



CEOs Need to Realize What Truly Drives High-Performing Organizations.

Studies show that most CEOs separate culture initiatives from their business strategy and story. Actually, culture is the byproduct of your story and strategy in action. The words and actions of every employee embody your company's story and strategy.

CEOs and C-suite executives must understand that words matter. They must acknowledge that the message behind the company's story and strategy play a significant role in the type of culture that takes root inside their business.

So, the real question here is, what is the state of your go-to-market story and strategy? How clearly and consistently are they communicated up and down your organization?



One way to find out is by answering the following questions...

Do our employees understand the company's story?

- > Our company's purpose?
- > How we want to be positioned in the market?
- > Who we are?
- > What we do?
- > The value we deliver?
- > What makes us different in the market?

Do our employees understand our strategy?

- > Vision?
- > Mission?
- > Values?
- > Customer needs and desires?
- > Promise to customers?
- > Pillars of our go-to-market strategy?

Executives who answer these questions with a resounding “yes” will most likely have high-performing cultures. Executives who answer “no” or don’t really know the answers to these questions need to understand that lack of clarity is negatively impacting their culture and business performance.

The fact is, CEOs who produce winning cultures maintain complete clarity and alignment between their story and strategy. They also ensure that their entire employee population understands, internalizes and activates the company's story and strategy in daily work activities.

Your story and strategy ... create a shared mindset.

When employees have a deep understanding of what your company stands for, what it does and how it creates value for customers, their purpose becomes clear. They feel more connected. They believe what they do matters. Clarity of purpose is a powerful motivator. And, it's born from a clear, compelling and consistent corporate story that aligns with your go-to-market strategy.

Your story and strategy ... drive aligned actions.

When leaders and team members across the organization understand how the strategy connects with the story, congruent actions and decisions unfold. Your company's vision, mission and values go beyond words on paper and take on a life of their own. Employees see how strategic decisions, investments and initiatives connect with the story. They understand how their marching orders align with the bigger picture. For this to happen, leaders must ensure the story and strategy are consistent and omnipresent.



Clarity and connectivity are the keys to a high-performing organization.

When your story and strategy are clearly defined and documented —and fully immersed in your company's culture — magic happens. As research from Duke University states ...

“An effective culture is like an invisible hand at work inside of each of the employees that helps to guide their decisions and judgments in a way that the overall corporation would desire it to be.”

Culture is formed when consistent words and actions, aligned with the corporate story and strategy, are constantly on display — when what is expected and what is acceptable become second nature to each employee. Everyone seems to operate from the same sheet of music. Which is why one executive who participated in Duke University's research said, *“Culture is your sheet music to success. It is no different than an orchestra. You can hire the best trumpet players, oboist, violinist, and unless they are all playing from the same sheet of music at the right tempo, you will fail. If you have the trumpets playing too loud, the song won't sound right. It is that delicate balance of getting people on the same page.”*

Do your employees have the clarity they need to perform at the highest level?

The problem is, most C-suite executives and business leaders are not providing employees with the same sheet of music to play from. As a result, employees lack clarity — clarity around what the company stands for, how it differs from the competition, and what its greater purpose is. They also lack clarity around the story the company needs to tell in the market and the promise it needs to make to customers.

Without clarity around the company's story and strategy, there is nothing for the employee to connect with. There is nothing shared from department to department, or division to division.

When it comes to maintaining organizational clarity, one executive interviewed by Duke University said it best:

“A good leadership team and good CEO will put in the processes to make sure the message filters down to the very bottom of the organization unchanged.”

The key word here is unchanged.

CEOs who want to establish high-performing organizations must understand it all starts with a clear, consistent corporate story and strategy. Then they must ensure that story and strategy is infused throughout their employee population.



This article is an excerpt from CEO Communicator, the monthly magazine published by OnMessage. This publication is specifically for C-Suite and Communications Executives who want to improve organizational clarity, alignment and performance. To download full issues of CEO Communicator Magazine, go to www.itsonmessage.com.

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James F. O'Gara is the CEO and Founder of OnMessage a leading B2B Communications Consultancy. Mr. O'Gara has spent thousands of hours formulating winning go-to-market strategies and stories for dozens of Fortune 100 companies and hundreds of high-growth businesses. O'Gara's expertise in go-to-market strategy development, Voice of Customer research, messaging and positioning, as well as customer-centric culture development, has earned him the respect of executives around the world. His ability to breakdown strategy, sales, marketing and positioning challenges in complex industries has been invaluable to CEOs, CCOs and CMOs at a number of leading companies. James is also an active member of the Forbes Communications Council and his thought leadership often appears on Forbes.com.

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About OnMessage:

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