



Joe Bernardo

An Interview with Cision CEO Joe Bernardo

Cision is proud to be one of the Educational Grant Sponsors of the upcoming Medical Communications Conference. Joe Bernardo shares his thoughts on leadership style, managing a global organization, innovations and market drivers and responding to client needs in an ever changing economic environment.

Tell us something about yourself as a CEO...What is your leadership Style...What excites you about the business...

As a relatively “hands on” CEO, I attempt to provide easy access and open communications, not only to the senior management team, but to all employees. I solicit as much input on an issue or opportunity as is reasonably possible from my colleagues, set a direction and then provide the support and resources necessary for the team to successfully do their jobs.

Our business here at Cision is changing rapidly to meet, and hopefully exceed, our clients’ expectations. Ever changing technology solutions and demanding client requirements keep this business exciting and always evolving.

What is the role of CEO in your company? How do you drive the organization?

My primary role as CEO is to lead the management team in setting a clear direction for the business, establishing priorities and goals (in line with our Global Corporate Vision) , and to provide the leadership and decision making necessary to see our plans successfully implemented.

The organization is driven through the senior management team, each member of which plays a key role in setting and achieving our common business goals.

What is the source of your optimism in this field? What do you see as innovation drivers and what are the growth obstacles?

Cision are experts on the Media. We have been identifying and keeping track of hundreds of thousands of media outlets and contacts for over 50 years, monitoring media content from Print, Broadcast, Internet and other electronic sources, and analyzing what the media is saying about our client’s, their competitors, their industries, and any number of other key messages our clients want to understand.

Monitoring tens of thousands of media sources and making sense of the tremendous volume of content is a vitally needed service which continues to grow. Serving this content and analysis to our clients through fully integrated web based, on demand software provides our clients easy access to this invaluable information.

Public Relations and Media Communications have been acknowledged as an essential part of a company’s marketing mix and with this acknowledgement comes an increased reliance and ever growing opportunity to serve this market.

At this point in time, the only potential obstacle to growth would be a serious, sustained economic downturn. These types of downturns have proved to be short lived in the past.

How is your business model scalable/compatible to an ever changing economic environment? How do you define opportunity?

Because Cision offers a complete portfolio of services addressing every aspect of a PR professional's routine business needs, clients can ramp their service up or down depending on their budgets or requirements. Traditionally, our business has performed relatively well in a down market.

More importantly, however, is that Cision has undergone a significant change in how we provide our services over the past several years. Cision has evolved from a paper based, media directory and manual print monitoring company to a full service "Technology Company", with market leading technology driven solutions in all of our services. Our business is now fully digitized and well positioned to respond to, if not initiate, new opportunities to better serve our clients.

What are the greatest assets of your organization?

The number one asset in Cision is our people. Cision employees serve an exciting market and work with thousands of great clients across virtually every industry vertical there is. They attempt to keep the client's needs in the forefront of everything they do, and I am pleased to say that it is quite common to receive compliments on how someone on our team has gone above and beyond on behalf of a client. We can't please all of the people all of the time, but we sure try to!!

The second most valuable asset in Cision is our well known and highly acclaimed media data. Cision (formerly Bacon's) has been recognized for over 50 years as offering the most complete, up-to-date and accurate media data in the industry, and we frequently regain clients who have left us for the competition due to the strength of our media data.

How will you keep evolving your structure?

By continually communicating with our clients, not only to understand what they need now to better perform there jobs, but to attempt to anticipate what they will need before they need it! Striving to maintain the number one market position in full cycle, integrated PR services will direct our evolution as it has over the history of our company.

How do you create an environment of success?

A successful environment is one which allows each and every employee to contribute and grow in an open and communicative way. Providing clear goals, constant input and an opportunity for open exchange keeps everyone an active part of the company's primary focus; to provide our clients with a level of service that not just meets their expectations, but exceeds it.