

Corporate Communication and Public Relations Practice Monitor 2011 Report

An initiative by BPRA, HarbourClub,
pr suisse, SPRI and USI

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About the Swiss Corporate Communication and Public Relations Observatory

The Swiss Corporate Communication and Public Relations Observatory – an initiative of BPRa, HarbourClub, pr suisse, SPRI and USI – generates knowledge about the state and evolution of the communication profession in Switzerland with the aim of supporting its development. The knowledge created and disseminated by the Observatory contributes to raising standards throughout the profession, honing educational and training curricula, identifying research needs, and promoting the industry as a whole.

Association of PR Agencies in Switzerland (BPRa)

The Association of Swiss PR Agencies (BPRa) unites the leading PR agencies in Switzerland – namely, those who have a proven track record in terms of size, experience and quality. All BPRa agencies commit themselves to CMS II quality certification. BPRa also aims to achieve a high level of professional advisory skills and market transparency among its members.

[Association of PR Agencies in Switzerland \(BPRa\)](http://www.bpra.ch)

www.bpra.ch

HarbourClub

HarbourClub offers its members – namely, Chief Communications Officers of Swiss organizations – an exclusive networking platform through which these leading communications professionals can exchange personal experiences, address new and future challenges in corporate communications, and promote informal contacts among professional colleagues. An additional goal is to professionalize and distinguish the corporate communications function.

[HarbourClub](http://www.harbourclub.ch)

www.harbourclub.ch

Swiss Public Relations Institute (SPRI)

SPRI has been providing undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing education for communication professionals since 1969. SPRI takes a holistic approach, offering an education that is both academic and based on current Public Relations practice. Counting over 8,000 graduates, SPRI conducts courses in Zurich, Bern, Lausanne and Geneva with 120 lecturers who represent a wide cross-section of leading PR practitioners in Switzerland. This unique base of know-how as well as an active connection with the main industry associations further strengthen SPRI's links within the communications community.

[Swiss Public Relations Institute \(SPRI\)](http://www.spri.ch)

www.spri.ch

pr suisse, the Swiss Public Relations Association (SPRV)

pr suisse is a professional organization with more than 1,700 members in seven regional divisions. Founded in 1954 as Swiss Public Relations Society (SPRG), with the scope of supporting the development of the profession as well as of specialized educational programs, today the association also administers the Federal examination board for PR professionals (Prüfungskommission) as well as the professional register (Berufsregister).

[pr suisse, the Swiss Public Relations Association \(SPRV\)](http://www.prsuisse.ch)

www.prsuisse.ch

Università della Svizzera italiana (USI)

The Università della Svizzera italiana (USI), founded in 1996, comprises four faculties: economics, communication sciences, and informatics in Lugano as well as architecture in Mendrisio. USI has a total student population of more than 2,800 from 35 countries and a teaching staff of 650 professors, lecturers and assistants. Benefiting from its unique geographic and cultural location, USI is a distinguished multilingual and multicultural university with a broad international outlook.

[Università della Svizzera italiana \(USI\)](http://www.usi.ch)

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About this report

Francesco Lurati, Professor of Corporate Communication, Università della Svizzera italiana, and Board Member SPRI “Since the launch of the first Observatory report, we were able to improve both the structure and the mode of conducting the survey. The new structure has allowed us to look more closely behind the topline results of the data and to pick up further important information that enables a more thorough analysis of both the state of the profession and the trends that govern its development. Additional information has been collected, for instance concerning how organizations structure the communication function or how professionals perceive their profession.”

The following five main aims guided the 2011 Swiss Corporate Communication and Public Relations Practice Monitor.

- To investigate the profession’s practices and their evolution
- To explore the different communication organizational structures and their relationship with the practice of the profession
- To evaluate the integration of communication practice within management practice
- To identify trends that influence communication practice
- To ascertain the need for education and personal development

Survey methods

The survey was conducted online from 19 April to 20 May 2011. Questions were available in four languages: German, French, Italian and English.

The survey included 34 questions structured in 5 main parts: (1) Domain, (2) Structure, (3) Management, (4) Professional Development, (5) Demographics. The number of questions (excluding routing and demographics questions) respondents had to answer varied according to their profile. Organizations’ CCOs: 24; organization “professionals with budget”: 20; organization “professionals without budget”: 13. Agencies’ CEOs: 15; agency “professionals with budget”: 15; agency “professionals without budget”: 11. Professionals from public administration, non-profit organizations, and/or non-governmental organizations were asked to answer questions formulated under the “organization” category. The formulation of each question was differentiated in order to take account of the six different respondent profiles. Respondents required approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete the questionnaire, depending on their profile.

Sample

Approximately 3,500 professionals were invited to complete the questionnaire. Invitations were sent directly by the Observatory partners (SPRI, SPRV, BPRA, HarbourClub and USI), using their databases.

The survey was also publicized on partners’ websites as well as through the main Swiss trade online portals.

489 valid replies (approximately 14 % response rate) were ultimately analyzed.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The 26 questions in the main part of the questionnaire were also cross-analyzed with most of the demographic data that emerged from the remaining 15 questions. Some of the 26 questions were cross-analyzed with non-demographic data as well (e.g. data signaling the level of strategic focus in communication practice).

Finally, wherever possible and appropriate, some data were compared with the results of the European Communication Monitor (ECM) [1] and the American Generally Accepted Practices (GAP) study [2].

Where appropriate (e.g. cross tabs, difference in means, etc.) statistically significant results (Cramer's V test) are reported in the text using the following convention: (*) where $p \leq 0.1$; (**) where $p \leq 0.05$; (***) where $p \leq 0.01$. In addition, some totals may not equal 100 % due to rounding up or down.

Authors

This report was written by a research team from the Institute of Marketing and Communication Management (IMCA) at the Università della Svizzera italiana (USI) comprising:

- Francesco Lurati, Professor of Corporate Communication
- Simone Mariconda, Teaching Assistant
- Jost Reinhold, Teaching Assistant

The team was supported by a Steering Committee comprising the following members:

- Markus Berger, Director SPRI and Board Member SPRV
- Roman Geiser, Chief Operating Officer EMEA and Chairman Switzerland, Burson-Marsteller and President BPR
- Corina Atzli, Head Corporate Communications, Bühler Management AG and President HarbourClub
- Regula Ruetz, ruweba kommunikation ag and President pr suisse
- Marion Starck, Starck Public Relations and President SPRI
- Martin Zahner, Managing Partner, YJO Communications AG, and Board Member BPR and SPRI

Quotation

Lurati, F., Mariconda, S., and Reinhold, J. (2011), Swiss Corporate Communication and Public Relations Practice Monitor. Zurich and Lugano: Swiss Corporate Communication and Public Relations Observatory

Contact person

Francesco Lurati
Università della Svizzera italiana
Via Giuseppe Buffi 13
6900 Lugano
Switzerland

+41 (0)58 666 45 82
francesco.lurati@usi.ch

[1] Zerfass, A., Verhoeven, P., Tench, R., Moreno, A., & Verčič, D. (2011): European Communication Monitor 2011. Empirical Insights into Strategic Communication in Europe. Results of an Empirical Survey in 43 Countries. Brussels: EACD, EUPRERA. In the rest of the report, it will be referred to as "2011 ECM survey".

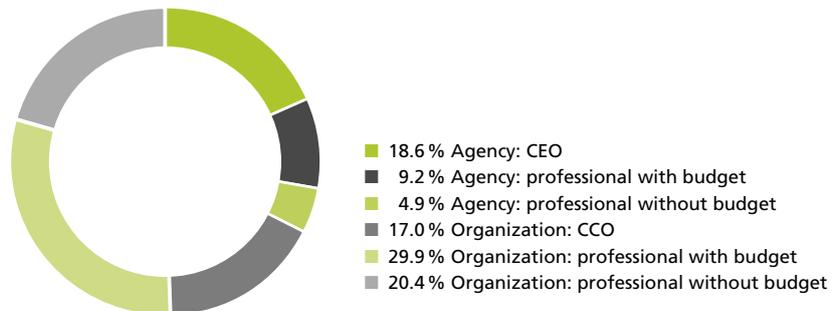
[2] Swerling, J., Sen, C., Bonefeste, A., Rezvan, A., McHargue, A. (2009): Sixth Annual Public Relations Generally Accepted Practices (GAP) study, GAP VI. Los Angeles: University of Southern California. In the rest of the report, it will be referred to as "GAP VI (2009)".

1. Respondents' general profile

A total of 489 communication professionals took part in the second Swiss Observatory Practice Monitor. Of these respondents, 329 (67.3%) work in organizations, while the remaining 160 (32.7%) work in PR and communication consultancies. The survey reached all linguistic regions of Switzerland, with respective percentages similar to 2010: 75.5% German, 21% French, 3.2% Italian, and 0.2% Rumantsch-speaking part of Switzerland [1].

Similar to the previous year, the survey attracted high participation by organization CCOs and agency CEOs (18.6% and 17% respectively). Also consistent with last year's sample, the majority of respondents are "professionals with budget" responsibility who work in organizations (29.9%) [2].

Respondents' position in the organization (%)



If one takes a closer look at those respondents working in organizations, most of them work at the corporate level (74.2%), while roughly one quarter work at the divisional / unit level [3]. If one looks at the type of organization in which respondents work, 33.7% work in joint stock companies, 23.7% in government-owned organizations or political institutions, 21.3% in private companies, 17% in non-profit organizations or associations, and finally 4.3% in other types of organization [4].

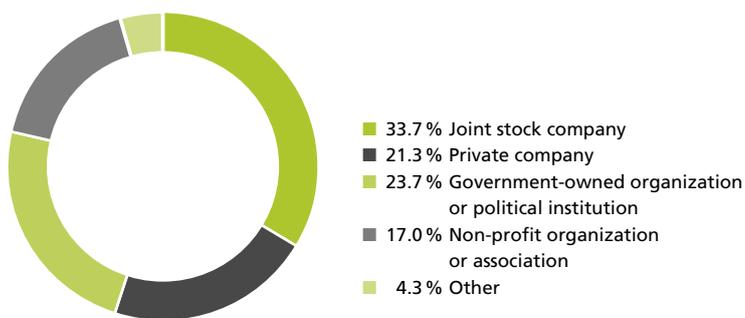
[1] Q33 (asked to all): In which part of Switzerland are you normally based? Response options: German-speaking part, French-speaking part, Italian-speaking part, Rumantsch-speaking part.

[2] In order to make the survey more effective, it was designed for six different professional profiles: (1) Agency: CEO; (2) Agency: Professional with budget; (3) Agency: Professional without budget; (4) Organization: CCO; (5) Organization: Professional with budget; and (6) Organization: Professional without budget. In the current report, footnotes will indicate (where applicable) which questions were asked to which profiles (numbered 1 to 6). If no specific reference to different profiles is made, "asked to all" will signal that all six profiles were asked to answer.

[3] Qf (asked to 4, 5, and 6): Do you work at the corporate OR divisional / unit level? Response options: Corporate level, divisional / unit level.

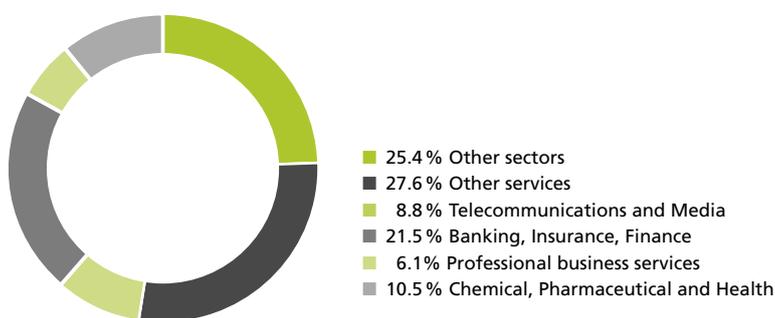
[4] Qc (asked to 4, 5, and 6): In which type of organization do you work? Joint stock company (multiple owners, quoted on the stock market), private company (small number of owners, not on the stock market), government-owned organization or political institution, non-profit organization or association, Other.

Respondents by type of organization (%)



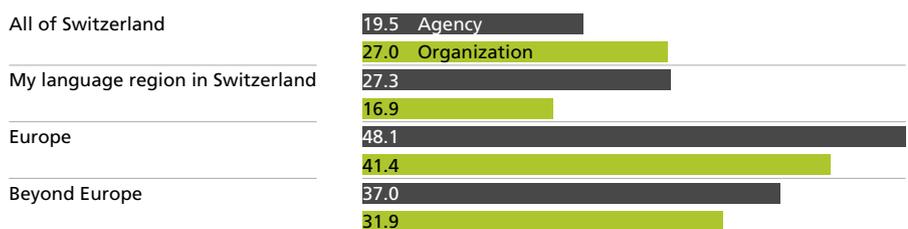
Further analysis shows that among those respondents working in joint stock or private companies, 27.6% work in “other services” (e.g. energy and water supply, transportation, tourism, education, etc.) while 21.5% work in the Banking, Insurance and Finance sector [5].

Respondents by sector (%)



Organizations in every sector are likelier than agencies and consultants to work at the worldwide level (27% vs. 19.5%,*); the latter are instead likelier to work at the European (27.3% vs. 16.9%,**), Swiss (48.1% vs. 41.4%) and regional (37% vs. 31.9%) levels [6].

Reach of business activities (%)



[5] Qd (asked to 4, 5, and 6; working in joint stock or private companies): In which sector do you work? Response items: Telecommunications and Media; Banking, Insurance and Finance; Professional business services; Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Health; Other services (consists of: Energy and Water Supply, Construction, Wholesale, Retail, Transportation, Tourism, Education, Arts, Entertainment and Recreation, and Other service activities); and Other manufacturing (including Agriculture, Food, Textile, Electronics, Luxury Goods, Machinery, and Other manufacturing).
 [6] Q34 (asked to all): What is the reach of your professional activity? (Multiple answers allowed) Response items: My language region in Switzerland, all of Switzerland, Europe, beyond Europe.

If one looks at the age of respondents [7], the majority are between 40 and 45 years old (19.7%), followed by respondents aged between 30 and 35 (17.3%). The percentage 30–35 year-old respondents is much higher in organizations than it is in PR and communication firms (21% vs. 10.1%); the same can be said for professionals aged between 35 and 45 (38.2% vs. 32.3%). On the other hand, more professionals over 45 work in agencies (43.7% vs. 28.1%). These results (***) suggest that, on average, professionals working in organizations are younger than those working in agencies.

