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Research Assessment #5

Below I will provide a few questions and answers from the interview I conducted with Paul Matsen, CMO of the Cleveland Clinic, on September 28th.

Did you always see yourself in this position? Was marketing always what you wanted to do when you were younger?

According to him, Paul Matsen never really knew where or what he wanted to do in life in high school, continuing throughout his college years. After he finished his undergrad, he attended Rutgers University and fell into the marketing industry. He didn't have a set role he wanted to become but worked his way up to becoming the CMO of the Cleveland Clinic.

As the CMO of the Cleveland Clinic, what does a day in your life look like?

What are your primary responsibilities and priorities?

“For me, the first priority is strategy; understanding the organization's goals and how we as a team can support it. I spend a large part of my time working closely with the heads of our various marketing units, [ensuring] that everybody is aligned.” He then gives an example of his weekly and monthly meetings, stating that it ensures everyone is connected and working towards the same goals. The sessions later back up his emphasis on the importance of

communication in the working environment. And through this consistent communication, he ensures that he allocates the teams the proper resources to achieve those goals. He then states, "I do get involved in the day-to-day work as well, so that can be looking at advertising, to digital content, to view press releases. [Really] getting involved in the implementation of new projects." From a broad perspective, that is how Mr. Matsen views his job. He does vocalize how he has to put much faith in his team members; once they understand the strategy, "they can execute it properly."

What skills do you feel are particularly important for your job when talking about these daily tasks?

"Looking at it from the lens of the Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, you [must] be an excellent listener. We are a large, complex organization, and a critical part of my job is to listen to the challenges and priorities across the organization and make sure it translates to the marketing and communications programs. I know it sounds very simple for someone of my title, but being a great listener is a skill many don't have." He then backs up this statement by providing an example of how he often gets asked by top management to train new leaders in communication skills. From his experience training, "For some it's natural, it's easy," but for others, they struggle to find the right words and comfortability with talking in front of large crowds.

Furthermore, "To be a leader at a high level in any position, whether school or a business, you have to be an excellent communicator. You have to be an articulate, clear verbal communicator, you need to be able to put together clear written communications and written presentations, and you need to be a good listener. So, that whole bundle of communications skills is vitally important.

Another skill is, "You have to be a continuous learner. I've been in marketing and communications for quite a long time, and the industry landscape has changed completely,".

When Paul started around 40 years ago, there were no computers or social media; everything was traditional. This form of advertising can look like tv commercials, radio ads, and billboards, amongst many other options that have recently diminished in popularity over the past decade.

“Over the course of your career, you [must] continue to learn and adapt. You can’t stay static.”. There is an extra emphasis for those in higher company positions to follow this outlook in their corporate life. It is especially significant because if a leader does not understand the importance of marketing—they will not allocate the proper funding, resources, or time to their employees. Mr. Matsen’s example was how he is not a rising Tik Tok creator, but he understands the app and its primary audiences and knows how it can help their marketing efforts. “Again, it sounds simple, but [many] people don’t do a great job of staying up to date with new technology, trends, and platforms.”

The key takeaway was the emphasis on content—meaningful content. This statement aligns with a book I’m currently reading, Building a Story Brand: Clarify Your Messages so Customers Will Listen by Donald Miller. The author highlights the same importance of avoiding overloading your audiences with too many resources or information by providing only relevant content.