

COMMUNICATION INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

Three candidates. One mandate.

An anonymised worked example of the brief a search firm receives at the close of a Silk Clarity assessment. Three shortlisted candidates for the same Group CEO mandate, scored against the six communication dimensions, with a recommendation the partner can defend in front of the client and the board.

MANDATE	Group Chief Executive — listed industrials parent, activist investor on register
SEARCH FIRM	Confidential (anonymised)
BRIEF REFERENCE	SC-2026-0428-CEO-3X
ASSESSMENT DATE	April 2026
METHODOLOGY	Silk Clarity Communication Framework

What the panel should do.

The shortlist contains one strong external profile, one internal candidate with the credibility to develop into the role, and one externally-credentialled founder whose communication profile carries identifiable risk against the activist context.

CANDIDATE A

Internal · Divisional CEO

RECOMMENDATION

Develop in role

HIGHEST

Integrity 88

LOWEST

Adaptability 64

CANDIDATE B

External · Sector President

RECOMMENDATION

Proceed

HIGHEST

Influence 88

LOWEST

Integrity 73

CANDIDATE C

External · Founder-CEO

RECOMMENDATION

Caution

HIGHEST

Adaptability 88

LOWEST

Composure 64

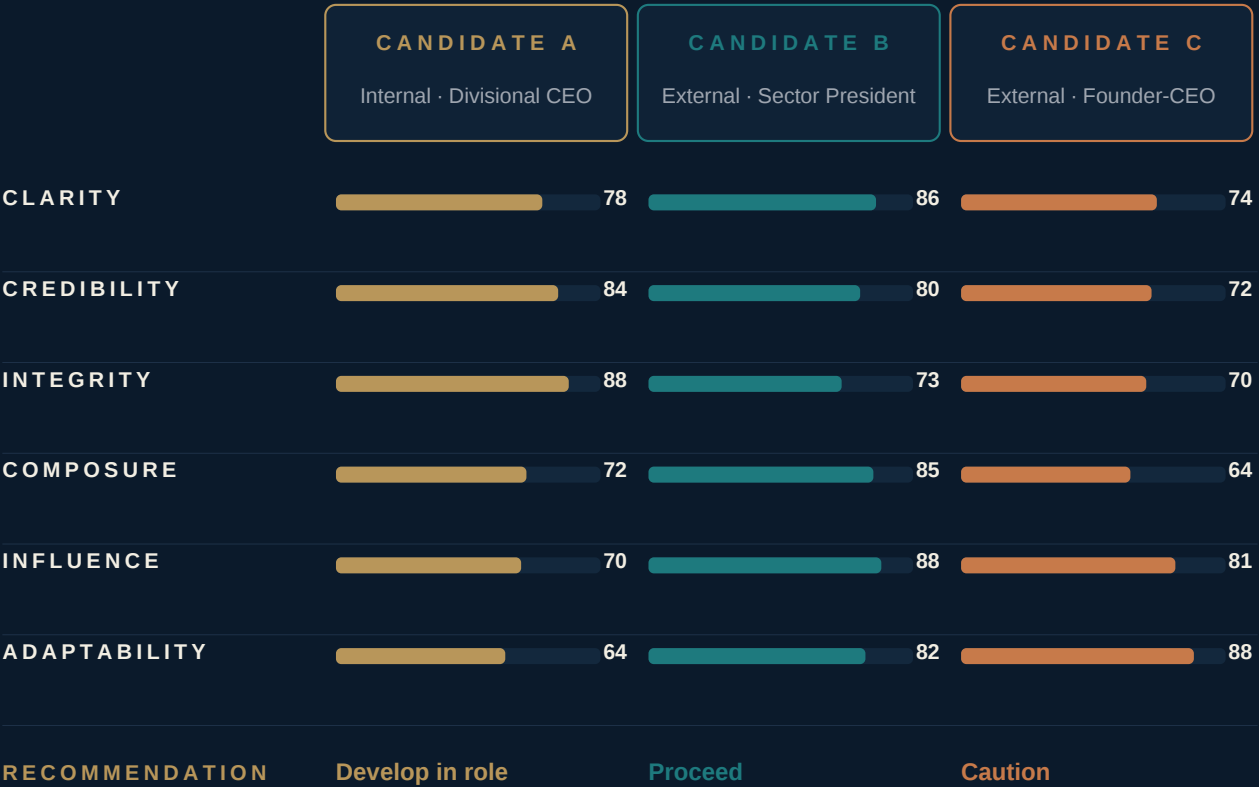
HEADLINE

Candidate B is the recommended appointment. Candidate A is the strongest developmental option if the board prefers continuity. Candidate C should advance only with an explicit communication risk plan attached to the offer.