Age of respondents in organizations and agencies (%)

	Average	Organization	Agency
Up to 30	13.1	12.6	13.9
30–35	17.3	21.0	10.1
35–40	16.5	17.8	13.9
40–45	19.7	20.4	18.4
45–50	16.3	15.2	18.4
50–55	8.1	7.1	10.1
55–60	4.3	3.2	6.3
Over 60	4.7	2.6	8.9

Furthermore, these results are linked to the years of experience enjoyed by professionals in agencies and organizations [8]. Because they have a younger professional base than agencies, organizations have more workers with less than five years' experience (25.6% vs. 17.2%, ***) and also more with between six and ten years' experience (29.9% vs. 12.7%, ***). By contrast, there is a higher proportion of professionals working in agencies who have more than ten years' experience (70.1% vs. 44.5%, ***).

Years of experience in organizations and agencies (%)

	Organization	Agency
Less than 5 years	25.6	17.2
6 to 10 years	29.9	12.7
More than 10 years	44.5	70.1

The data obtained by the 2011 ECM survey show that, compared to European professionals, fewer Swiss communication professionals have an academic degree [9]. In fact, while 93.3% of European communication professionals claim to have an academic degree, only 61.6% of Swiss respondents do. If one continues to look at the 2011 ECM results, 27.8% of European professionals have a Bachelor's degree; this percentage is much higher than in Switzerland (9.5%). The same can be said for professionals holding a Master's degree (ECM: 58.8% vs. 45.6%). Similar percentages of professionals have a Doctorate (ECM: 6.7% vs. 6.5%).

[7] Q27 (asked to all): How old are you?

[8] Q29 (asked to all): How many years of experience do you have in communication management / public relations? Response items: less than 5 years, 6 to 10 years, more than 10 years.

[9] Q30 (asked to all): Please state the highest qualification you hold. Response items: No qualification, Federal Certificate (eidg. Fachausweis, brevet fédéral, attestato professionale federale), Federal Diploma (eidg. Dipl.), CAS (Certificate of Advanced Studies), Bachelor's (B.A.), Master's (M.A., M.Sc., Mag., M.B.A.), Diploma (Lizenziat), or Doctorate (Ph.D., Dr.).

These percentages relating to the educational qualifications of Swiss professionals remain similar across agencies and organizations. The only exception is that, compared to agencies, more professionals working in organizations have a Federal Certificate (16.6 % vs. 8.3 %). On the other hand, more professionals working in agencies have a Doctorate (10.8 % vs. 4.2 %).

Educational qualification (%)

Doctorate	6.5
Master's, Diploma	45.6
Bachelor's (B.A.)	9.5
CAS	7.5
Federal Certificate	13.8
Federal Diploma (eidg. Dipl.)	13.3
No qualification	3.9

Respondents were asked to specify their communication qualifications [10]. Almost one third of communication professionals (29.5%) state they have an academic degree in communication. When compared to the 2011 ECM survey results, the percentage of Swiss professionals with an academic degree in communication is lower; in fact, the proportion among European professionals is equal to 44.5%. 18.5% of respondents in Switzerland claim to have no communication qualification.

When it comes to the differences between organizations and agencies, a higher percentage of professionals working in organizations hold a CAS degree (20.5% vs. 8.9%, ***). The same applies to PR-F (24.4% vs. 14.6%, **). On the other hand, there is a higher percentage of professionals working in agencies who hold a PR-B degree (22.3% vs. 15.3%, *). Furthermore, there are more agency professionals with no communication degree (21.7% vs. 16.9%).

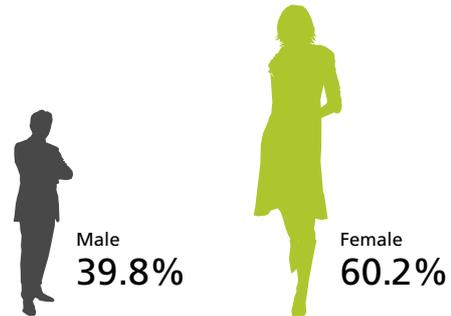
Communication qualification (%)

Academic degree in communication	29.5
PR-F	21.1
PR-B	17.6
CAS in communication	16.6
Prof. cert. in other com. discipline	14.6
No communication qualification	18.5

[10] Q31 (asked to all): Please state the communication qualifications you hold. Response items: PR-F, PR-B, CAS (Certificate of Advanced Studies) in communication, professional certificate in other communication discipline, academic degree in communication (Bachelor's/Master's/Doctorate).

Regula Ruetz, ruweba kommunikation ag and President pr suisse "During the 50 years since the founding of our association, the share of women in the Public Relations industry has increased to over 60%. A look at our educational courses and new members statistics shows that this trend is set to increase in the coming years. Classical female capabilities are predestined for a career in Public Relations. However, this calls for improved career opportunities and individual life planning for women in agencies and companies alike. On the other hand, women will be challenged to grasp opportunities for promotion and if need be prepared to fight for them in the same way as their male counterparts. Otherwise much valuable know-how will go to waste."

The majority of communication professionals are women (60.2%) [11]. The percentage of women is higher in organizations (66.6%,***) than in agencies (47.8%,***)). The percentage of women in Switzerland is slightly higher than the corresponding figure for Europe, as reported by the 2011 ECM survey (55.6%).



In the next years, the proportion of women working as communication professionals will most likely grow. In fact, there are significantly more women than men among younger professionals. Even though the percentages for women and men are similar for professionals over 40 (51.8% vs. 48.2%,***), this ratio clearly changes below the age of 40 (women 69.7%,***) as well as below the age of 30 (women 78.7%,***)).

Finally, almost 70 % of Swiss communication professionals who took part in the survey belong to a professional organization [12]. In line with 2010, most respondents are affiliated to pr suisse (53.5%). When compared to professionals working in organizations, respondents working in agencies are likelier to belong to a professional association (77.4% vs. 64.2%,***)).

Professional affiliation (%)

pr suisse	53.5
BPRA	7.1
HarbourClub	4.3
SVIK/ASCI	4.5
SPAG/SSPA	5.2
Other national com. assoc.	11.3
Other international com. assoc.	7.4

[11] Q28 (asked to all): What is your gender?

[12] Q32 (asked to all): Are you a member of a professional organization? For the possible response options, see the "Professional affiliation" chart.

2. Perceptions from the industry

Respondents were asked a series of questions in order to understand their perceptions regarding some specific aspects of their profession. Assessing perceptions is helpful in understanding how professionals make sense of their environment (trends affecting the profession), their role within the organization, and the impact of their activity (consideration of CC / PR recommendations; influencers of organizational image).

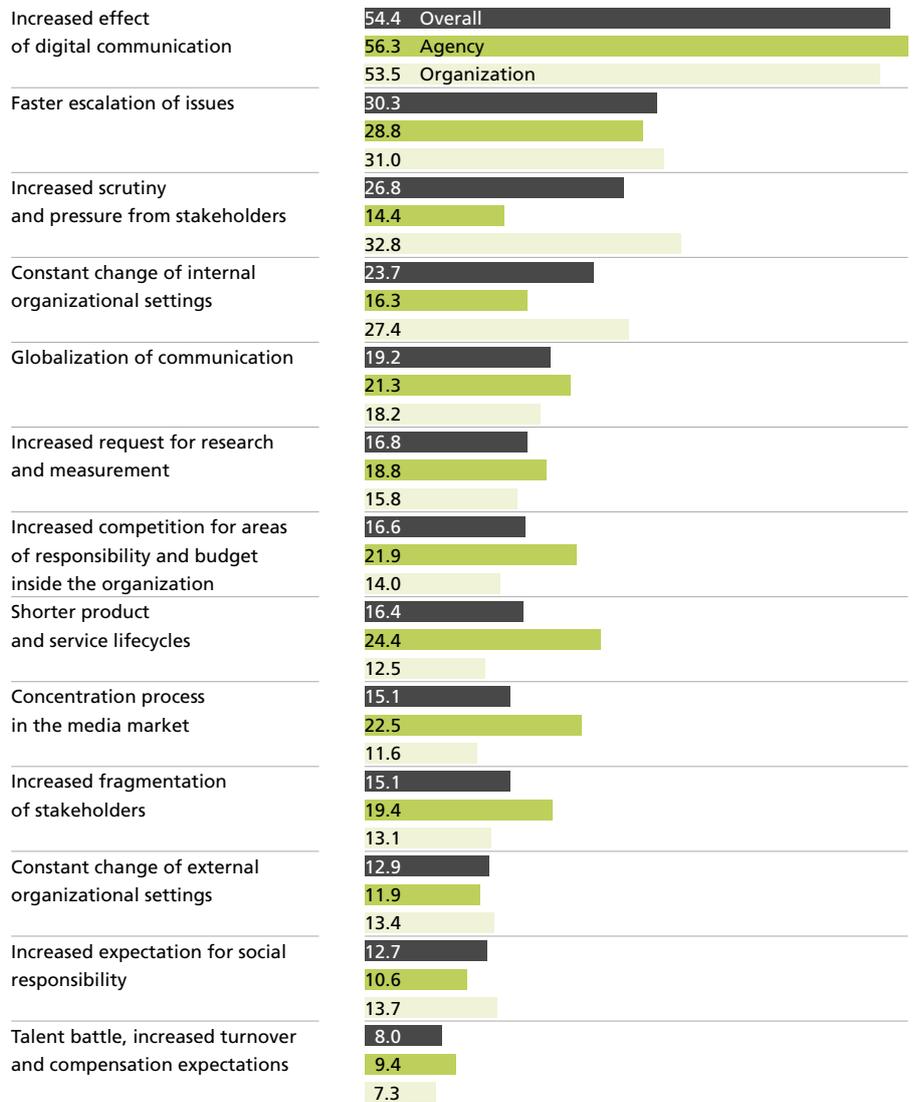
2.1 Trends affecting organizations: Digital communication is clearly the main trend, followed by increased pressure from the environment

Two trends affecting communication activities are seen as being very important by all respondents [1]. As in 2010, “increased effect of digital communication” remains the trend that is likeliest to be acknowledged by all types of communication professionals as being the most important (54.4%). Linked to the increased effect of digital communication (and thus directly following it as the second most important trend for both agencies and organizations) comes “faster escalation of issues” (30.3%).

Roman Geiser, Chief Operating Officer EMEA and Chairman Switzerland, Burson-Marsteller and President BPRA “The fact that the effect of digital communication continues to be the top trend in the communication industry is of no surprise. Since the last survey, the debate is clearly over about whether social and digital media are here to stay. Digital channels have taken their deserved place both in corporate communications and within the marketing mix. The challenge for communicators is no longer the question of whether to join the dialogue, but how to ensure a meaningful contribution that is in line with strategy. We are also likely to see increasing pressure on the much-prized ‘corporate language’ – giving way to greater transparency and immediacy in a more open dialogue with stakeholders at all levels.”

[1] Q17 (asked to all): Which of the following trends are affecting your activity the most? (Pick 3) For the possible response options, see the “Industry trends” chart. The ten trends have been defined on the basis of ECM 2009 (Q6), PRSA 2006 (p. 5) and Balmer, J. M. T., and Gray, R. G. (1999): Corporate Identity and Corporate Communications: Creating a Competitive Advantage. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 4(4): 171–176.

Industry trends (%)



Although agencies and organizations seem to agree on the two most important trends, there are a few differences concerning other important trends. Respondents working in organizations cited more often “increased scrutiny and pressure from stakeholders” (32.8 % vs. 14.4 %, ***) and “constant changes of internal organizational settings” (27.4 % vs. 16.3 %) as trends affecting their activity. Respondents working in agencies were likelier to mention four other trends that affected their activity: “shorter product and service lifecycles” (24.4 % vs. 12.5 %, ***), “concentration process in the media market” (22.5 % vs. 11.6 %, ***), “increased competition for areas of responsibility and budget inside the organization” (21.9 % vs. 14 %), and “increased fragmentation of stakeholders” (19.4 % vs. 13.1 %, **).

If one looks at the different types of organization, respondents working in non-profit organizations attach even greater importance to “increased effect of digital communication” (64.3%,*). Respondents working in government-owned organizations or political institutions by contrast attach greater importance to “faster escalation of issues” (42.3%,*) and “constant changes of internal organizational settings” (32.1%). On the other hand, joint stock companies attach greater importance to “constant changes of external organizational settings” (22.5%,***).

Interestingly, if one looks at the different sectors instead, companies in the Banking, Insurance and Finance sector and those in the Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Health sector attach greater relevance to “increased scrutiny and pressure from stakeholders” (43.6% and 42.1% respectively). It is not surprising that companies working in the Telecommunications and Media sector attach huge importance to “increased effect of digital communication” (68.8%,**).

2.2 A relatively low percentage of professionals believe their recommendations are taken seriously by senior management

On average, only around one third of communication professionals believe that senior management takes their recommendations seriously [2]. However, this percentage increases if one only considers CCOs (43.4%).

Consideration of CC / PR recommendations by senior management (%)

Overall	35.3
CCO	43.4
Professional with budget	34.1
Professional without budget	30.1

The perceived consideration of CC / PR recommendations by senior management also varies in accordance with the relationship between the marketing and communication functions within the organization. 43.8% of those working in organizations where communication leads the marketing function feel their recommendations are taken very seriously. This percentage falls to 18.5% in marketing-driven organizations (**).

Finally, if one looks at the ECM 2011 and GAP VI (2009), it seems that Swiss professionals feel they are taken less seriously than their European and American colleagues [3].

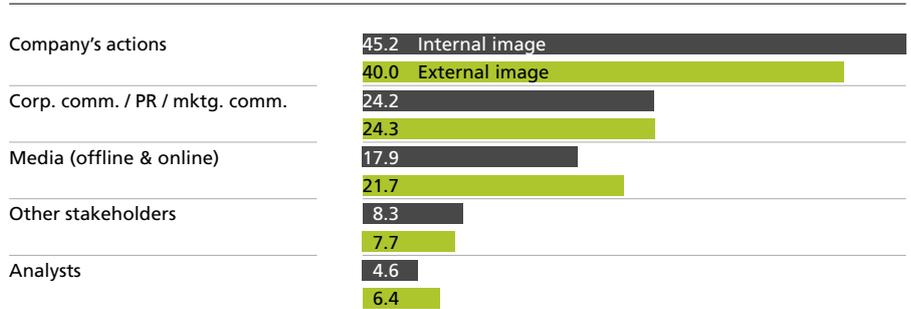
[2] Q16 (asked to 4, 5, and 6): In your organization, how seriously are corporate communication / PR recommendations taken by senior management (chairperson/CEO / executive board members)? (1 = not taken seriously at all; 5 = taken very seriously; I don't know.) Scale points considered 4–5 (average of the two). Adapted from GAP VI (2009) (Q7) and ECM 2011 (Q6)

[3] However, the Swiss results can only partially be compared with the 2011 ECM and GAP VI (2009) survey results. Indeed, these two studies used a 7-point scale, whereas a 5-point scale was used for the Swiss respondents. Furthermore, the GAP VI (2009) report did not provide the percentage of respondents who answered in the upper part of the scale, but an average indicator of the total answers. According to ECM 2011, 77.9% of European respondents think they are taken seriously (answers 5–7), while only 43.4% of Swiss professionals do (answers 4–5). According to GAP VI (2009), on a scale from 1 to 7 US respondents have an average of 5.8, while on a scale from 1 to 5 Swiss professionals have an average of 3.92. In order to compare the two results, one could transform the US average (5.8) obtained on a 1-to-7 scale to the equivalent amount on a 1-to-5 scale using the following calculation: $([5.8 - 1]/[7 - 1] * [5 - 1]) + 1 = 4.2$. The US average would be slightly higher than the Swiss one (3.92).

