

Transformational Change

An Interview with Torie Clarke,
Senior Vice President-Global Corporate Affairs, SAP



Torie Clarke

EDITORS' NOTE Torie Clarke has held her current post since July 2013. She was previously Senior Communications and Government Affairs Adviser at Comcast since 2004. Prior to that, she was U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs and Pentagon spokesperson under U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Clarke also served as Press Secretary for former President George H.W. Bush's 1992 reelection campaign; an adviser to Sen. John McCain (R-AZ); an assistant U.S. trade representative during the first Bush administration; and GM of Hill & Knowlton's Washington, D.C. office.

What excited you about this opportunity at SAP and made you feel it would be the right fit?

SAP is at a very unique moment in its history and in the broader context of where the industry is going. There are tremendous opportunities if we transform appropriately. SAP can not only be the leader in the industry but can take the industry in new and different directions that it hasn't even considered yet.

I'm less interested in companies that are hugely successful and happy where they are. Start-ups are attractive but it's a specific kind of activity. This is a much bigger challenge.

From an employee perspective, do you feel that an adequate understanding of this transformation is in place?

Increasingly so. The biggest challenge when dealing with a huge transformational progression is making sure employees really understand what's happening. The most successful organizations are those in which the people really grasp the mission and intent. It's the responsibility of leadership to convey that, so they understand their role in it.

When you're going through this type of transformational change, does it ever end?

No. Transformation might not be the right word because it indicates an end state. We can't even define our industry when it comes to the changes that have occurred over the past 10 years. We're not really sure where this is going but we know we want to be at the head of it, which means we have to embrace the notion of change as the constant, and that's hard. It's less about transformation and more about transforming.

How do you define your role and how important is it that that role is such a part of business strategy now?

One thing I really enjoy is helping people move outside their comfort zones. It's important to build and maintain meaningful relationships with the right policy makers around the world, and that takes time and digging in deep with them. I'm good at helping people move into those areas they might not be comfortable in.

The second focus is integration. The most successful organizations are the ones in which they fully integrate the relevant parts and pieces of the company. I try to fully integrate the substance of the business with the other parts and pieces that are important to success now, so integration is a really important part of what I'm trying to drive. ●

Driving Growth

An Interview with
Maggie Chan Jones, Chief Marketing Officer, SAP



Maggie Chan Jones

EDITORS' NOTE Maggie Chan Jones has held her current post since November 2014. Most recently, she served as the inaugural Regional CMO of North America at Level 3 Communications. Before joining Level 3, she spent over seven years at Microsoft Corporation, where she was the Marketing Director of U.S. Cloud Services and Office 365. Prior to her role at Microsoft, Chan held managerial and marketing positions at Sun Microsystems and ADIC.

How do you define the CMO role today?

CMO today is about driving growth. Today, one not only has to think about the brand in terms of how to engage with customers and driving the best brand experience possible, but also to think about how to help the business to drive growth through the portfolio they have, be it product or services.

When we look at who makes that happen, it's people. By 2020, 70 percent of the workforce will be millennials. It's thinking about how to drive towards that future workforce that will be critical.

How do you define SAP's brand message and how critical is it that it be consistent?

First and foremost, it has to align to the company's vision, which is helping the world run better and improving people's lives. That becomes the anchor for us in how we cultivate activities leading to that vision.

In 2014, Bill (McDermott, Chief Executive Officer) talked about Run Simple, which became the operating principle for us and the anchor for our marketing campaign. This past year, we launched the Run Simple campaign globally.

The premise is that complexity is really hurting businesses. Out of the top 200 companies, 63 percent of the executives find that complexity is lowering their profits by up to 10 percent. Our campaign focuses on how SAP helps companies combat complexity so they can run simple.

Has the shift been more towards digital platforms and social media?

It's definitely important but I also don't want to minimize traditional marketing executions as well. It's more about the brand. Having the right mix is going to be important.

How critical is diversity to SAP and how important was it for you in coming here?

It's absolutely critical. Personally, when I consider joining a company, this is one of the things I look at. We want to make sure that our workforce is mirroring the customer base we're serving.

We serve 190 countries around the world and there are different cultures and ethnic backgrounds, and we need to have that type of diverse workforce from diversity of thought, culture, and everything else.

Out of my leadership team, we are based out of six countries in nine markets; 50 percent are women and 42 percent are ethnic minorities, myself included. ●