



September 2016

Who's the Captain of Content Cadence?

You know, the person who sets the right tone and direction for all of the information that leaders receive. The single point of contact who aligns how information is shared across an organization. The person you go to who tells you how to organize your thoughts, the amount of detail a leader will want and the key things you need to tell them to drive an outcome. The person who can advise you on what you need to say and how you need to support it.



Have you been looking for this person as long as most managers have?

Well, it's a fictitious name for a position that rarely exists inside of companies. But, it should!

Every month, we teach workshops on how to lead conversations with leaders. Our methodology is based on interviews, surveys and experience in helping hundreds of managers organize their ideas for a conversation with senior leaders. Our research rings true, and our approach works. But, in every program, the question that managers always ask is, "Have you taught leaders how to align to this process as well?" In many cases, yes. And where we can influence a more standardized approach, we see a significant difference in how information is presented and shared up and down in an organization.

Prior to writing the book, **Leading Executive Conversations**, I interviewed and surveyed hundreds of leaders whose insights led to many of the concepts we teach. I still remember asking many of those leaders how they felt managers should learn the right cadence in sharing information. Most said, "Listen, I can't coach the entire organization to get this right." I agree. That's why our workshop has been a hit. We teach a process that helps managers better understand the leader's perspective and how to align to that perspective.

But, I think leaders have some skin in this game, too.

As I work across organizations, I see the amount of time and effort that goes into creating PPT decks, executive summaries, and other materials. And, I always ask a manager what direction they've gotten in terms of what the leader needs to know and how they like to receive information. Rarely do they get any true direction. Instead, they get input at multiple levels as every other manager tries to add concepts and data points that they think will be relevant. It dilutes the message, and it's all a guess. And, some managers are more educated at guessing than others.

Wouldn't it be terrific if managers could pull out a framework that has been tailored to a leader and guides the manager on the format and cadence that a leader prefers? It would be more than terrific. It would be...and is...productive!

Here's how we do it.

First, we review materials a leader frequently receives. Usually, these are given to us by a leader as examples of information they receive and notes about what is missing.

Second, we work with a leader in coaching sessions. Our goal is to better understand how they use information and to uncover personal preferences. We introduce our methodology and see how it can best be modified to a leader's style.

Third, we draft a process for the leader's communication. This includes an outline, storyboard and support materials. While it's built from our methodology, it's also tailored to specific focus areas or worries of a leader. And, that makes all the difference.

Fourth, we test the new cadence with a small subset of the leader's team. We coach these managers to use the elements of the process and we observe how the leader responds to the new cadence. This gives us a testing phase as managers get comfortable with a process and the leader evaluates how well the process supports his/her objectives.

Finally, we roll-out the process in an organization. This is usually done as part of a training program designed to help managers feel more confident and competent with executive conversations.

And, while it takes us about eight weeks to deliver a tailored process, it saves every manager at least a week of worry in trying to hit the right cadence.

So, while the Captain of Cadence may not be in your organization, I know where you can find one. We have several on our team, and we'd welcome the opportunity to help you get your organization in order.

What would it mean to your organization to have content cadence? Ask your managers. They know all too well the amount of time and effort they're losing without one.

Call us when you need us!



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