Six dimensions. Same axis.

Three candidates assessed against the same role context, scored from 0–100 across the six communication dimensions. Bars are calibrated to the senior listed CEO threshold.

Group Chief Executive — listed industrials parent, activist investor on register



Candidate A.

Develop in role.

CANDIDATE A				RECOMMENDATION				Develop in role			
Internal · Divisional CEO											
CLA	78	CRE	84	INT	88	COM	72	INF	70	ADA	64

WHY CONSIDERED

Continuity candidate. Eight years inside the group, three running the largest division. The board knows the operator; the question is whether the operator is yet the communicator the parent role demands.

WHAT THE ASSESSMENT SHOWED

Strongest of the three on integrity (88) and credibility (84) — the internal record is doing visible work in every exchange. Composure under simulated activist pressure held at 72, which is acceptable but not comfortable. Adaptability scored 64: the candidate's instinct under unfamiliar stakeholder framing was to retreat to the divisional playbook rather than reframe.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE CLIENT

Supportable as an appointment if paired with a structured first-ninety-day communication programme covering investor framing, media composure, and adaptive stakeholder switching. Without that pairing, the integrity advantage will erode the first time the activist register tests the adaptability gap in public.

Candidate B.

Proceed.

CANDIDATE B					RECOMMENDATION				Proceed		
External · Sector President											
CLA	86	CRE	80	INT	73	COM	85	INF	88	ADA	82

WHY CONSIDERED

External candidate from a comparable listed parent in an adjacent sector. Sponsor-led credentialling already complete; the panel is using the assessment to confirm communicative fit, not establish it.

WHAT THE ASSESSMENT SHOWED

Highest composite of the three. Clarity (86), composure (85), and influence (88) all clear the senior listed CEO threshold without qualification. The candidate's framing under hostile simulated questioning was structured, deliberate, and audience-aware. The single signal worth weighting is integrity at 73 — not a flag, but the lowest of the three.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE CLIENT

Proceed. Weight the back-channel reference work toward consistency between stated position and observed behaviour over time, and toward any prior instance where the candidate's public commentary diverged from internal posture. Brief the chair on the integrity calibration so it is observed, not assumed.

Candidate C.

Caution.

CANDIDATE C					RECOMMENDATION					Caution	
External · Founder-CEO											
CLA	74	CRE	72	INT	70	COM	64	INF	81	ADA	88

WHY CONSIDERED

Founder-CEO of a high-growth private business sold to a strategic acquirer eighteen months ago. Brings adaptability and influence that neither of the other two can match. The question is whether the founder context has stress-tested the communication patterns the listed parent role will require.

WHAT THE ASSESSMENT SHOWED

Exceptional on adaptability (88) and influence (81). Composure scored 64 — the lowest single score across all three candidates on any dimension. Under sustained adversarial questioning, the candidate's cadence accelerated, the framing narrowed, and the persuasive register shifted from structured argument to personal conviction. Effective in a founder room. Identifiable risk in front of an activist register and a hostile financial press.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE CLIENT

Advance only with an explicit communication risk plan, a defined investor-relations counterweight in the executive team, and a chair willing to coach composure in public settings. The assessment surfaces this risk now rather than letting it surface in the first hostile earnings call.

How the brief is produced.

Every brief is produced through the same assessment workflow. The methodology is consistent across candidates so that comparison rests on observable evidence rather than interview impression.

01 · BRIEF

The search firm submits the role context and the candidates to be assessed.

02 · ASSESS

Each candidate completes a structured assessment calibrated to the role and stakeholder context.

03 · SCORE

Communication behaviour is scored against the six-dimension framework on a 0–100 scale.

04 · COMPARE

Individual profiles plus a side-by-side shortlist scorecard are produced.

05 · RECOMMEND

A defensible recommendation is delivered to the search partner — never directly to the client.

06 · REVIEW

The brief is reviewed with the partner so the evidence is integrated into the client conversation.

ABOUT THIS SAMPLE

Names, sector, and identifying detail are anonymised. Scores, recommendations, and narrative reflect the structure and depth of the brief a partner firm receives.