Redefining Corporate Communications Success in the C-Suite.

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CEOs Who Increase Organizational Clarity ... Improve Business Performance.

Ask most C-suite executives if their company’s vision, strategy, culture and story matter and they will say … “Of course they matter.” But the real answer is uncovered when you ask the next question …

“What are you doing to ensure clarity and alignment exists in these areas — up and down your organization — on a consistent basis?”

In most cases … their answer is vague and delivered with less conviction. So, let’s be clear: Having a vision is one thing — infusing it into the fabric of your culture is another. Defining your go-to-market strategy is one thing, however translating that strategy into a message employees can understand and activate is something else.

The truth is, many business leaders are amazed to learn that 70 percent (7 out of 10) of all employees are unknowingly misaligned with their company’s strategic direction and just 55 percent of middle managers can even name one of their company’s top five priorities (Harvard Business Review).

These executives are even more shocked when they hear that 90 percent of their front-line employees don’t know what their company stands for and what makes it different from the competition (Gallup).

Bottom line: In the rapidly changing business environment we operate in today, organizational clarity and alignment doesn’t happen by chance.
What degree of clarity and alignment exists across your organization?

The first step in improving organizational performance is to understand the degree of clarity and alignment that exists across the company. This is accomplished by conducting a thorough assessment of the four dimensions of organizational performance:

Vision: Your reason for being, your purpose, the dent your company wants to leave in the universe.

Strategy: Your macro go-to-market strategy, core business initiatives and priorities.

Culture: Shared mindset, behaviors and actions across the business.

Story: Your company’s positioning, value proposition and promise to customers.

The assessment enables you to understand how aligned the organization is around the shared beliefs, decisions and actions that are required to drive optimal business results.
How Do You Get Started?

Within 45 days, OnMessage can capture and deliver critical insights through quantitative and qualitative research that provides you with a baseline report on the degree of clarity that exists across all four dimensions of organizational performance. These insights enable you to understand how organizational clarity is impacting business performance at various levels of your company.

Quantitative Research

An online survey is used to assess clarity in all four areas across your entire employee population. Quantitative survey results are compiled, analyzed and segmented. We analyze the results with a high degree of granularity so we can pinpoint high-performing and low-performing areas within the organization.

Qualitative Research

Extensive one-on-one interviews are also conducted with a cross section of your employee population. Interviews are conducted across every functional area of your business and at multiple levels (executive, middle management, individual contributor). During these interviews, we cover all four dimensions of organizational performance, surface valuable performance insights and identify obstacles that may be preventing you from attaining greater clarity in various areas of your business.

Findings and Recommendations

Our experts compile and analyze all findings and formulate recommendations for your executive team. We will share these findings with your executive team in a formal presentation. During this meeting, we will also share our recommendations for improving clarity and alignment within specific areas of your business.

Want to improve organizational performance? Start by understanding the degree of clarity and alignment that exists across these four dimensions of your business. To learn more about our Organizational Clarity Assessment, email jogara@itsonmessage.com.

James O’Gara is the CEO and Founder of OnMessage, a management consulting firm that specializes in helping C-suite executives formulate intentional messaging and communication strategies to create clarity in the minds of employees and customers. Clarity that increases employee engagement, improves the customer experience and maximizes organizational performance.

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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.
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 corporate message throughout the entire customer journey. 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.

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.
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.
C-Suite:
Your Legacy Mindset Regarding Marketing Has Got to Go.

In the business world today, the customer has taken center stage. That means CEOs and C-suite executives must change the way they think about marketing’s role in the enterprise. They must reset the boundaries and expand marketing’s reach into and influence over the entire customer experience. Gone are the days of marketing’s sole focus being brand awareness, generating leads and launching campaigns. They have been replaced with … more holistic ownership of the customer journey.

It’s Time to Redefine Marketing’s Role Across the Organization.
CEOs have to lead the charge when it comes to changing the way executives across the enterprise view marketing, how it operates, and the degree of control it has over the customer experience.

Simply put, marketing should be defined and confined only by the customer journey itself.

With this fact in mind, leading CEOs are starting over. They are clearing the slate and using the customer journey as the foundation from which they task marketing with developing strategic plans, formulating budgets and building the brand.

