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The Most Powerful Name in Corporate News

Business Strategy Execution Consultants for Launching And Growing Companies, Products and Services



Denise DeSimone
Chairman
C-leveled

CEOCFO: Ms. DeSimone, what is C-leveled?

Ms. DeSimone: C-leveled is a company that helps execute business strategy. We help companies regardless of the size, execute a strategy that enables them to develop, launch, or grow their business.

CEOCFO: What do you understand about business that allows you to do a superior job when you are working with a client?

Ms. DeSimone: Very simply, our team. We are a company that is built by Entrepreneurs; we understand what it takes to move the needle. I also believe our success can be attributed to our structure. We have subject matter experts in each division of business. We have a strong team of people in finance, marketing, branding, app development, corporate strategy, and sales strategy. It is an efficient model because when a company comes to us, it is very likely that they will need several tasks. We assign several people each account, so we are able to affect change faster and more economical for the client.

CEOCFO: When you are approached by a company and reviewing what they are looking for, what might you take into account that less experienced people do not realize should be in the mix?

Ms. DeSimone: When we look at companies to work with, things we look at is the executive, the CEO and the management or leadership team. We want to make sure that the executive and executive team understands that change is sometimes necessary. We also look for the willingness to adhere to a plan and see it through. All business problems can be solved. Uncovering the root of the problem is sometimes the hardest part. Once you do that, you have to put a clear path in place to fix that problem.

CEOCFO: Do you know right away when you are talking with a business owner if they are the right person to work with C-leveled and appreciate what you are doing as opposed to being possessive of their own ideas?

Ms. DeSimone: We've developed a great reputation in Western PA, and on a regional and national level. I think the more we are recognized, the easier it is for people to come to us that are already a match. In general, we can spend 30 minutes to an hour with someone and say this is going to be an opportunity that will be beneficial for everyone or this is something that is never going to work.

CEOCFO: How would a potential client come upon C-leveled?

Ms. DeSimone: People generally find us by word of mouth. We do many speaking engagement on business efficiency, processes, financial metrics and branding/marketing. If someone searches "business growth," that is where they would find C-leveled. We are a company that is paid to do one thing, which is to help our clients gain more revenue. Sometimes they are unclear about the future of the business and it is our job to lay out the possibilities for them.

CEOCFO: Would you give us an idea of a typical project and maybe something more outside the box?

Ms. DeSimone: We do a lot of work for private investors or equity groups because they get an experienced management team that they do not have to pay full price for. Our model helps get portfolio companies to the next level. In addition, any private equity company that buys a company may need to rebrand it, remarket it and that is a perfect client for us. A technology or early stage company that is trying to get off the ground is the perfect company for us. We come in and set the strategy and help execute it – that's an important about C-leveled, we execute on the strategy. While we do have ad-like agency in house, we are a different kind of ad agency; we have to affect change every day. We have to execute.

CEOCFO: *When you are putting together a strategy, what is the key to including the different elements to reach best way to get things accomplished?*

Ms. DeSimone: There is no substitute for real data. A great deal of research goes into what we do. We cannot take a contract for a client and go by gut feel. We have to make sure that there are statistics and data to drive every strategy. We look at everything very carefully and present the research, identify the opportunities, and plan out the steps that it will take. Everything we do is very process driven. The financial metrics have to be there, the marketing and branding has to be there. If you do not know what good looks like, it is tough to achieve anything.

CEOCFO: *Is it easier because there is so much more data today or does it complicate it a bit because you might look at three or four sources and they are conflicting in some way?*

Ms. DeSimone: I think it is easier because there is more data available to all businesses and sectors and I think it is easier because there are better tools. You can do things today with tools that might have taken you two weeks to do five years ago.

CEOCFO: *Are there types of projects you prefer to work on given a choice?*

Ms. DeSimone: Personally, I like the technology projects and the app development projects. I like working out details of what an app can and cannot do. I am not a developer but we have a team of developers here. I like anything technology driven. We as a company develop products for clients in mix of different industries. It is technology, consumer based, B2B service.

“Why you choose C-leveled is because we are a great group of people that are very dedicated and have a genuine interest in each of our client’s success.” - Denise DeSimone

CEOCFO: *How is business these days?*

Ms. DeSimone: It is really good these days. We are actually ramping up to hire a handful of people. Like any business, we will always keep looking for more but I think where we sit today, we are in a pretty comfortable position for 2016.

CEOCFO: *What do you want in your people?*

Ms. DeSimone: We need culture. We know we are going to hire a specific skill set and that a certain level of talent is always required. We need people that are invested in what they do and those that are not afraid of work. It seems simple but it is really kind of difficult to come by, especially in the creative world. It is hard to break that big agency mentality and bring it into a more entrepreneurial environment. So we want great people that are creative and come with keen business acumen.

CEOCFO: *Why choose C-leveled?*

Ms. DeSimone: Choose C-leveled because we have a company full of very skilled people that could help navigate you through any business problem that you have, today. We can help you develop, launch and grow your business, move you to the next level. If it is transitioning to different generations, if it is selling your business, we have the expertise in house. I think more importantly why you choose C-leveled is because we are a great group of people that are very dedicated and have a genuine interest in each of our client’s success. The first client we ever had a C-leveled, we still have today.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

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