Torch Group
Executive Talent That's A PERFECT FIT™

Fresh Perspectives on Evolving Leadership Roles

Marketing, Sales & Communications Leaders, and their Responsibilities

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Foreword

As both society and business change—as innovative technologies arise, and new markets appear while others vanish—customer expectations and preferences are also altered. Business models, products, and services that formerly prevailed lose ground and are displaced by solutions better suited to filling contemporary customer and market requirements. Music CDs give way to online streaming, retail stores to ecommerce, and manual production lines to factory automation and robotics.

Nothing can stop such change from happening. The belief that it might be possible to do so is at best wishful thinking and at worst a recipe for how to perish. People in general and companies in particular must keep up with the times, not to be faddish or trend setting, but to survive and flourish and turn challenges and opportunities to their best advantage. Individuals accomplish this by acquiring new skills and developing underutilized talents whereas businesses achieve it by meeting new market demands with updated offerings and refashioning their communications, marketing, and sales functions to best support their efforts.

This eBook, a compilation of recent *Torchlight* features, presents Torch Group's current thinking on the revised and expanded roles of key market- and customer-facing functions and the requisite talents, aptitudes, and backgrounds of the professionals who lead them. In other words, it is what we believe CMOs (chief marketing officers), CSOs (chief sales officers), communications executives and their senior management staffs should look like in an age where sales channels run the gamut from face-to-face selling to ecommerce, marketing departments are filled with content creators and social media strategists rather than writers and artists, and the workforce is shifting from Baby Boomers to Millennials and Gen-Xers. We hope you find it useful in helping you fill executive and C-level roles in these core functions.

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Marketing

What to Look for in Your Next CMO or Senior Marketing Leader

Like many other business functions, marketing's role and significance can vary from one company or industry to another. Depending on the circumstances, marketing can either extend or be confined to functions that range from market definition and product management to marketing communications and sales support. However, most marketing functions and the CMOs (chief marketing officers) and marketing vice-presidents who lead them have a common characteristic: they are squarely focused on customers — on determining who they are, where to find them, and what best to offer them. As such, they are not only responsible for overseeing or defining key elements of the company's marketing mix — such as its new product introductions, messaging strategy, awareness objectives, and lead generation goals — but also for identifying unmet customer needs and capitalizing on market opportunities that enable it to meet its growth, sales, and profit targets.

A Lot on the Plate

The mission-critical nature and multiplicity of a CMO's responsibilities can make it challenging for companies to identify and to hire individuals with the requisite skill sets. This challenge is only increased by changing market trends, shifting buyer preferences, and rapid technological advances in marketing automation and digital communications. Indeed, marketing is evolving at a rate formerly reserved for software development, which is itself one of the forces driving these changes. As marketing technology becomes more powerful and grows more sophisticated, it has enabled areas of marketing such as database marketing, marketing analytics, multichannel marketing, behavioral marketing, and account-based marketing to move to center stage, pulling in their wake associated sub-functions such as search engine optimization (SEO), search engine marketing (SEM), e-mail marketing, lead nurturing, social media, and other areas of digital marketing.

A Marketing Chief of Staff

Obviously, a CMO cannot be an expert in all these areas. Marketers who present themselves as such are either exaggerating or don't even know how much they don't know. This problem is not unique to marketing, nor is its solution. Just as a chief financial officer (CFO) cannot be familiar with every aspect of corporate finance, from the finer points of the tax codes to intricate internal audit requirements, the CMO cannot possibly know all the minutiae associated with accurately structuring marketing databases, building content hierarchies, or creating PPC (pay per click) campaigns. Nor should he or she be. Rather, the CMO's role is to synthesize market and customer information, to develop an analytics-driven marketing- and sales-oriented strategy, and to ensure that his or her expert staff executes it in a manner that delivers both a consistent customer experience and outstanding results. To do this, the CMO must not only be steeped in the tenets of classical marketing and the realities of the sales process but must also be conversant with emerging trends in digital marketing and how they affect the company's ability to prevail in its target markets. He or she must also be able to attract, understand, work with, and lead senior-level managers and practitioners from areas of marketing as diverse as market research, product management, exhibitions management, and digital

marketing. This is a tall order that is made even taller by the makeup of the typical marketing team, which might include creative and analytical personnel at various stages of professional development—from interns and entry-level personnel to middle and senior-level managers.

Marketing Leaders Don't Rise Through the Ranks

Surveys show that over the last few years, in part because of the velocity of marketing's analytical and digital transformation, the majority of newly placed CMOs have not been promoted from within but instead hired externally. In fact, one 2013 study conducted across a broad range of industries by a major leadership consultancy indicated that, over the preceding 18 months, only 2 percent of the surveyed companies had promoted their new CMOs from within, whereas the remaining 98% had hired them from external sources. These numbers were markedly different for the CMOs they replaced, 29% of whom had been internally promoted. Interestingly, other data indicate that over 79% of new CMOs are experienced in digital marketing compared to 69% of their predecessors, while 80% of current CMOs have analytical experience compared to a mere 48% of past CMOs. The apparent dearth of internal CMO candidates with the range of skills required for companies to keep abreast of current marketing trends has rendered CMO recruitment more demanding than ever and made employers open to new approaches and options. As the marketing function has become more methodology- and technology-driven across most if not all business areas, marketing experience has become more transferable across industries. Accordingly, companies are now more willing to consider candidates from other industries, sometimes preferring candidates with up-to-date marketing analytics and digital marketing skills to those whom, despite industry experience, have a less well-rounded skill set.

THE APPARENT DEARTH OF INTERNAL CMO CANDIDATES WITH THE RANGE OF SKILLS REQUIRED FOR COMPANIES TO KEEP ABREAST OF CURRENT MARKETING TRENDS HAS RENDERED CMO RECRUITMENT MORE DEMANDING THAN EVER AND EMPLOYERS OPEN TO NEW APPROACHES.

One Size Does Not Fit All

This is not to say that companies in all business areas prize CMOs with marketing analytics and digital marketing skills above all others. For example, capital equipment manufacturers and professional service firms, which rely heavily on personal-referral marketing, continue to value CMOs who have industry knowledge and broad networks of industry contacts. This is also true of companies in highly regulated industries — such as healthcare, the life sciences, energy, and pharmaceuticals — where CMOs are expected to be well acquainted with the constraints imposed upon marketing by the regulatory environment. Finally, the premium placed on CMOs with contemporary skill sets is greater in consumer or B-2-B industries where classical or operational marketing — such as branding, promotion, and lead generation — is more greatly valued than it is in industrial manufacturing or technology sectors where business development and direct vertical industry experience might still carry greater weight.

Finding the Elusive "Perfect-Fit" CMO

In contrast to the past, when companies might have found their next CMO through referrals from professional associations or personal networking on the part of members of the C-suite or the board, the increasing demand for CMOs with broad, up-to-date skill sets has led many companies to turn to the executive retained search firms as a source of new CMO talent. Generally, a qualified retained executive search consultancy will provide its clients with access to a much broader candidate pool than they would otherwise have. This is particularly true if the search consultancy is a "boutique" firm with internal competence in the marketing

function or with an impressive track record of related placements in the client company's own industry. Such a firm will typically have an internal database and extensive network replete with potential marketing leadership candidates upon which it can draw and will likely perform further external research to uncover additional passive candidates. The best firms will also conduct competency-based behavioral interviewing to help determine if the selected candidates will be a "perfect fit" for the client's marketing organization. This is an important consideration when one recalls that the CMO must lead and inspire a diverse mix of creative, operational, and analytical personnel in order to make the company's marketing vision a reality — which, in the end, is what a CMO's job is all about.

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Marketing

The Digital Marketing Leader: Managing Your Company's Virtual Persona 24/7

These days, it's hard to imagine any company whose business has not been somehow affected by one or another form of digital marketing, from outbound marketing such as e-mail and online pay-per-click (PPC) advertising through inbound marketing such as content marketing, search engine marketing, and social media. Certainly, there are perhaps a few outlier companies that don't rely much on digital marketing but, for the most part, if a business has considerable revenue, a significant product or service set, and a sizable customer and prospect base, it has a website and digital marketing presence. Not having these is akin to not being in the Yellow Pages years ago because, nowadays, without them, a company is not so much in business as perhaps on the road to being out of business.

Expanded Communications Options, Greater Access, & Changing Customer Habits

As information has become accessible at every hour of the day and night through laptops, mobile phones, and other devices, companies have had to migrate from print advertising, direct mail, and similar traditional forms of marketing to virtual and more interactive communications channels. These changes are most marked in the retail and consumer products sectors, where eCommerce stores are making conventional shopping outlets go the way of typewriters, adding machines, and comparably outdated items now better suited to museum exhibitions than to everyday business operations. While traditional marketing vehicles, like product catalogs and capabilities brochures, remain important, they are increasingly being co-opted by digital equivalents like e-books and web content.

No Business Sector Left Behind

This expansion of communications options and changing market preferences has caused many companies to re-examine their go-to-market strategies and operating models. Regarding the initial point, consider the consumer software industry, which has transitioned from shipping boxed and shrink-wrapped packages via DHL and UPS to offering downloadable desktop and mobile apps, or the recording industry, which once promoted recording via radio and television and produced physical deliverables such as CDs and vinyl LPs, but which now markets and delivers syndicated music over streaming services such as Pandora and Spotify. As for changed operating models, one need only think of Amazon's transformation first of the bookselling business and subsequently of almost every other conceivable area of the retail sector, including—as evinced by its recent purchase of Whole Foods—even groceries.

