

Pre-IPO Comms has a Heavy Brand Marketing Focus

What Top Communicators in the Valley Are Telling Us

“ I firmly believe **communications is an arm of marketing**. If the team is not focused on specific financial growth metrics tied to their work, then it's less likely to be valued, especially in this market. ”

“ Consumer brands are looking for more in terms of **guaranteed brand protection**, which is something you don't typically get in a traditional communications approach. ”

“ Some startups might be **too early on for PR** because they are **still honing the brand**. News acquisition is what the early stage startup needs, so any internal communications team is often led by a chief marketing and communications officer who is tackling both. ”

“ Consumer companies can drive coverage through email campaigns and balk at media interaction because there is an **unknown of how the brand will be treated in the media**. ”

“ When you reach Series D, that's when you see PR no longer reporting into marketing but becoming its own department with a bigger partnership relationship. ”

“ The constant debate is whether or not communications is helping to drive **brand awareness**. ”

“ The traditional view – communications talks to the media, and marketing is directly speaking to the consumer – I've seen that begin to break down. Communications is seen as a way to **build relationships with customers**. ”

“ With early-stage companies and even unicorns, **I've seen a hybrid function emerge**. You're not doing just communications: you have to tackle brand and marketing because the younger companies need analytics **to prove their spending and maximize ROI**. ”

C-Level Access, Alignment With Business Goals

What Our Interview Subjects Had to Say

“ The CEO in the earlier-stage companies in the Bay Area are trying to build their own profiles. **The celebrity CEO is rampant here.** They want to be front-and-center and that influences communications reporting straight to the CEO. ”

“ We want communications to be ready for the IPO. We want to be in the headlines with Google, Apple, Facebook. ”

“ The market is also unfortunately less competitive salary-wise in the early stage companies. You have to **be willing to take that base pay cut and take on the equity.** ”

“ At Apple or Cisco, communications was viewed as a vehicle for the company and the brand. 50% of company activity doesn't relate to product production, it becomes about the C-suite. That falls under the purview of communications, giving the function a lot of value. ”

“ With enterprise and B2B companies, **communications has become more important** because it involves strategic partnerships that are no longer covered by the press today. ”

“ A good communications function should have **owned content on its own platform.** That way, the function can begin to tie itself to data. Putting metrics on communications is the best way to attain buy-in from the C-suite. ”