

Helping with Strategy and Short-Term Implementation

Aileron was founded in 1996 with a mission to unleash the potential of private business through professional management. Founder Clay Mathile understood that passion alone was not enough to propel an entrepreneur. In addition to passion, entrepreneurs also need tools, strategies and processes to advance their businesses and have a meaningful impact on their communities. Aileron's focus was on constantly researching, innovating, and developing the very best tools and programs to bring to their clients. By 2017, Aileron had a rich client base and a long history of success in helping entrepreneurs thrive.

Challenge

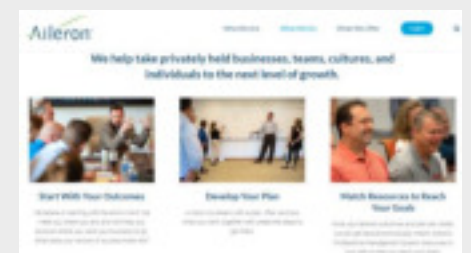
Aileron was doing well with a constant stream of innovative products, tools and programs, and they decided they were ready to expand their footprint. They had a strong team of smart, dedicated and innovative leaders working in Research & Development (R&D) and program development, but they had no marketing structure and no dedicated resources focused on building their own value proposition or increasing awareness of the brand. They had great products, but needed to shift their overall offering to a client-centric one. To address the challenge, Joni Fedders, President of Aileron, asked the head of R&D, Nicole (Luisi) Dalichau, to add marketing as part of her purview. Dalichau posted a marketing manager role, but was not having success finding the right person. At the same time, the team was short-handed and had a few critical projects that needed to be managed. With the team strapped more than usual, Dalichau knew she needed to find a resource that could help with both strategic positioning and short-term marketing implementation.

Solution

Both Fedders and Dalichau knew Amy Connor, President and Owner of CMO-OnLoan, from past working relationships. Through a number of exploratory conversations, Aileron and CMO-OnLoan built a strong foundation of trust as well as a clear understanding of the work that needed to be done. Aileron engaged CMO-OnLoan for a contract with the goals of helping Aileron both begin their strategic shift from being product-driven to being client-centered as well as providing more tactical marketing support during Aileron's short-term capacity issue.



Listening to your clients is not the same thing as being client centered. Aileron had many years of success supported by an inspiring mission and high-quality products. Everything felt like it was going well, but some client feedback was telling them they could be even better. CMO-OnLoan helped them see how a few strategic shifts could move them from just listening to clients to being truly client-centered.



Unlike some big, expensive consulting firms, CMO-OnLoan is more interested in understanding what will help vs. just billing hours. Aileron's Nicole Dalichau says *"We talked to Amy 4 or 5 times before official engagement and each time she was patient and added something extra for me to think about. She would give me a small kernel and help direct me to sharpen what I was actually looking for."*

Approach

Since Aileron was starting from a place without a marketing structure, CMO-OnLoan began by working with Dalichau and her team to establish fundamental marketing processes that would build Aileron's internal capability in marketing.

The work then shifted to a simultaneous flex between strategy and execution. The team worked together to clarify and build alignment around the customer target. Together they uncovered the drivers that were causing their value proposition to be less clear and some needed changes to clarify the brands within the portfolio. They revised the brand architecture to ensure the Aileron brand was clear and at the forefront. Simultaneously, CMO-OnLoan worked as a part-time embedded team member to translate the new strategy, build an annual marketing & communications plan, and take the lead on some detailed project management work. Says Dalichau "CMO-OnLoan is not about just getting it done or showing what we did, but enabling the team to be the winners."

Results

The two primary drivers of success for were CMO-OnLoan's commitment to uncovering and understanding the work that needed to be done before starting an engagement and the ability of CMO-OnLoan to quickly and easily flex from strategy to execution.

CMO-OnLoan delivered:

- + Marketing foundation – team understanding of definitions & processes
- + Marketing organization - roles & responsibilities, job descriptions
- + Customer Target
- + Brand architecture
- + Naming architecture
- + Value Proposition
- + Annual Marketing Plan
- + Marketing implementation

CMO-OnLoan is driven to have a real and lasting impact – not just doing the work, but also building the skills of the team already in place. Their ability to easily flex up and down from strategy through execution was exactly the combination that Aileron needed. *R&D Leader, Nicole Dalichau, says, "Amy puts her ego aside. She has humility and is willing to help the team wherever they need it. She's not about just getting it done or showing what she did. She wants to enable the team to be the winners."*

About CMO-OnLoan

With CMO-OnLoan you gain marketing experts who:

- Are trusted and valued members of your team
- Provide expertise to help grow your business
- Have an entrepreneurial and problem-solving spirit
- Provide leadership from planning through execution
- Can connect you to a network of trusted, expert resources

We're Here to Help!

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