

GSE CEO Program (GCP)

The GSE CEO Program is a rigorous 4-week online course designed specifically for leaders who have been officially appointed as incoming CEOs (or equivalent) or who have been in the role for less than three years in Kenya and East Africa. Drawing on decades of experience in the Decalogue Management Methodology™ and the foundational works of Deming, Goldratt, and the systemic management tradition, this program equips you with the confidence, strategic clarity, and systemic thinking tools to lead effectively in our regional context.

This program recognises the unique nature of CEO roles and the challenges they face in the East African business environment. Experienced executives, board members, and thought leaders will share their insights to prepare you for success. Given the uniqueness of the role, CEOs don't have many people they can speak with openly. Hence, this program will develop an enduring peer cohort of like-minded and similarly situated CEOs to provide support as you step into your new position.

Who Should Attend

This program is designed for:

1. **New CEOs** Leaders who have been officially appointed as incoming CEO or have been in the role for less than three years
2. **Managing Directors** Leaders taking the helm of subsidiaries, regional offices, or local operations
3. **Department Secretaries** Public sector leaders assuming top leadership roles in government ministries
4. **Executive Directors** Leaders of NGOs, non-profits, and social enterprises in the region
5. **Founders Transitioning** Entrepreneur-founders moving from startup mode to professional CEO
6. **Successors in Family Business** Next-generation leaders taking over family enterprises

Organisation Types: Small to medium-sized listed organisations, NFP/NGO, government/public, private organisations, and family businesses across East Africa.

The GSE Advantage: Why This Program is Different:

Focused on seeing the business leadership as an interconnected system of processes.

Traditional CEO Programs	The GSE Approach
Focus on leadership theories and case studies from Western corporations	Builds CEO leadership as a systemic practice —understanding how you, your board, your organisation, and your market interconnect as networks, not silos
Teach delegation and team building as skills	Reveals organisational design as constraint management —freeing yourself for strategic work by understanding system interactions
Treat strategy as a planning exercise	Views strategy as hypothesis testing —using cause-and-effect logic to anticipate outcomes before committing resources
Address board relations as stakeholder management	Frames board engagement as shared understanding —building the "profound knowledge" Deming insisted was essential for governance
Measure performance with lagging indicators	Establishes systemic metrics —understanding variation and identifying leverage points to lead in real-time

Your Learning Journey: 4 Weeks of Integrated Discovery

You will progress through four interconnected modules, each building on the last. Every week combines conceptual frameworks from the Decalogue tradition with practical application to your real-world CEO challenges.

Week 1: The Leadership System—Understanding Your New Role

Core Question: *What does it mean to be a CEO, and how is this role fundamentally different from other executive positions?*

This week establishes the foundational lens: the CEO role is not simply a promotion from other C-suite positions, it is a qualitatively different kind of leadership. You'll learn to see your organisation as an interconnected system and identify where your real leverage lies.

Weekly Topics & Key Takeaways:

	Topic	Key Integrated Case Study	Key Takeaways
1	The Uniqueness of the CEO Role	Kenyan Manufacturing Case: A successful COO of a family-owned food processor in Thika is promoted to CEO. Within six months, he realises that the skills that made him an excellent COO (operational focus, attention to detail, hands-on management), are now creating bottlenecks. He is overwhelmed and his board is concerned.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The CEO role requires a fundamental identity shift; from functional leader to systemic leader. 2. Deming taught that the leader's job is to understand the system, not just manage the parts. 3. Your success is no longer measured by your decisions, but by the conditions you create for others to decide well.
2	Mapping Your New System: Stakeholders, Constraints, and Interconnections	Regional Bank Example: A new CEO of a tier-2 bank in Nairobi must navigate expectations from the board, regulators, shareholders, customers, and employees—each group operating with different assumptions and constraints. The previous CEO was removed for failing to balance these competing demands.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every CEO operates within a system of interconnected stakeholders—what Goldratt called the "core conflict" between competing demands. 2. Undesirable effects (board tension, regulatory pressure, staff turnover) are data about constraints in your organisational system. 3. The Conflict Cloud process, from the Decalogue tradition, reveals the underlying mental models creating your leadership blockages.
3	The Conflict Cloud: Diagnosing Your First CEO Challenge	Family Business Succession Case: The daughter of a founder of a successful logistics company in Mombasa is appointed CEO. Long-serving executives, who have been with the company for decades, are resistant to her ideas. The board expects growth, but the senior team wants stability. She faces the classic Goldratt dilemma: drive change or maintain cohesion?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Surface-level problems ("they don't respect me") mask deeper conflicts ("I must drive growth AND maintain team cohesion"). 2. A clearly defined conflict points directly to the solution, an "injection" that breaks the logjam. 3. Your first task as CEO is to diagnose and not to act.

