



A new and more complex corporate communications landscape has emerged and is presenting never-before-seen challenges for companies of all types and sizes. Whether mastering revolutionary technologies that instantly spread news and opinions to audiences across geographic borders or satisfying an ever-growing group of demanding stakeholders, corporate communications' role has expanded beyond anything that could have ever been predicted.

As the impact and visibility of the corporate communications function grows in prominence, so too is the role of the corporate communications officer (CCO), who is becoming more valuable and influential at the highest levels of business every year.

To better understand this evolving, critical function, Spencer Stuart and Weber Shandwick partnered with KRC Research in conducting the first wave of our *Rising CCO* research.

Research participants included 141 senior corporate communications professionals at the largest Fortune 500 companies in the U.S. and Europe. Results were analyzed in total and by company reputation status.

“ It is becoming increasingly important for Corporate Communications to serve as an internal business resource. It's not just about communicating the actions of the enterprise; it's about using communications to help the enterprise succeed. ”

– Fortune 500 CCO

CCOs HOLD PROMINENT POSITIONS AT THE WORLD'S LARGEST COMPANIES

- Nearly one-half of CCOs (48%) report to CEOs today.
- CCOs had a median seven interactions with their current company boards, including one invitation to attend a board meeting in the past 12 months.
- CCOs are closely partnered with the highly visible CMO, who is both the CCO's greatest ally and greatest rival.

CCOs' EXPECT THEIR WORKLOAD WILL SHIFT FROM TACTICAL TO STRATEGIC

- CCOs' workload is more tactical (58%) than strategic (42%) today.
- In 2008, CCOs expect to focus more on environmental/social responsibility and corporate reputation, with blogging/social media and corporate Web sites becoming more important tools. While U.S. CCOs expect to primarily concentrate on blogs/social media next year, European CCOs intend to focus on public relations.

CCO METRICS REMAIN HIGHLY QUALITATIVE

- The vast majority of CCOs are measured on qualitative measures – positive media coverage (75%) and CEOs' "gut" feelings (73%). They are least likely to be measured by quantitative metrics such as the number of media mentions (35%) and cost controls (32%).

CCOs IN COMPANIES WITH THE MOST ESTEEMED REPUTATIONS* HAVE HIGHER STATUS, LONGER TENURES AND MORE CONFIDENCE

- CCOs in companies that are held in the highest regard are distinctly different from their peers in less regarded companies on a variety of factors.

How CCOs In Most Admired Companies Differ From CCOs In Contender Companies	Reputation Status*	
	Most Admired	Contender
<i>CCOs in Most Admired Companies are MORE likely than CCOs in Contender Companies to:</i>		
Have longer tenures	4 years, 10 months	3 years, 5 months
Have prior PR agency experience	42%	32%
Report to CEOs	53%	33%
Have no interdepartmental rivals	25%	9%
Identify reputation management as a top priority in 2008	34%	21%
Report that future CCO success depends on global expertise	52%	41%
<i>CCOs in Most Admired Companies are LESS likely than CCOs in Contender Companies to:</i>		
Rate talent shortage as a significant challenge	35%	47%
Give themselves six months or less to prove their worth when a new CEO arrives	73%	85%

*Based on Fortune's 2006 Most Admired Survey (March 19, 2007). In general, Most Admired Companies are most highly ranked companies in an industry on overall reputation. Contender Companies are ranked in the industry's bottom half.

“ **Actively managing reputation risk is key to creating a truly value added corporate communications function.** ”

– Fortune 500 CCO

The Spencer Stuart/Weber Shandwick research provides quantitative evidence on where the CCO role stands today and how it is expected to evolve. As global challenges continue to mount and technology fuels instantaneous communications, the CCO function will only rise in significance. Without a doubt, the best CCOs can make a difference in employee talent and acquisition, shareholder value, corporate responsibility, and reputation building. We will continue to track their progress.

ABOUT THE RISING CCO

Research participants included 141 senior corporate communications professionals at the largest Fortune 500 companies in the U.S. and Europe. The survey was conducted online with KRC Research in July/August 2007.

To learn more about our *Rising CCO* research, please contact:

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