

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO CALIFORNIA WALNUT BOARD & COMMISSION



For almost 75 years, the California walnut industry has united and invested in promotion, research, and market development through the creation of the California Walnut Board in 1948. As a grower enacted USDA Federal Marketing Order, the organization represents more than its 4,500 producers and 86 handlers (processors) it makes up the fabric of California's rich agricultural history. Today, California is home to 99% of U.S. commercial walnut production and is the leader in global trade accounting for close to 50%. The U.S. is the largest market utilizing one-third of annual production with the remainder shipping to over 50 countries.

Headquartered in Folsom, California, the California Walnut Board (CWB), and sister agency, California Walnut Commission (CWC) are agricultural commodity organizations committed to their mission of cultivating industry prosperity by increasing worldwide demand for California walnuts while protecting the industry's ability to produce, trade and mitigate risks at state, federal and international levels.

Both CWB and CWC are critical voices for the walnut industry. The Board conducts research and promotion programs, industry reporting, regulatory and technical matters, and assures compliance with Order regulations. Handler assessments fund Board activities. The CWC is a grower established Commission founded in 1987, funded by grower assessments. The CWC conducts marketing programs, health and nutrition research, regulatory, and compliance and advocacy efforts on behalf of industry. The CWC works in conjunction with the California Department of Food & Agriculture. In concert, both organizations play a key role in strengthening the industry's position in the domestic and global marketplace.

The California Walnut Board is seeking a dynamic leader with a successful track record that can lead the industry towards future growth. In addition to serving as Executive Director of the CWB, this individual will serve as CEO for the California Walnut Commission. The ideal candidate must have a broad agri-business background with a demonstrated mix of marketing, financial, regulatory and executive management experience leading professional teams with a strong member relations focus.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Executive Director and CEO provides executive leadership for the CWB/CWC to achieve its mission. The position is responsible for performing all management functions necessary for the CWB/CWC to accomplish required duties and carry out necessary responsibilities under the Federal Marketing Order/State Statute. This opportunity is a salaried, full-time, management position with varying work hours and time commitments. This individual must be able to effectively lead and inspire internal and external stakeholders at all levels to achieve an increasing and high-level industry prosperity.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The Executive Director and CEO report to the Board of Directors of the CWB and CWC, made up of California walnut producers and processors. Both entities are quasi-governmental and have mandatory oversight/reporting requirements under the Order and Commission statute. Direct reporting to CWB/CWC executive committees.

This position requires leading a team of six direct reports including the Director of Operations, Executive Coordinator, Senior Marketing Director International, Senior Marketing Director, U.S. Marketing & Communications, Director of U.S. Branding & Food Innovation and Director of Regulatory & Technical Affairs. The role maintains responsibility for a total staff of nine employees, several consultants, multiple outside contractors and agencies.

PROFESSIONAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic and Operational Leadership

- Provide leadership for a united California Walnut industry: growers, handlers, Boards and staff.
- Establish and execute industry strategic plan, informed by market intelligence, evaluation and return-on-investment for CWB/CWC initiated programs.
- Direct personnel, salary structure, and performance evaluations. that hold staff (and outside contractors) to high standards of performance.
- Promote a culture that reflects the CWB/CWC's values, encourages excellent performance and rewards productivity. Ensure that the CWB/CWC and its programs are consistently presented with a strong, positive image.
- Engage with internal and external stakeholders on issues pertaining to the CWB/CWC efforts.
- Ensure oversight and compliance with FMO and State of CA regulations, including Financial and Agreed upon Procedures, Compliance and Civil Rights reviews/audits.

Relationship Management

- Recruit, motivate and manage a talented and dedicated professional staff.
- Evaluate performance and provide counseling and coaching to employees that encourages entrepreneurial initiative and prudent risk-taking.
- Ensure that all HR laws, policies and expectations are adhered to without compromise.
- Maintain harmonious employee/employer relations.
- Assess current and future staffing levels; develop and implement staffing and succession plans.
- Direct a strong internal communications system to facilitate member relations at the highest level.
- Interface with representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, U.S. Trade Representative office and other agencies and officials to discuss regulations and standards. Maintain effective relationships with all relevant state, national and related industry organizations.
- Serve as industry spokesperson and represent the CWB/CWC at industry functions and trade shows.

