

Global Corporate Affairs & Communications Survey

Data Report 2025



Introduction

In every corner of the globe, organizations are operating in a new age of complexity, and in return, the role of communications and corporate affairs is undergoing a notable shift. The leaders responsible for shaping and protecting corporate reputation have become central, and essential, to enterprise strategy. Our work with clients worldwide confirms this evolution: communications is a strategic driver that fuels decision-making.

It is against this backdrop that the Global Communications Search Partnership (GCSP) came together. As a collaboration among four leading executive search firms – Taylor Birchwood in the U.K. and Middle East, Heyman Associates in the U.S., GK Personalberatung in Germany, and Barber Search in Hong Kong – we unite regional expertise with global perspective. Our goal is to offer a clearer view of the evolving talent landscape, identify the growing challenges facing these teams, and elevate our collective understanding of what world-class leadership in communications and corporate affairs looks like today.

This inaugural 2025 Global Communications & Corporate Affairs Survey reflects that ambition. Drawing insight from senior leaders across regions and industry sectors, the findings offer a global benchmark for priorities, pressures, and levers of influence shaping the function. Many of the early themes reaffirm what practitioners have long sensed: communications is finally getting the airtime it deserves. We hope our perspectives will support leaders in navigating change and aligning reputation and strategy more effectively across the enterprise.

We look forward to continuing this dialogue globally in the months and years ahead.



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2026 Priorities

Respondents were asked for the key priorities for their Communications and Corporate Affairs functions for 2026. Responses were ranked in order of importance

1	Building and protecting corporate reputation	63%
2	Aligning communications with strategy and transformation	56%
3	Navigating geopolitical and economic uncertainty	39%
4	Strengthening executive visibility and thought leadership	27%
5	Leveraging AI and digital tools	27%

Other themes mentioned by respondents were:

6	Enhancing employee engagement and internal communications	21%
7	Supporting brand positioning and marketing integration	18%
8	Improving external stakeholder engagement and trust	14%
9	Driving cultural change	14%
10	Enhancing measurement and analytics to drive impact	8%
11	Attracting and retaining top talent	5%
12	Strengthening investor engagement	4%
13	Advancing sustainability initiatives	2%

"AI is transforming the work of communicators around the world. Tasks that once took days or even weeks can now be completed in seconds. This gives us an extraordinary opportunity to deliver higher-quality work and better outcomes at unprecedented speed. However, we must ensure that critical thinking and decision-making remain our own responsibility"

