of you? Because I'm only doing one more of these, I'll do one in Prague, but otherwise, that's it.

Gabby.

Gabriella Schittek:

I hope to see you in Prague again, but still I don't know. So in any case I'm going to ask now as if it's the last time I'm here with you as a CEO, okay? What would be your message for the next CEO if you had to leave him a message?

Rod Beckstrom:

My second week on the job was with Mike Roberts. Mike was the first CEO of ICANN and he came to my little office in Palo Alto, temporary office and I asked him for his advice. I said what should I know and Mike said; here's what you have to remember. No matter what you do as CEO at ICANN, you will be criticized, every single decision, every one, just don't worry about it. Try to ignore it and just move on. You've got to keep doing the right thing, and that was incredibly good advice for me. Because part of this open system, multi-stake holder process is that any party that doesn't get what they want in a process and try to restart the process, or question the process, or criticize this staff, or criticize the board, so it's really a peel mechanism. Is what a lot of the criticism is, and a political lobbying mechanism. So that's interesting because I've never had that type of experience before, so the advice to that leader would be the same.

Do what's right. Keep focusing on doing what's right, and just ignore the criticism if you know that it's right, because you're never going to have everyone saying; this is great or agreeing.

Second thing I would is we have built an amazing executive management team at ICANN. My advice to CEO would be do everything you can to get to know those exceptional people, and keep them onboard, because if you can keep them onboard than the organization is going to be able to keep its high level

performance that I think its moved to, but if you lose them, you lose the talents, you lose that knowledge. You really put that at risk, and particularly, this is going to be a very difficult next three years for ICANN because of the pressures of the GTLD programs are going to be enormous.

April 12<sup>th</sup> of this year is less than one month away. Let's do a quick real fun exercise. I'm going to go around the table, so everybody is got to think about it. I want your guess on how many GTLD applications, or might be, it doesn't matter, but we're doing crowd search.

Deanna can you help me keep a record? I'm going to do an average real quick, okay? Need you to help me.

So we'll start down here sir. A quick estimate, any number, the end of the table. No? Sergio can you start me off, Sergio.

Sergio Salinas Porto:

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Rod Beckstrom:

I'm sorry, maybe I didn't explain this well. Let's just say for example, there's one-thousand new GTLD applications in a month. That's 185 million dollars that will be in ICANN's bank accounts to process in that program on top of the 80 million dollars today. If it's two thousand, then think about why am I saying this, the pressures that will come financially, politically, or restraints etc. So I know very well the pressures of trying to keep the organizations together with all this constant change and the community constant political issues.

It's a little like if I were to draw a picture. It would be like the staff and the CEO trying to spin plates. Have you seen dancers that are spinning plates in the air? It's like the staff is trying to help spin and support twenty, thirty different plates. Like the wind here in Costa Rica, there's a huge wind on the plates, there's grease on the floor, there's butter on the floor. The floor is moving okay. Some people try to pull the carpet out whenever they can and so, to do that it's a

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really challenging and exciting balancing act, that's going to get really tested for over the next few years. That would be my advice. Thank you.

Kate Ann Davis:

Good morning, I'm Kate Ann Davis from Jamaica. This question is being asked out of curiosity. Can you tell me a little about your journey? How did you become in ICANN and what is it like being CEO of ICANN?

Rod Beckstrom:

Sure. My journey's been an odyssey. It's more like an odyssey because I don't have a career plan at all. I used to have career plans when I came out of the university. I wanted to get this done in a year, and this done in five years, this done in ten years, and I did that and it worked quite well, but I threw that away about fifteen years ago. So in my career I was an investment banker and then I started a software company when I was twenty-four. It became public because I was lucky in the right market at the right time, then technology firms. Done environmental policy work for about twenty years on a non-profit about the size of ICANN, got a hundred million dollars in revenues.

I started on that board for about eighteen years. So I've done environmental work, then I did three years as an activist peace worker full-time all over the Middle East and around the world. Then I became an author, I wrote a book called *The Starfish and the Spider*, then I was a professional speaker about the book, then I got recruited into U.S. Government to work on cyber security. That was very exciting and that happened because of the book. I didn't do anything to get involved in politics, I just wrote a book and then I got called by a cabinet member to advise him and I did that. I did the government work. I ran the National Cyber Security Center in the U.S. Government because of the work I did for the director of National Intelligence initially because of my strategic work I did in the book. The theories of social networks and technology networks are interesting.

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Anyway, then I worked for four cabinet members, then I left and I thought I was going to take a vacation and I sent an email to all my friends, and by the way I said no when I got called for the U.S. Government initially. I said no, I will not do it. I got asked to do another job, I said no, but I did, I said okay. I said well, I'm being asked by a cabinet member. He says I just talked to President Bush yesterday and we created this new center and you're the guy. You need to come running. I'm like what? Me? He's like, you are the guy, because you understand networks, social networks, collaboration and we're trying to pull together all these different efforts in the government.

I said no, I can't do it. I'm in Silicon Valley. He said, no, no, the President and I are asking you to do this and he goes I'll call Secretary Chertoff of DHS right now. I want you to go see him tomorrow, and I walked away. We were in kind of a cocktail party. I walked away and I said if I could go meet Chertoff that would just be fun to interview with him. I should go meet these other cabinet members and I should interview with them, then you start interviewing with people and things happen. I didn't plan that, I said no and it happened and then I sent an email out and someone approached me to talk to ICANN and I said no, absolutely not. I'm not moving to Los Angeles, I'm busy, I want to be with my family in Palo Alto, but then I was honored.

What's it like? It's like being in the middle of a very, very fast tornado that never stops and it's like other tornadoes come in it and through it. The inside of ICANN is just so insanely, crazy busy, you can't imagine. I want you to imagine roughly, if you come to these events and you see this huge amount of activity. I want you to imagine that—that's ten-percent of what we're exposed to as an organization, ten-percent. We are exposed to so many issues technically. Internet coordination globally, coordination with companies all over the world, diplomatic issues, diplomatic problems, political issues, naming issues, legal issues, lawsuits.

You just look at the correspondence page and the number of things that happen. So it's incredibly exciting, but you've got to come to peace with the fact as CEO, is like funnies. Someone asked me yesterday. Didn't you know that the

agenda page on the ICANN wasn't up-to-date days before? I said no, I didn't notice. He said, you're kidding me, you didn't notice? I'm like, I'm lucky if I could look at my schedule when I get there off the airplane and get ready to go to the meetings. No, I don't watch one page out of thousands of page, out of hundreds of projects ICANN has, so he's a CEO, so we have to have a great team.

We built a great team, and the hardest part of leading ICANN because it's a unique organization, is to respect the multi-stake holder process for policy development and public comment and feedback. Let those very, I call them decentralized processes happen or starfish like processes happen, but the organization has to have structure because it has to execute. When you have to have structure to pull off an event for seventeen hundred people in Costa Rica with hundreds of different sessions and make sure everything works in every room. That's a huge planning of logistic exercising, and so the set of things ICANN has to do is a lot, but that structure has to have some order. Now you can manage it in a collaborative fashion, but there is a hierarchy and there is structure and there re responsibilities.

Janice is our wonderful person that works with this community here fellowship, and does other things, but she knows what she does, that's her responsibility. So ICANN is unique because most organizations have a bit of that hierarchal structure to go execute, or they're very decentralized and loose. ICANN is very complex I think in its complexity. The hardest thing to do as CEO is to define the interfaces and manage the interfaces between those open processes and between-

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