In some instances, the spread of digital communications and marketing has affected businesses by causing them to redefine the very definition of whom they view as customers or prospects. A telling example in this respect is in the realm of B2B (business to business) manufacturing, materials provision, and professional services. Because B2B purchases often entail the acquisition of "big ticket" items such as capital equipment, raw materials, or professional services such as legal counsel or management consulting, marketing and sales efforts in the sector have traditionally focused on building awareness, consideration, preference, and long-

term relationships with prospects' and customers' C-suite officers, high-ranking executives, and other members of senior management. The reasoning was that if you got a company's senior leadership to think well of your product or service, you were "golden," and there was little need to cultivate relationships with less prominent members of the organization. Those were indeed the days and those were also far simpler times.

Currently, as business challenges increase in number and complexity and their potential solutions grow and deepen in corresponding fashion, the number of players involved in making B2B purchases has expanded accordingly. For example, the selection of a food supplier for a regional or national restaurant chain or the purchase of an enterprise-wide CRM (customer relationship management) system for almost any kind of company is typically a committee endeavor involving specifiers and evaluators, as well as managerial- or -executive level decision makers; the first group is often composed of young and Internet-savvy individual contributors, and the last group of managers likely beset with a host of other equally pressing responsibilities. The upshot of all this is a more informed and transparent purchasing process in which a variety of customer stakeholders must be persuaded and convinced before an order gets placed, a check cut, or a PO issued. So, even if executive golf outings and expensive dinners are still sometimes part of the B2B sales process, easy digital access to better and more compelling information for all members of the customer's purchasing team has become the most important factor.

A Digitally Influenced Marketplace

In the early 90s, when the Internet first arose in earnest, some marketers took a wait-and-see attitude, with a few even dismissing it as a fad that would eventually pass. Of course, that view — along with many of the marketers who held it — has long since vanished. Sometimes, though, confronted with the endless barrage of new Internet marketing vehicles, eCommerce platforms, and social media alternatives, it's easy to wonder if digital marketing has been overhyped. Whatever the answer, the numbers make a compelling case for digital marketing's relevance. For example, studies by Brafton, a U.S.-based content marketing firm, and Accenture, a global business consultancy, indicate that up to 94% and 95% of B2B and B2C purchasers, respectively, perform online research before arriving at purchase decisions. As such, it's likely fair to say that companies unable to effectively address and leverage digital marketing are proceeding at their own peril.

Digital Marketing Needs Vary According to Your Competition, Customers, & Markets

Not all companies require the same level of digital marketing activity or the same types of resources to deploy it. As an example, a modest-sized business services firm might only need a straightforward, well-designed website that lists its practice areas and locations and provides bios and contact information for its partners or consultants, whereas a professional services company, such as a law firm specializing in family or malpractice law whose target customer is the larger public, will likely need to make its website more overtly sales oriented, and engage in advertising in the online editions of local newspapers and regional service provider directories.

NOT ALL COMPANIES REQUIRE THE SAME LEVEL OF DIGITAL MARKETING ACTIVITY OR THE SAME TYPES OF RESOURCES TO DEPLOY IT.

The table stakes are higher yet for companies with more tangible offerings. For instance, embattled brick-and-mortar retailers and former mail order houses must be able to showcase most if not all their merchandise in a well-categorized site equipped with eCommerce shopping carts and faceted search- and cross-sell and upsell capabilities. On the other hand, B2B capital-equipment manufacturers, like makers of food processing equipment, might not need online purchasing capability but, if their products are customizable, might require specification-based product configurators and pre- and post-sales online support via live chat or call-on-demand functionality. In contrast, a B2B components manufacturer that sells in high-volume to OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) and in smaller volume to maintenance and repair organizations might need a website equipped with account-specific web portals and the ability to accept purchase orders for the first group of customers and robust product selectors and credit card processing capability for the second. Finally, almost all companies, whether they are selling to end users or to other businesses, will likely benefit from ongoing social media initiatives involving blogging and postings to social communities and platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, and Twitter, preferably integrated with their PR, trade press, and IR initiatives.

The head of digital marketing must be able to provide ***strategic leadership*** *as well as* ***direct tactical execution***

What Does An Ideal Digital Marketing Team Leader Look Like?

The answer depends on some of the factors cited above, i.e., how much digital marketing capacity does your company need? Another driving determinant, however, is company size. A small professional services firm might get by with minimal in-house staff — such as a digital marketing manager who defines the digital strategy and manages execution herself or through a subcontractor and/or agency. A moderately-sized manufacturing business, however, will probably have a digital marketing director and a staff composed of several web professionals, including content developers, web designers, and programmers, who either execute the digital strategy directly or oversee its execution by external parties. By comparison, a larger consumer products or manufacturing company will often have a full-blown internal digital marketing agency, headed by an executive director or vice president, replete with digital strategists, content developers, UX designers, and SEO/SEM, email, social media, and lead generation specialists, as well as additional support from agencies and contractors.

To manage such a diverse team and broad range of technical responsibilities, the head of digital marketing must be able to provide strategic leadership as well as direct tactical execution in areas as diverse as digital asset management, marketing automation, and data-driven measurement and reporting methodologies such as omni-channel attribution and multivariate testing. Moreover, whether the leader is an executive or a director who reports to one, the digital marketing leader must be able to cross the divide between digital and traditional marketing and work collaboratively with the management staff from other areas such as sales, business development, and information technology (IT). Most importantly, he or she must be capable of crafting a digital marketing plan that is integrated with the company's overall marketing and sales strategy, supports its positioning, communicates its messaging, and helps deliver on its business goals and objectives.

How Can I Find the Right Digital Marketing Team Leader?

Outside of pure technology areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), biomedical engineering, and IT, digital marketing might be one of the fastest-growing job fields today and its practitioners among the most sought-after talent, given the digital skill shortfall among most marketing staffs. (See two recent surveys conducted by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), wherein hundreds of marketers from digital agencies and client companies were asked to rate their organizations' digital marketing competence on a scale of 1 to 100, and the average rank came in under 60 for client companies). The hiring challenge is further exacerbated by a tendency among candidates with tenuous digital marketing backgrounds to exaggerate the depth of their experience. As such, hiring managers must be careful to distinguish between candidates who are merely good at bandying buzzwords from those who truly understand the discipline from a strategic perspective as well as have a handle on its tactical execution.

This is one of the reasons that many companies who need to hire a digital marketing leader find it helpful to retain the services of an executive search consultancy experienced at identifying, evaluating, and acquiring digital marketing management talent, whether in the company's own business sector or across a wider range of industries. Such a firm will typically have suitable contacts and access to related candidate databases that it can draw upon when sourcing positions in this arena. What's more, it will be experienced at vetting candidates and separating the wheat from the chaff (i.e., those who are perhaps spouting fluff versus those who truly know their stuff) via a variety of methods, including competency-based behavioral interviewing and technical skills assessments. The better firms will also pay close attention to a candidate's interpersonal characteristics, soft skills, and management style to ensure that they are consistent with your core values and your company's norms and standards. Because, in the last analysis, the ideal hire is one who is both a perfect fit for your organization's culture and also truly expert in his or her technical area and adept at fulfilling his or her management responsibilities: In other words, someone who doesn't merely tell you what you want to hear and mouth the latest jargon, but who instead walks the walk to help you meet your company's mission-critical marketing and sales objectives.

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Marketing

From Brand Identity to Brand Culture: The Evolution of a Strategic Business Function & Revolution of Its Leadership

At their historic roots, the words *brand* and *branding* mean to identify an object or an animal as one's property by marking it indelibly. Since that humble beginning, the words have acquired more expansive connotations, most often as a result of their adoption by the field of marketing.

For many of us, *brand* and *branding* conjure up images of Madison Avenue in the 1950s and 1960s, of the entertainment series "Mad Men," and of legendary ad agencies like BDM, J. Walter Thompson, Chiat Day, and Ogilvy & Mather. These were the heady times of big ad budgets and massive campaigns by Procter & Gamble, Palmolive, General Foods, Unilever, and the other packaged goods and consumer product giants that established branding as a branch of Marketing and used it as a means both of differentiating products and of establishing their identities in a mass market.

In those days, the means to achieve these ends were comparatively straightforward: the development of brand differentiation, the creation of a unique brand identity composed of brand image and brand message, and the building of brand awareness through widespread, repeated, and consistent reproduction of the brand image and message across all appropriate media. What's more, the brand image and brand message were typically painted with broad brush strokes on a huge canvas, i.e., they were designed to appeal to the largest possible cross-section of potential customers and, as such, were usually aimed at the least common denominator.

This blunt-instrument, or shotgun, approach to branding was the direct result of a paucity of authoritative media and market data, at least compared to today's prevailing standards for prospect and customer information. Back then, on the one hand, market feedback was often gleaned from small, not-always reliable focus groups, and, on the other, from large, expensive surveys whose scarcely segmented population bases were anything but granular. Consequently, in branding's early, glory days subjective gut instinct and intuition often held greater sway than did objective data collection. As a result, the development of brand identity and messaging frequently entailed more telling than it did listening.

