

# BEST PRACTICES IN ADVOCACY AND MESSAGING TO THE C-SUITE

American College of Osteopathic Internists



THE SUPREME ART OF WAR IS TO SUBDUES  
THE ENEMY WITHOUT FIGHTING

Sun Tzu, Approx. 490 BC

KNOW YOUR ENEMY AND KNOW  
YOURSELF AND YOU CAN FIGHT A  
HUNDRED BATTLES WITHOUT A DISASTER

Sun Tzu, Approx. 490 BC

- ▶ Know the most concerning priorities of the CEO/COO/CFO
- ▶ Understand the C-suite characteristics, business practices, and lexicon
  - ▶ Speaking their language
- ▶ Understand personal communications styles and how they interact to facilitate or undermine your efforts

## KEY OBJECTIVES WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH THE C-SUITE

Joint commission

Creating and ACO

ACGME accreditation

Personnel shortages

Finances

Technology

Physician hospital relations

Osteopathic recognition

Government mandates

Care for uninsured

Population health management

QA/QI

Patient satisfaction

Obama care implementations

# CEO PRIORITIES





# C-SUITE CHARACTERISTICS AND BUSINESS PRACTICES



- ▶ Primary concern? Improve their business!
- ▶ Improvement is most often defined as
  - ▶ Increasing sales
  - ▶ Market share
  - ▶ Customer loyalty
  - ▶ Reducing costs, errors, employee turnover
  - ▶ Improving productivity, employee engagement, customer service, etc.
- ▶ How does osteopathic recognition (OR) address any of these factors?
  - ▶ Consider quality of care that community has come to expect
  - ▶ No additional costs involved
  - ▶ Quality of students entering the program

C-LEVEL DECISION-MAKERS ARE PAID  
TO IMPROVE THEIR BUSINESS RESULTS



- ▶ Shifts in priorities may impact the level of support for OR
- ▶ Devise a strategy that will keep OR a “current” solution

C-LEVEL DECISION-MAKERS DEAL  
WITH CHANGING PRIORITIES

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- ▶ Executives arrive early, stay late
- ▶ Too many calls, emails, meetings
- ▶ Maximize every minute you have with them: phone calls and face-face
- ▶ *Know exactly what to say when you connect with these individuals*

C-LEVEL DECISION-MAKERS ARE  
EXTREMELY BUSY

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- ▶ C-level executives rarely make decisions on their own
- ▶ Often defer to other people on their team and ask for feedback from peers and/or subordinates
- ▶ Engage and involve these people in your conversations
- ▶ Invite them into the decision-making process
- ▶ Look for alliances and advocates in the trainee community: Is OR important to them?
- ▶ *Finesse alliances!*

C-LEVEL DECISION-MAKERS RELY ON  
OTHERS

- ▶ Mistakes impact reputations and therefore affect the decision-making process
- ▶ Uncover and understand the risk factors
- ▶ Determine how OR can mitigate these or if OR itself is seen as a risk factor

C-LEVEL DECISION-MAKERS DON'T  
LIKE TO MAKE MISTAKES



- ▶ You don't get to the top being a self-doubter!
- ▶ Bring you're a game to discussions: you must be confident in not only your rationale for keeping OR, but your ability to sell it!
- ▶ Don't back down when you're challenged: you need to demonstrate a belief in the importance of and your commitment to OR

C-LEVEL DECISION-MAKERS HAVE BIG  
EGOS



- ▶ No one is sitting at their desk waiting for you
- ▶ Be persistent in your efforts to connect with these individuals, and as the boy scout motto reads: Be Prepared!

C-LEVEL DECISION-MAKERS SPEND  
THE BULK OF THEIR DAY IN MEETINGS



- ▶ Your meeting to meet with them about OR must be tied to a compelling reason. Remember their priorities!
- ▶ Make your meeting about helping them and the hospital.

C-LEVEL DECISION-MAKERS HAVE AT LEAST  
40 HOURS OF WORK ON THEIR DESK AT  
ANY GIVEN TIME

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- ▶ Most C-level executives simply don't have the time to respond to most emails
- ▶ Furthermore, the greater the intimacy of the contact, the more persuasive you will be
- ▶ Use a variety of strategies to connect with C-level decision-makers; leverage allies and advocates

C-LEVEL DECISION-MAKERS RECEIVE  
UPWARDS OF 150 EMAILS EVERY DAY

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- ▶ Focus on the big picture
- ▶ Make OR an essential value to his/her priorities
  - ▶ QA
  - ▶ Maintaining high-quality grads coming into the program

C-LEVEL DECISION-MAKERS THINK BIG  
PICTURE



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