Financial Stewardship

- Responsible for operational budgets of both entities in the total range of \$38M - \$45M per year. Annually works with the executive committees and full Boards to establish annual operating budget, assessment rate and reserve management.
- Oversee the prompt, thorough and accurate reporting of financial assets and activities. Provide regular and as requested financial reports to the Board of Directors.
- Coordinate annual financial audit and the implementation of relevant financial controls and procedures.
- Review monthly and annual financial statements for budgetary comparisons, analysis and action-oriented responses as necessary.
- Implement and maintain a program for monitoring compliance with assessment rate.

Program Management

- Lead and manage all CWB/CWC programs and initiatives to grow the consumption of California walnuts both domestically and internationally.
- Direct government relations and advocacy efforts, staff and consultants on pertinent and timely issues pertaining to industry's ability to operate and be profitable.
- Oversee production, post-harvest, market-intelligence and nutrition research programs, working with research directors, committees, advisory groups to establish priorities and projects. Establishes and manages relationships with the research community.
- Plan, implement, monitor and evaluate all programs and activities of the organization to ensure objectives are achieved. Oversee design, delivery and quality of programs and services.
- Establish key performance indicators and develop the necessary metrics to measure the effectiveness of marketing and research programs conducted in-house and any work performed by outsourced agencies. Maximize the value received for each dollar spent in marketing or research.
- Provide regular reports on program accomplishments to the Board of Directors.

EDUCATION & SPECIFIC QUALIFICATIONS

- An undergraduate BA/BS degree is required. A graduate degree in a related discipline is preferred.
- A minimum of five (5) years senior management experience with P&L responsibility in the agri-business or related field.
- Demonstrated creativity/innovation, initiative and leadership skills.
- History of building and leading high performing teams.
- Demonstrated success in policy advocacy and issues management, specifically in U.S. international trade policy.
- Strong marketing orientation with direct working experience with international/domestic media and public relations agencies needed. Outstanding knowledge of successful marketing that truly grows demand.
- Experience with international business highly desirable.
- Non-profit or commodity board management preferred.
- Experience working with federal marketing orders/U.S. agencies (USDA, USTR, FDA, EPA) would be a plus.
- Extraordinary communicator; in small groups and for public speaking events.
- Flexibility to travel on a regular basis (local, national and international travel).

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Highly strategic; innovative and creative visionary.
- Team builder; creates focused, results-driven teams; able to inspire and motivate others by exhibiting a genuine passion and affinity for walnuts, the organization and members.
- Possess emotional intelligence with strong interpersonal skills; approachable, a great listener able to relate equally well with all levels of an organization and with diverse groups, e.g., producers, handlers, outside agencies, staff, industry and consumers.
- A consensus builder; strong yet diplomatic leader to unite and engage disparate groups.
- Must be entrepreneurial with the ambition and passion to realize the full potential of the organization.
- Ironclad integrity; impeccably honest and trustworthy, uses discretion regarding confidential issues.
- Ability to be decisive and fearless.
- Delegates effectively; monitors results and holds individuals and teams accountable.
- Difference maker; effective management of multiple projects, achieves outstanding results.
- Strong work ethic; demonstrates reliability, initiative and efficiency. Able to work in a fast-paced environment.
- Possesses realistic optimism with a desire for continuous learning and development.

CONTACT MIXTEC GROUP FOR INFORMATION

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:

The California Walnut Board is an Equal Opportunity employer and conducts all business in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended and the nondiscrimination regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture as now or hereinafter amended (7 CFR Part 15). Furthermore, California Walnut Board complies with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and the Federal Equal Opportunity Act.