Media Expansion and Its Branding Ramifications

It's not so much an exaggeration as an understatement to say that over the last few decades technological advances have enabled an exponential expansion in market data and a proliferation of platforms for customer and marketplace communication. These changes have incited a ripple effect of marketing changes, ranging from the rise of database and direct marketing in the 1990s through today's increasingly personalized digital marketing. Along the way, they have also transformed branding from a function focused on one-way outbound communication into a discipline that must continuously absorb as well as internalize an ever-rising tide of market feedback to maintain a brand message that is authentic and more likely to resonate with customers. In short, whereas it was once enough simply to define a brand, widely broadcast it, and occasionally refresh it, now companies must diligently monitor their brands to ensure that they meet customer expectations, which are aired daily in blogs, chat rooms, and other forums dispersed across the broad spectrum of social media. This sea change has coincided with a redefinition of branding and the scope of its mission, changed the

background and qualifications necessary to lead the function, and vastly increased the number and types of companies that consider branding important.

Branding's Spread Across Business

Although at its outset branding was largely practiced in the packaged goods arena, where it was first used to create unique identities for nearly generic products such as cereals, soaps, and laundry detergent, the use of branding rapidly spread to other consumer product categories such as electronics, cosmetics, designer apparel, and even kitchen appliances. However, as the years have gone by, the biggest border traversed by branding has been that between B2C and B2B companies, with huge B2Bs such as Intel, Owens Corning, and Cisco Systems, and even Caterpillar jumping on the branding bandwagon.

In some instances, such as in the case of Intel's "Intel Inside" chip campaigns or Owens Corning's "Pink Panther" insulation promotions, B2B vendors engage in branding to create "pull through" demand on the part of their B2C customers' own end users. Other times, as in the branding initiatives undertaken by enterprise-wide software providers such as Oracle, SalesForce, and HubSpot, the intended audience is solely the business customer as there is no other end-user to speak of. This is also true of campaigns undertaken by B2B organizations in narrower industries such as foodservice equipment and electronic instrumentation. In both of these examples, branding is practiced to sharpen identity, to increase awareness, and to build preference in a crowded market.

In yet another scenario, comparatively small B2B and B2C companies sometimes employ branding not just to heighten their profiles with prospects and customers, but also to make their businesses themselves more attractive for acquisition by potential corporate or private equity buyers.

Expansion of the Role of Branding

As the Information Age has morphed into the age of Digital Transformation and as company-customer communications have evolved from a one-way broadcast paradigm into a two-way exchange model, the role and responsibility of the branding function has greatly expanded in many companies. No longer is attention to brand identity and brand awareness the function's mantra nor is honing high-level brand messaging sufficient. Now, customers expect brand characteristics to be reflected in every communication from a company and to be implicit in each of their interactions with it. To fill these new expectations, branding's responsibilities have expanded to include the creation and ongoing articulation of *brand values,* development of *brand stories,* and cultivation of company *brand cultures*.

When Logos, Style Guides, & Other Basics Were Enough

In the years that first followed branding's recognition as a legitimate business discipline and, in some companies, a crucial marketing component, it was largely concerned with the development of highly impactful communications. *Brand identity, brand message,* and *brand awareness* were its primary tenets, and, as such, the function stuck close to the basics of advertising theory like messaging, memorability, frequency, and reach. Accordingly, branding was usually the province of advertising professionals who spent much time perfecting communications elements such as logos, taglines, mandatory type fonts, and color palettes, and then synthesizing all this information into "brand books," (style guides) to ensure that the company's highest-level messaging was authorized and consistent. Because the dearth of detailed quantitative feedback data made the evolution of a brand a risky endeavor to be undertaken only with great caution, a company or product brand, once launched, was only revised on a periodic basis and, even then, the revisions often amounted to no more than mere tweaks to execution.

Altered Profile of Branding Teams & Leadership

The many changes in communications capabilities and attendant marketplace expectations have not only expanded branding's areas of responsibility but, also, of course, the complexion of the function itself. In some B2C companies, this has moved it beyond marketing to place it within the realm of strategic business management. In companies that aspire to achieve a brand culture, it even straddles the line between an outward-facing customer-oriented function and an inward-focused employee-centric one. This is because in such companies every customer interaction and touchpoint—from online and tele-sales down to shipping and accounts receivable—must reflect the brand, communicate its values, and live and breathe the brand story.

THE MANY CHANGES IN COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES AND ATTENDANT MARKETPLACE EXPECTATIONS HAVE NOT ONLY EXPANDED BRANDING'S AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY BUT, ALSO, THE COMPLEXTION OF THE FUNCTION ITSELF.

All of this demands branding leadership that is more highly placed within the organization and that has a broader skill and experience set than might have been typical in the past. Responsibilities of this order call for C-level or other senior executives with extensive cross-functional exposure, P&L (profit and loss) experience, and change management know how, in addition to the usual proficiency in communications and marketing. Depending on the nature and structure of a business, the lead branding job might carry the title of chief branding officer (CBO) and report directly to the company's chief executive officer (CEO) or, alternately, be a vice president position that reports to the chief operating officer (COO), to the president, or to the executive vice president of sales and marketing. In companies where branding is not viewed as having as great an impact on the company's overall success, the top branding job might be a senior level management position that reports into the vice president of marketing, and, in yet others, such as regional grocery chains or manufacturers' rep firms, branding leadership responsibility might simply be held by the senior marketing executive.

In any of these cases, the key to the successful practice of branding is a leader who understands its foundations, including brand identity, messaging, and awareness, and the key elements of its more recent evolution—the brand story and the brand culture, for example.

What Does an Ideal Brand Leader Look Like?

As with many matters of importance, finding the brand executive or senior manager who can develop a company's brand or brand portfolio has never been an easy task and, these days, it's even harder. This is because expectations regarding branding continue to increase, and the function's involvement with and influence over the rest of the organization is expanding accordingly. Not only must the individual who leads the branding function be adept at deciphering market analytics, recognizing great creative, internalizing customer insights, and articulating the brand story, he or she must also be able to navigate and affect change within the organization's culture and have the ability to collaborate with the other functional areas to achieve branding's expanded mission.

The ways of finding candidates for your company's most senior branding position are almost as varied as the talents and skills that the winning candidate will need to have to be selected for the job. One option is to turn to your HR (Human Resources) department, which will likely put out feelers, review previously submitted résumés, and advertise the opening on major job search engines. HR will subsequently be inundated with both off-target and on-the-mark direct applications, as well as a stream of barely vetted applications from contingency recruiters, all of which the HR staff will need to wade through and some of which will be referred to you for evaluation—so, on the whole, an involved and potentially time-consuming process.

Another option is to ask your management team for suggestions and further request that they query industry peers for recommendations, but this runs the risk of distracting them from their core responsibilities and could also tip off your competition.

Yet another possibility is to seek out the services of a respected, retained executive search consultancy, preferably one with experience in branding and access to proprietary candidate databases. Such a firm will typically conduct an in-depth inquiry into the position's requirements and your company's cultural values to ensure that they fill the initial candidate pool with qualified candidates. They will also cull this pool through standard processes designed to yield a select subset of candidates that best meet your company's needs and are most likely to succeed in its cultural and business environment. The best such search firms will also likely employ comprehensive evaluation procedures such as competency-based behavioral testing and might even offer a no-cost replacement guarantee should a candidate fail to remain with you for a prescribed period.

Because the more responsible the job, the harder it is to find just the right candidate, the cost of employing an executive search firm usually varies according to the seniority and compensation associated with the open position. While at first glance engaging such a firm might seem expensive, if you look at the organizational costs associated with the average internally led executive search, it quickly becomes apparent that the truth is often just the opposite. Finally, it's probably also worth keeping in mind that while you can't put a price on health or happiness, most companies can very likely put one on brand awareness, authenticity, and preference or, worse yet, on their absence.

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Marketing

Finding a Market Research Leader Who Can Help Paint a Picture of Your Ideal Customer

Market Research has evolved markedly since the days when B2C companies largely derived their customer insights from a mix of focus groups and government demographic reports and B2B organizations relied for the most part on subjective information from the trade press or their own sales forces. Steady innovations in quantitative research, such as the advent of Big Data and enhanced predictive analytics, and refinements in qualitative research, such as improvements in the Voice of the Customer methodology and the introduction of user experience (UX) analysis, have greatly expanded both the capabilities and scope of market research, as well as blurred the lines between it and its younger sister, the Customer Insights function.

Indeed, the rising flood of social-media driven customer opinions, needs, and motivations (sometimes summarized as "social customer market insights," or CMI) has led many companies to realize that blending traditional research with Customer Insights data can provide the detail of a focus group on the scale of a survey, allowing them to paint more accurate portraits of their customers (e.g., customer personae), which in turn provides them with a better understanding of the customer journey and the ability to more finely delineate the brand equity map. Accordingly, whereas Market Research was in many companies once focused largely on providing customer data to Product Development, now, reinforced with Customer Insight, it has become an expansive corporate function, providing crucial input to areas from Branding and outbound marketing through Sales and Business Development.

Quantitative vs. Qualitative Research: A Fork in the Road or a Bend in the River?

Traditionally, the great divide in Market Research has been between a concentration on numerically driven quantitative research (e.g., surveys, PPC, and in-store shopping data) or on narrative driven qualitative research (e.g., Voice of the Customer interviews, focus groups, and — in a recent cross-over from customer insight — social media commentary, customer-care input, and UX analysis). A comparable distinction has existed between secondary research (e.g., the analysis of information drawn from previously published data, such as industry-trend or government economic reports) and primary research (i.e., custom research designed and conducted exclusively for an organization). In fact, these approaches are not mutually exclusive and which approach a company employs can vary according to the prevailing practice in its industry or according to a particular project and its objectives.