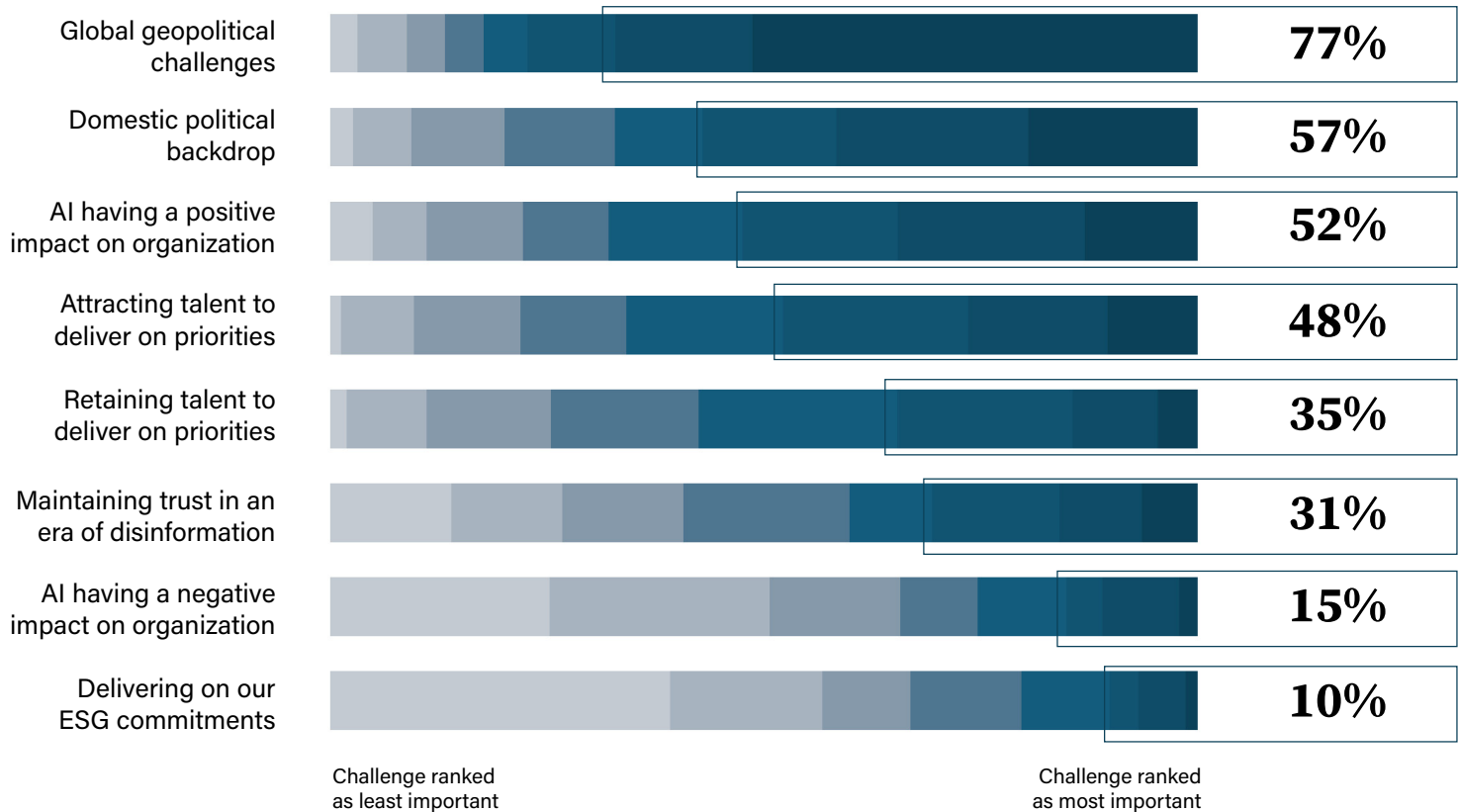
- Barbara Schaedler, Head of Group Communications (Member of the enlarged CEC) at Roche

CEO and Leadership Priorities

Respondents were asked for the key priorities for their own organization's leadership, as well as which stakeholder groups are most important to their CEO.

Please rank the following challenges, as to how much they concern your leadership team:

% who selected as a Top 3 Challenge



Please rank the following stakeholders based on their importance to your CEO.