2.3 Influencers of the organization’s image: Actions are more important than communication

Generally speaking, professionals in both organizations and agencies believe that the external and internal image of an organization is likelier to be influenced by the company’s actions (40 % and 45.2 % respectively) rather than its communication efforts (24.3 % and 24.2 % respectively) [4]. This result is interesting, especially if one considers that communication professionals claim to have relatively limited involvement in business decisions; this will be discussed further in chapter 4.3. This suggests there is a certain awareness that the full potential of the communication function will only be realized when a higher level of involvement in business decisions is achieved.

Influencers of the organization’s image (%)



Interestingly enough, professionals seem to think that corporate communication / PR and marketing communication are more influential than what is reported in the media (21.7 % and 17.9 %). Yet again, this applies to the internal and external image of the organization.

[4] Q18 (asked to all): (Organization) The image of an organization is influenced by various entities. What is the relative importance of the following entities in influencing the external image (the image held by external stakeholders) and the internal image (the image held by employees) of your organization? (Agency) The image of an organization is influenced by various entities. According to your experience, what is the relative importance of the following entities in influencing the external image (the image held by external stakeholders) and internal image (the image held by employees) of your clients' organizations? (Divide 100% points among the following entities). Response items: see "Influencers of the organization's image" chart.

3. Structure

3.1 A relatively high presence of CCOs on the organizations' executive boards

Almost half of organizations' CCOs are either members of the executive board (30.1%) or the extended executive board (16.9%) [1]. The majority of CCOs who are not part of the executive board report directly to the CEO (42.2%).

The percentage of CCOs who are members of the executive board decreases significantly (**) in joint stock companies, where only 10.7% of CCOs sit on the executive board. This figure is significantly higher (**) in non-profit organizations or associations (72.7%).

CCO's hierarchical status in different types of organization

	I'm a member of the executive board	I'm a member of the extended executive board	None of the above, but I report directly to the CEO	None of the above, but I report to another board member	Other
Average	30.1 %	16.9 %	42.4 %	6 %	5 %
Joint stock companies	10.7 %	21.4 %	53.6 %	14.3 %	0 %
Private companies	41.7 %	8.3 %	37.5 %	4.2 %	8.3 %
Government-owned organizations or political institutions	25.0 %	31.3 %	37.5 %	0 %	6.3 %
Non-profit organizations or associations	72.2 %	0 %	18.2 %	0 %	9.1 %

There are some characteristics that seem to be shared by CCOs sitting on the executive board. Although not statistically significant, there is a higher percentage of men (56.5% men vs. 43.5% women). The majority of CCOs sitting on the executive board are younger, and therefore have fewer years' experience than the average CCO. 43.5% are aged 40–45 (average for CCOs: 28.2%), 34.8% have between 6 and 10 years' experience (average for CCOs: 20.5%), and by comparison only 56.5% of them have more than 10 years' experience (average for CCOs: 73.1%).

When it comes to education, the majority of CCOs sitting on the executive board seem likelier to have an academic background, but in fields other than communication. Indeed, 56.5% of CCOs sitting on executive boards hold a Master's degree (CCO average: 46.2%), whereas only 26.1% have an academic qualification in communication (Bachelor's/Master's/Ph.D.). However, they seem likelier to have professional training in communication: 21.7% PR-F, 26.1% PR-B, and 17.4% CAS (CCO averages: 15.4% PR-F, 23.1% PR-B, 15.4% CAS). This explains why only 13% overall of CCOs sitting on executive boards have no qualification in communication (CCO average: 23.1%). These data may suggest there is an above-average likelihood that CCOs on executive boards will include professionals with an academic education earned in fields other than communication, albeit supplemented by professional communication-specific training.

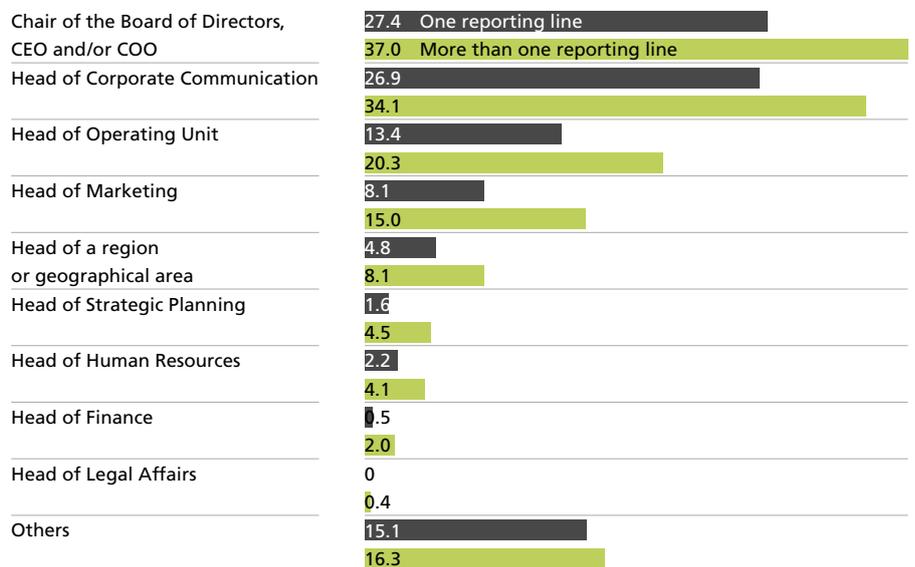
Corina Atzli, Head Corporate Communications, Bühler Management AG, President HarbourClub "Over the past years, there has been a steady rise in the impact of the communication function in corporations. The fact that there is also an increasing number of Chief Communication Officers in the executive boards of leading Swiss companies is a strong signal that communication is being recognized as a management function, leading to an increasingly strategic role for Communication Heads. However, the Observatory results also show that there is still room for improvement in many organizations for communications professionals to rise to the broader challenges and responsibilities which this trend inevitably brings in its wake."

[1] Q12 (asked to 4): What is your hierarchical status? Response items: I'm a member of the executive board; I'm a member of the extended executive board; none of the above, but I report directly to the CEO; I report to another executive board member. To whom? (open answer); none of the above. I report to (open answer). Adapted from ECM 2011 (Q15).

3.2 Also a relatively high percentage of professionals (not CCOs) report to the C-Suite

If one looks at the reporting lines of professionals (n = 289; with and without budget) [2], most of them report to the Board of Directors, CEO and/or CCO (37%), followed by the Head of Corporate Communication (34.1%), Head of Operating Unit (20.3%), Head of Marketing (15%), and others (16.3%). Among those who selected “Others” as an option, “Secretary General” is most frequently mentioned.

Reporting line of professionals with/without budget (%)



Among those professionals who selected only one option (n = 185; therefore 75 % of all respondents have only one reporting line), a surprising 27.4% claim to report to the “Chair of the Board of Directors, CEO and/or CCO”. 27% claim instead to report to the “Head of Corporate Communication”, 13.4% to the “Head of Operating Unit”, and 8.1% to the “Head of Marketing”.

A deeper analysis allows a better understanding of the surprisingly high 27.4% [3] of professionals who report to the “Board of Directors, CEO and/or CCO” (among those with only one reporting line). This percentage increases significantly (***) for private companies (50%) and non-profit organizations or associations (55.6%). By contrast, the percentage is lower for joint stock companies (20.5%). This data may be explained by the fact that the figure of CCO does not exist in private companies and NPOs, and that communication is carried out by managers in charge of other functions (Marketing, HR, etc.). As such, they report directly to the CEO.

[2] Q14 (asked to 5 and 6): To whom do you report? Response items (more options possible): Chair of the Board of Directors, CEO and/or COO; Head of Corporate Communication, Head of a region or geographical area, Head of Operating Unit, Head of Finance, Head of Human Resources, Head of Legal Affairs, Head of Marketing, Head of Strategic Planning, Other. Adapted from GAP VI (2009).

[3] Percentages here were calculated on the basis of the total number of those who selected only one reporting line (n = 185).

Professionals who more often report to the “Head of Marketing” work in joint stock (20.5 %) and private (32.6 %) companies (**). Conversely, only 3.2 % of professionals working in government-owned organizations or political institutions and 6.7 % of those working in non-profit organizations or associations claim to be reporting to the “Head of Marketing”.

3.3 Collaboration between communication and other functions varies across different types of organization

As in 2010, the results indicate major collaboration with the CEO and Marketing department [4]. 65.1 % of CCOs and 43.8 % of “professionals with budget” claim to work closely with the CEO. Similarly, 60.2 % of CCOs and 48.6 % of “professionals with budget” state they work closely with the Marketing department. Similar differences between the two profiles exist when it comes to collaboration with other functions. These differences suggest that CCOs are the ones who drive the relationship with other functions.

Inter-functional collaboration

	Com	Other	CEO		Marketing		HR		Finance		Legal		Board of Directors	
			CCO	PWB	CCO	PWB	CCO	PWB	CCO	PWB	CCO	PWB	CCO	PWB
1			1.2 %	10.3 %	2.4 %	11.0 %	8.4 %	18.5 %	9.6 %	21.2 %	24.1 %	28.1 %	13.3 %	34.9 %
2			2.4 %	13.7 %	4.8 %	4.1 %	19.3 %	21.2 %	24.1 %	25.3 %	19.3 %	21.9 %	24.1 %	19.9 %
3			31.3 %	32.2 %	32.5 %	36.3 %	41.0 %	41.8 %	39.8 %	41.1 %	38.6 %	39.0 %	41.0 %	30.1 %
4			51.8 %	34.9 %	25.3 %	22.6 %	26.5 %	14.4 %	20.5 %	8.9 %	9.6 %	8.9 %	12.0 %	12.3 %
5			13.3 %	8.9 %	34.9 %	26.0 %	4.8 %	4.1 %	6.0 %	3.4 %	8.4 %	2.1 %	9.6 %	2.7 %
			65.1 %	43.8 %	60.2 %	48.6 %	31.3 %	18.5 %	26.5 %	12.3 %	18.0 %	11.0 %	21.6 %	15.0 %

CCO: Chief Communication Officer; PWB: Professionals with budget

The level of inter-functional collaboration varies across different types of organization. For instance, non-profit organizations or associations seem to enjoy major collaboration with many functions: 81.8 % claim to have major collaboration with the CEO, and 90.9 % (*) with the Marketing department. Joint stock companies also seem to enjoy a high degree of collaboration with the CEO (78.6 %) and with HR (46.5 %).

[4] Q15 (asked to 4 and 5): How closely do you work with the CEO / Marketing department (including Brand and Sales Managers) / HR department / Finance department / Legal department / Board of Directors? Scale: A graphic representation of the scale was used for this question (see the “Inter-functional collaboration” table). All levels of proximity were considered.

Inter-functional collaboration across types of organization (CCOs)

	CEO	Marketing	HR	Finance	Legal	Board of Directors
Average	65.1%	60.2%	31.3%	26.5%	18.0%	21.6%
Joint stock companies	78.6%	53.5%	46.5%	57.1%	28.5%	21.4%
Private companies	50.0%	50.0%	20.8%	16.6%	16.7%	16.7%
Government-owned organizations or political institutions	68.8%	68.8%	12.5%	0%	6.3%	31.3%
Non-profit organizations or associations	81.8%	90.9%	45.5%	18.2%	18.2%	27.3%

Somewhat surprisingly, results from last year and this year show that CC / PR departments seem to have a relatively minor degree of collaboration with the HR function. However, as shown earlier, joint stock companies (46.5%) and NPOs (45.5%) claim they work more intensively than the average with HR departments (31.3%). Furthermore, organizations that consider internal communication to be an important discipline [5] on average seem likelier to collaborate with the HR function (40.7%**) [6]. This suggests there are some leading organizations which recognize the importance of internal communication, and thus collaboration with Human Resources.

3.4 All communication disciplines are generally under the Corporate Communication / PR department

The data indicate that 72% of CC / PR functions are in charge of all the communication disciplines [7]. The communication disciplines which are least likely to fall under the CC / PR function are mainly Investor Relations and Public Affairs, and to a certain extent Internal Communication.

When it comes to the different types of organization, 100% of CCOs working in government-owned or political institutions responded that all the communication disciplines are placed under the CC / PR function. Among corporations, this percentage is very different in the Banking, Insurance and Finance sector, where only 42.9% of respondents claim that all the communication disciplines are under the CC / PR function.

[5] Only CCOs were considered for this analysis. Respondents who answered 5 on a scale from 1 to 5 were considered. See Data Q3, chapter 4.2.: (Q3 [asked to all]): The public relations / corporate communication function includes several disciplines. How important are these disciplines in your organization / consulting activity (if you are an agency) today? How important will they be in 3 years? (1 = not at all; 5 = very much; "does not apply"). Scale points considered: 4–5. For the possible response options, see the "Communication disciplines" chart in chapter 4.2.

[6] A similar pattern can be found in two other cases. 1) If one considers organizations that attach major importance to financial communication and investor relations (involvement 5, on a scale from 1 to 5), the collaboration of CCOs with the Finance department increases from 26.5% to 32.6% (***). 2) If one considers organization CCOs with a high involvement in corporate governance decisions (involvement 5, on a scale from 1 to 5), the collaboration of CCOs with the Legal department increases from 18% to 22.9% (***).

[7] Q13 (asked to 4): In your organization, are all the communication disciplines (e.g. internal communication, investor relations, public affairs, etc.) under the corporate communication / PR function? Response items: Yes, No. Respondents who answered "no" were then asked: If not, which one(s) is (are) not under the corporate communication / PR function?

The status of the CCO [8] or their proximity to the CEO [9] does not seem to influence the percentage of PR / CC departments that have all the communication disciplines under their control.

3.5 Communication and marketing: two independent but coordinated functions, particularly among joint stock companies

The relationship between the corporate communication / PR function and the marketing function can follow five different organizational models. The two functions can in fact be completely independent, or independent but coordinated, marketing can lead corporate communication, corporate communication can lead marketing, or the two functions can be merged into one undifferentiated department.

As in 2010, the prevalent organizational model (see following table, model 2) is the one in which communication and marketing are two independent but coordinated functions [10]. Interesting and significant differences (***) are found if one considers the different types of organization. For instance, model 2 turns out to be even more dominant among joint stock companies (58.2%). According to the data, government-owned organizations or political institutions and non-profit organizations or associations strongly favor a communication-driven model (see model 4), whereas a marketing-driven model is more often found in private companies (see model 3). Finally, there is an above-average likelihood in non-profit organizations or associations that marketing and communication will be organized in one department.