Market Research & Customer Insight—Two Legs of the Same Journey

The quantitative end of Market Research has long been focused on the compilation of data on market need, market size, company competitors, and potential customers; in other words, the "WHAT" of customers and markets, a broad overview of the opportunities and risks in the market landscape. In contrast, the qualitative "customer insight" end of Market Research (whether fed by focus groups, surveys, or social media) is focused

on helping a company to map the customer journey and to understand “WHY” customers interact with its products in certain way, so that, armed with such insight, the company can positively affect customer purchase behaviors. In an ideal situation, the qualitative information is overlaid on the quantitative data, enabling the company to develop a compelling brand story and to create robust customer personae — strawmen that represent its target customer types and around which it can develop marketing programs tailored to a near perfect fit.

Industry-Defined, Company-Specific & Customer-Centric

While the potential goals of and reasons for Market Research are as varied as the different research approaches and as limitless as the number of companies, they are often common within an industry. For example, in brick-and-mortar consumer retail environments, Market Research is often driven by the need for a clear understanding of customer demographics and psychographics as well as of in-store shopping patterns in order to help determine optimal store location, advertising placements, and sale-floor merchandising. Similarly, in an e-commerce consumer products business, research might focus on website navigation paths to checkout and on actions taken within the shopping cart, such as selection of cross- and up-sell options. Finally, companies in both business areas will likely undertake original research and secondary research on seasonal sales cycles because prior-year sales results and inventory turns will inform their promotional calendar and stocking levels over the coming year. Companies in different business sectors, however, are prone to have different sets of research objectives. For example, B2B industrial manufacturers, such as second-tier suppliers to petrochemical companies, are less likely to be interested in research that links consumer demographics and driving habits to gasoline consumption than in research on broader economic trends and cycles that could increase or decrease demand for equipment on the part of their oil-company customers.

Commonalities

Although companies in the same or closely related industries are more likely to conduct research in similar areas than are companies in disparate or un-related industries, some research topics are of interest to nearly all companies, regardless of their end products or services. These topics include visitor behavior on a company’s own website, a company’s search-engine rankings versus its competitors and peers, and a company’s reputation as evinced by prospect and customer commentary in social media. Consequently, even B2B companies that in the past might not have had much interest in Customer Insights now pay attention to them because the extensive reach of social media means that a customer’s impression of a company is no longer formed merely by trade press coverage and firsthand experiences but, potentially, by all customer experiences. This has upped the ante in the Customer Insights end of Market Research, since Customer Insight data can now be used not just to identify and address specific instances of customer dissatisfaction but also to alert the company to looming public relations crises.

Different Folks for Different Strokes

In many companies, these developments have redefined the mission of the Marketing Research function, expanding the array of research methodologies that companies must implement and requiring them to determine what combination of each is best suited to provide crucial research data to internal constituencies. Market research staffs must be able to accurately weigh the predictive significance of their quantitative findings and to evaluate the behavioral implications of their qualitative findings and to determine which are the most significant to their industry and business. These developments have also led to a revision of the job descriptions of market research leaders. In contrast to the past, when research functions were as often as not led by statisticians, these days they are increasingly directed by individuals with diverse academic backgrounds, from the social sciences to economics, as well as equally varied professional experience, from Product Development to Marketing Communications. What’s more, because the output of the Market Research function is used by internal customers with different and distinct areas of need and expertise, it is important that its leader have previous experience in or exposure to business areas other than research.

Finding a Multi-Skilled Leader for the Market Research Function

Finding a Market Research director or vice president with the skill set necessary to set the right objectives and to deliver optimal results is a tall order. Given the ongoing state of rapid socioeconomic, marketplace, and technological change, it is challenging enough to find individuals with the right combination of leadership and technical skills necessary to lead most business functions. When the function requires mastery of diverse, and, in some respects, opposing skill sets — the empirical (e.g., quantitative) versus the intuitive (e.g., qualitative) — the bar is that much higher. This is why some companies turn to retained executive search consultancies to help them find the rare individual who can lead this key Marketing function. Just as the Market Research function can provide a company with a view of its prospect and customer landscape, a search consultancy affords the hiring company a broad perspective on the field of qualified candidates. What's more, good search firms will do this by conducting their own exhaustive research, bringing to bear the same skill sets and employing some of the same techniques used by expert market researchers. For example, the search firm might use secondary quantitative research to get a feel for prevailing trends in the Market Research field, perform primary research to develop a portrait (e.g., persona) of the ideal candidate for use in populating a candidate pool, undertake qualitative research, such as client-intake sessions focused on establishing the organization's technical and cultural requirements, and, finally, conduct candidate behavioral and competency-based interviews devoted to determining a candidate's suitability for the open position and likelihood of acculturation to the company's internal environment.

Using these or comparable research and interviewing techniques, a good executive search firm will be able to paint an accurate portrait of what your next market research head should look like. Even more importantly, just as thorough market research should not only provide a company with a picture of its target customer but also in fact lead it to the customer, an excellent search consultancy should be able to introduce you to your next director of market research in the flesh.

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Marketing

Hiring the Ideal Product Management Executive

A company's Product Management function — which straddles the oftentimes broad chasm between engineering-driven Product Development and customer-oriented Marketing and Sales organizations — requires a leader who understands the priorities on each side of the divide and knows how to reconcile and prioritize these so that all parties are satisfied and that the company's strategic objectives are met. To be sure, the need for such cross-functional leadership skills (i.e., the ability to foster and leverage the talents and capabilities of various parts of the organization) is not unique to Product Management. For example, leaders of Continuous Improvement, Accounting, and Human Resources must also encourage and build on the cooperation and input of other company departments to fulfill their own missions. However, unlike these squarely inward-facing functions, which are usually categorized as overhead, Product Management typically carries P&L (profit and loss) responsibility and must focus both on internal capabilities and external market requirements, as well as develop and deploy strategies that ensure the former optimally serve the latter.

Role of Product Management

First introduced by Proctor and Gamble in the early 1930s and later repurposed and expanded in the 1980s by Microsoft and other high-tech giants, Product Management is now a core business function in almost all non-service businesses. Having expanded beyond its roots in packaged-goods brand and category management, today Product Management is practiced by companies in business sectors as diverse as B2B and consumer products manufacturing, software development, and hardware assembly. What's more, it is often among the most important drivers behind a company's growth and profitability. Indeed, in many companies — particularly technology companies — the Product Management function is at the very heart of the revenue-generation engine, since, as its name implies, its charter includes defining products, bringing them to market, and actively monitoring and managing them once they are in-market. More specifically, the function is charged with managing the company's product portfolio and product life cycle, from new product definition, development, and introduction through maturity, harvest, obsolescence, and replacement.

Product Management: The Nexus Point

In order to carry out its mission, Product Management must act as a unifying hub for the Product Development, Marketing, and Sales functions and serve as a summing node — a central synthesis and resolution point — for product-related internal, customer, and market information. Consequently, its core set of responsibilities is as diverse as it is deep. For example, Product Management must collect Market Research and Customer Insight data, define product requirements, determine capability tradeoffs, develop positioning and value propositions, and draw product roadmaps — all of which will likely have short- and long-term implications for a company's financial forecast, its growth plans and hiring projections, and even its acquisition strategy. When all is said and done, this means that Product Management is responsible for painting a picture of the company's future. This is why the head of Product Management is sometimes

referred to as the “CEO of Products”—a weighty and appropriate title, as there is little more important to a company’s ongoing success than its products.

Product Management Leaders

As with many core functions, the structure of a company’s Product Management function is closely tied to the organization’s overall size and the nature of its business. As such, Product Management departments can range from a single individual in a small, one-product firm to hundreds of individuals in a moderately sized high-tech manufacturer to literally thousands of professionals in a global consumer packaged goods maker.

In a large company, the Chief Product Officer (CPO) typically reports directly to the CEO and is ultimately responsible for all product activities, and he or she designs or refines the overall product strategy to align with the corporate vision and to enable the achievement of goals set by the CEO and board of directors.

In mid-sized companies, the Product Management function might be led by a senior-level product leader — such as a senior vice president or vice president of Product Management who reports to a C-level executive and leads a large team of product managers. He or she is responsible for major initiatives that have the potential to create great value for the business, works to achieve alignment among the cross-functional teams (i.e., Product Development, Marketing, and Sales) that are critical to product success, and has input into the company strategy. Such an individual’s direct reports will typically include product managers, and, in companies that adhere to the Agile product develop methodology, product owners. The vice president of Product Marketing is directly responsible for defining product strategy and features, approving product releases, and monitoring product life cycles to ensure maximum payback on product investment.

In the smallest companies, the head of Product Development might also be in charge of Product Management and, in some cases, even of Product Marketing. This is not an ideal scenario as few individuals possess the combination of skills and temperament necessary to fulfill the responsibilities of both roles nor will he or she have the time to dedicate the degree of attention that each warrant.

Primary Responsibilities

The head of the Product Management function and his or her team have allegiances to three distinct entities — the *products,* the *customers,* and the *business* itself. The *products* are the team’s *raison d’être,* the offspring whom they have shepherded through Product Development, whose character (i.e., feature and benefit set) they have formed, and whose entrance into and progression through life (i.e., the marketplace) they must facilitate and oversee. The *customers* are a key focus because it is their input — gathered through surveys, web analytics, firsthand interviews, focus groups, and the like — that has informed and shaped the product and that will determine its evolution over its life cycle. Of course, the *business* itself is a principal stakeholder because it is the entity to which Product Management is accountable for the fulfillment of its primary mission: optimizing products to maximize their ROI (return on investment) and value.

