

# Communications in 2018... the voice of the CEO



## Get smart

In 2007, CEOs *hoped* CCOs would know about their organisations in detail. Now they *expect* it<sup>1</sup>.

*"Communications people should be closer to the business. They should be able to understand the company figures properly – to understand the business, but also where it's heading and what issues it's going to face."*

**Paul de Krom, CEO, TNO<sup>2</sup>**



## Get real

In 2007, CEOs recognised that consumers wanted transparency and authenticity. Today, they are looking to CCOs to help them manage their online engagement to ensure it is authentic and consistent with the brand<sup>1</sup>.

*"We are currently seeing a complete revolution, as the world rapidly becomes ever more transparent. The pressure to increase transparency is enormous, and I believe that corporate communications can play a very significant role in that process. The ability to steer this process in the right direction – to communicate your story, your strategy, your culture – is becoming ever more important."*

**Stepan Breedveld, CEO, Ordina<sup>2</sup>**



## Get ahead

In 2007, CEOs saw the CCO role as largely tactical with a focus on identifying and countering threats. CCOs are now expected to be able to identify and counter issues before they escalate into threats<sup>1</sup>.

*"The key challenge is: have that foresight to anticipate what is likely to become important over the next few years, because if you get it wrong now, it's going to be hard to recover."*

**Mike Hawes, CEO, SMMT<sup>2</sup>**



## Get strategic

In 2007, Communications was seen as an important contributor to strategy, but did not have a seat at the table. Today, CCOs are recognised as having an important role to play in the creation and implementation of strategy<sup>1</sup>.

*"In my view, the involvement of communications needs to take place at the very beginning of the strategy-building process. It's important for them to be there, challenging ideas and highlighting opportunities: 'What does that really mean?' 'Can we live up to these standards?' 'Have you thought about A, B, C?'"*

**Andreas Joehle, CEO, Hartmann Group<sup>2</sup>**



## Get vocal

In 2007, CEOs saw social value and CSR as important, but not a key priority for Strategy or Communications. Today, social value is seen as a key part of both... and a major role for the CCO<sup>1</sup>.

*"I think that's one of the internal things that a really good corporate comms person does: they hold a mirror up to the organisation and keep everyone honest, and they do it by focusing on what's important and what's real and understandable."*

**David Lockwood, CEO, Laird PLC<sup>2</sup>**

## A closing thought...

*"Technology used to be a cost, but today that same technology is the business. For many of the same reasons, communication used to be seen as a cost but is now becoming the business."*

**Saskia van Uffelen, CEO, Ericsson Belux<sup>2</sup>**

1. 'Innovative and executive: this is the next-generation of communications director', VMAGroup, 28 November 2016. A copy of the report can be requested at... <http://www.vmagroup.com/the-next-generation-of-communications-directors/>

2. Analysis of 'The CEO View: Communications at the center of the enterprise', Arthur W Page Society. <https://www.awpagesociety.com/thought-leadership/the-ceo-view-communications-at-the-center-of-the-enterprise>