	Week 1 Deliverables	Key Activities
1	Diagnose Your CEO Challenge: Using the Conflict Cloud template, map a current strategic challenge you are facing. Submit:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A clear statement of the situation 2. The undesirable effects you are observing 3. The core conflict you believe is causing the blockage 4. Key stakeholders in your CEO system
2	Required Reading & Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "The role of the leader in a systemic organisation" (Deming and Goldratt: The Theory of Constraints and the System of Profound Knowledge - (Cohen & Lepore)) 2. "Introduction to systemic thinking for executives" (Sechel: Logic, Language and Tools to Manage Any Organization as a Network - (Cohen & Lepore)) 3. Decalogue Methodology™ Guide to the Conflict Cloud 4. Case Study: "The First 90 Days as CEO: A Systemic Perspective"

Week 2: Working with the Board—Building Shared Understanding

Core Question: *How do boards work, how do board directors think, and how can you build a productive partnership with your board?*

Building on your systemic diagnosis, this week delves into the most critical relationship for any CEO: the board. You'll explore how boards function, the common mistakes new CEOs make, and techniques to help your board, and therefore yourself, succeed.

Weekly Topics & Key Takeaways:

	Topic	Key Integrated Case Study	Key Takeaways
1	THow Boards Think: Understanding Board Dynamics	East African Telecom Case: A new CEO of a regional telecom company faces a board that seems divided. Some directors push for aggressive expansion; others want consolidation. The CEO doesn't understand the underlying dynamics and is caught in the middle.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boards are not monolithic—they are networks of individuals with different mental models and constraints. 2. The "human constraint" is often the board's own assumptions about how things should work. 3. Your job is not to manage the board but to create the conditions for shared understanding.
2	Common Mistakes New CEOs Make with Boards	Agribusiness Example: A new CEO of a large tea exporter in Kericho presents a bold strategic plan to the board, expecting enthusiasm. Instead, he faces scepticism and resistance. He failed to understand that the board needed to be part of the strategy development, not just recipients of it.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The "negative branch" tool from the Decalogue helps you identify unintended consequences of your board interactions before they occur. 2. Boards need to be involved early, not informed late. 3. Trust is built through transparency, not through impressive presentations.
3	Building a Productive Board-CEO Partnership	Public Sector Case: A new Director General of a Kenyan government agency must work with a board appointed by different political interests. Previous CEOs lasted less than a year. How can she build a sustainable partnership?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Future Reality Tree helps you map the positive outcomes of a strong board partnership. 2. The Prerequisite Tree identifies every obstacle standing between current board tension and productive collaboration. 3. An "unrefusable offer" for the board creates buy-in even in politically charged environments.

	Week 2 Deliverables	Key Activities
1	Board Engagement Strategy:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Map your board members, their mental models, constraints, and what they genuinely value 2. Identify potential "negative branches" in your upcoming board interactions 3. Draft a board engagement plan for your first year
2	Required Reading & Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Working with governance bodies" (The Human Constraint: How Business Leaders Can Embed Continuous Innovation, Montgomery) 2. "Governing networks" (From Silos to Network" (Montgomery)) 3. Decalogue Methodology™ Guide to the Future Reality Tree and Negative Branch 4. Case Study: "Building Board Trust: A CEO's Journey"

Week 3: Developing and Executing Strategy—From Plan to Flow

Core Question: *How do you design, communicate, and execute strategy in a complex, interconnected world?*

Armed with systemic diagnosis and board understanding, this week focuses on the core work of the CEO: strategy. You'll learn practical frameworks that enable you to focus on the most important levers to create organisational flow.

