



Final Report: The 2015 Corporate Communication Practices Study

Key Findings:

- 1:** Transformation of the discipline continues with emphasis on internal (employee engagement, corporate culture, the Intranet) & external (media and reputation) communication functions
- 2:** More robust budgets (no change 38.6% or increased 36.4%) reflect the increased need for corporate communication. Steady staff increases (no change 37.8% or increase of 44.5%) reflect a new confidence to hire communication professionals.
- 3:** The transformation of the profession has placed renewed emphasis on building positive corporate culture and employee engagement in response to uncertain global economic conditions, changing business and media models, “big data,” and the networked enterprise.
- 4:** Diversity and minority representation among the top corporate communication professionals indicates greater female representation, with small strides within other groups.
- 5:** Communication executives continue to see their primary role as “manager of the company’s reputation” and “counsel to the CEO.”
- 6:** Integrity, trust, and comprehensive understanding of the business and its constituencies are among the main success factors for reputation management.
- 7:** Political, financial, and technological uncertainty drives sharp focus on business imperatives and has led to running corporate communication like a never-ending political campaign.
- 8:** The Citizens United and Dodd/Frank U.S. Supreme Court decisions have required greater transparency and disclosure efforts in reporting, more internal coordination with other corporate officers, and greater efforts to communicate the company position with investors and other audiences.
- 9:** Corporate Communication departments use agencies and other service providers for advertising (corporate brand and product or service), the annual report, crisis and emergency communication, internet communication, media relations, public relations, and social media. Most have a procurement policy and pre-approved list for such engagements. The budget for almost half of the companies is over \$1,000,000.
- 10:** Top Corporate Communication officers are: middle-aged, paid very well, better educated.
- 11:** Corporate communication professionals see the top issues that they face related to increases in technology, speed, transformation of the discipline, alignment across the enterprise and with business outcomes, convergence, and transformation.
- 12:** Corporate communication professionals see the top trends that they face related to social media, employee engagement, leadership, proactive engagement with company critics, demographics of the new workforce, and alignment with public interest.

13: Social Media, no longer a novelty, becomes another part of the strategic management of corporate communication.

14: Most of the heads of communication report to the CEO, but reflecting the transition taking place in the profession, many report to the Chief Marketing Officer. All of our respondents indicated that they were responsible for the oversight of internal communication. Since 100% of our respondents were responsible for overseeing internal communication, there were no differences by industry, annual revenue, or by number of employees.

15: Corporate communication professionals see a bright future for the profession as it faces a challenging transformation, increased business complexity, greater demands for engaging employees and the corporate culture, meeting higher requirements for transparency, and the increased importance of the profession to the overall success of the enterprise.

NOTES:



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