To fulfill its core mission, the Product Management team must have a thorough understanding of the customer’s needs, the Product Development team’s capabilities, and the company’s overall business strategy. It must become immersed in the customer’s requirements to the point of being able to write “use stories,” must be able to justify the deployment of scarce Product Development resources and must understand the cost-benefit tradeoffs necessary for the product to fill marketplace needs as well as meet the company’s financial requirements.

Consequently, the Product Management leader and his or her team have multiple loyalties and must be adept at balancing the priorities of and the deliverables expected by their various constituencies. However, all of this notwithstanding, their deepest loyalty needs to be to their products, for which they must have an unflagging passion and on whose behalf they must tirelessly advocate as they are the vessel by which their obligations to all three of their constituencies will be fulfilled.

Product Management: Core Deliverables and Value Streams

Given the breadth of the Product Management leader's responsibilities, he or she must be a visionary as well as a realist and, ideally, should have a strong right-brain and left-brain orientation, a capacity for the quantitative and the qualitative, and a creative yet analytical perspective. It takes a multi-talented and broadly skilled individual to fill such a role, one who has had experience in both Product Development and Marketing, and who has demonstrated the ability to develop a product portfolio that serves as a solid foundation for ongoing growth rather than, as can all too easily happen, one that turns out to be a flimsy house of cards.

Searching for such a leader is a little like looking for a needle in a haystack or the proverbial pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. Some of the turns in this potentially long and winding road can be evaded if one has access to talent acquisition professionals who employ comprehensive and consistent processes – for example, broad passive candidate research, competency-based behavioral interviewing, and a repeatable candidate identification, selection, and onboarding protocol, such as the Torch Group's ***Signature Search Process™***.

What Makes a Great Product Management Leader?

Selecting the right executive to lead any mission-critical function is not a simple task, but the challenge is compounded when it comes to Product Management. This is because the best Product Management leaders typically have experience in both the Business Development/Marketing/Sales and the Product Development ends of business. This last point is especially important in technology and engineering-driven companies that adhere to the Agile Product Development philosophy, which specifies close interaction between Product Management and Product Development, a situation wherein it is usually easier for the Product Management leader to make sound business decisions if he or she has a good understanding of the technology stack and the capabilities of the Product Development team.

Even though finding a candidate who is ideally suited to your organization's culture *and* has the requisite skills and experience to meet its core business objectives is a tall order, it is not an unrealistic one. As with many of life's more crucial undertakings, it simply requires a clear understanding of the task at hand, a vision of the desired outcome, and, perhaps, a little expert help along the way. After all, when it comes down to finding the individual who will be charged with ensuring the viability of your company's current and future products, it doesn't hurt to take every reasonable measure to ensure that the search process results in the best possible outcome—a perfect fit.

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Marketing

The Vice President, Sales Channel Management: Your Guide Along the Divergent Pathways to Market

Just a decade or two back—before technology convergence, digital transformation, and the Internet of Things remade the world in which we live and work—in most industries, the sales channels, or conduits, between a company and its customers were well defined, long established, and not subject to much change, let alone evolution. A company's predominant channels largely depended on its industry and the complexity or diversity of its products. For example, industrial component or system manufacturers brought their offerings to the marketplace through direct field sales, distributors, or manufacturers' representatives; software makers through B2B direct sales forces and consumer-retail outlets; consumer goods and apparel houses through department stores, specialty shops, and direct mail; and packaged goods producers through supermarkets, restaurants, and other segments of the retailing and foodservice sectors. In many instances, a company had a primary sales channel and, at most, perhaps one or two secondary channels. For example, an industrial component manufacturer would employ field sales to sell in large volume but would also use distributors or inside salespeople to sell to small-volume buyers.

That was Then, This is Now

These days, as control of company and customer interaction increasingly shifts from the seller to the buyer and cost-effective sales processes become crucial to profitability, many companies are faced with the challenge of engaging their customers through an ever-increasing array of sales channels. For example, in the past, major office- and desktop-publishing software makers were well served by comparatively simple, dual sales-channel structures featuring dedicated face-to-face account teams for enterprise buyers and retail distributors for small-office and consumer purchasers. However, more recently, confronted with the need to maximize sales efficiency and effectiveness across a fragmented customer base, they have had to introduce tele-sales and re-seller teams for mid- and small-enterprise customers, online stores to serve both enterprise buyers and consumers and, in some cases, even brick-and-mortar stores to cater to the latter. What's more, whereas formerly the marketing efforts that support these sales channels were confined to such long-familiar media as print and broadcast advertising, events, and in-store merchandising, today's media mix is characterized by an explosion of digital vehicles ranging from the countless variations on Web and e-mail marketing through the many permutations of social media.

Channel Mix—Varied Currents in Your Products' Stream to Market

Just as a river's course to the sea varies according to the topography through which it flows, the way a company's products proceed to market is determined by its channel mix, which is itself influenced by multiple factors such as the company's economic sector, industry, product set, competing offerings, and target markets, along with, in some cases, the robustness of its internal sales organization and the availability of third-party partners. Consequently, the desired background and qualifications of the head of sales channel management can vary widely among companies. The following is an examination of the elements that can dictate the necessary skills and competencies of the position in two markedly different business sectors.

A Tale of Two Industries

The term *Sales Channel Management* can be literally construed to mean a company's management of a single internal or external sales channel; more pragmatically, however, the phrase refers to a function found in companies equipped with external sales channels, either in addition to or in place of their own internal channels. The two examples below adhere to the second model.

Consumer Packaged Goods. Channel management first emerged as a sales function in the consumer-packaged goods industry, specifically, in the processed foods business, wherein the function is sometimes still referred to as *trade management.* Unlike end-product manufacturers in business sectors such as computing and software, who have largely managed to obviate the "middleman" and sell directly to the end-user, packaged food producers—which include some of the world's largest and oldest consumer companies, such as Proctor and Gamble, General Mills, and Nestlé's—sell almost exclusively to wholesalers. This means that they must engage in a *push and pull* strategy, on the one hand aggressively targeting distributors, food brokers, and institutional food service operators through partner-reward programs and volume discounts designed to increase large-scale "middle man" purchases and inventory stocks while on the other hand squarely taking aim at the end-customer via advertising and in-store marketing such as end-cap displays, on-product coupons, and point-of-purchase promotions geared to increase consumer purchasing. The ultimate goal of the *push and pull* approach is to provide the manufacturers' products with sufficient momentum to *push* them through the supply-chain and incite sufficient demand to *pull* them into the hands of customers who are the final purchasers end users.

Industrial and High-Tech Components. The B2B component industry's channel structure is more multi-faceted and—as of late, at least—evolutionary than that found in the processed foods business. Industrial and high-tech component manufacturers—such as valve, fitting, connector, integrated circuit (IC), semiconductor, and nanofiber makers—must often employ multiple channels to bring their products to market. Their principal customers are seldom final end-users, but rather original equipment manufacturers (OEM) or system integrators (SIs) who incorporate the component manufacturers' products into their own end-user offerings or, alternatively, they are the OEM- and SI-repair functions or partners that service these offerings in the aftermarket. OEM and SI products might range from specialized in-plant machinery, industrial field gear, and automotive or other transportation industry equipment to home appliances like dishwashers and refrigerators to consumer electronics such as home entertainment systems, mobile phones, and other portable electronic devices.

The sales channels through which component manufacturers address their target markets are usually determined by a market's average transaction size and range from channels that address "upstream" pre-production customers, e.g., product designers and component specifiers, to channels focused on "downstream" post-sale product-service customers, e.g., maintenance, repair, and operations (MRO) technicians. The deciding factor is typically the cost of the channel as it relates to the target market's sales potential. Hence, as alluded to above, high-cost individual face-to-face field salespeople, or, depending on the size of the sales opportunity, an entire field sales team—are typically assigned to upstream pre-production customers whereas lower-cost channels—such as inside sales teams, distributors, and e-commerce storefronts—are employed to address downstream, post-sale customers. Such channel diversity can prove challenging for components manufacturers and for the leaders of their Channel Management functions because different sorts of channels require different types of resources and support, as do the customers to whom they sell. Moreover, the Channel Management leadership must carefully analyze and rationalize the channel mix to obtain optimal sales ROI for the company.

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What to Look for in a Channel Management Executive

The answer, of course, depends on the many factors and elements already described above, as well as on the channels that your company already has in place or plans to develop. This having been said, there are indeed common competencies to look for in Channel Management leadership, whatever your company's current or planned channel mix. Because Channel Management has many marketing-related aspects and because marketing (particularly integrated marketing and performance analytics) is in a constant state of evolution, a good understanding of digital and traditional marketing is desirable. Beyond this, a successful sales-management track record with experience in key account development, the drafting of sales plans and partnership contracts, and the negotiation of discount- and value-added service agreements are strong assets, if not outright requisites. Finally, unlike some other areas of sales and marketing in which non-industry specific, transferable skills might be more valuable than extensive industry knowledge and experience, a deep industry background is hard to beat in Channel Management, especially when one considers the vast potential variations in channel mix among industries, such as the differences described earlier between preferred channels in the processed food versus industrial components businesses.

Along these lines, when recruiting candidates for Channel Management executive positions, it is often helpful to turn to search firms that have hands-on functional or sourcing experience in your company's industry rather than those with little or no direct industry experience in your area. The first are far more likely than the second to be able to find and vet the sort of individual you need for such a challenging role—a leader who can guide you through the strong currents and sometimes treacherous shoals of Channel Management in your business sector.

