



Achieving radical and sustainable improvement in top line performance

## What Keeps a CEO Awake at Night?



**September, 2016**

### **The Challenge:**

Change and new challenges are always top of mind for today's CEO. CEO's must be skilled at addressing a wide spectrum of both internal and external issues facing their companies including learning how to triage (must before should and should before could) while positioning others for success. As a CEO, how you prioritize your time is critical. You are always being watched by the organization.

Our anecdotal insights, working with CEO's for more than 3 decades, suggests a compelling list (not ranked).

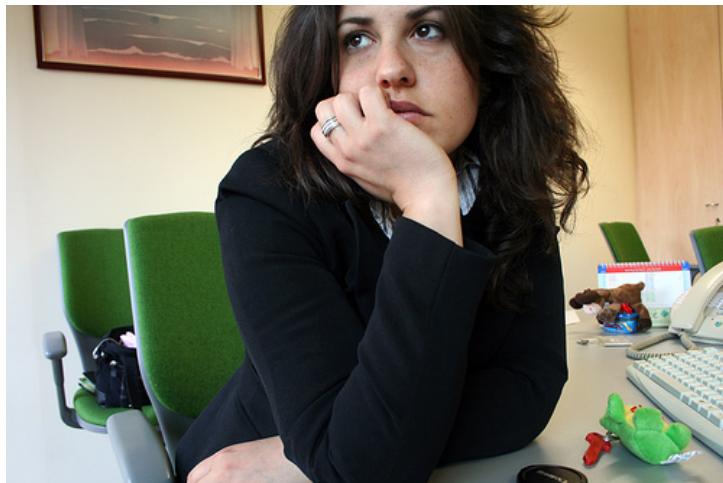
For example, CEO's have refrained on the following:

- Lack of Employee Engagement
- Talent Management
- Competition
- Making the Quarter
- Regulation & Legislation

While the above list is by no means exhaustive, each of them does deserve some commentary.

### **Lack of Employee Engagement**

This is quite common when CEO's avoid setting and sharing specific priorities for the organization on a regular basis. This often results in the refrain "I don't think anyone knows what the corporate strategy is. We just do what we think is right and hope for the best." As we often say at Kappa, "Hope is not a strategy."



### **Talent Management**

These issues typically cover a broad range of concerns including finding the right talent during periods of change and how to identify and keep the best talent. Making sure that high potential employee's are being properly nurtured is also important. Keeping the hiring funnel full and flowing is always a good idea especially to preempt unexpected turnover. The goal is finding the right people with the right attitude.



### **Competition**

Operating in a fast paced, global marketplace is challenging. Setting direction and tone across geographies and cultures is never easy. Being a good multi-national company requires that all policies and processes reflect the global village not just where our headquarters are located. And lets not forget about new forms of competition that may render your product and service offering obsolete overnight.



### **Making the Quarter**

Regardless of whether you make the quarter or miss the quarter, managing the Board and preparing "your story" for the next Board meeting and earnings release (if public) is one of the most time consuming activities a CEO faces. Conducting win reviews and loss reviews is the best way to gain firsthand insight into the organization's performance as it tries to grow faster than the competition globally. Information such as, sales cycle, average deal size and hit rates will help the CEO get a firm handle on the organization's sales engine region by region.



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## Regulation & Legislation

Shifting regulation and legislation is inevitable and CEO's must be skilled at anticipating the "so what" impact of these changes **before** the legislation becomes effective rather than after. Whether it's about securities, tariffs, product safety, health, environment, taxes, privacy, education, etc. the CEO needs to be surrounded with subject matter experts for guidance.



## Conclusion

While there are many things that are preying on a CEO's mind, this is a vaguely right list.

**As a CEO or leader of your organization,  
what keeps you awake at night?**

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at [kappainfo@kappaeast.com](mailto:kappainfo@kappaeast.com).

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