51%

32%

11%

10%

3%



Customers



Investors



Employees



Govt &
Regulators

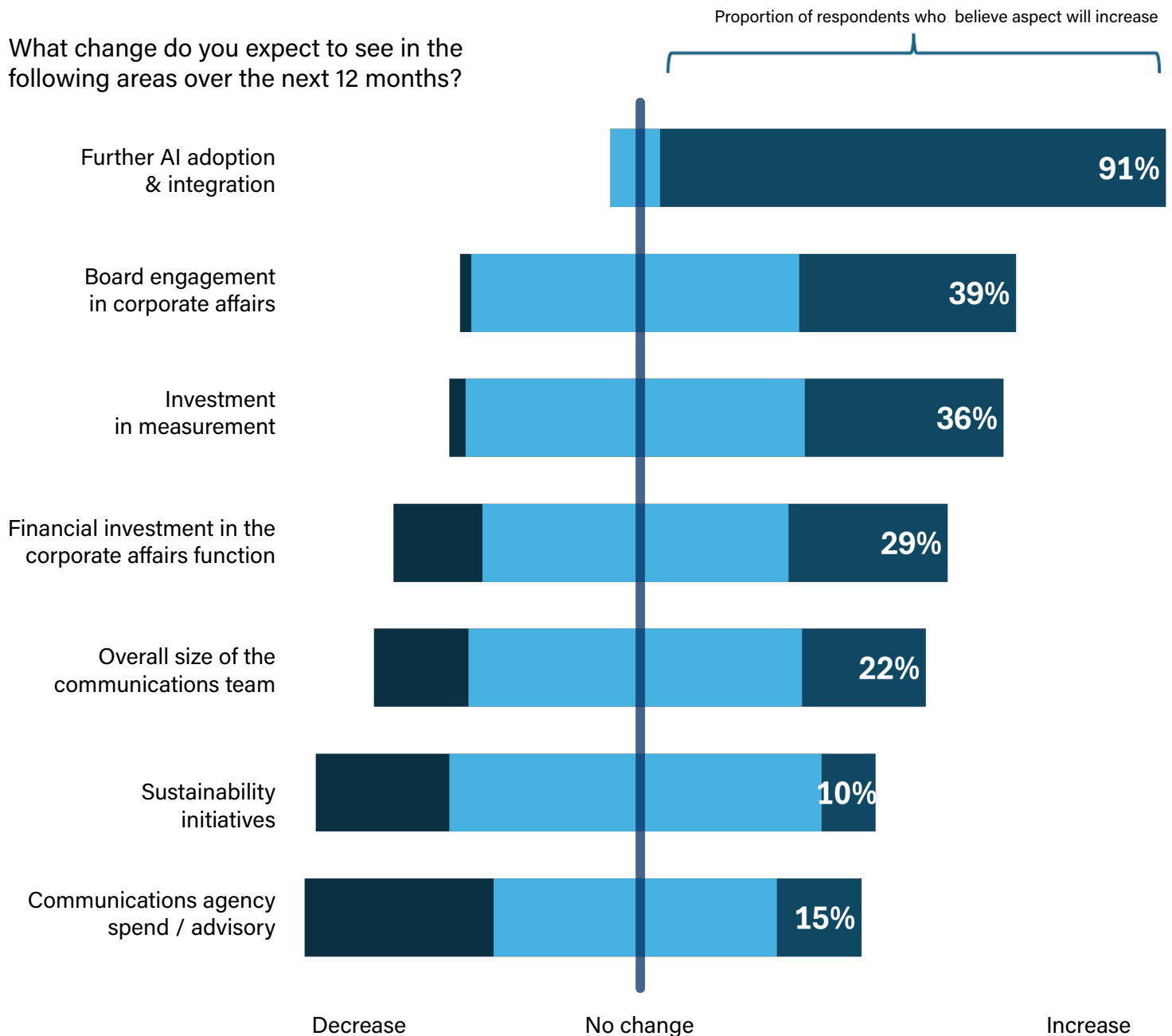


General
Public

% represents proportion of respondents who selected stakeholder audience as the most important to their CEO

How the focus of Communications will change

Respondents were asked how they thought individual focus areas would change in the next 12 months; whether their importance would decrease, increase, or stay the same.

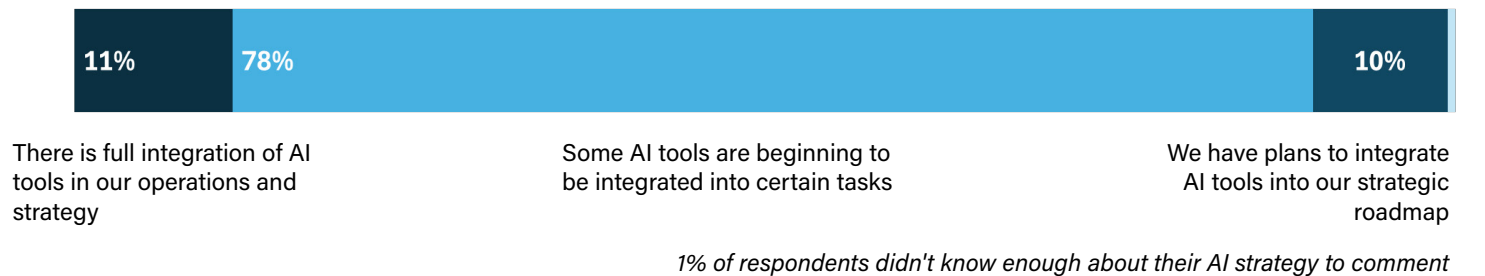


"Tomorrow's communications leader blends strategic business acumen with human-centered storytelling - using AI critically, mastering data, sensing risks early, and staying close to stakeholders - while relying on curiosity, empathy, integrity, and strong networks to turn complex contexts into clear, meaningful narratives that drive real impact."