Sales

The Business Development Executive: Strategic & Customer-Focused

The term *Business Development* is ambiguous. Does it mean to "develop a business" by helping it define its marketing and product development strategies or does it mean to "develop business for a business" by increasing its sales, revenue, and profitability? If the answer is all these things, as it in fact is, how does the Business Development executive go about making this happen? The answer to this last question is multifaceted.

A Finger in Every Pie

Most senior executives, directors, and managers largely concentrate on a single business function, such as Finance, Operations, Product Development, Sales, or Marketing. The Business Development executive's responsibilities, however, span several, and, most often, it is the three latter. Depending on the industry and business model of the company and on the executive's professional background, a greater emphasis might be placed on one over another, e.g., Marketing over Product Development or Sales over Marketing. Whatever the mix, Business Development leaders are generally focused on three things: the company's products or services, its customers, and how its offerings might best meet customer needs.

This is because Business Development's primary mandate is to grow the business by the most effective means possible. Usually, the optimal ways to do this are by increasing sales of existing products and services to current customers, initiating sales of the same to new customers, or developing new offerings for sale to both. This formula is a basic of business. However, like much common knowledge, it's one thing to be aware of it and another thing to have the capacity to act on it and reap the benefits. Having such capacity entails truly knowing one's customers and how to sell to them. Typically, Marketing acquires such knowledge on a macro level, through secondary market research, whereas Business Development acquires it on a micro level, through personal interaction. To do this, a company's Business Development team must be adept at both qualitative and quantitative analysis. What's more, its members' backgrounds should include significant exposure to the sales process. Finally, the team's leader should be at once tactical and strategic, a rigorous performer who is nonetheless flexible enough to be opportunistic when circumstances warrant.

Jack of All Trades as Well as Master of Many

Perhaps more so than the head of any other customer-facing function, the leader of Business Development needs to have a strong handle on multiple aspects of the business. Ideally, he or she must have or develop a deep familiarity with his or her company's industry, in-depth knowledge of the features and benefits of its offerings compared to those of its competitors, a thorough understanding of its customer's needs, and the ability to transform all this into a plan that outlines what products and services are optimal for what customers in the present competitive environment and which might need to be evolved or newly developed to meet likely future requirements.

A business development leader must have a strong handle on multiple aspects of the business.

Depending on the complexity of a company's products, e.g., industrial machinery or enterprise-wide software versus professional services or consumer products, fulfilling the above responsibilities calls for an individual who feels equally comfortable in the Sales and Product Development spheres as in the areas of Market Research and Marketing Communications, since Business Development must draw upon all these functions in order to fulfill its own mission.

For instance, to keep a finger on the pulse of the market, Business Development in a manufacturing company typically reviews secondary research and conducts its own primary research via contact with select customers or prospects, and then acts upon its findings to influence the modification of existing products, spur the development of new offerings, and help shape the company's product messaging. Just as importantly, Business Development uses the customer and prospect relationships that it builds in the course of these activities to increase sales and grow the company's top-line numbers.

Sales Versus Business Development

Business Development's role in the sales process bears further discussion, since the function is not really part of Sales but certainly of it. This means what, exactly? Simply, that, as its name implies, a large part of Business Development's role is to secure and to develop new business that will have a significant, positive impact on the company's long-term growth prospects. The Business Development leader and his or her direct reports pursue this objective via a variety of methods. For example, in capital-equipment manufacturing companies, they do so by working with Sales to identify key customers for participation in Product Development's Voice of the Customer initiatives, a process whereby customer input influences modifications to existing products and the development of new ones and that frequently leads to additional sales to the participating customers. In professional service firms, Business Development is not much involved in defining service offerings but instead in business prospecting. For example, targeting high-value clients and nurturing relationships with their decision makers, such as a Marketing vice president responsible for hiring ad agencies, and key influencers such as a Corporate Counsel who weighs in on the selection of strategic service providers such as management consultants or executive search services.

While the above-described responsibilities often overlap with Sales activities, particularly key-account initiatives, they differ in one very important aspect: Business Development's customer-relationship and market development work usually has both a long- and short-term horizon (i.e., a focus on immediate and future sales potential) and is also global rather than regional in nature. By contrast, Sales usually concentrates on making its monthly, quarterly, and annual sales targets and is often more focused on territory sales growth rather than on specific account penetration and expansion, a difference that sometimes renders the function more tactical than strategic.

Does My Company Really Need Business Development?

On its face, this might seem like a rhetorical question, since just about every company needs to develop its business. However, less literally interpreted, it's a valid query, since the true question here is "Does every company truly require a Business Development function?" If yours is a B2B company whose business is characterized by high-dollar sales to identifiable corporate entities with significant lifetime value, the answer is yes. If, on the other hand, you're in the retail business and sell to large swathes of the general public, additional resources dedicated to mass and segment marketing would probably be a better investment. Potential exceptions to this last advice are businesses in which third-party influencers/endorsers have great sway over the final decision makers. A B2B example would be a manufacturer whose external legal counsel recommends an accounting firm that has worked for other of his or her clients or an IT services provider that vets a proposed marketing software purchase for compatibility with a company's other software solutions and its network. In the consumer space, third-parties with sway range from celebrity endorsers in broadcast and print media to "influencers" with large followings on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook.

How Can I Find a Skilled Business Development Executive to Help Grow my Business?

There are probably as many ways to find a Business Development Executive as there are different sorts of professionals from Sales and Marketing backgrounds who have the talent and skills to be one—which is to say, enough ways, but, in the end, maybe not all that many. The principal ones include the following:

- Internal promotion
- Talent acquisition on the part of your internal HR (Human Resources) function
- Informal recruiting by executive and senior management among their business connections and circles of acquaintance
- The use of executive search services experienced in filling such positions

The first course of action is likely to result in candidates who have the advantage of being familiar

What Does the Ideal Business Development Leader Look Like?

As the above suggests, the background of the ideal Business Development executive should likely include a stint in Sales, significant exposure to Marketing, an understanding of Product Development, and, depending upon the nature of your business, possibly industry experience. He or she should be sufficiently analytical to understand and act on market data. The Business Development leader should also be intuitive and polished enough to know how to develop and manage one-on-one relationships with high-potential prospects and to effectively interact with the leaders of peer company functions such as Sales, Marketing, and Product Development, as well as top management. Perhaps just as importantly, the Business Development executive should be highly personable and proficient at making new contacts, cultivating relationships with prospects, and general networking, since a good part of the role has to do with pursuing and capitalizing on referral-based business. Finally, the Business Development leader should be good at public speaking, as he or she will likely have to make company capabilities presentations before customers and prospects as well as speak at trade shows and industry conferences.

with your business but whose frame of reference might also be limited by it. The second way might well be effective but adds to the workload of the HR function, particularly if, as in many small- to medium-sized companies, the department does not often have to fill executive-level vacancies. The third method will doubtless surface interesting candidates, but the task might distract executive team members from other pressing responsibilities and, worse yet, runs the risk of tipping off the competition. The fourth method, the use of an executive search consultancy, might at first glance seem more expensive than the other options, but, when one pokes beneath the surface, this initial impression might prove inaccurate. There are a number of reasons for this.

A reputable executive search firm typically has access to third-party databases of potential "passive" candidates (i.e., qualified leaders who are not actively seeking new employment) and extensive executive contacts, as well as a proven, repeatable search process. The best search consultants will employ competency-based behavioral interviewing to assess candidates' functional knowledge and, if they themselves have worked in Business Development or a related area like Sales or Marketing, will also draw upon their own past work knowledge to evaluate candidates. Finally, such firms will carefully vet candidates to determine whether they share your company's core values and are a good fit with your company's culture. So, in the last analysis, the out-of-pocket cost of hiring executive search experts will probably be outweighed by the benefits. The Business Development leader that you hire will likely play an important role in your company's future growth and, in the end, it's hard to think of a better investment than one in your organization's future.

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Sales

The Chief Sales Officer (CSO): A "Nice to Have" or a True "Must Have"?

For a long time, the C-suite of many companies was confined to the chief executive officer (CEO), chief operating officer (COO), and chief financial officer (CFO)—or, in other words, to the representatives of functions that have been considered core to businesses since the middle of the 19th century. Over the last several decades, though, as the world has changed and the global business environment grown ever more complex, the composition of the C-suite has similarly evolved, giving rise to new C-level positions such as chief technology officer (CTO), chief information officer (CIO), chief human resource officer (CHRO), chief legal officer (CLO), and, most recently, even chief marketing officer (CMO). However, possibly no business function has received a later invitation to the C-suite than has Sales, which for some companies is an opportunity missed.

Does My Company Need a CSO or Will a Vice President of Sales Do?

Perhaps because the title and the position are relatively new, some companies question if the role could truly make a difference to their success and whether a vice president of Sales might instead suffice. As with so much in business, the short answer is it depends. This is because the nature and focus of the two jobs vary: the CSO position is geared more toward long-range, 3-to 5-year planning and the development of broad organization-wide sales strategies, whereas the vice president of sales role is more squarely focused on developing and meeting quarterly and annual sales goals. It is a no brainer that most companies need someone in the latter position, but many could also benefit from having someone dedicated to the former. Whether one or the other—or both—are necessary is determined by the character of a company's business and the complexity or comparative simplicity of its sales model, structure, and channels.

