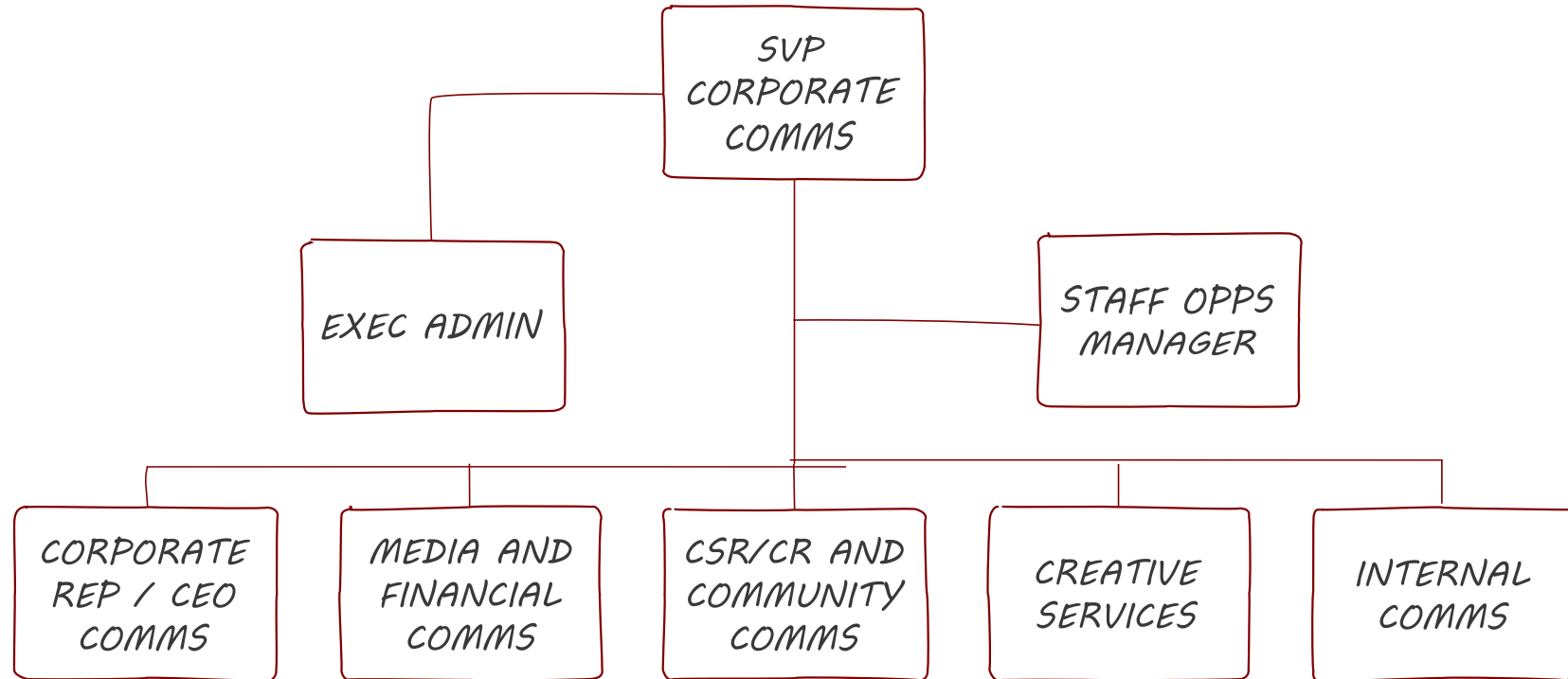


Atop the Unicorn List: A Mature, Full-Service Department



A sprawling, 20-billion-dollar company is going to need multiple staff members focused on each of the major functional areas in communications. Precisely how those teams and reporting lines are structured will depend on factors including the business model, growth patterns and how close the company is to going public. For instance, one company might focus more on government relations efforts, while another might invest more resources in community relations to drive engagement with the user base.

The common thread is that the department will now have a multilevel management structure. With more people thinking about strategy and delegating execution, it will become harder – and more important – to keep everyone aligned with overall messaging but also out of each other’s lanes. The ad-hoc, all-hands-on-deck approach of the early days will give way to more clearly defined roles. At the same time, it will be important for the top communicator to prevent siloes from forming and to preserve a sense of

common purpose even though people are all now focused on different things.

With those challenges comes the freedom to hire for raw talent – “best athlete” communicators – who are early enough in their careers to grow into just about any role the company might need. Even after the department structure has completed the evolution and maturation process, there will still be value in thinking ahead to try and future-proof the function for the uncharted territory that always lies ahead.