

Magenta

Service: Messaging Strategy with OnBoard

Case Study

Streamlining Messaging to Highlight Key Differentiators

OnBoard has spent more than three decades advancing gender parity in corporate boardrooms through research, education, and leadership development.

As the organization looked to expand its visibility and reach, it needed a clearer, more cohesive communications strategy that highlighted its unique value, strengthened its messaging, and connected audiences to its mission.

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Point of Departure

“For more than three decades, OnBoard has spearheaded the movement toward gender parity in the corporate boardroom and empowered women to advance their careers.”

You’ll find this introductory sentence — written by Magenta as part of the Impact Communications Audit — on the **OnBoard website.**

Established in 1993, OnBoard aims to increase the number of women on corporate boards and in executive leadership. The small-but-mighty team executes a suite of programs that have proven successful at building networks, connecting women with board opportunities, and tracking progress toward gender parity at the highest levels of business.

When Magenta partnered with OnBoard, a member described the organization as “the best-kept networking secret in Atlanta” — a testament to its efficacy, but not the ideal position from a marketing perspective! OnBoard retained Magenta to conduct a communications sweep, aiming to grow program awareness and highlight the organization’s presence as an essential contributor to the national conversation around gender parity.



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Flight Plan

Stage 1: Identify differentiators as mission pillars.

Magenta worked with OnBoard to identify the key differentiators of their programming. First was the **Annual Study**, an OnBoard publication that has benchmarked women's representation on public company boards in Georgia since 1993. The Study is OnBoard's most important piece of intellectual property, and had received regular coverage from Atlanta business journalist Maria Saporta. Though the document itself was posted on OnBoard's website, Study data was not readily available on webpages. Users had to download the full Study PDF to read it, meaning they had to be really curious about OnBoard's work to see the groundbreaking results.

Second, while countless organizations offer professional development for career advancement, OnBoard is one of the few that provides coaching and education tailored specifically for women pursuing seats on corporate boards. OnBoard provides board-specific networking and development at every stage of women's careers, from young professionals to women who have obtained board seats. With input from OnBoard, Magenta wrapped various programs under one umbrella: "Career Lifecycle Initiatives."

As Magenta assessed OnBoard's primary communications channels (website, email, LinkedIn, and presentation decks for corporate groups), we put the Annual Study and Career Lifecycle Initiatives front and center.



Liftoff

Stage 2: Tie all communications to a mission pillar.

After establishing OnBoard's two key differentiators, Magenta recommended that OnBoard tie each communication to its critical mission pillars: (1) tracking progress toward gender parity (in the Annual Study), and (2) preparing women for board service (through Career Lifecycle Initiatives). We worked together to develop strategies for four primary communications channels: website, email distribution, LinkedIn, and presentation decks for corporate groups.

Phase 3: Translate pillars into channel-ready messaging.

Implementation recommendations included:

Highlighting OnBoard as a thought leader by positioning the Annual Study at the forefront of communications:

- Visualizing Annual Study results on the website.
- Including Study data in presentations to corporate groups and using the messaging to inform corporate DEI practices.
- Sharing findings from the Study on LinkedIn throughout the year (instead of only at the time of publication), coordinating messaging with key moments like Women's History Month.

Clarifying offerings for women in each career stage:

- Refreshing membership levels (delineated by career stage) on the website.
- Launching Member Spotlights on LinkedIn, enabling followers to see women like them engaged in various membership levels and programs.
- Featuring OnBoard's Career Lifecycle Initiatives in the Study to illustrate how OnBoard influences change — and how readers can be part of that change.

Creating cases for funding* for key initiatives:

- Outlining how the Annual Study builds awareness of women's underrepresentation in corporate leadership — and how sharing its results shifts how boards recruit directors.
- Developing language surrounding the Career Lifecycle Initiatives and how they influence diversity in corporate leadership.
- Generating proposals to secure grant and sponsorship funding for the initiatives.

***Read more about Magenta's Case for Support service on our Offerings webpage.**

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Point of Arrival

Phase 4: Identify performance indicators to monitor communications clarity.

OnBoard implemented Magenta's recommendations and refreshed language across every section of their website to call attention to the outcomes of its two key differentiators: (1) tracking progress toward gender parity on corporate boards and (2) preparing women for board service. Team members, board members, and constituents celebrated the enhanced clarity and energy across OnBoard's communications.

As an indirect result of the Audit, OnBoard saw marked, organic improvement across all communications metrics:

- **LinkedIn followers grew by 73%, from 1,966 to 3,398 business people largely based in OnBoard's key markets.**
- **Email open rates increased from 32% — already above the industry average — to 36%.**
- **Membership increased by 18%, from 540 to 639.**
- **Sponsorship and donation revenue exceeded budgeted goals by 68% and 75%, respectively. Sponsors were largely incentivized by offering their employees access to programs in the Career Lifecycle suite.**

Streamlining OnBoard's communications messaging had ripple effects throughout the organization's marketing, fundraising, and broad awareness efforts, ultimately positioning OnBoard to achieve unprecedented year-over-year increases in engagement and revenue.