Simple but Effective—Depending on the Circumstances

As a rule, the smaller the company (i.e., the less diverse its product set, the more uniform its customers, and the more limited its target markets and regions), the more likely it is to need only a director or vice president of sales—someone who is capable of leading a single-channel Sales organization, developing realistic sales forecasts, and ensuring that the forecasts are met. Good examples of such organizations include custom machine builders; small plastics or industrial components manufacturers; medium-sized consumer products wholesalers; and "one-shot" software developers, such as makers of a single smartphone app. In such companies, the sales director's or vice-president's responsibilities are usually limited to the development of the one sales channel's strategy and aimed at enhancing its short-term performance, i.e., increasing current fiscal year sales. He or she is often seen as being at the very top of senior-level middle management—on the border of the executive realm but not quite in it or of it. Accordingly, sales VPs and directors are not often involved in developing high-level corporate strategy, but, rather, are only tasked with ensuring that the sales organization is in alignment with it.

Varied yet Robust—Especially When Size is a Factor

By contrast, CSOs are full-fledged members of the company's executive team and, as their titles imply, often corporate officers, with the full fiduciary duties and leadership responsibilities that this status bestows. As such, they are most likely to be found in companies with complex, multi-channel selling structures that serve multiple customer segments with widely varying needs and requirements. The CSO's responsibilities are broad and invariably include contributing to the development of the company's overarching strategy as well as determining how the Sales function can best enable it. Whereas the VP of sales is largely focused on making sure that the Sales organization meets monthly, quarterly, and annual sales targets, the CSO, though ultimately responsible for the same, is also expected to work with other functional areas—such as Marketing, Product Development, and Business Development—to develop and verify long-term revenue projections and to ensure that the company's Sales structure and its planned evolution support the overall business strategy. As such, he or she is often charged with identifying, evaluating, and addressing factors that could enable the company's long-term growth, such as sales processes, key account management, commercial initiatives, and key performance indicators (KPIs).

Perhaps even more importantly, however, the CSO is typically tasked with determining the channel mix—deciding whether a single sales channel, different elements of the same channel, or multiple channels are required to optimally serve each customer segment—a factor that is vital to the company's success, particularly in times of rapid social and technological change. Channel mix is both market- and industry-driven and can encompass complex organizational and customer-facing structures. For example, in banking, a single channel—face-to-face sales—predominates but varies somewhat according to target customer segment, e.g., tellers serve retail checking-account holders, mortgage-loan specialists serve home buyers, commercial bankers and loan officers work with businesses, and personal-wealth managers deal with wealthy investors. By contrast, in the retail and consumer-products sectors, a multi-sales channel model prevails, with many merchants offering their different customer segments the opportunity to purchase merchandise from brick-and-mortar stores, online storefronts, and direct mail catalogs, according to their preference. Yet another example of a diverse and complicated channel mix can be found among B2B industrial components manufacturers whose customers usually fall into three categories: original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) that purchase high volumes of components to integrate them into their own products and are thus assigned account executives; design engineers who buy small quantities for prototype- and beta-product builds that will lead to larger orders and consequently warrant the attention of field salespeople; and maintenance, repair, and operations (MRO) technicians, who make multiple but periodic single-item purchases and are therefore best served by low-cost channels such as distributors and on-line storefronts.

Not least because of its potential effect on revenue growth and profitability, the determination, implementation, and oversight of a company's channel mix is an enormous and vitally important responsibility. However, it is far from being the CSO's only mission-critical responsibility. The CSO must also keep abreast of changing customer expectations, not merely in terms of preferred products and services but also in respect to customer purchase patterns and post-purchase preferences, both factors that are key to customer acquisition and retention, which are among the sales organization's foremost deliverables. These days, this means that the CSO must be cognizant of the latest trends in e-commerce, sales force enablement, and customer relationship management (CRM) platforms, and that he or she must also be able to work with the Marketing and Information Technology (IT) functions to determine which are best suited to the company's various sales channels as well as to the business as a whole.

Finding a Multi-Talented Leader for a Multi-Faceted Job

Leading a sales organization is never easy. For a vice president or a director of sales, there are sales programs to deploy, a sales team to motivate, sales managers' egos to manage, and the relentless monthly, quarterly, and annual numbers to make. For a CSO, the challenges are even greater and more disparate, for not only is the CSO responsible for Sales meeting its tactical goals, but also for helping shape the company's vision, contributing to its long-term strategic plan, and working collaboratively with fellow C-suite team

members to ensure that they are providing the support necessary for Sales to meet its objectives and that Sales is returning the favor in kind.

Finding individuals who are up to this task is challenging. Promotion from within, which can sometimes be effective in terms of filling other C-suite positions that require a deep knowledge of the company—such as the COO—can be less effective with respect to CSOs since the position is often added when the company's products are increasing in number and variety, its customer base is moving from relatively homogenous to distinctly heterogenous, and, as noted above, its sales models and channels are becoming more diversified. All of this means that the CSO position often entails a larger and more complex set of responsibilities than is likely to have been held by an internal candidate, such as an incumbent sales VP or director, who rose through the ranks when the company, its target markets, and customer base were markedly simpler.

Many companies with newly created CSO positions often turn to external candidates to fit the bill, sometimes finding them through the C-suites' professional contacts, via industry and professional associations, or through an exceptionally well-connected internal HR department. Frequently, however, companies turn to retained executive search firms with established practices in Sales, Marketing, and Business Development. Because of their typically long and deep experience filling comparable positions, such firms usually have extensive databases of passive candidates. They also often attract interest from highly experienced and qualified candidates who might be available because of a merger, reorganization, or some other legitimate reason for displacement. Additionally, a search firm that has placed CSOs and comparable high-ranking sales executives in the past is likely to use candidate-evaluation procedures that far exceed an elementary industry or skills match. Such well-rounded assessment processes are integral to finding the perfect fit for an executive sales position, since a company's executive management must be in step with company culture to adequately understand it, effectively manage it, and, if necessary, evolve and ultimately change it.

Finding leaders possessed of these abilities can be a daunting task but it is not impossible, particularly if one turns to an executive search firm with related expertise to help identify and vet candidates. Even if it proves challenging at times, the search will likely be worth the effort because the Sales function and the revenue that it generates are the engine of a company's continued existence and growth, and, in the last analysis, nothing could be worthier of effort than that.

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Communications

The Marketing Communications Executive's Role in the Age of Digital Convergence, Business Transformation, & the Internet of Things

In the not so distant past, a successful B-to-B Marketing Communications leader's skill set was as predictable as it was traditional: excellent writing and editing skills, an understanding of communications theory, experience with the trade press, expertise in print advertising and direct mail, familiarity with print production and events management, and the ability to manage in-house staff and work with external agencies. This was a tall order even at the time, but, given today's increasingly fragmented yet interconnected markets, now it almost seems quaint and woefully inadequate.

Riding the Wave of Digital & Media Convergence

Digital convergence (the intersection of IT, telecom, consumer electronics, and entertainment), its direct offspring media convergence (the merging of traditional and electronic communications), and the Internet of Things (intelligent devices, mobile hardware, and interactive software) have transformed marketing, as well as many other aspects of contemporary business and everyday life. Nowadays marketing communications comprises multiple digital and conventional functions and requires experience in varied related disciplines. On the strategic level, this can include behavioral marketing, account-based marketing (ABM), database marketing, and face-to-face marketing. On the tactical level, it can entail content marketing, inbound marketing (web site content, SEO, SEM, and PPC), outbound marketing (e-mail marketing, direct mail and print advertising), social media, and classic marketing activities, such as events marketing, public relations, and point-of-purchase marketing.

The diverse elements of the Marketing Communications mix often have overlapping objectives with tangential ramifications. Ensuring that they don't work at cross-purposes but instead provide optimal value requires strategic planning and coordinated execution across different marketing and communications channels. Hence, the rise of integrated marketing communications and the need for Marketing Communications leaders who, though not necessarily expert at each function, must know how to harness them for multi-channel marketing initiatives that can comprise elements as diverse as print advertising, retail locations, websites, events, social media, and features of the product itself. However, this is not the greatest challenge now facing Marketing Communications leaders. Rather, it is the rapidly blurring line between Marketing Communications and Sales—or, more succinctly, the convergence of the two.

Border Crossings

In some business sectors, such as consumer products and retail, sales responsibilities have been migrating to marketing functions such as e-commerce for more than a decade, with a major milestone having been achieved over the 2016 Thanksgiving Day weekend, when, according to the National Retail Federation, an estimated 108.5 million Americans shopped online versus the 99.1 million who visited stores. This trend underscores the importance of Marketing Communications executives in these sectors having e-commerce expertise in addition to the print advertising background that has long been a perquisite for such positions. However, in most other business sectors, the migration of sales responsibilities to the marketing function is not as clear cut. Indeed, by contrast, in professional services, B-to-B manufacturing, and capital equipment, digital and media convergence are not causing sales and marketing responsibilities to shift from one area to the other but rather, causing them to be shared, with Marketing Communications being called upon to provide sales-ready leads, shorten the sales funnel, and create bona fide sales opportunities.

Mapping the Journey

The fusion of Sales and Marketing means that Marketing Communications executives in general need a better understanding than ever before of their targeted customers. Effective Marketing Communications leaders have risen to this challenge by familiarizing themselves not just with the beginning of the sales and marketing process—awareness and consideration, which has always been their purview—but also with its end stages, preference and adoption/purchase, which were formerly the exclusive province of Sales. They have done this by working with their sales colleagues and by employing marketing automation systems that enable them to create customer personae from empirical, behavioral, and anecdotal data and using these personae to help them develop customer journey maps and customer stories that reveal both the customer's actual and desired-state experience of a company. Such journey maps cover the customer's every interaction with a company and are often intended to drive everything from the content and UX (user experience) on the web site to sales training and even, in software and mobile apps organizations, new product development.