Suzanne Rouden-Schmidlin, Rouden & Partners and President of the Federal examination board for PR professionals, *Prüfungskommission, pr suisse* "The growing influence of social media as well as the increasing density of information and frequency of news distribution all lead to different communication content influencing one another and becoming mixed. Today's news consumer picks information out of the online chaos and decides for himself to which information and which source he will trust. This means the clear division between marketing and corporate communication is no longer possible. The challenge for corporate communicators lies in giving their corporations a strong and credible voice within the framework of integrated communication. This must also be taken into account in all aspects of further and higher education."

Marketing and communication interrelation

Organizational model	1	2	3	4	5	6
						Does not apply
Average	8.3 %	45 %	12.2 %	14.4 %	10.9 %	9.2 %
Joint stock companies	15.2 %	58.2 %	11.4 %	3.8 %	8.9 %	2.5 %
Private companies	8.5 %	40.4 %	21.3 %	14.9 %	8.5 %	6.4 %
Government-owned organizations or political institutions	3.8 %	43.4 %	3.8 %	20.8 %	9.4 %	18.9 %
Non-profit organizations or associations	0 %	26.8 %	12.2 %	26.8 %	22.0 %	12.2 %

[8] See Data Q12, chapter 3.1: (Q12 [asked to 4]: What is your hierarchical status? Response items: I'm a member of the executive board; I'm a member of the extended executive board; none of the above, but I report directly to the CEO; I report to another executive board member. To whom? [open answer]; none of the above. I report to [open answer]. Adapted from ECM 2011 [Q15]).

[9] See Data Q15, chapter 3.3: (Q15 [asked to 4 and 5]: How closely do you work with the CEO / Marketing department [including Brand and Sales Managers] / HR department / Finance department / Legal department / Board of Directors? Scale: a graphic representation of the scale was used for this question [see the "Inter-functional collaboration" table]. All levels of proximity were considered).

[10] Q11 (asked to 4 and 5): Which of the following diagrams most clearly corresponds to the circumstances of your company? (Pick 1) For the possible response options, see the "Marketing and communication interrelation" diagram.

If one considers the various sectors, it generally seems that the average trend is confirmed, albeit with a few exceptions. Model 2 is more present in the Telecommunications and Media sector (70 %) and the Banking, Insurance and Finance sector (69.6%). On the other hand, while model 2 remains the dominant model, it seems to be less present (38.5 %) than the average in the Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Health sector. Model 1 (where communication and marketing are two completely independent functions) is also frequently encountered in this sector (30.8 %).

It is interesting to note that 24.1% (***) of respondents from organizations with only a regional reach [11] claim that none of the five models apply to their organization. This could be explained by the fact that these organizations have neither a marketing nor a communication function.

The organizational relationship between corporate communication and marketing naturally impacts on the ratio of marketing and corporate topics covered by the Corporate Communication / PR department [12]. On average, 64.5 % of CC / PR communication activity relates to corporate topics and 35.5 % to marketing issues, although when corporate communication leads marketing (model 4), 72.1 % of communication activity is devoted to corporate topics. If marketing leads corporate communication (model 3), 57.3 % of communication activity deals with marketing topics.

As a side comment, it is interesting to point out that the percentage of marketing topics handled by Corporate Communication / PR departments is much higher in private companies (43.1%), and by contrast much lower in government-owned organizations (20.5%). Furthermore, the percentage varies significantly (***) between agencies and organizations. Indeed, on average agencies dedicate 40.8 % of their communication activity to marketing topics, whereas the figure for organizations is 32.9 %.

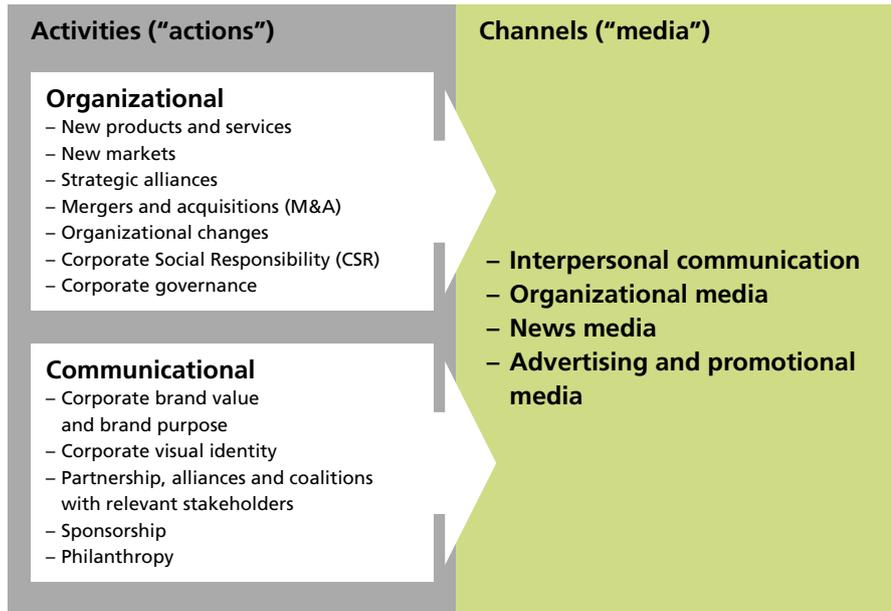
[11] See Data Q34, chapter 1: (Q34 [asked to all]: What is the reach of your professional activity? [Multiple answers allowed] Response items: My language region in Switzerland, all of Switzerland, Europe, beyond Europe.)

[12] Q2 (asked to all): (Organization) How much of your communication activity goes into covering corporate-related and marketing-related topics? (Agency) In your consulting practice, how much of your communication activity goes into covering corporate-related and marketing-related topics for your clients? (Divide 100% points among the two topics.) Response items: corporate-related topics, marketing-related topics.

4. The practice of corporate communication

Disciplines

- Institutional communication
- Issue communication
- Internal communication
- Financial comm. & investor relations
- Public affairs
- Community relations
- Crisis communication



Conceptual note: Corporate communication and public relations include several disciplines that range from institutional communication to crisis communication. Communication professionals enact the different disciplines by implementing organizational actions that can range from contributing to the design of new products or services to influencing corporate governance. They can of course also act by implementing communication activities (for instance, by defining corporate brand values and brand purposes or by managing philanthropic activities). Their actions are formally communicated through four main categories of channels: interpersonal, organizational, news, and advertising and promotional media. The following sections will present data referring to this conceptual framework.

4.1 CC / PR budget: one fifth to agency fees

The CC / PR budget is mostly allocated to staff salaries and related costs (46.3%) [1], as pointed out by the CCOs who provided this information [2]. 19% of the communication budget is by contrast devoted to paying "corporate communication / PR agency fees" and 7.9% to "corporate communication / PR measurement and evaluation". These data are in line with the GAP VI (2009) study: US respondents claim to spend 46% of their CC / PR budget on staff salaries and benefits, and 19.8% on paying PR agency fees. However, it seems that the percentage of budget US professionals allocate to CC / PR measurement and evaluation is slightly lower (4%).

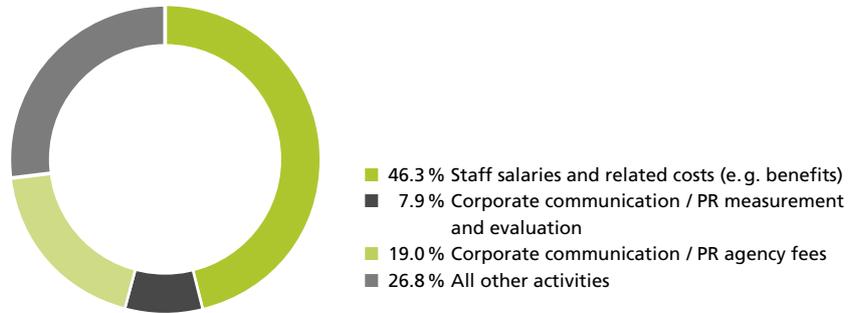
On average, Swiss communication professionals work with 3.15 agencies [3]. This result is also in line with GAP VI (2009).

[1] Q21 (asked to 4): For 2010, please indicate what percentage of your total corporate communication / PR budget was allocated to each of the following areas. (Divide 100% points among the four channel categories.) Response items: staff salaries and related costs (e.g. benefits), corporate communication / PR measurement and evaluation, corporate communication / PR agency fees, All other activities. Adapted from GAP VI (2009) (Q15).

[2] 43.8% of the CCOs interviewed claimed that information about their budget allocation could not be released.

[3] Q22 (asked to 4 and 5): How many corporate communication / PR agencies do you work with on average? Open answer; we don't work with agencies. Adapted from GAP VI (2009).

Allocation of CC / PR budget (%)



Joint stock companies are those with the highest percentage of their budget devoted to measurement activities (15.8 %). This percentage is lower in private companies (1.6 %), while it is closer to the average for government-owned organizations (4.3 %) and non-profit organizations or associations (5.3 %).

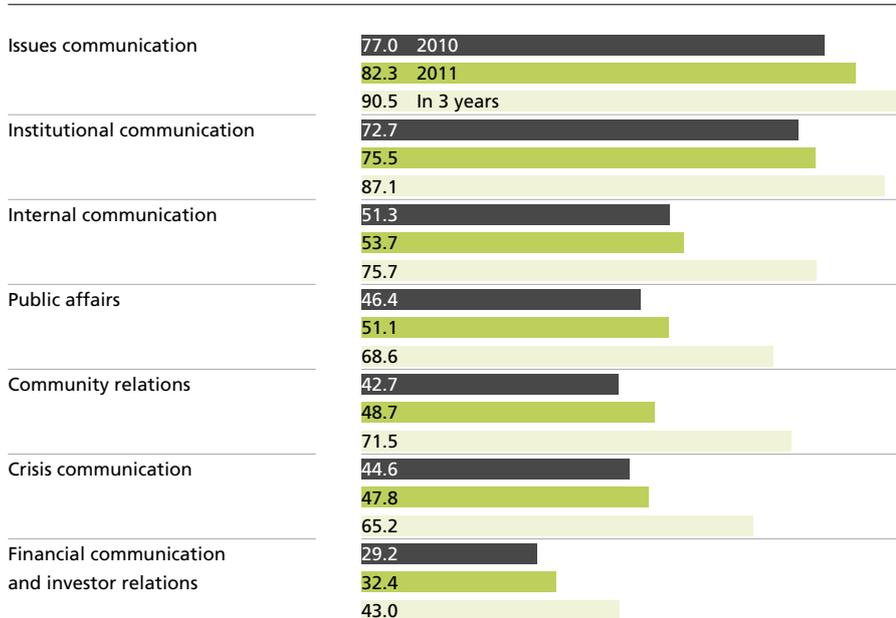
Government-owned organizations or political institutions and non-profit organizations or associations devote a smaller proportion of their budget to agency fees (15.9 % and 13.5 % respectively).

4.2 Communication disciplines: leading role of “issues communication” and “institutional communication”

In line with the 2010 results, “issues communication” (82.3 %) and “institutional communication” (75.5 %) are seen as the most important communication disciplines [4]. Their importance has grown since last year, and is expected to grow again over the next three years. Also in line with last year’s results, “financial communication and investor relations” is the communication discipline considered to be less important by communication professionals (32.4 %). It is no surprise that joint stock companies are the only exception (66 %, ***).

[4] Q3 (asked to all): (Organization) The public relations / corporate communication function includes several disciplines. How important are these disciplines in your organization today? In 3 years’ time, how important will these disciplines be in your organization? (Agency) The public relations / corporate communication function includes several disciplines. In your consulting activity, how important are these disciplines today? In 3 years’ time, how important will these disciplines be in your consulting activity? (1 = not at all; 5 = very much; “does not apply”.) Scale points considered: 4–5. For the possible response options, see the “Communication disciplines” chart.

Communication disciplines (%)



If one compares organizations with agencies in 2011, organizations seem to attach more importance to “internal communication” (68.9% vs. 43.1%, *). Among the various types of organization, the importance of “internal communication” is less recognized by non-profit organizations or associations (44.6%, *). Joint stock companies attach more importance to “crisis communication” (61.6%, ***).

The importance of all the communication disciplines is expected to grow over the next three years. However, the disciplines whose importance is expected to increase most conspicuously are “community relations” (+22.8%), “internal communication” (+22%), “public affairs” (+17.5%), and “crisis communication” (+17.4%).

If one looks at the different sectors, it is interesting to note that 100% of “Telecommunications and Media” companies believe “internal communication” is of major importance. Furthermore, companies in this sector strongly believe in the importance of “community relations” (66.7%, **).

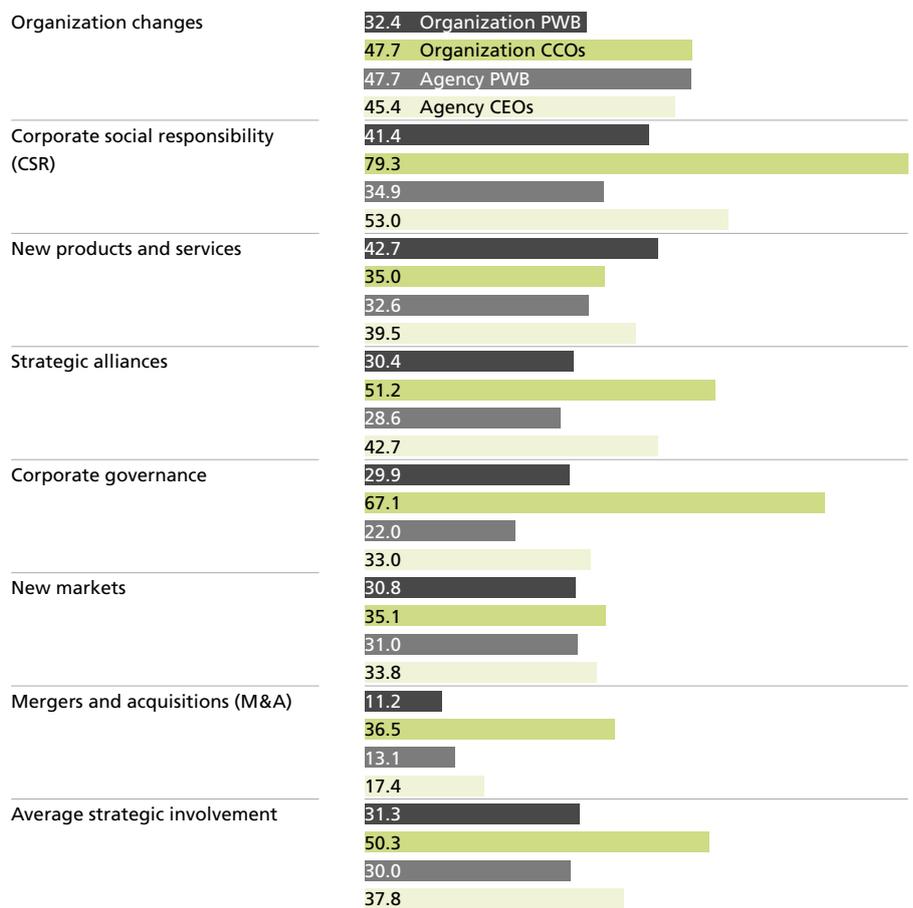
Finally, the importance of “internal communication” is less likely to be acknowledged in marketing-driven organizations (46.4%, ***) than in communication-driven companies (72.2%, ***).