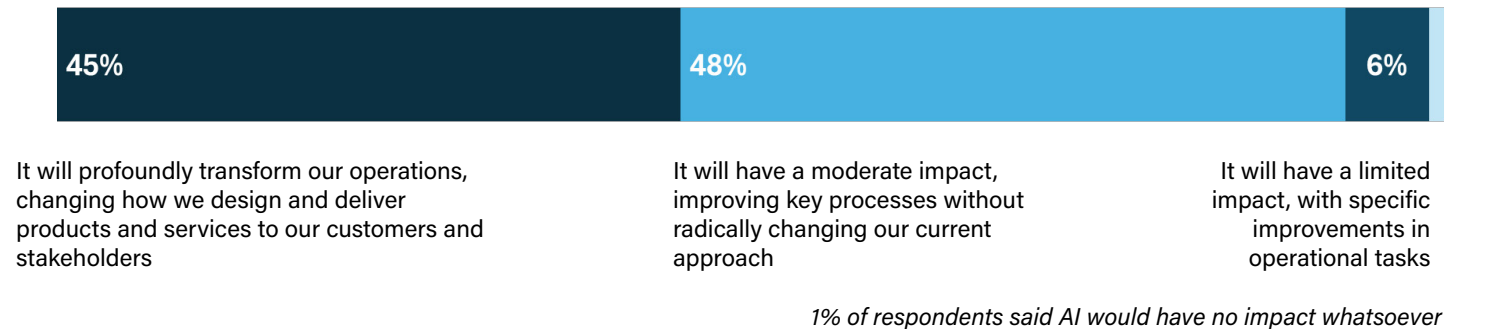
The impact of Artificial Intelligence

Respondents were asked about their perceptions of AI in Communications - how they were using it, and any concerns they had.

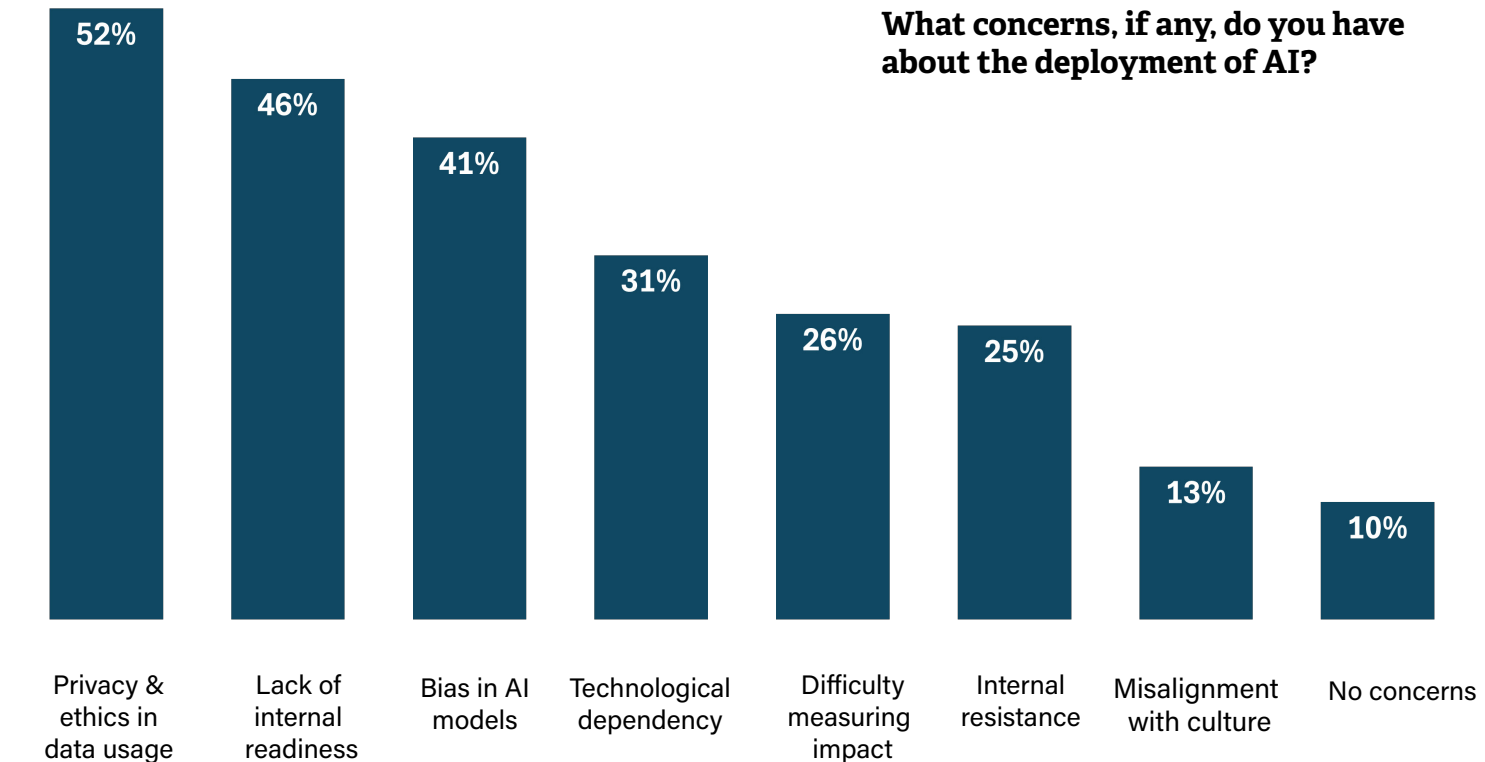
Currently, how integrated is AI in your corporate affairs team?