What Your Next Marcom Leader Should Bring to the Party

The answer is a lot of different yet inter-related competencies, values, and experiences. Gone are the days when small to mid-sized industrial companies could assign marcom management to a long-time administrator with good organizational skills or to a graphic artist with the ability to write passable copy or, at least, to proofread somebody else's. Also gone are the days when a manufacturing-sector engineer with sales experience, a consumer products category manager, or a retail store manager, however talented, could easily assume such a position and be counted on to quickly grow into it. These days, truly effective marcom leaders—those who hit the ground running and know what needs to be done to stay ahead of your competition—must have a deep understanding of the dynamics that lead to sales in your industry, whether those sales are on-line or face-to-face. They also need to be able to interpret primary and secondary research to develop integrated, multichannel marketing communications strategies. Finally, in order to successfully execute on these strategies, they must be deeply familiar with the full complement of traditional and digital tactics available in today's marketing tool kit as applied across the entire sales and marketing funnel, from prospect attraction and development through customer acquisition and retention.

The Right Fit

Finding the best individual to a fill a key marketing communications role can be a challenge for companies large and small alike. As with all mission-critical positions, the list of required skills, traits, and cultural competencies is often dauntingly long and the pool of likely candidates sometimes discouragingly small, at least on the surface. Consequently, as is the case with other senior leadership positions, hiring companies sometimes turn to executive search consultancies, as these firms can have significant internal databases of potential candidates as well as access to even larger external databases of the same. The advantages of seeking the assistance of a search consultancy are many—from a more varied and richer slate of candidates to an expedited screening process and accelerated hiring cycle. If a search consultancy with deep experience in Marketing Communications and related disciplines such as marketing automation and funnel management is selected, so much the better. Just as you typically hire marketers or salespeople who are familiar with your industry and products, it is best to retain search consultants with a track record of successfully finding and placing Marketing Communications executives. Like practiced musicians, such consultants know the score because they've played it before—which, ultimately, can only play out to your benefit.

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Communications

The Hallmark of a Successful Corporate Communications Executive: Developing & Promoting a Resonant Message

The role of the senior communications executive has always been expansive, laden with diverse responsibilities that range from the strategic to the tactical, from high-level messaging to executive speech writing for presidents and CEOs, from the development of general communications strategies to the creation of step-by-step crisis-management scenarios. This array of duties can vary according to industry or business sector and according to whether an organization is public or private, non-profit or for-profit, domestic or global. However, the primary responsibility of an organization's top communications executive is consistent: to ensure that, whomever the stakeholder and intended audience, the organization's branding and messaging reflect its strategy and support its associated goals and objectives. This was a tall order even back in the days of print media and traditional public relations. Today, amid the rising tide of digital and social media, it is nearly epic in stature.

Keeping the Flame Alive—Creating a Broadly Resonant Story

Perhaps the foremost responsibility of a senior Corporate Communications executive or Director of Communications is to develop the baseline story, make it compelling, and keep it aligned with an evolving company strategy—a simple, straightforward task conceptually, but a somewhat more complicated one in practice. This is because a story is typically most effective when it addresses what matters to the company's audience and, in the case of most companies, the audiences are multiple and fragmented. For example, in a typical publicly held corporate entity, messaging must appeal to constituencies ranging from the board of directors, investment analysts, and shareholders to the business media, trade press, customers, employees and the community. If the company in question is in the aerospace, pharmaceutical, or another highly regulated industry or 501(c)3 in education, healthcare or foodservice, the cast of stakeholders that must be addressed can further include regulatory agencies, standards committees, watchdog groups, and trade associations.

The Communications Strategy: Navigating the Tower of Babel

To execute on the above responsibility effectively, the leader of the Corporate Communications function must be adept and comfortable at interacting with and taking input and direction from the company's C-suite or the non-profit's president or executive director. He or she must also possess a good understanding of the organization's operating model, competitive landscape, and attendant challenges and opportunities, and must be able to synthesize this information into a strategy that encompasses all outbound communications. This may entail presentations at live meetings, social media, or the dissemination of information via digital or traditional media. Finally, because unexpected events—such as an injured employee or accident, for example—can wreak havoc with even the most meticulously planned communications schedule, the

Corporate Communications vice president or director must be comfortable changing direction quickly and re-prioritizing as circumstances require.

This means that, like someone putting together a puzzle, the individual who leads Corporate Communications must be skilled at evaluating and integrating input from internal stakeholders such as Marketing, Sales, and Research and Development, and external stakeholders like customers, investors, and the larger community. More importantly, he or she must be capable of using this input to inform a comprehensive message that can be tailored into nuanced "sub-messages" that resonate uniquely with each group and yet remain faithful to the meaning and spirit of the over-arching general message. For instance, in a corporate setting; a company's investors will be interested in different components, e.g., RONA (return on net assets), CAGR (compound annual growth rate), and GPM (gross profit margin) than will its customers, who are likely to pay more attention to the company's market leadership and its reputation for quality and service. Yet, in both cases, at the highest level, what each constituency is most interested in is the company's reputation—whether it is good or bad, whether credible or suspect, and, most importantly, whether or not it is aligned with their own objectives and self-interest. It is the job of the Corporate Communications executive to formulate a communications strategy that safeguards this reputation and to continue to develop it as the company's evolving business strategy requires and business conditions dictate.

From the Strategic to the Tactical & Back

Of all the senior communications leaders—marketing communications executives, advertising and public relations vice presidents, and internal communications or social media directors — perhaps none must be conversant in as many areas as the vice president or executive director of Corporate Communications. Like the Marketing Communications executive, he or she must be familiar with and capable of evaluating the merits of pay-per-click (PPC) and print advertising, virtual trade shows and live conferences, public relations and social media, to name only a few communications vehicles and sub-disciplines. However, the communications executive's list of required competencies often also includes internal communications, government affairs, media relation, community relations, branding, crisis management, and investor relations, among others. Typically, these functions report directly to the communications leader or, if not, he or she usually sits on their governance committees or provides them with some other sort of formal oversight and counsel. What's more, frequently the communications executive serves as the final arbiter of language for outbound president or CEO communications, such as speeches and presentations, and is called upon to write them outright or to check them for alignment with the organization's sanctioned strategy, prevailing voice, and approved perspective.

OF ALL THE SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS LEADERS, PERHAPS NONE MUST BE CONVERSANT IN AS MANY AREAS AS THE VP OR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS.

Do We Really Need a Corporate Communications Executive?

The answer is that your company's size and industry matter. For example, privately held small- to mid-sized manufacturing companies—whose primary constituencies are usually limited to customers, third-party channel partners, and employees — can probably get by with a marketing communications leader to address the first two sets of stakeholders and simply leave employee communications to Human Resources. In contrast, a public company of comparable size will more than likely have a greater variety of stakeholders to consider, such as the financial press, equity analysts, and institutional and individual investors. On the flip side, a local government or non-profit organization might require a community relations expert who can ensure the company's mission is well understood by those who can most benefit from its services.

Many other factors might also dictate a company's need for a Corporate Communications executive. For example, companies in highly regulated business sectors like the automotive and life sciences industries are likely to need someone to oversee government affairs and, because of the public safety issues associated with their products and services, might also need an executive-level manager who is responsible for crisis management. Finally, non-profits, such as hospitals and universities, frequently have Corporate Communications executives who, in addition to being responsible for the organization's messaging and branding, are also responsible for or work with the fundraising and development functions, or, in the case of educational institutions, the alumni relations area.

Finding the Best Communications Executive for Your Company

Identifying and recruiting the ideal communications executive is no different than searching for any other senior leader, except that the range of the desired skill set—from the strategic to the tactical, from business acumen to creative ability—is perhaps broader than that required of leaders in more specialized functions like finance or operations. Moreover, the position often requires hands-on capability, particularly in writing, and, such applied tactical ability is something that many other sorts of executives leave behind when their careers become focused on strategy and operations management. Finally, since the Corporate Communications executive must usually depend on other executives for input regarding positioning and strategy as well as communicate this information to the various internal and external stakeholders, he or she must have a collaborative, team-oriented work style and also be a good cultural and personal fit in general.

Because the position's requirements are so eclectic, the search for the perfect Corporate Communications executive can be both an exhaustive and exhausting process. It isn't easy to find senior communicators with the requisite organizational understanding, business competence, strategic aptitude, and technical competence needed to effectively address diverse stakeholder segments. Such an individual must have extensive experience, preferably with an organization in the same industry and with the same sort of fragmented stakeholder base as the hiring organization.

This is one of the reasons that many companies and organizations searching for Corporate Communications leaders turn to executive search firms with a solid track record of filling such positions. Such a search consultancy will typically have access to large databases of passive candidates and will also likely employ competency-based behavioral interviewing to check a candidate's management style and likelihood of fitting in culturally. Some even conduct skills evaluations and assessments, which is important for a position where proficiency in writing and other applied communications skills is of great importance. While retaining the services of an executive search firm might be marginally more expensive than relying on internal talent acquisition resources, having access to a larger candidate pool and outsourcing the initial rounds of the interview process usually more than make up for the added cost. Moreover, the importance of internal and external communication's mission might in and of itself justify the expenditure. After all, communications is about creating a positive perception of the organization, and we all know that perception is reality.

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