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# IGNITE COMMUNICATIONS

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PRESENTED BY:


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# About VMAGROUP

- **International recruitment and executive search specialist for communications, digital and marketing**
- **Established for 40 years and 10 years in mainland Europe**
- **Headquartered in London with offices in Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels and Frankfurt**





# BEYOND COMMUNICATIONS

A CEO perspective of reputation leadership

# Scope

- **A qualitative 52 page report, including 70 quotations from 40 Chief Executives**
- **Based on the UK, Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland**
- **Nationalities of those interviewed included British, American, Italian, Belgian, Dutch, French, German and Polish**

# Scope

- **CEOs that lead global multinationals, local internationals, large local companies and trade associations**
- **Sectors covered range from financial services to FMCG, from industry, B2B and B2C organisations**

# Interview questions

- 1. What is the most important perceived value to yourself and the executive board of the role of the corporate communications director?**
- 2. To what extent should the senior corporate communications professional be involved in key strategic decisions?**
- 3. How do you perceive the role of the corporate communications function within your company will change over the next five years?**



# Interview questions

- 4. What do you perceive are the biggest challenges corporate communications directors will face over the next five years?**
- 5. What do you feel are going to be the most important skills required from an effective corporate communications director in the next five years?**
- 6. Is the communications function helping to drive the digital agenda within your company?**

# Key findings

- **CEOs called for CCOs to reinvent themselves**
- **A call to create a truly strategic function**
- **Companies are having to reinvent themselves**



**“O2 is a brand that runs a business,  
not a business that has a brand.”**

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Ronan Dunne  
CEO, O2 Telefonica

**“I want my director of comms to challenge me; to teach me as well as help with my blind spots”**

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Dr. Axel Steiger-Bagel  
CEO, Bayer Benelux



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# What does a communications director contribute to business strategy?

- **Bring alignment**
- **Translate strategy into content and channels**
- **Identify the reputational risks and rewards of strategic decisions**

# All change: the new communications culture

- **The digital revolution has brought more change**
- **The message control model is over**
- **Authenticity and transparency are the essential tonal cues today**
- **Audiences expect evidence of a new type of business model: socially responsible, publically responsive, democratically inclusive**

# Key focus areas

- **Building and safeguarding the reputation**
- **Navigating, filtering and harnessing digital**
- **Spearheading internal change**
- **Taking up the leadership mantle**



# The need for true leadership

**“If I look at your standard communications director 10 years ago and the one now, the job is so much more multi-faceted, more proactive and more intense than it ever was before. It requires a significantly higher level of general management skills, strategic skills, and far more digital savvy than ever before. As a result, in my eyes, it’s just a totally different job. You’re looking for completely different individuals.”**

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Ton Büchner  
CEO, AkzoNobel





# CCO capabilities matrix



## Key leadership skills

- Managing complexity
- Decision making capabilities
- Results orientated
- Business insight
- The ability to instil trust

## Characteristics

- Strategic mind-set (not tactical or expert)
- Global perspective (not judgemental or narrow)
- Ability to drive (not influence) engagement
- Manage and lead through ambiguity

## Personal skills

- Courage
- Resilience
- Learning agility
- Collaborative skills
- Problem solving capabilities with speed and complexity

## What CEOs need and will demand

- Expert advice with credibility and holding excellent judgement
- Business and financial acumen
- Relevant business or other functional experience
- Leadership skills
- Strategic competence

**The future is bright!**



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