4.3 Organizational activities: Involvement in business decisions is linked to structural factors

Like any other management function, corporate communication fulfills its strategic role when it influences business decisions. If it fails to do so, it is confined to a tactical role, limiting itself (at best) to supporting strategic objectives defined by other managers.

50.3% of CCOs and 31.3% of “professionals with budget” feel they are highly involved in business decisions [5]. These data confirm last year’s findings, and suggest that the strategic role in organizations is mostly concentrated at CCO level.

Involvement in business decisions (%)



CEO: Chief Executive Officer; CCO: Chief Communication Officer; PWB: Professionals with budget

[5] Q1 (asked to 1, 2, 4, and 5): (Organization) How much do you feel involved in decisions concerning the following business aspects? (Agency) In your consulting activity, how much do you feel your clients involve you in decision-making concerning the following business aspects? (1 = not at all; 5 = very much; does not apply.) Scale points considered 4–5. For the possible response options, see the “Involvement in business decisions” chart.

CCOs' perceived level of strategic involvement (50.3 %) is much higher than that of agency CEOs (37.8 %). On average, only one third of agency CEOs feel highly involved by their clients in business decisions. By contrast, the proportion of "professionals with budget" who feel highly involved in strategic business decisions is similar among organizations (31.3 %) and agencies (30 %).

The average degree to which clients strategically involve agencies does not seem to increase with big agencies that have contracts at the highest level and across different departments. In particular, it seems to stay the same for big agencies [6] and agencies working directly with CEOs or departments other than Corporate Communication [7].

If one looks at the individual domains of business decisions, CCOs feel they are strongly involved in decisions about "corporate social responsibility" (79.3 %) and "corporate governance" (67.1%). The aspects where agencies' CEOs feel more involved are "corporate social responsibility" (53 %) and "organizational changes" (45.4 %). The fact that corporate social responsibility is the aspect where organizations' CCOs as well as agencies' CEOs feel more involved confirms that the CSR discipline is growing, and also that it is a domain where communication professionals frequently play a central role.

In order to better analyze the data about perceived strategic involvement in business aspects, a single synthetic indicator of strategic involvement was computed by averaging the answers of each respondent for all the items [8].

One initial clear result is that the average level of strategic involvement (3.1) does not change across different types of organization or different sectors.

However, it is more interesting to understand which factors influence the perceived level of strategic involvement enjoyed by communication professionals within an organization. In order to achieve this, an analysis using the CART method [9] was conducted.

[6] Identified by the number of communication specialists working in the agency. Two groups were created: up to 19 specialists (average of strategic involvement: 3.1) and more than 20 specialists (average of strategic involvement: 3.7). However, the differences were not found to be statistically significant.

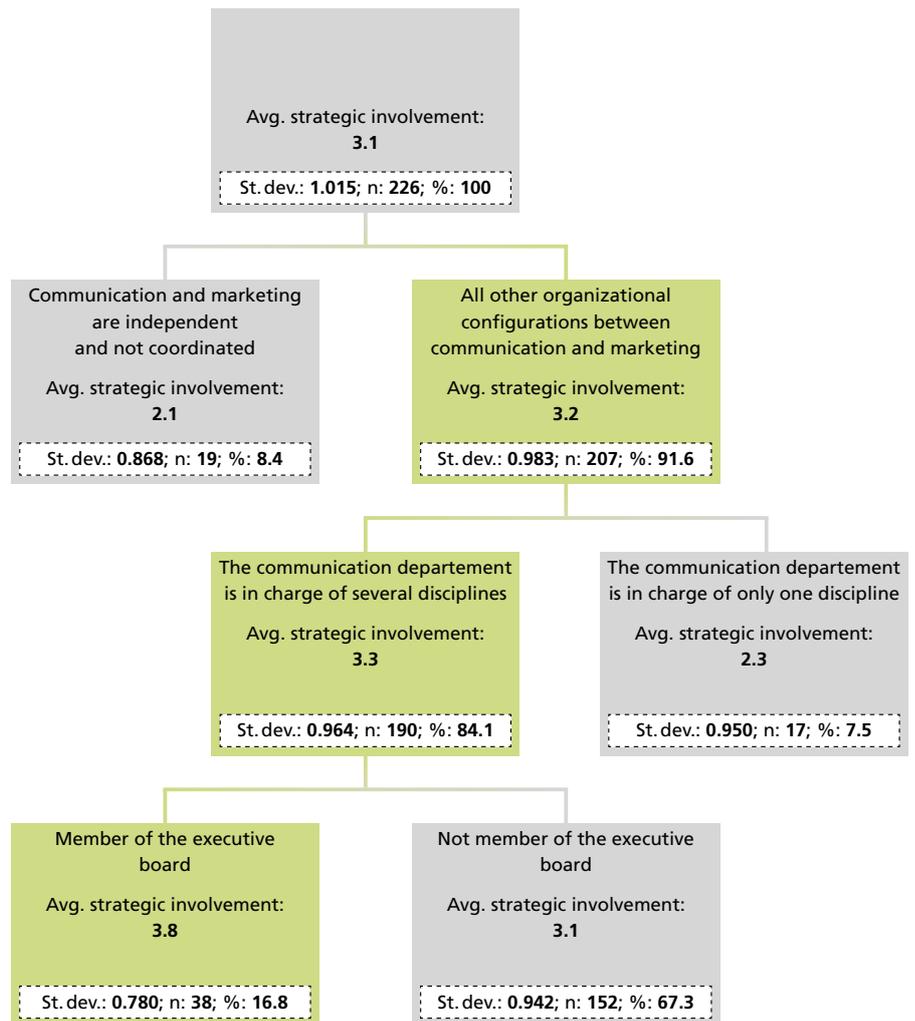
[7] Identified by the number of consulting assignments coming from outside CC/PR. See Data Q24, chapter 7.2: (Q24 (asked to 1 and 2): What percentage of your consulting assignments come from the corporate communication / PR department? Respondents who selected a percentage inferior to 100 % were then asked: Since you don't only work with the Corporate Communication / PR department, with which other departments or functions do you work (pick all that apply). For response options, see the "Agency assignments that do not come from CC/PR" chart in Chapter 7.2.

[8] Compared to using the single items, this indicator has more flexibility. Indeed, it allows easy comparisons and makes crossing with other data much easier. Moreover, it also makes the understanding of results more intuitive than mentioning the single items each time.

[9] CART, which stands for Classification And Regression Trees, is an exploratory data analysis method based on the combination of computational and mathematical techniques. It is used to study the relationships between a dependent measure and a large series of possible predictor variables which themselves may interact.

The results outlined in the graphic below indicate that the factors which truly differentiate professionals who feel they have a high level of strategic involvement from those who do not consider themselves to be playing a relevant strategic role are related to structural and not personal (demographic) characteristics.

Determinants of strategic involvement (average points)



The data reported in the tree diagram reveal that the factor with the highest discriminating power is the interrelation between the marketing and communication functions (see chapter 3.5 and “Marketing and communication interrelation” diagram [10]). Those organizations where marketing and communication are completely independent and uncoordinated (model 1 in chapter 3.5 diagram) belong to the group with the lowest average strategic involvement (2.1). Among all the other types of interrelation between marketing and communication (models 2–5 in chapter 3.5 diagram), the strategic involvement is on average equal to 3.2. However, there are differences if one considers the specific interrelation models. The average level of strategic involvement is higher (3.4) in organizations where communication leads marketing (model 4) and (3.6) in organizations where communication and marketing are one single entity (model 5). By contrast, communication professionals’ level of strategic involvement seems to be lower (2.9) in organizations where corporate communication is under marketing (model 3).

The next discriminating factor is whether communication professionals cover just one or several disciplines as part of their job (e.g. internal communication, investor relations, public affairs, etc.) [11]. Those who cover several disciplines have a higher strategic involvement (3.3).

Finally, the third most important discriminating factor is whether corporate communication professionals sit on the executive board. If they do, they state that they have a higher level of strategic involvement (3.8) [12].

To summarize: Those people who claim to have the highest average level of involvement in business decisions are (1) members of an organization where marketing and communication are not completely independent of one another; (2) not specialized in one discipline, but cover several communication disciplines as part of their job; and (3) members of the executive board.

Differences in terms of the extent to which professionals feel involved in business decisions are influenced by other factors too. However, unlike the three above-mentioned factors they do not have the capacity to differentiate in a significant fashion. Here are some examples:

Professionals who claim that recommendations from their CC / PR departments are “not taken seriously at all” [13] declare an average strategic involvement of 2.4, whereas those who claim that their recommendations are “taken very seriously” state an average strategic involvement of 3.6.

[10] See Data Q11, chapter 3.5: (Q11 [asked to 4 and 5]: Which of the following diagrams most clearly corresponds to the circumstances of your company? [Pick 1] For the possible response options, see the “Marketing and communication interrelation” diagram).

[11] Qh (asked to all): In your current activity are you focused on one particular communication discipline (e.g. internal communication, investor relations, public affairs, etc.) or are you involved in several of them? Response options: focused on one discipline, cover several disciplines.

[12] See Data Q12, chapter 3.1: (Q12 [asked to 4]: What is your hierarchical status? Response Items: I’m a member of the executive board; I’m a member of the extended executive board; none of the above, but I report directly to the CEO; I report to another executive board member. To whom? [open answer]; none of the above. I report to [open answer]. Adapted from ECM 2011 [Q15].)

[13] See Data Q16, chapter 2.2: (Q16 [asked to 4, 5, and 6]: In your organization, how seriously are corporate communication / PR recommendations taken by senior management (chairperson/CEO / executive board members)? [1 = not taken seriously at all; 5 = taken very seriously; I don’t know.] Scale points considered 4–5 [average of the two]. Adapted from GAP VI [2009] [Q7] and ECM 2011 [Q6]).

The average strategic involvement increases significantly as professionals get closer to the CEO, ranging from 2.5 (those who claim to be very far from the CEO) to 3.5 (those who claim to be very close to the CEO).

Professionals working at corporate level feel more involved in strategic aspects than their colleagues working at unit / divisional level [14] (3.2 vs. 2.6, ***).

Finally, men on average feel more involved in business aspects than women (3.2 vs. 2.9, **). However, the difference is not as great as with the previous factors.

4.4 Communication activities I: Corporate branding is carried out by communication professionals with strong links to the C-Suite

Corporate branding is a process of soul-searching, leading to the identification and formulation of the reason why the organization exists, together with its guiding principles. As such, it can be viewed as the most strategic communication activity, and one of the bridges between communication and corporate strategy.

Corporate branding in organizations: a CCO's business, and even better if the CCO is close to the Board

Swiss CCOs seem to play a leading role in the development of their organization's corporate brand. Indeed, 60.2 % of CCOs claim to have a leading role in the definition of corporate brand values and brand purpose, and 71.1% state they have a leading role in the development of the corporate visual identity system [15].

This involvement is concentrated at CCO level. Indeed, it is not surprising that as one descends the corporate ladder the percentage of professionals with a leading role decreases markedly, as reported in the following table.

Organizations' communication professionals with a leading role in corporate branding activities (%)

	Org. CCOs	Org. PWB	Org. PWoB
Definition of corporate brand values and brand purpose	60.2	23.3	9.0
Definition of corporate visual identity systems	71.1	33.6	16.6

CCO: Chief Communication Officer; PWB: Professionals with budget; PWoB: Professionals without budget

[14] See Data Qf, chapter 1: (Qf [asked to 4, 5, and 6]: Do you work at the corporate OR divisional / unit level? Response options: corporate level, divisional / unit level.)

[15] Q4 (asked to all): (Organization) To what extent are you involved in the following corporate brand activities? (Agency) In your consulting activity, are you involved in helping your clients with the following corporate brand activities? Response items: definition of corporate brand values and brand purpose (an organization's "fundamental reason for being"), development of corporate visual identity systems (i.e. logos, colors, typographies, images, etc.). Scale points for companies: leading role, supporting role, not involved. Scale point for agencies: in charge, involved, not involved.

The percentage of professionals with a leading role in the definition of their organization's brand values and purpose increases in line with their proximity to the CEO [16] and the Board of Directors [17], to 62.5 % (***) and 91.7 % (***) respectively. It is interesting to note that the opposite applies when it comes to the definition of brand visual identity systems: Only 50 % (***) of those who are very close to the CEO and 66.7 % (**) of those who are very close to the Board of Directors claim they have a leading role here. This second aspect whereby corporate branding is less strategic justifies the fact that CCOs with a stronger connection to the C-Suite may consider it less central to their activity.

Furthermore, there is a link between how seriously professionals feel CC / PR recommendations are taken by top management [18] and their declared involvement in corporate branding activities. Among those professionals (not only CCOs) who respond that recommendations are taken very seriously, 48.7 % (***) claim to have a leading role in the definition of corporate brand values and purpose, whereas only 14.7 % (***) of those who say that recommendations are not taken seriously at all claim to have a leading role in the definition of corporate brand values and purpose.

Agencies and corporate branding: a leading role only when called in by departments other than Communication?

Agencies seem to play only a marginal role when it comes to helping their clients develop their corporate brands. Only 8.8 % of agency CEOs claim to have a leading role in the definition of their clients' corporate brand values and purpose, while 18.7 % claim to have a leading role in the development of the visual identity system. In agencies (unlike organizations), the second level ("professionals with budget") say that, compared to CEOs, they are likelier to be involved in the definition of brand values and purpose (13.3 %) and visual identity systems (22.2 %). Furthermore, it is not surprising that there are hardly any "professionals without budget" who claim to have a leading role in helping clients develop their corporate brands.

Agencies' communication professionals with a leading role in corporate branding activities (%)

	Agency CEOs	Agency's PWB	Agency's PWoB
Definition of corporate brand values and brand purpose	8.8	13.3	0
Development of corporate visual identity systems	18.7	22.2	4.2

CEO: Chief Executive Officer; PWB: Professionals with budget; PWoB: Professionals without budget

[16] See Data Q15, chapter 3.3: (Q15 [asked to 4 and 5]: How closely do you work with the CEO / Marketing department [including Brand and Sales Managers] / HR department / Finance department / Legal department / Board of Directors? Scale: A graphic representation of the scale was used for this question [see "Inter-functional collaboration" table in chapter 3.3]. All levels of proximity were considered.)

[17] Ibid.

