



CEO Wake-Up Call: Your Corporate Message Matters More than Ever.

I hate to say it, but many of today's CEOs have lost touch with a critical fact in business: The strength of a company's story is intrinsically tied to the financial performance of the business.

You get out of it ... what you put into it.

If your corporate story is ineffective and inconsistently delivered ... financial performance suffers. However, when your story is clear, compelling and consistently delivered throughout the customer experience ... top-line and bottom-line results thrive. Why do I believe many CEOs have lost touch with this fact? How else can you explain the lack of strategic time, energy and investment the C-suite puts into the development and delivery of a consistent corporate story?

Most companies ... treat corporate messaging as nothing more than words on paper.

Most companies ... develop and deliver their corporate story in an ad hoc manner.

When you take those two facts and add that we work in a business world driven by instant gratification, short cuts and quick wins ... you have a recipe for disaster.

A customer experience awakening is required.

Just a few years ago, making sure stakeholders (beyond the marketing department) understood the corporate message was a luxury — a nice-to-have. It is a business imperative. Why? Because today, the customer experience is the battleground on which business is won and lost. The customer experience is made up of so much more than just a new website or campaign. It takes a village to deliver a clear, compelling and consistent corporate message throughout the entire customer journey. In the modern business world, it takes unwavering executive-level commitment (time, resources and investments) to ensure every stakeholder who plays a role in the customer experience is able to bring a consistent story to life.



The development and delivery process matters.

Tactic-driven, inconsistent and isolated — this is how most companies approach the development and delivery of their story throughout the customer experience. If your corporate message is going to drive financial performance, your messaging development and delivery process has to matter, and the CEO needs to send that message loud and clear — up and down the organization.

It must be strategic, intentional and holistic.

Remember, your message is not an ad, it's not a slogan, it's not even the message on your website. It's the story that is consumed throughout the customer journey ... across all channels ... and every touchpoint. Yet, why is it many C-suite executives look for the quick win when it comes to getting their message in the market? They launch new campaigns, new annual reports, websites ... and for some reason think their work is done. They wonder why financial metrics aren't moving in the right direction. To be honest, I don't think they truly believe these tactical things are going to materially impact customer acquisition, retention and loyalty — but I do think many forget what will actually deliver results.

Infusion and activation determine ROI.

Even if a company lands on an extremely compelling message — if it's not consistently delivered throughout the customer journey — it won't be the story customers take away from the experience they have with the business. That's why CEOs and C-suite executives have to redefine what the finish line looks like. It's not landing on a clear, compelling and consistent message. That's just the starting line. If executives want their corporate story to have a material impact on the financial performance of the business — a clear, compelling message must be infused throughout the customer experience. That means the message must be activated inside and outside of the organization.



Customer behavior has changed ... have you?

Too many CEOs are still living in the past. They don't understand that the rules of engagement have changed. They are not willing to fundamentally change how they approach messaging development and delivery — inside and outside of their organization. My only caution to these executives is this: beware. In the past, repercussions of delivering a fragmented, disconnected message in the market may not have jumped off the P&L. But, that's because the way customers engaged with and consumed your story was different. Make no mistake about it ... it's a new world and it's an entirely different competitive environment. Your message matters more than ever before.

CEOs and C-suite executives who hang onto the old-school approach to corporate messaging development and delivery ... will lose. Those who change the way they bring a clear, compelling and consistent story to life throughout the entire customer experience ... will win. And win big.

So, if you want a new ad campaign — have at it.

However, if you want to make a material impact on top-line and bottom-line financial performance — be prepared to lead the way and invest in a disciplined corporate messaging development and infusion process across every customer-facing part of your business.



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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:

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.