Weekly Topics & Key Takeaways:

	Topic	Key Integrated Case Study	Key Takeaways
1	Strategy as Systemic Design, Not Annual Planning	Kenyan Fintech Example: The CEO of a growing Nairobi fintech startup has a traditional strategic plan—five years of detailed projections. But the market is changing too fast. The plan is obsolete within months, yet the organisation is still trying to execute against it.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation of the future is a network, not a hierarchy executing a fixed plan. 2. Moving the Chains offers an operational solution: strategy must be adaptive, not rigid. 3. The CEO's job is to create the conditions for strategic flow, not to dictate every move.
2	The Unrefusable Offer: Strategy That Creates Pull	Regional Bank Example: A new CEO wants to transform her bank into a digital leader. But the organisation is resistant. Employees don't see why they should change.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategy imposed from the top creates compliance, not commitment. 2. An "unrefusable offer" answers the question for every stakeholder: "What's in it for me?" 3. The External Constraint framework helps you design strategy that people genuinely want to execute.

3	Executing Strategy Through Systemic Metrics	Manufacturing Case: A new CEO of a flower farm in Naivasha has ambitious growth targets. But traditional metrics (revenue, profit) are lagging indicators—by the time they show a problem, it's too late to act.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Traditional metrics measure activity, not progress toward strategic goals. 2. Throughput, Inventory, and Operating Expense (T, I, OE) provide a systemic view of strategic impact. 3. The right metrics create a feedback loop that sustains momentum.
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	Week 3 Deliverables	Key Activities
1	Strategic Framework Development:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft your organisation's "unrefusable offer"—for customers, employees, and the board 2. Identify the key constraints limiting your strategic execution 3. Define the systemic metrics you will use to track progress
2	Required Reading & Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Adaptive strategy" (Moving the Chains: An Operational Solution for Embracing Complexity in the Digital Age," Lepore) 1. "Strategic flow" (Quality, Involvement, Flow: The Systemic Organization" (Montgomery & Lepore)) 2. Decalogue Methodology™ Guide to Creating Unrefusable Offers 3. Case Study: "Strategy as Flow: A Nairobi Success Story"

Week 4: Leading Through Complexity—Resilience, Brand, and the Long Game

Core Question: *How do you sustain yourself and your organisation for the long term?*

The final week synthesizes everything into a coherent CEO approach. Drawing on Quality, Involvement, Flow, you'll learn to manage your resilience, build your CEO brand, and create the conditions for sustained organisational excellence.

Weekly Topics & Key Takeaways:

	Topic	Key Integrated Case Study	Key Takeaways
1	Honing and Operationalising Your CEO Brand	Professional Services Case: A new CEO of a Nairobi consulting firm is brilliant but unknown. She needs to build a brand that represents her as a leader and the face of the organisation—but she's uncomfortable with self-promotion.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your CEO brand is not about you—it's about what your organisation stands for. 2. Sechel teaches that language and logic shape perception. 3. An authentic brand emerges from clarity about your organisation's core purpose.
2	Managing Your Resilience: The CEO Marathon	Regional Infrastructure Example: A new CEO of a Kenyan construction firm is burning out after eight months. The pressure is relentless. He's neglecting his health, his family, and his own wellbeing.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The CEO role is a marathon, not a sprint. 2. The Human Constraint reminds us that the leader's inner world is the starting point for all outer change. 3. Resilience is not about enduring stress—it's about designing a life that sustains you.
3	Creating Your CEO Action Plan	Synthesis Session: Workshop your own CEO development journey using all the tools from the program and the framework of Quality, Involvement, Flow.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A complete CEO action plan must address all three elements: the quality of your thinking, the involvement of your people, and the flow of work. 2. The plan must be grounded in your specific context and challenges. 3. The first 90 days after the program are critical—you will leave with a clear "Day 1" action.

	Week 4 Deliverables	Key Activities
1	Complete CEO Action Plan: Submit a comprehensive action plan for your CEO leadership, including:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conflict Cloud (diagnosis of your core strategic challenge) 2. Board engagement strategy 3. Strategic framework with unrefusable offer 4. Resilience and brand development plan 5. First 90-day implementation calendar
2	Required Reading & Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "Quality, Involvement, Flow: The Systemic Organization" (Montgomery & Lepore) (Decalogue Methodology™ Complete framework) 1. "Leadership communication" (Sechel: Logic, Language and Tools" (Lepore) 2. Decalogue Methodology™ Guide to the Prerequisite Tree and Transition Tree 3. Template: Complete CEO Action Plan

Tangible Outputs

By the end of this program, you will have:

