

Ernest Andrade has over 20 years of leadership experience successfully engaging the public, private and non-profit sectors by implementing forward thinking strategies in the areas of municipal annexation, knowledge-based economic development, program management and workforce development.

Under his leadership, the City of Charleston has evolved into a welcoming environment for growing companies with an entrepreneurial spirit. As Annexation Director, he grew the City of Charleston from 38 square miles to 100 square miles - a strategy that increased Charleston's tax base by over \$2.5 billion and 17,000 residents.

In 2001, the Charleston Digital Corridor, Andrade's brainchild, was launched. This comprehensive knowledge-based economic development initiative has earned Charleston its reputation as an emerging technology destination and is recognized as a national model for technology-based economic development. With the same resilience and creative juices used to develop and execute the Digital Corridor's programming initiatives, Ernest piloted yet another victory for the City of Charleston – the Flagship.

The Flagship is Charleston's premier co-working environment. In less than two months after opening its doors in June 2009, the Flagship was operating at full capacity with a waiting list for its facility and within one year, graduated four companies and houses an additional eight companies. These companies have doubled in size, secured a total of 14.1 million dollars in funding and created almost five million dollars in compensation, locally.

Ernest Andrade also consults with privately held knowledge-based companies on a wide range of business issues including raising capital; streamlining operations; along with brand and communications management. Under a "no committees-just results" philosophy, Ernest is the epitome of "strategic doing." He believes that in order to be successful you have to gather information in an efficient manner and rapidly decipher what is relevant.

Ernest was born and raised in Kuwait and lived in India prior to migrating to the United States in 1981. He became a naturalized citizen in 1996.