[18] See Data Q16, chapter 2.2: (Q16 [asked to 4, 5, and 6]: In your organization, how seriously are corporate communication / PR recommendations taken by senior management [chairperson/CEO / executive board members]? [1 = not taken seriously at all; 5 = taken very seriously; I don't know.] Scale points considered 4–5 [average of the two]. Adapted from GAP VI [2009] [Q7] and ECM 2011 [Q6]).

It seems that the level of agencies' involvement in corporate branding activities does not manifest any significant differences if one considers the size of the agencies [19]. However, it seems that agencies which receive more assignments from departments other than communication [20] are likelier to have a leading role in corporate branding activities. For instance, those agencies that claim to have a leading role in the definition of their clients' corporate brand values and purpose have an average percentage of assignments coming from outside the Communication department (52.5%). By contrast, those agencies that claim not to be involved in the definition of brand values and purpose have a lower average percentage of assignments coming from outside the Communication department (39.6%). These data suggest that agencies are likelier to be called in to define brand values and purpose by functions and departments other than communication departments.

4.5 Communication activities II: Partnerships, sponsorship and philanthropy are managed internally with the support of agencies

Communication activities comprise three areas in addition to those that have just been discussed: partnerships, alliances and coalitions with relevant stakeholders; sponsorship; and philanthropy. While corporate branding is a highly strategic activity, the strategic impact of these three additional areas may vary depending on specific circumstances.

There are big differences in the level of involvement that organizations' CCOs and agencies' CEOs have in the different communication activities (***) [21]. CCOs are only partially involved: 48.2% of them have a leading role in managing "sponsorship", 33.7% "philanthropy", and 27.2% "partnerships, alliances and coalitions with relevant stakeholders". These percentages (as shown in the following table) decrease markedly for agency CEOs, thus implying that they are only marginally involved in helping their clients in these areas.

CCOs and agency CEOs with a leading role in communication activities (%)

	CCOs	Agency CEOs
Partnerships, alliances and coalitions with relevant stakeholders	27.7	11.0
Sponsorship	48.2	8.8
Philanthropy	33.7	9.9

[19] Identified by the number of communication specialists working in the agency.

[20] See Data Q24, chapter 7.2: (Q24 [asked to 1 and 2]): What percentage of your consulting assignments come from the Corporate Communication / PR department? Respondents who selected a percentage inferior to 100% were then asked: Since you don't only work with the Corporate Communication / PR department, with which other departments or functions do you work (pick all that apply). Response options: see the "Agency assignments that do not come from CC/PR" chart in chapter 7.2.

[21] Q5 (asked to all): (Organization) To what extent are you involved in the following activities? (Agency) In your consulting activity, are you involved in helping your clients with the following activities? Response items: "Partnerships, alliances and coalitions with relevant stakeholders", "Sponsorship", "Philanthropy". Scale points for companies: leading role, supporting role, not involved. Scale points for agencies: in charge, involved, not involved.

As suggested by the following table, agency CEOs are likelier than organization CCOs to play a supporting role in these processes (***) . One possible interpretation of these differences is that organizations have developed a sophisticated set of internal competencies in these fields, and thus resort to agencies merely to support and complement their skills, which (as will be seen in chapter 7.1) constitutes the main reason cited by many communication professionals working in organizations when they are asked why they work with agencies.

CCOs and agency CEOs with a supporting role in communication activities (%)

	CCOs	Agency CEOs
Partnerships, alliances and coalitions with relevant stakeholders	66.3	73.6
Sponsorship	27.7	59.3
Philanthropy	38.6	48.4

4.6 Communication channels: Organizational media play a leading role

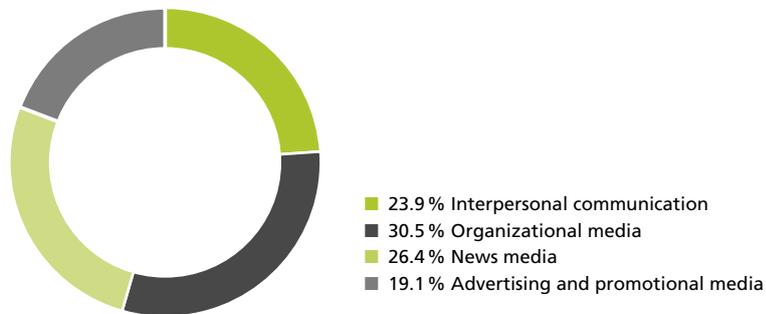
Among the different types of communication channel used by communication professionals, “organizational media” play a leading role (30.5 %), followed by “news media” (26.4 %), “interpersonal communication” (23.9 %), and “advertising and promotional media” (19.1 %) [22]. The increased importance of the “organizational media” channel is probably linked to the ever-increasing importance of digital communication [23]. However, no significant changes are expected to occur over the next three years in terms of the extent to which the various communication channels are used.

Martin Zahner, Managing Partner, YJOO Communications AG, and Board Member BPRA and SPRI “Many companies seek to steer their reputation themselves – as far as this is still possible in today’s world – without being reliant on third-party media. This requires the unfiltered transportation of a company’s own key messages to its stakeholders. Communicators have therefore traditionally held to the production of their own publications and are likely to continue to do so in the foreseeable future. These publications are being continually extended, particularly in terms of content. Annual reports, client and employee magazines are but a few of the attractive and widely used examples. For many organizations, the aim of retaining so-called authority over their own messages is being severely challenged by the digital media, particularly by Web 2.0 and social media. Their ability to bring the culture of dialogue into harmony with their own positioning is therefore likely to be a critical success factor in years to come.”

[22] Q6 (asked to all): (Organization) Public relations / corporate communication functions communicate through four channel categories. What is the relative importance of these channels in your organization today? What will the relative importance of these channels be in your organization in 3 years’ time? (Agency) Public relations / corporate communication functions communicate through four channel categories. Regarding the work done for your clients, what is the relative importance of these channels today? Regarding the work done for your clients, what will the relative importance of these channels be in 3 years’ time? (Divide 100% points among the four channel categories). Response items: interpersonal communication, organizational media, news media, advertising and promotional media.

[23] See Data Q17, chapter 2.1: (Q17 [asked to all]: Which of the following trends are affecting your activity the most? [Pick 3] For the possible response options, see the “Industry trends” chart. The ten trends have been defined on the basis of ECM 2009 [Q6], PRSA 2006 [p. 5] and Balmer, J. M. T. and Gray, R. G. [1999] Corporate Identity and Corporate Communications: Creating a Competitive Advantage. Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 4 [4]: 171–176.)

Importance of communication channels (%)



As expected, agencies declare to work for their client slightly more on “News media” (29.4%).

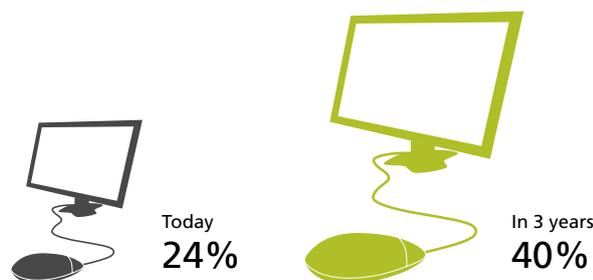
If one looks at the different types of organization, non-profit organizations or associations are the ones that use “organizational media” the most (37%). By contrast, government-owned organizations or political institutions attach greater importance to “news media” (29.4%); “news media” are far less likely to be used by private companies (20.1%), which instead seem to attach more importance to “advertising media” (23.5%). By contrast, government-owned organizations or political institutions and non-profit organizations or associations use “advertising media” to a lesser extent (14.4% and 13.5% respectively).

Among corporations, the Telecommunications and Media and Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Health sectors claim to make above-average use of interpersonal communication (28.3% and 32.4% respectively). At the same time, corporations in the Telecommunications and Media sector attach less importance to “organizational media” (19.7%), and more importance to “advertising and promotional media” (30.6%). “Advertising and promotional media” do not seem to be important for Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Health sector companies (10.8%).

5. Digital communication

5.1 Digital communication: The biggest growth is expected in interactive digital media

As in 2010, communication professionals claim that, on average, they spend 24% of their time producing digital media. This figure might increase to as much as 40% in the next three years. [1] There are slight differences among the various professional profiles: For instance, CCOs have an average of 19.2% while (not surprisingly) “professionals without budget” (organization) have a current average of 28.5%. This difference might be due to the fact that professionals working at lower levels actually spend more time producing digital media. Among the various types of organization, non-profit organizations are those with the lowest average (19.6%), while joint stock companies are those with the highest (26.9%).



If one considers the different types of digital media [2], “social networks” are the most popular (58.1%), followed by “online videos” (32.1%) and “content sharing” (23.7%). Apart from “online videos”, both “social networks” and “content sharing” have grown since 2010 (+28.1% and +7.9% respectively). Moreover, “microblogs” (e.g. Twitter) have grown significantly since 2010 (+5.7%).

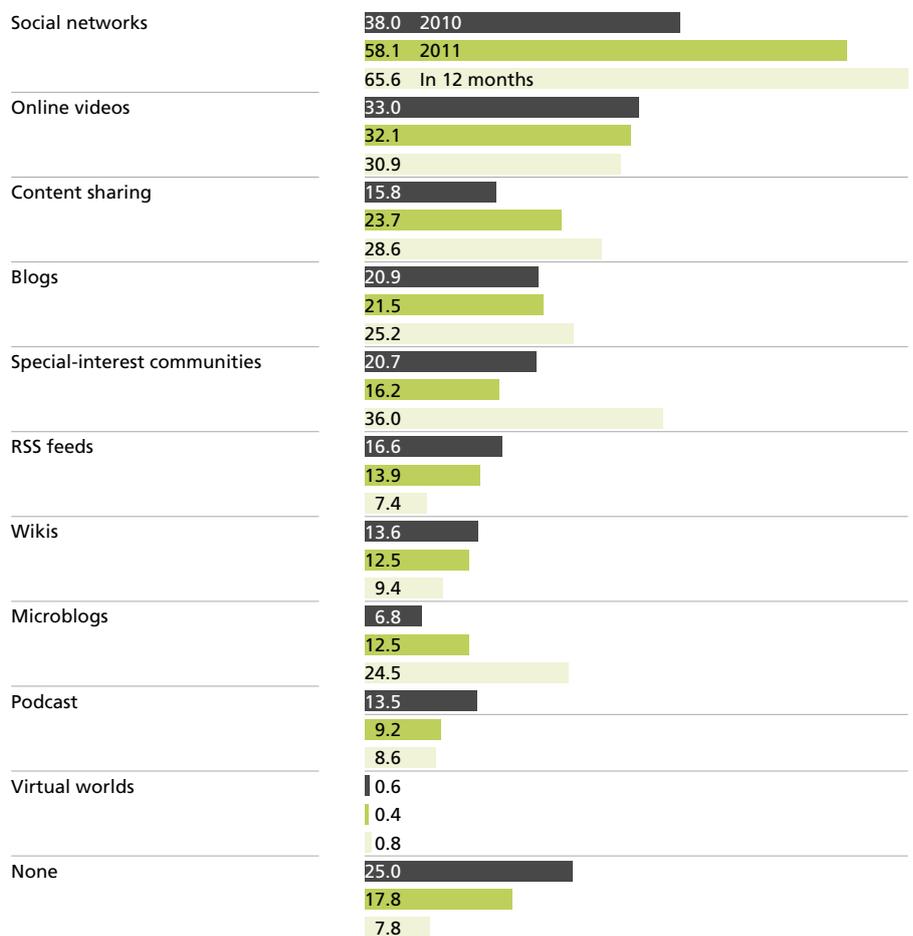
If one looks at forecasts for the next 12 months, “special interest communities” (36%; forecast: +19.8%), “microblogs” (24.5%; forecast: +12%), “social networks” (65.6%; forecast: +7.5%), and “content sharing” (28.6%; forecast: 4.9%) are the digital media with the highest expected growth. These results are in line with current trends in digital communication: More specifically, digital media are increasingly used in an interactive and focused way.

[1] Q7 (asked to all): (Organization) Think about the relevance of digital communication (both: internal and external) in your activity. Please provide a rough estimate of the relative time you spend in producing this type of communication today (don't include the time spent on day-to-day e-mailing). How much do you think this will be in 3 years' time? (Agency) Think about the relevance of digital communication in your activity. Please provide a rough estimate of the relative time you spend today in producing this type of communication for your clients (don't include the time spent on day-to-day e-mailing). How much do you think this will be in 3 years' time? (Percentage of time).

[2] Q8 (asked to all): (Organization) Apart from websites and e-mails, what are the major digital media you use in your communication plans today? (Pick up to 3). (Agency) Apart from websites and e-mails, what are the major digital media you use in the communication plans that you develop for your clients today? (Pick up to 3). (Organization) Apart from websites and e-mails, what are the digital media that will grow the most in your communication plans in the next 12 months? Please pick the ones with the most expected growth, regardless of their current relevance. (Pick up to 3). (Agency) Apart from websites and e-mails, what are the digital media that will grow the most in the communication plans that you will develop for your clients in the next 12 months? Please pick the ones with the most expected growth, regardless of their current relevance (pick up to 3). Response items: see “Usage of digital media” chart.

Interestingly, while 25 % of communication professionals did not use any digital media in 2010, the current percentage has decreased to 17.8 %. Not surprisingly, this percentage is expected to fall even further over the next 12 months. These results are perfectly in line with the fact that communication professionals consider “increased effect of digital communication” to be the trend that is most affecting their industry [3].

Usage of digital media (%)



If one considers the various types of organization, “social networks” are mostly used by non-profit organizations or associations (67.9%), whereas government-owned organizations or political institutions use them to a lesser extent (46.2%). When compared to the average (32.1%), joint stock companies use more often “online videos” (41.4%).

[3] See Data Q17, chapter 2.1: (Q17 [asked to all]: Which of the following trends are affecting your activity the most? [Pick 3] For the possible response options, see the “Industry trends” chart. The ten trends have been defined on the basis of ECM 2009 [Q6], PRSA 2006 [p. 5] and Balmer, J.M.T. and Gray, R.G. [1999] Corporate Identity and Corporate Communications: Creating a Competitive Advantage. Corporate Communications: An International Journal, 4 [4]: 171–176.)

