



Stovall Grainger Modleski Inc.

Partners in Building Competitive Immunity®

C-Suite Access...STOP IT—RIGHT NOW! Before You Hurt Yourself!

There are two or three admonishments from our mothers that characterized the first twelve or so years of our lives. Perhaps your memories are similar. *“Don’t make me have to turn this car around. We’ll just go back home!”* Or the standard... *“One more time and you’ll be grounded for life!”* And finally, the proverbial... *“Stop it right now before you hurt yourself!”*

The phrase *“C-Suite Access”* is now firmly installed on row one of the catch phrase-industry jargon slang Pantheon—Hall of Fame. Now keep in mind dear readers, that our little shop teaches professionals to not only **aspire** to the highest levels of market segment terrain understanding, but to also, over time, with alacrity and professionalism, **physically get there**. So where’s the rub? Why are you admonishing us to avoid hurting ourselves? Well, consider this...

When ideas and phrases get bandied about with enough frequency to become jargon, our bias is that you can go ahead and attach another attribute to it. It’s become a fad and might even be perilously close to being headed for a *“check the box—do it—done that”* characterization. The collective history of sales and marketing offers scores of evidence that support this slippery slide.

When *“Materials Management Access”* or *“Customer Delight Processes”* or *“The Total Account—Office Call”* fads end up on the technique/solution/flavor of the year slippery slope; the abrupt landing at the bottom might hurt a little bit, but not so much that three days later, you and your organization still feel it. Especially if you’ve been around long enough to see this stuff come and go. You can see the slide of fading importance emerging and you have the luxury of shrouding yourself in that burlap sack that all county fair slip and slide boondoggles offer participants in advance. We call that the *“burlap sack of experience.”* Or the carpet of *“been there done that.”*

But C-Suite carpet is different. The



motivation for this article came from one of us hearing for the zillionth time the empty phrase... *“We need C-Suite access...we are focusing on C-Suite access.”*

The SGM team wraps this next observation



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in love, but here goes...Most of us wouldn't be prepared to have a meaningful interaction with a C-level officer. So when we hear this "C-Suite Access" stuff it worries us. Why? Because the landing at the bottom of this fad/trend slippery slope is more painful and can have lasting consequences. Consequences that are far more dramatic than when your company finally let the "Total Account Call" fad drift into the ether.

So don't even try it...right SGM? No, no, no (*Don't make me turn this car around*)... That's **not** what we are saying...just the opposite actually. Why? ...because we are serious when we say that suppliers who understand the macro-terrain through the eyes of the highest levels of organizational influence possess competitive advantage. It's rarified air up there and strategists love breathing it. But you need to invest the requisite amount of time to develop the skills and confidence to run a fifteen minute dialogue at the C-Suite level and have the agreed upon fifteen minutes turn into thirty. Anything less than this level of commitment to preparation and you'll probably be met with the "you need to go back down to materials management/pharmacy/the lab to discuss this" ...and the part you won't hear is the C-level officer saying to others... "How did this

person get here? Make sure that these types of folks don't clutter my calendar in the future." Strategists spend **at least quadruple** the amount of time in the *Temple Rehearsal*...advance preparation for the allocated amount of meeting time that anyone at the C-level sets aside for you.

In our next installment, SGM will delve further into the rationale for breathing rarified C-level air and offer insights regarding how to be one of the credible few who gets there and behaves in a way that has the C-level officer pleased that she gave you the time to have dialogue.

And by the way, most C-level professionals who, if they are wildly successful, run a net-net margin business of 2-4%. And they don't define the physical space within which they work as a "Suite". So drop the cute jargon; drop it right now or I'll turn this car around and we'll just go home.

*SGM is a Training and Consulting collaborative that **understands the healthcare marketplace and understands the power of Strategy.***

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