

"The best view comes after  
the hardest climb."

- Author Unknown



## CEO Trend 2021: Ethical Communication - the Key to your Success

Dear CEO,

The huge changes that swept across 2020 have affected every sector of the economy. As we head into a new year with the promise of vaccination around the corner, there will be a new normal. A normal in which customers and stakeholders are unsure of the current situation and what they can expect in the future. A normal in which digitalized remote workspaces for employees have resulted in decreased socialisation and higher anxiety amongst the company's workforces.

**To lead and foster trust in all stakeholders**, it is imperative for today's CEOs and Chief Experience Officers (CXOs) to **reshape the company's message** and **build in processes** for ethical communication. Businesses and their management teams, including the CXOs, must ensure that they develop and have ethical communication practices in place, both internally and externally. Ethical communication, is a **framework of communication principles** that need to align with an organisation's code of ethics. Honesty, openness, and transparency are its core principles. For it to be implemented, these values need to become the foundation of all the relationships the organization has with its employees, vendors, stakeholders and customers.

**Internally**, an environment of transparency helps employees see what's happening within the organisation and it allays their fears. It also reinforces their trust in leadership. **Externally**, the image of the company stands to gain if they communicate their ethics and let their customers know that they can be trusted, especially now.

**Ethical communication, according to our assessment, is one of the most important trends for 2021.** The European Communication Monitor Survey 2020 studied current practices as well as future developments and offered a detailed picture of the kind of ethical challenges faced by professionals at a micro and macro level. According to this study, a majority of communication professionals lack up-to-date resources to tackle new ethical challenges that have emerged in a digital age.

CXOs and their leadership teams will urgently need to put these practices in place. This will help build a solid reputation and retain customers and clients. **In 2021, customer loyalty will be the key to long term business success as consumers tend to make decisions based on whether the values of the organisation align with their own.** Your company's reputation and its brand also stand to gain if the company makes ethical communication a priority. At a time when it is easy for customers to criticize the organization and step away from it based on a negative experience or management practices, **ethical communication will help garner**

goodwill and prevent consumer attrition.

Ethical communication will also be helpful to CXOs for developing a positive work environment where employees can work together as a team and build strong relationships with their colleagues. A trust-based communication fosters loyalty among its employees, even in adverse situations. Historically, companies who have acted ethically in matters of environment, gender equality, and good leader behaviour are known to have a strong workforce who identify with the company behaviour as their own. Organisations that are honest about their values and ethics and bring that message to their employees will also be able to avoid legal situations that can cause long term damage to their reputation.

As with most important changes, ethical communication needs to come from top management and leadership to be credible and to hold value in the eyes of the clients, customers, employees, and stakeholders. Going forward, this means that **communication and ethics training must become an intrinsic part of the organisation guidelines** so that understanding and evaluating situations and acting ethically become the new normal.

With a view to 2021 ahead, I wish you a merry Christmas and a relaxing, reenergizing year-end, and a happy and healthy New Year.



Wishing you holiday cheer,  
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