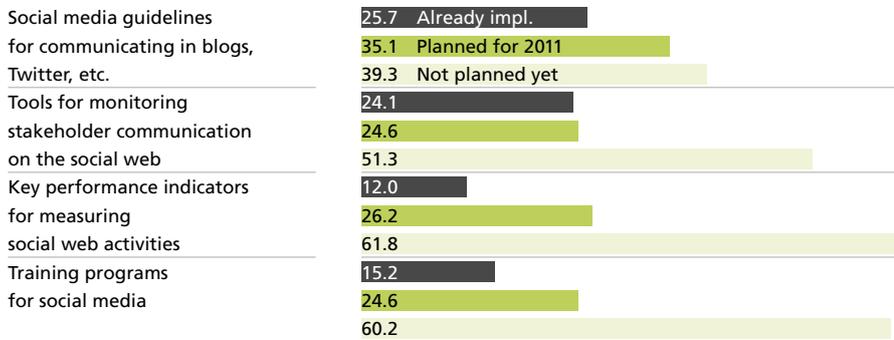
5.2 Social media governance: still under construction

The implementation of guidelines for the governance and proper use of social media is still in its infancy [4]. Only one fifth of respondents claim to have them in place. Roughly one quarter state that their organization plans to implement the different guidelines in 2011. More than half claim not to have planned the implementation of any social media governance measures.

If one compares the results with those obtained by the 2011 ECM survey, Swiss communication professionals still lag behind. Indeed, 39.6% of European communication departments have already implemented “social media guidelines”, 33.3% “tools for monitoring stakeholder communication”, 21.3% “training programs for social media”, and 21.1% “key performance indicators for measuring social web activities”. Among “adopters” in Switzerland, 25.7% of respondents have already implemented “social media guidelines for communicating in blogs, twitter, etc.”, while 24.1% have established “tools for monitoring stakeholder communication on the social web”. “Key performance indicators for measuring social web activities” and “training programs for social media” have been implemented by an even smaller percentage (12% and 15.2% respectively).

Marion Starck, President, SPRI Managing Director, Starck Public Relations and Founder, Crisis Protection Network “Following the explosion of social media and the ensuing paradigm shift in communication, companies have been confronted with a whole new set of risks associated with data security. As the security dangers of open networks become more apparent, the need for social media governance measures and training can no longer be ignored. These must be firmly embedded within their corporate communications practice and crisis preparedness programs. The fact that Swiss communicators are lagging behind their European peers in the introduction of social media guidelines, means a clear call for greater awareness and a new approach.”

Social media governance measures (%)



Across the various types of organization, joint stock companies appear to be those to have the highest rate of implementation when it comes to all the different guidelines: Almost half of them have already implemented “social media guidelines for communicating in blogs, Twitter, etc.” (49%, ***). The same can be said for the implementation of “tools for monitoring stakeholder activity on the social web” (41.2%, **). Whilst still above-average, the proportion of joint stock companies that have already implemented “key performance indicators” (25.5%, *) and “training programs for social media” (25.5%) is somewhat smaller. These data correspond to the average European figures obtained by the 2011 ECM survey.

[4] Q9 (asked to 2 and 5): (Organization) Has your organization already implemented one of the following social media governance measures? (Agency) Based on your experience, what stage are the majority of your clients at when it comes to the implementation of the following social media governance measures? Social media guidelines for communicating in blogs, Twitter, etc.; tools for monitoring stakeholder communication on the social web; key performance indicators for measuring social web activities; training programs for social media. Response options: already implemented, planned for 2011, not planned yet. Adapted from ECM 2011 (Q15).

Among other types of organization, private companies are those with the smallest percentage that have already implemented “social media guidelines” (8.7%, ***).

Implementation of social media governance measures across different types of organization (%)

	Social media guidelines for communicating in blogs, Twitter, etc.	Tools for monitoring stakeholder communication on the social web	Key performance indicators for measuring social web activities	Training programs for social media
Joint stock companies	49.0 %	41.2 %	25.5 %	25.5 %
Private companies	8.7 %	30.4 %	8.7 %	8.7 %
Government-owned organizations or political institutions	18.9 %	18.9 %	5.4 %	8.1 %
Non-profit organizations or associations	13.3 %	13.3 %	6.7 %	16.7 %

Among the various types of corporation, Telecommunications and Media firms are those with the highest percentage of companies that have already implemented “social media guidelines” (57.1%). By contrast, only 18.8% of Banking, Insurance and Finance corporations have implemented these guidelines. On the other hand, 50% of corporations in the Banking, Insurance and Finance sector claim to have already implemented “tools for monitoring stakeholder communication on the social web”.

Telecommunications and Media companies are also more advanced than the average when it comes to the implementation of “key performance indicators for measuring social web activities” (28.6%, *) and “training programs for social media” (42.9%, **).

6. Measurement of communication effectiveness

As in 2010, the results indicate that the majority of communication professionals (77%) measure the effectiveness of communication through “clipping and media response” [1]. Also consistent with last year’s results, the second and third most-measured items are “internet / intranet usage” (59.2%) and “understanding of key messages” (51.6%).

Measurement of communication effectiveness (%)

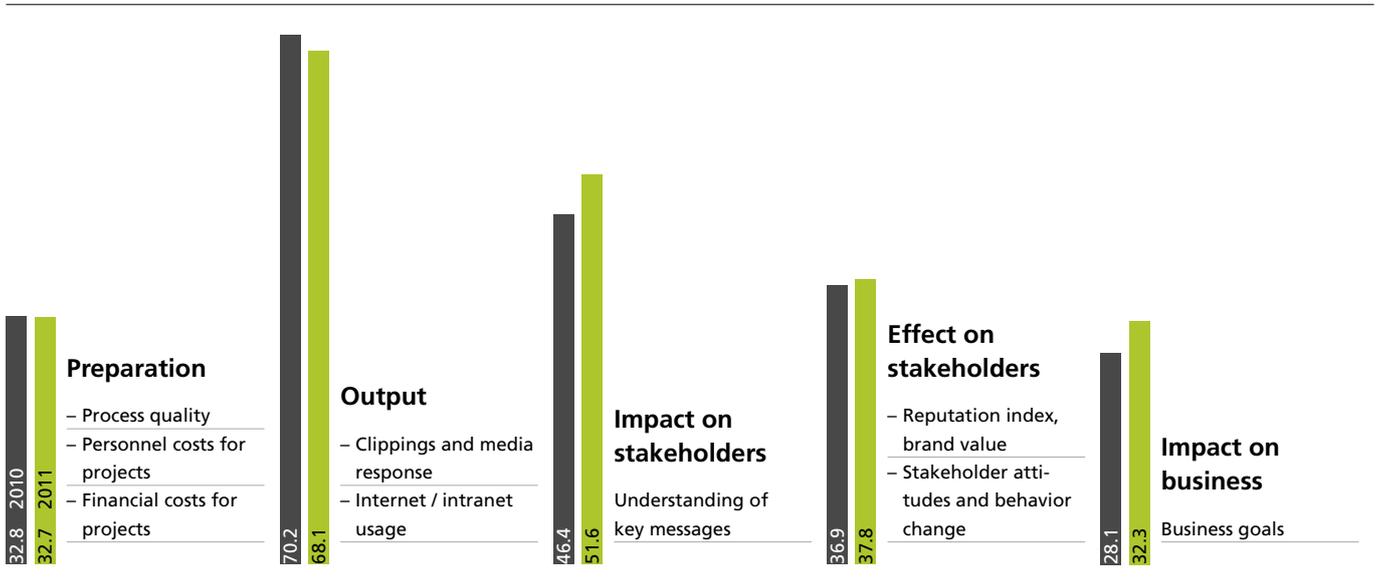
Clippings and media response	77.0
Internet/intranet usage	59.2
Understanding of key messages	51.6
Stakeholder attitudes and behavior change	45.5
Financial costs for projects	45.3
Process quality (internal workflow)	32.7
Business goals (i. e. with scorecards)	32.3
Media production costs	30.5
Reputation index, brand value	30.1
Personnel costs for projects	20.1

Patrick Schürmann, Managing Director, Adwired Communications AG “Over the last year, social media continued to gain ground. However, the Swiss Observatory clearly shows that social media do not seem to have substantially influenced the way in which the effectiveness of communication is measured. One reason might be that the purely quantitative measurement of social media does not provide communication professionals with meaningful results. This is mainly due to the fact that it is a highly complex task to capture qualitative data from the surface noise of the multifaceted social media landscape. So if PR professionals seek to really understand the opinions, attitudes and behaviors reflected within social media, it will be imperative to concentrate on their key influencers. Therefore, social media monitoring is likely to shift from a purely quantitative approach to an initiative to better monitor quality coverage in the months to come.”

All the items can be grouped into five stages (levels) of evaluation which reflect the path from the preparation stage right through to measuring the actual impact of communication on business goals: “preparation”, “output”, “impact on stakeholders”, “effect on stakeholders”, and “impact on business”. If one compares the findings with the results obtained in 2010, the latter are generally confirmed: The data in fact reveal that the majority of communication professionals still focus on “output” (70.2% in 2010 and 68.1% in 2011). However, the percentage of professionals measuring “impact on stakeholders” has increased slightly from 46.4% in 2010 to 51.6% in 2011. Furthermore, “effect on stakeholders” (37.8%) and “impact on business” (32.3%) have also increased slightly this year. Overall, the data suggest that professionals might have started to look beyond output measures.

[1] Q19 (asked to all): Which items do you monitor or measure to assess the effectiveness of public relations / communication management? (1 = not at all; 5 = very much). Scale points considered: 4–5. For the possible response options, see the “Measurement of communication effectiveness” chart. Taken from ECM 2009 (Q9).

Stages of evaluation (%)



If one looks separately at the results for agencies and companies, the outcome is that agencies (68.6%, ***) attach more importance than other organizations (43.4%, ***) to measuring “impact on stakeholders”.

Not surprisingly, among the different types of organization it is joint stock (37.6%) and private (39.1%) companies that are likelier to measure “impact on business goals”. If one further divides these corporations into sectors, those operating in the Banking, Insurance and Finance sector (38.5%) and Telecommunications and Media sector (37.5%) are likeliest to measure “impact on business goals”.

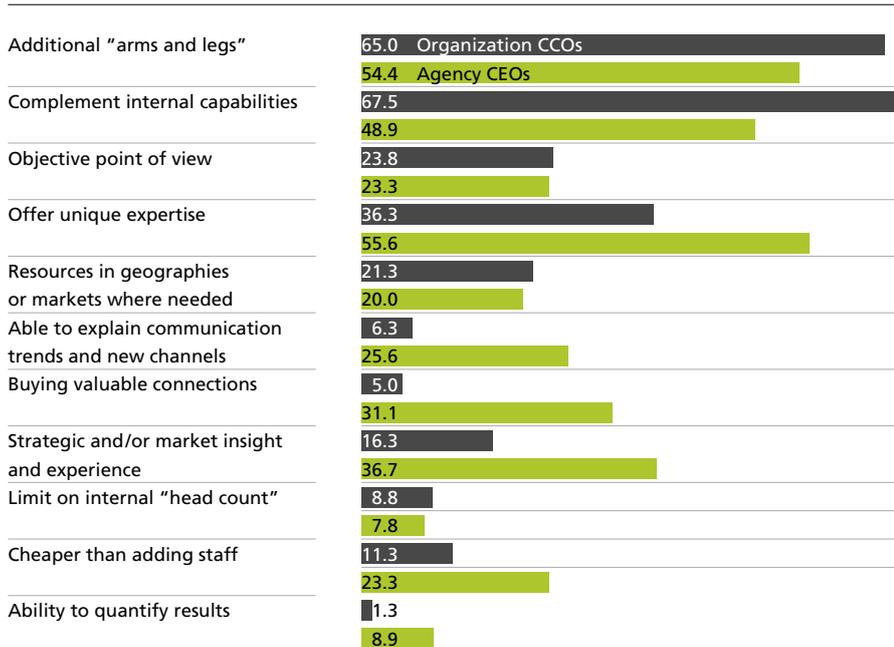
A very high proportion (63.2%) of those operating in the Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Health sector claim to measure “impact on stakeholders”. The same cannot be said for corporations working in the Banking, Insurance and Finance sector, where only 41.1% attach major importance to this level.

7. Agency–organization relationship

7.1 Reasons for working with communication consultancies: Companies tend to cite operational reasons, while agencies tend to cite strategic ones – a difference that is mostly attributable to the views held by CCOs of joint stock companies

As in 2010, there are still strong differences between the reasons CCOs provide to justify why they work with agencies and the reasons why agencies believe companies decide to contact them. In general, organizations' CCOs tend to have an "operational view" of agencies ("additional arms and legs" [65 % vs. 54.4 %], "complement internal capabilities" [67.5 % vs. 48.9 %]). On the other hand, agencies tend to see themselves as providing a more strategic contribution ("offer unique expertise" [55.6 % vs. 36.3 %], "strategic and/or market insight and experience" [36.7 % vs. 16.3 %], "buying valuable connections" [36.7 % vs. 16.3 %], and "able to explain communication trends and new channels" [25.6 % vs. 6.3 %]) [1].

Reasons for working with agencies and consultants (%)



A deeper analysis according to type of organization and sector allows a better understanding of some of the differences in perception. For instance, it seems that joint stock companies' CCOs (75 %) are the ones who mostly identify "additional arms and legs" as the main reason for working with agencies, while CCOs working in non-profit organizations or associations (50 %), private companies (56.5 %), and government-owned organizations or political institutions (60 %) seem to consider this reason less important, confirming the perceptions expressed by the agencies' CEOs themselves.

[1] Q23 (asked to 1, 2, 4 and 5): (Organization) What are your main reasons for working with public relations agencies and communication consultants? (Agency) Why do you think companies decide to work with public relations agencies and communication consultants? (Pick 3) For the list of response options (reasons), see the "Reasons for working with agencies and consultants" diagram. Same scale as GAP VI (2009) and ECM 2008.

If one takes a further look at CCOs working in corporations in the various sectors, 100 % of those working in the Banking, Insurance and Finance and Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Health sectors selected the “additional arms and legs” option. It therefore seems that the major discrepancy in terms of reasons for working with agencies can be especially traced back to the opinions of CCOs working in joint stock companies in the two above-mentioned sectors.

7.2 Half the assignments to communication consultants originate from entities other than Corporate Communication / PR departments

On average, 50 % of agency assignments come from CC / PR departments [2]. If one considers those commissions emanating from outside CC / PR departments, CEOs (89.3 %) and Marketing departments (68.6 %) are the most common sources.