According to McKinsey & Company, “Few senior-executive positions will be subject to as much change over the next few years as that of the chief marketing officer. Many CEOs and boards may think that their senior marketers’ hands are already full managing the rise of new media, the growing number of sales and service touchpoints, and the fragmentation of customer segments. But as the forces of marketing proliferation gather strength, what’s actually required is a broadening of the CMO’s role. This expansion will encompass both a redefinition of the way the marketing function performs its critical tasks and the CMO’s assumption of a larger role as the voice of the customer across the company.”

CEOs Must Lead the Charge and Open New Doors.

While some CEOs and executive teams may not have the appetite for this reset — it is the right business and financial decision in the long run. In fact, CEOs who redefine marketing’s role in the business, with customer experience at the center, will ultimately gain and maintain greater market share than their competitors. However, to make this happen — you, as the CEO — must be prepared to drive change.

For your CMO and marketing team to be successful, you will need to ensure they can capture greater knowledge of the customer through analytics; have more involvement in the formulation of your company’s go-to-market strategy; take on broader messaging development and delivery responsibilities; and have the authority to lead customer-centered initiatives that span almost every functional area of the company.
In other words, you will have to completely redefine, in the minds of leaders across the organization, where marketing’s job starts ... and stops.

Yes, You Will Need a Strong, Strategic CMO ... But You Must Have Their Back.

A recent Forrester article, “CMOs Boldly Reach For More Influence In The Enterprise,” explains that, “CMOs should step forward and take responsibility for turning the enterprise toward the customer. This means taking on a more significant role on the executive team ... it also begs CMOs to lead innovation processes in the organization ... the CMO, has to create a more engaged customer relationship. Getting the organization to see the CMO in this light is a big ask, and only CMOs who rethink their approach to marketing operations will pull it off.”

With that said, as the CEO, you must have the courage and persistence to lead the way. Your marketing leaders can’t do it themselves. To win, the entire executive team must commit to working with marketing to re-center the business around the customer experience.

In fact, a recent Heidrick & Struggles study found that 62 percent of CMOs view relationships with peers on the senior executive team as vital to their success. We think that percentage should have been closer to 100 percent. Why? Because without philosophical and strategic alignment between the CEO and CMO ... and unwavering commitment from the C suite to transform marketing — companies will experience limited success in the future. It’s just that simple.
The world of management consulting has been turned on its head. Rapid changes in business strategy, customer requirements, and competition are transforming how C-suite leaders engage with and extract value from experts in a given field. Long-term, six-figure engagements are being replaced with agile, on-demand insights and advisory services.

OnMessage is leading this transformation in the organizational communications space with our on-demand Intelligence and Advisory Services.

Our vision is simple.

To transform organizational communication into an engine that drives business performance.

Our mission is rooted in your reality.

To provide executives with the rapid intelligence, specialized services and agile resources they need to execute successful communication and business strategies.

The value we deliver is self-evident.

We enable executives to improve organizational clarity, alignment and performance through effective communication strategies.

Why are we retooling the way we work?

Because our clients (C-suite executives) have shared with us their frustration with the old-school model of consulting. They wanted something different. They wanted a new kind of communications partner. One that understood the realities of their world and could deliver value — when and where — they needed it most.

That's why our new subscription model provides executive teams with rapid access to the intelligence, training, virtual advisory services and on-site consulting they need to improve organizational performance.
Why should you, as a C-suite executive, turn to OnMessage today and in the future?

Because you can tap into what you need … when you need it. Our on-demand services deliver the …

> Intelligence you need to drive effective organizational communication.
> Executive Development your leaders must have to capitalize on best practices in executive communications.
> Virtual Advisory Services you must have to rapidly execute critical business initiatives.
> On-site Consulting required to attack complex messaging and communication challenges.

So, when it comes time to formulate and execute strategic business initiatives — you now have a communications advisory partner that gets it. A partner that will provide you with rapid access to the communications expertise and resources you need to support your …

> Go-to-market strategies and plans
> Annual business goals and priorities
> Organizational change initiatives
> M&A integration processes
> Employee and customer roadshows
> Product and service launches
> Branding and positioning initiatives
> Customer and partner meetings
> Virtually any critical business initiative
Crystal-clear organizational communication is the currency of business. Employees crave it. Customers demand it. Now we help executives, like you, develop and deliver it 24 / 7 / 365.

Visit our website to learn more about our new on-demand and subscription services or contact James O’Gara at jogara@itsonmessage.com.

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