

## THE GROUP OF ANALYSTS

Temel Kahyaoglu, Chief Analyst TGOA, in conversation with

# Jürg Weber

## CEO censhare (Schweiz) AG on corporate newsrooms



Jürg Weber is the CEO, co-founder and co-owner of censhare (Schweiz) AG. Throughout his career, he has acquired in-depth experience in product management, purchasing management and sales marketing at both nationally and internationally active trading companies. During this time, he implemented one of the very first DAM, PIM and multi-channel publishing projects in Switzerland. Fascinated by this topic, he decided to switch completely to the provider side of this IT technology 18 years ago.

It is important to exploit synergies whenever time and resources become increasingly scarce. This not only rings true for the topic of production, but also when looking at the distribution of content. For the latter, a corporate newsroom is often the ideal solution. It permits the most diverse topics to be spontaneously addressed, centrally coordinated and publicised in a timely and targeted manner.

**Where will the challenges lie for companies with regards to communication and marketing in the future?**

Publishing relevant content across all channels, in real time and perfectly coordinated with all in-house stakeholders. I believe this is one of the greatest challenges for corporate communication and marketing. The challenge becomes exponentially greater if companies do not prepare and manage their communication and marketing content centrally, and if national or even global coordination within a company is required.

**Where do you see potential for getting these under control?**

Companies – and I am specifically referring to medium-sized and large enterprises – must dispense with their silo thinking when it comes to communication, marketing and specific product and sales marketing. Instead, they should move towards a ‘holistic information unit’ approach. Possibly in the form of a ‘publishing house’ within the company. I am astonished by how many enterprises continue to block themselves with this kind of silo mentality. I myself have worked in medium-sized companies in which the above-mentioned departments and divisions were already consolidated into a unit. To this end, the respective strengths of the communication specialists were harnessed to generate a consistent, multichannel force. For this reason, I see an emerging trend towards corporate newsrooms as a potential future solution for agile and swift action, but – above all – for reaction.

**What actually is a corporate newsroom?**

A corporate newsroom is a central place in which all information carriers within a company can – on an interdisciplinary and interactive basis – coordinate all content and their channel management, including monitoring content preparation and content evaluation. This place can be physical or systemic. And this ensures efficient and consistent communication between the respective company and the desired target groups or target markets. A further important benefit lies in the fact that you can react to new circumstances practically without delay.

**What do you recommend when establishing such newsrooms?**

Before embarking on this kind of ‘project’, one should most definitely ensure that all in-house and political jurisdictions are always coordinated and in agreement with each other. The introduction of a corporate newsroom is always a holistic corporate project and must therefore be regarded as an important tool for the future of corporate communication by all employees – including the management itself. One could almost view it as an essential company asset. Above all because the introduction of a corporate newsroom project takes time and demands patience. Here, I am not primarily talking about setting up a physical infrastructure, but about a holistic change process that stretches across the various areas of communication, requiring a wholly new definition of structures and processes. The appropriate information technology is ultimately implemented on the basis of these. »

**Please name the important aspects of introducing a corporate newsroom.**

The greatest responsibility lies without doubt with the management. It must support the project 100 percent and provide sufficient time and an appropriate budget.

**When could this kind of project fail or the intended impact not happen?**

If the planning and organisation are not executed cleanly. Or if there is tremendous time pressure in some ‘corner’ from the outset and the various responsibilities are included too late or – in the worst-case scenario – are not included at all. This runs the risk of creating internal resistance to the project and slowing the planned venture unnecessarily. This in turn causes the support of, and conviction amongst, the management to gradually wane.

**So, how would you ideally approach introducing a corporate newsroom?**

The challenges of such new methods with regards to the instruments are extremely complex. There are numerous obstacles to overcome. That’s why I recommend employing external consultants with the corresponding know-how in implementing such projects and who, on the one hand, expertly advise a company in an appropriate manner and, on the other hand, simultaneously actively accompany the change process from the kick-off through to the go-live stage and beyond.

**What organisational and infrastructure-related aspects need to be considered?**

Primarily, the focus should be on drafting the organisational structures and processes, including creating scope for further potential changes and adjustments. These structures and processes should preferably be derived from the defined future communication and information aims. I recommend putting together a competent core team comprising people from all existing divisions who are responsible for planning, preparation, steering, monitoring and content evaluation – both during the active project phase and following roll-out. As early as during the project kick-off, this team should acquire a profound overview of the infrastructure possibilities – both physically and systemically. Here, the team should ask itself what is possible and what is the appropriate solution for each individual entity in the specific case. However, the final evaluation of these solutions should not be carried out until the future corporate newsroom strategy has been defined. Because: it is not the strategy that needs to adapt to the infrastructure, but the other way around.

**What should the time frame for such major projects be?**

You should expect them to take between one and two years. However, this is heavily dependent on the respective circumstances at the company – such as the pre-defined aims and the inclusion of, or collaboration with, various divisions of the company. Ideally, implementation should be carried out in stages. Initial success will be tangible within a very short period of time, with the ‘positive groove’ retained.

**What options are there for measuring success?**

Here, there are various options and approaches – for instance, assessment using KPIs focussing on sales or time-to-market. Furthermore, success can be measured on the basis of the impact of simultaneously or globally distributed daily content such as the latest stories, topics or product information, stringently disseminated across all channels at the appropriate point in time. If you have already identified what the future of communication, (product) marketing and advertising entails, then measuring the success of the future corporate newsroom strategy practically becomes obsolete. Everyone active in this area should be aware that establishing such newsrooms is an essential step towards the future of multichannel information.

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*censhare (Schweiz) AG is a subsidiary of censhare AG of Munich. Since 2007, censhare (Schweiz) AG has been providing the Swiss market with sales, system integration and ongoing operations support solutions. Successful project implementation and partnership-based collaboration with customers are the top priorities.*

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