Agency assignments that do not come from CC/PR (%)

CEO	89.3
Marketing	68.6
Chair of the Board or Directors	28.9
Secretary General	23.1
HR	22.3
Public Affairs / Legal	19.8
CFO	12.4
COO	9.1
Other	14.0

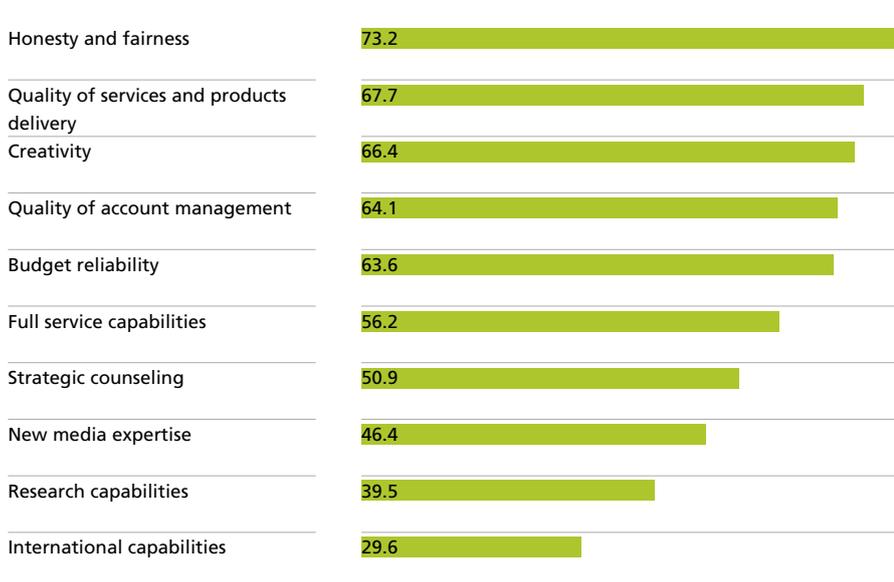
Agencies differentiate themselves, among other things, via the geographical reach of their activities. However, this factor does not seem to influence their ability to get commissions from CEOs. Instead, it seems to impact on how successful they are in gaining commissions from marketing departments. In fact, only 60.5 % of those agencies with a regional reach state they receive commissions from marketing departments, while the percentage increases for agencies with a broader reach, i.e. 72.7 % of those working predominantly in Switzerland, 77.1 % of those in Europe, and 76.9 % of those with a global reach. These results probably reflect the fact that since marketing departments focus on markets, they also expect geographical competencies from their consultants, whereas CEOs are more interested only in competencies in specific content areas.

[2] Q24 (asked to 1 and 2): What percentage of your consulting assignments come from the Corporate Communication / PR department? Respondents who selected a percentage inferior to 100 % were then asked: Since you don't only work with the Corporate Communication / PR department, with which other departments or functions do you work (pick all that apply). Response options: see the “Agency assignments that do not come from CC/PR” chart.

7.3 Clients are highly satisfied with consultants' honesty and creativity and the quality of the services they deliver

A high percentage of organizations claim to be highly satisfied with agencies' "honesty and fairness" (73.2%), "creativity" (66.4%), and those factors which can be traced back to the quality of their services, i.e. "quality of services and products delivered" (67.7%), "quality of account management" (64.1%), and "budget reliability" (63.6%) [3].

Satisfaction with agencies and consultants (%)



On the other hand, organizations are often less satisfied with the breadth of agencies' operational skills, i.e. "full service capabilities (56.2%) and "international capabilities" (29.6%), and with the strategic contribution they offer, i.e. "strategic counseling" (50.9%) and "research capabilities" (39.5%).

By and large, the results do not manifest any relevant differences in terms of type of organization, sector, language region, and reach of professional activity, although there are a few exceptions. Joint stock companies seem less likely to be satisfied with agencies' "creativity" (53.2%, **) whereas non-profit organizations or associations appear to be pleased with this aspect (76.6%, **). Organizations operating on a worldwide basis manifest above-average satisfaction with agencies' "international capabilities" (45.9%, *).

[3] Q25 (asked to 4 and 5): How satisfied are you with public relations agencies and communication consultants? (1 = not at all, 5 = very much; "does not apply"). Scale points considered: 4–5. For the possible response options, see the "Satisfaction with agencies and consultants" chart.

Interestingly, professionals who chose strategic reasons to work with agencies [4] have a higher average satisfaction with agencies’ “strategic counseling” (69.6%) and “quality of services and products delivered” (78.2%,*). Professionals who on the other hand chose more opportunistic [5] reasons for working with agencies seem to be less satisfied with their “strategic counseling” (34.7%).

These data seem to suggest there is a need to further investigate the reasons why some organizations purchase strategic services offered by agencies and consulting firms, and why they are highly satisfied with them, together with those factors that dissuade others from seeking these services and leave them dissatisfied with their quality.

[4] See Data Q23, chapter 7.1: (Q23 [asked to 1, 2, 4 and 5]: [Organization] What are your main reasons for working with public relations agencies and communication consultants? [Agency] Why do you think companies decide to work with public relations agencies and communication consultants? [Pick 3] For the list of response options [reasons], see the “Reasons for working with agencies and consultants” diagram. Same scale as GAP VI [2009] and ECM 2008.) An indicator was created for professionals who selected at least two items (out of three maximum choices allowed) from among the following: “They provide an objective point of view”, “They provide strategic and/or market insight and experience”, “They provide an ability to quantify results”, “They are able to explain communication trends and new channels”.

[5] See Data Q23, chapter 7.1 (as in previous footnote): An indicator was created for professionals who selected at least two items (out of three maximum choices allowed) from among the following: “They provide additional arms and legs”, “They are cheaper than adding staff”, “We have a limit on our internal head count”.

8. Professional development

Consistent with 2010, the majority of professionals claim to have only one (36.6%) or two (34.9%) areas in which they need more expertise. Indeed, only a small proportion selected either four (2.1%) or five needs (1.1%). 13.5% of professionals claimed to have no needs[1].

Needs in areas of expertise (%)

Management of communication tools and channels	51.2	2010
	54.8	2011
Research and measurement	35.5	
	30.2	
Communication expertise	32.2	
	27.3	
Personal skills	28.7	
	25.6	
General management	20.1	
	17.8	
I have no needs	13.5	
	13.5	

The priorities of communication professionals when it comes to professional development needs have not changed since last year. “Management of communication tools and channels” (54.8%) and “research and measurement” (30.2%) remain the areas in which professionals feel they have more needs. Compared to 2010, the proportion of people who selected “management of communication tools and channels” has increased slightly (+3.6%). All the other areas have decreased. Once again, this might be symptomatic of the fact that professionals feel the urge to keep up-to-date in the field of new media.

Agencies and organizations have similar needs. However, when compared to organizations, more respondents working in agencies claim to need development in “general management” (23.9% vs. 14.6%, **). On the other hand, professionals working in organizations apparently have a greater need for “communication expertise” (29.9% vs. 22%, *).

While there are no significant differences between the various types of organization when it comes to development needs, some interesting contrasts become apparent if one looks at the various sectors, as shown in the next table. For instance, while 23.1% of professionals working in the Banking, Insurance and Finance sector need more expertise in “general management”, only 11.1% of professionals working in the Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Health sector do (**).

A high percentage of professionals working in the Telecommunications and Media sector (53.3%, *) feel a need to improve their “personal skills”.

Markus Berger, eidg. dipl. PR-Berater BR/SPRV, Director SPRI “Contrary to the situation at the time of SPRI’s inception, the majority of professional newcomers to our industry nowadays have not switched to the PR profession after a period of extensive work experience in another management discipline. This means that there is an increasing demand for structured modules in continuing education with subjects in the area of ‘general management’. Financial management and Leadership in particular are competences that are expected of communication professionals on every level. Of course this is in addition to the key prerequisite of a thorough understanding and mastery of all – including the new – communication instruments and channels.”

[1] Q26 (asked to all): In which areas do you personally need more expertise today? Please, if possible, specify the topics that come to mind in the areas of expertise you have selected. (Pick all that apply) For the possible response options (reasons), see the “Needs in areas of expertise” chart.

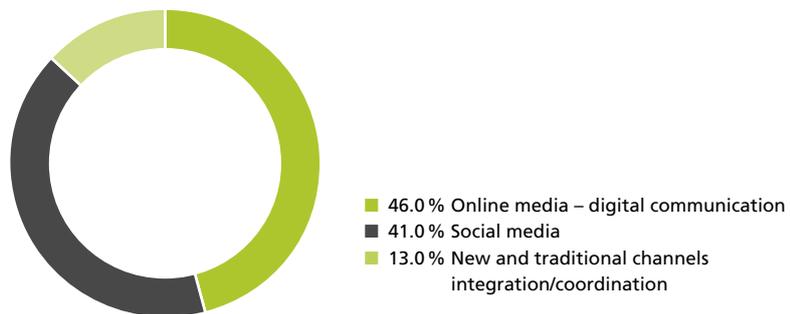
Professional development needs across sectors (%)

	Comm. tools & channels	Research & measurement	Comm. expertise	Personal skills	General management	No needs
Average	54.8 %	30.2 %	27.3 %	25.6 %	17.8 %	13.5 %
Telecomm. & Media	33.3 %	33.3 %	40.0 %	53.3 %	20.0 %	0 %
Banking, Insurance and Finance	66.7 %	43.6 %	15.4 %	23.1 %	23.1 %	10.3 %
Chemical, Pharmaceutical and Health	61.1 %	27.8 %	27.8 %	33.3 %	11.1 %	11.1 %

When asked to specify their needs within the five areas of expertise [2], respondents mentioned somewhat well-defined needs [3].

In “management of communication tools and channels,” the areas most specified by respondents were clearly “online media – digital communication” (46%), “social media” (41%), and “new and traditional channels integration/coordination” (13%).

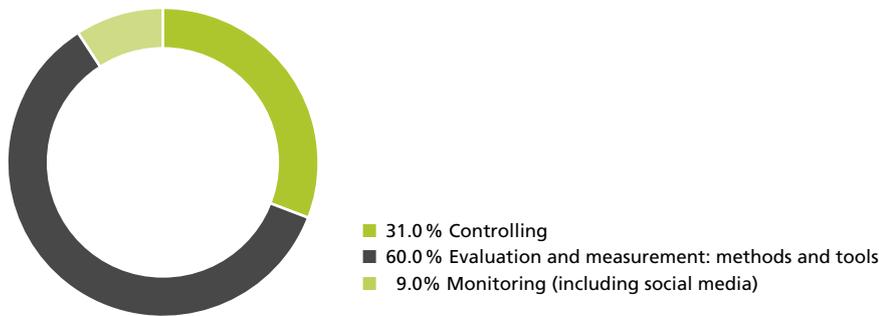
Needs in management of communication tools and channels (%)



When it comes to requirements in “research and measurement,” respondents specified needs in three categories: “evaluation and measurement: methods and tools” [4] (59%), “controlling” [5] (32%), and “monitoring (including social media monitoring)” [6] (9%). The monitoring of social media is still an underdeveloped need. This result is consistent with the low level of implementation of guidelines and best practice within organizations [7].

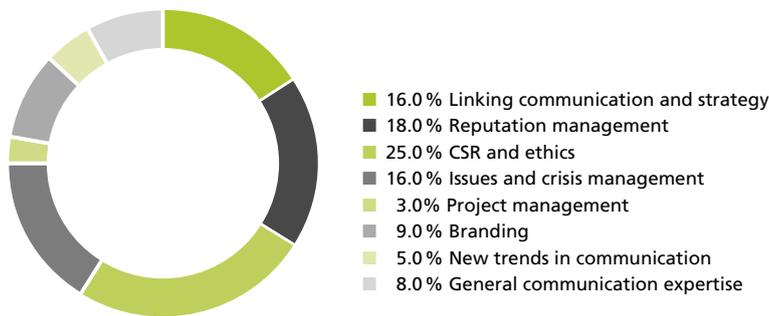
- [2] Communication expertise (management of communication tools and channels / general management / research & measurement / personal skills) was chosen as an area where you currently need more expertise. Please, if possible, specify the topics that come to mind in this area you have selected.
- [3] These indications have been provided in an unprompted way, increasing their intrinsic value. They are only partially comparable with the 2010 data, which instead were picked by respondents from a given list (close-ended question).
- [4] Examples of items mentioned include: “Tools for measurement of communication effects”, “Specific evaluation methods”, “Cost-effective tools”, etc.
- [5] Examples of items mentioned include: “Support / development of simple controlling”, “Reliable cost center analysis”, etc.
- [6] Examples of items mentioned include: “Monitoring for social media activity”, “Evaluate and interpret traffic”, “Tools for following activities over time”, etc.
- [7] See Data Q9, chapter 5.2: (Q9 [asked to 2 and 5]: [Organization] Has your organization already implemented one of the following social media governance measures? [Agency] Based on your experience, what stage are the majority of your clients at when it comes to the implementation of the following social media governance measures? Social media guidelines for communicating in blogs, Twitter, etc.; tools for monitoring stakeholder communication on the social web; key performance indicators for measuring social web activities; training programs for social media. Response options: already implemented, planned for 2011, not planned yet. Adapted from ECM 2011 [Q15]).

Needs in research and measurement (%)



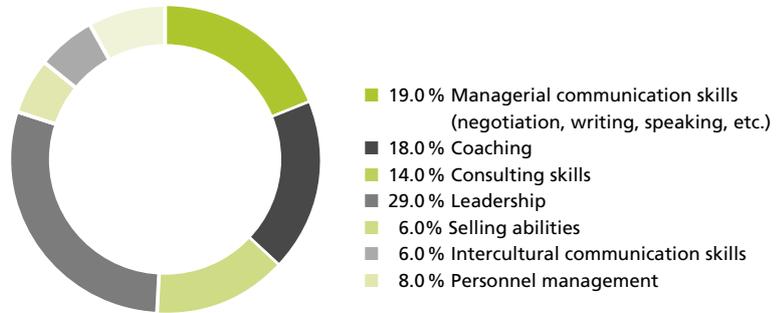
In “communication expertise,” respondents mostly need development opportunities in the areas of “CSR and ethics” (25%), “reputation management” (18%), “linking communication and strategy” (16%), and “issues and crisis management” (16%).

Needs in communication expertise (%)



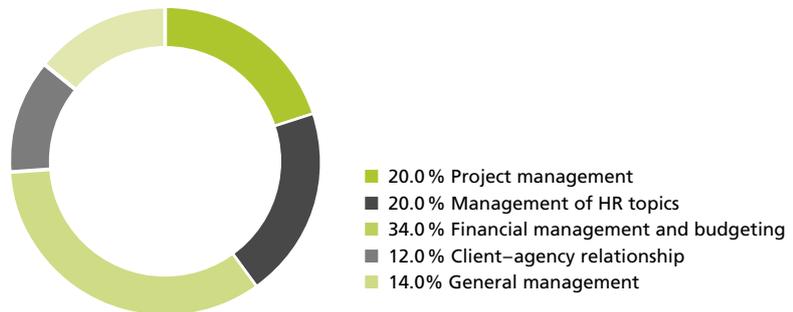
Respondents’ specific needs in “personal skills” are varied. However, professionals feel they mostly need to improve their “leadership” abilities (29%), “managerial communication skills” (19%), “coaching” (18%), and “consulting skills” (14%).

Needs in personal skills (%)



Respondents' needs are more varied in "general management". However, the predominant areas are "financial management and budgeting" (34%), "management of HR topics", and "project management" (20%).

Needs in general management (%)



Swiss Corporate Communication
and Public Relations Observatory
c/o Università della Svizzera italiana
Via Giuseppe Buffi 13
6900 Lugano
Switzerland

Tel +41 (0)58 666 45 82
francesco.lurati@usi.ch