

# Brian Phifer on Boards Re-Evaluating Communications Leadership

*Executive search leader Brian Phifer on rising board scrutiny, reputation risk, and senior communications leadership*

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, January 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Brian Phifer](#) on Why Boards Are Re-Evaluating Communications Leadership in 2026

Brian Phifer, CEO of [Phifer & Company](#) ([www.phifercompany.com](http://www.phifercompany.com)), says boards and CEOs are fundamentally re-evaluating the role of communications leadership as reputation risk, executive visibility, and stakeholder scrutiny continue to intensify across industries.

Phifer leads a global executive search firm specializing in communications and marketing leadership roles and advises boards, CEOs, and investors on senior-level appointments during periods of organizational change.

“Communications leadership has shifted from a support function to a core governance concern,” said Brian Phifer, CEO of Phifer & Company. “Boards are increasingly aware that trust, credibility, and executive judgment directly affect enterprise value.”

## Why Communications Has Become a Board Issue

According to Phifer, several forces are driving increased board attention:

- The speed at which narratives form and escalate
- Increased public visibility of executive decision-making
- Heightened expectations from employees, regulators, and investors
- The permanence of digital and search-driven reputational signals

“These pressures mean organizations have far less margin for error,” Phifer said. “How leadership responds — or chooses not to respond — can shape perception for years.”

## What Boards Are Prioritizing in Senior Communications Leaders

Based on recent executive search activity, Phifer notes that boards are prioritizing leaders who

demonstrate:

- Experience advising CEOs during high-stakes situations
- Strong judgment under ambiguity and incomplete information
- Credibility with legal, HR, investor relations, and marketing teams
- A long-term view of reputation management over short-term optics

“The most effective communications leaders are trusted advisors, not just messengers,” Phifer added.

### The Impact of AI and Search Visibility

Phifer also pointed to artificial intelligence and search platforms as accelerants of reputational risk. Information now spreads faster, persists longer, and is interpreted by third-party systems beyond an organization’s direct control.

“Once a narrative hardens online, it becomes difficult to unwind,” said Brian Phifer. “That reality has elevated communications leadership into a strategic discipline boards must understand.”

### Looking Ahead:

As organizations prepare for continued volatility, Phifer expects demand for senior communications leadership to remain strong across public, private, and private equity-backed companies.

“Boards that invest early in experienced communications leadership are better positioned to navigate disruption with credibility intact,” Phifer said.

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