

Summary

The title of chief executive officer resonates with images of power and prestige. These are the men and women in the organisation whose desk is the place where the buck is supposed to stop and where key decisions are signed off. This chapter has shown that a range of macro forces require them to adopt a strategic mindset that should bring public relations into their orbit. Rather than a fleeting collision, the relationship between the CEO and public relations leader should be symbiotic as well as ongoing. Both are required to view the organisation as a holistic entity rather than through a restrictive functional lens. Each should have a clear perspective across the organisation and a strong moral sense of accountability to the world outside. This helicopter view is essential for strategic understanding and for maintaining the organisation's licence to operate. Such a focus leads to a joint preoccupation with reputation, relational capital, values, organisational integrity and good governance.

This common world-view should lead to a situation in which CEOs endorse, enable and participate in a strategic communication process. However, working with the CEO as a trusted adviser requires not just an understanding of the macro issues shaping their world but also an appreciation of the specific situation they operate in. This affinity with the chief executive's world is essential if the public relations leader is to fulfil both their leadership role and strategic potential within the organisation.