1. A complete **CEO Action Plan** ready for implementation in your role
2. **A portfolio of tools and frameworks** (Conflict Cloud, Future Reality Tree, Prerequisite Tree, Transition Tree, Unrefusable Offer)
3. A **board engagement strategy** for your first year
4. A **strategic framework** based on systemic principles
5. An **enduring peer cohort** of fellow CEOs facing similar challenges across East Africa
6. **Certificate of Completion** from the Graduate School of Entrepreneurs

Learning Methods

This program is designed for busy professionals. Each week combines:

	Method	Description
1	Interactive Video Lectures	Short, focused videos introducing key concepts with real-world examples from East Africa
2	Case Study Analysis	Rich cases drawn from Kenyan and regional organizations, analyzed through Decalogue frameworks
3	Peer Cohort Sessions	Small-group discussions with fellow CEOs facing similar challenges—building an enduring support network
4	Weekly Mentor Huddles	Live sessions with experienced practitioners to workshop your specific strategic challenges
5	Self-Assessment Diagnostics	Tools to understand your mental models, leadership assumptions, and development areas
6	Practical Application	Each week's deliverable builds toward your final CEO Action Plan

What You'll Take Away

You will progress through four interconnected modules, each building on the last. Every week combines conceptual frameworks with practical application to your real-world change challenge.

Core Capabilities

	Capability	You Will Be Able To...
1	Systemic Diagnosis	See your organisation as an interconnected system and identify the real constraints to your effectiveness
2	Board Partnership	Build productive, trust-based relationships with your board based on shared understanding
3	Strategic Clarity	Design adaptive strategy that creates pull rather than requiring push
4	Network-Based Organisation	Lead your organisation as a network, not a siloed hierarchy, creating flow and adaptability
5	CEO Brand	Develop an authentic leadership brand grounded in organisational purpose
6	Sustained Resilience	Create the conditions for your own long-term effectiveness and wellbeing

Learning Requirements & Assessment




To earn the GSE CEO Program Certificate, you must:

1. Complete all module work in all week sessions by stated deadlines.
2. Actively participate in course discussions, reflections, and mentor huddles.
3. Complete all self-assessments and reflections.
4. Submit a passing CEO Action Plan that demonstrates application of Decalogue tools and systemic frameworks.

The GSE CEO Program Key Facilitators

You will progress through four interconnected modules, each building on the last. Every week combines conceptual frameworks with practical application to your real-world change challenge.

Key Facilitators

1		<p>Domenico Lepore <i>Co-creator of the Decalogue Management Methodology™</i></p> <p>Domenico Lepore is a physicist, management educator, and co-creator of the Decalogue Management Methodology™. For over 30 years, he has worked with organizations across Europe, North America, and Africa to implement systemic management approaches based on the Theory of Constraints and the work of W. Edwards Deming. He is the co-author of Deming and Goldratt: The Theory of Constraints and the System of Profound Knowledge and author of Moving the Chains and Sechel: Logic, Language and Tools. Domenico brings a unique combination of scientific rigor and practical business experience to CEO development.</p> <p>Domenico Lepore (https://ca.linkedin.com/in/domenicolepore)</p>
2		<p>Angela Montgomery <i>Co-creator of the Decalogue Management Methodology™</i></p> <p>Angela Montgomery is an organizational psychologist, writer, and co-creator of the Decalogue Management Methodology™. With decades of experience advising leadership teams on three continents, she specializes in helping organizations transition from siloed hierarchies to networked, adaptive systems. She is the author of The Human Constraint, From Silos to Network, and co-author of Quality, Involvement, Flow. Angela's work focuses on the human dimensions of systemic change—the mental models, assumptions, and constraints that leaders must navigate.</p> <p>Angela Montgomery (https://ca.linkedin.com/in/angelamontgomeryphd)</p>
3		<p>Giovanni Siepe <i>Decalogue Management Methodology™ Practitioner</i></p> <p>Dr. Giovanni Siepe is a management consultant and practitioner of the Decalogue Management Methodology™ with extensive experience across Europe and Africa. He specializes in helping CEOs and leadership teams apply systemic thinking to strategy execution, organisational design, and performance improvement. Giovanni brings a pragmatic, results-oriented approach to CEO development, grounded in decades of hands-on consulting experience.</p> <p>Giovanni Siepe (https://ca.linkedin.com/in/dr-giovanni-siepe-86263416)</p>