

Keys to Converting CEO Messages into Desired Actions and Outcomes.

This is a message CEOs need to hear over and over again...

There are two keys to translating executive communication into action:

1. Strategic intent
2. Persistence

Many executives are perplexed when their message doesn't translate into action. They are dumbfounded by the lack of "retention" that exists up and down their organization. Most executives feel like they have communicated the same message over and over again ... and it still does not translate into the desired action or outcomes.

Many times, this is because they are communicating the ... exact same message ... over and over again. Their messaging strategy is one-dimensional. It is not aligned with the learning and adoption curve that is required to translate words into action.





For your message to convert into desired actions, you must communicate in phases. You need to deliver the message with the strategic intent of moving your audience from:

- > **Context:** What is this about and why is it important?
- > **Understanding:** What does it mean for the company, our customers, etc.?
- > **Internalization:** How does this impact me and why should I care?
- > **Application:** How do I apply this in a meaningful and relevant way in my job?
- > **Operationalization:** How does this change the way my team operates moving forward?

The core message remains constant; it is simply wrapped in a story that is intentionally designed to move your employee from one phase to the next. And, just to be clear ... no, you can't move your audience through the learning and adoption curve by addressing all of these in one long message.

This leads us to the second key to success. Persistence.

Most executives underestimate the sustained communication effort required to translate a message into consistent action.

Whether it pertains to changes in the business model, new offerings, strategic initiatives ... most CEOs are communicating messages that are critically important and many times complex.

That's why you must realize that your employees are inundated with messages every day ... from every direction.

Persistence is the only way you will get your message across.

Some believe the "Rule of 7" applies. You have to deliver a message seven times before the desired behavior is activated. However, Microsoft recently conducted a study designed to measure the optimal number of exposures required for audio messages to stick. The study showed that messages must be communicated between six and 20 times to achieve the desired result.

No, this doesn't mean simply sending out one to two messages for each phase of the learning and adoption curve is the answer (2 messages x 5 phases = 10). It means you utilize the repetition and frequency that is required to move your audience from one phase of the adoption curve to the next.

For instance, providing your audience with "Context" may only require one to two messages. However, establishing "Understanding" may require two or three; "Internalization" may require three or four; "Application" eight to 10; and "Operationalization" may demand 10 to 20.

Many factors come into play with respect to communication repetition and frequency. The complexity of the message; the hierarchy of your organization; the number of unique audience segments you must reach; the measurable results that are actually being attained, etc.

So, the next time you plan to activate strategic initiatives, share critically important messages, or change the mindset of employees across your organization — ask yourself ...

- > Where is my organization on the learning and adoption curve?
- > What is my strategic intent with this particular message?
- > What repetition and frequency is required?

The key to success is anchoring your communications plan in strategic intent and persistence. Only then will your words (messages) translate into the actions and outcomes you want to see in the business.

OnMessage is a management consulting firm that specializes in helping executives formulate intentional messaging and communication strategies that create clarity in the minds of employees and customers. Clarity that increases employee engagement, improves the customer experience and maximizes organizational performance. Learn more at www.itsonmessage.com.





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.

About the Author:



James F. O'Gara
CEO and Founder
OnMessage

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 break down 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.

Contact James directly at: >< [in](#) [twitter](#)

About OnMessage:

OnMessage is the B2B communications consultancy executives call when it counts. When strategic shifts in the business take place, when financial performance is on the line and when the message absolutely must deliver material business results. OnMessage specializes in helping C-suite and communications executives ...

- > Reposition and differentiate their businesses
- > Produce laser-focused messaging / positioning for new product and service launches
- > Establish clear, compelling messaging for specific industries and geographic markets
- > Communicate changes in vision / strategy or leadership inside and outside of their organizations
- > Develop effective communication programs in support of M&A integration and other organizational changes

For the last 16 years, OnMessage has earned trust and respect from executives around the world.

- > Trusted Advisor to 100's of C-Suite Executives
- > 500+ B2B Mid-Market and Fortune 1000 Companies Served
- > 600+ Strategic Messaging Engagements Delivered
- > 250+ Successful Product Messaging / Positioning Platforms Developed
- > 75+ Years of Combined M&A Communication & Integration Experience
- > 50+ Years of Combined Organizational Communications Expertise
- > 16 Years of Consistently Exceeding Client Requirements

Let us earn your trust. Request an engagement briefing and learn more about our firm at www.itsonmessage.com.