Over the next three years, how much impact do you expect AI to have on the way your team delivers?



What concerns, if any, do you have about the deployment of AI?

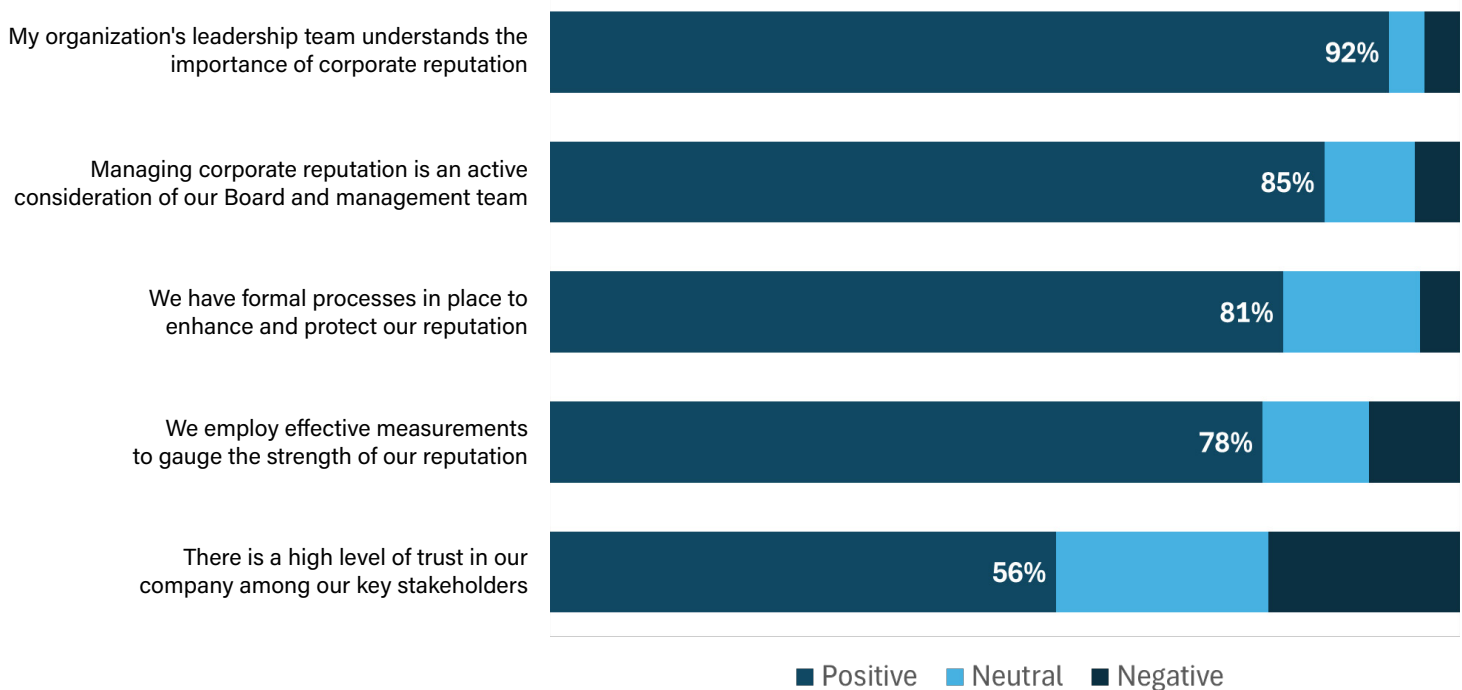


"AI makes the counsel of the Corporate Affairs leader even more important. It's important to demonstrate commerciality so that the Executive Team trust your advice - whether that is to follow or disregard AI-powered suggestions."

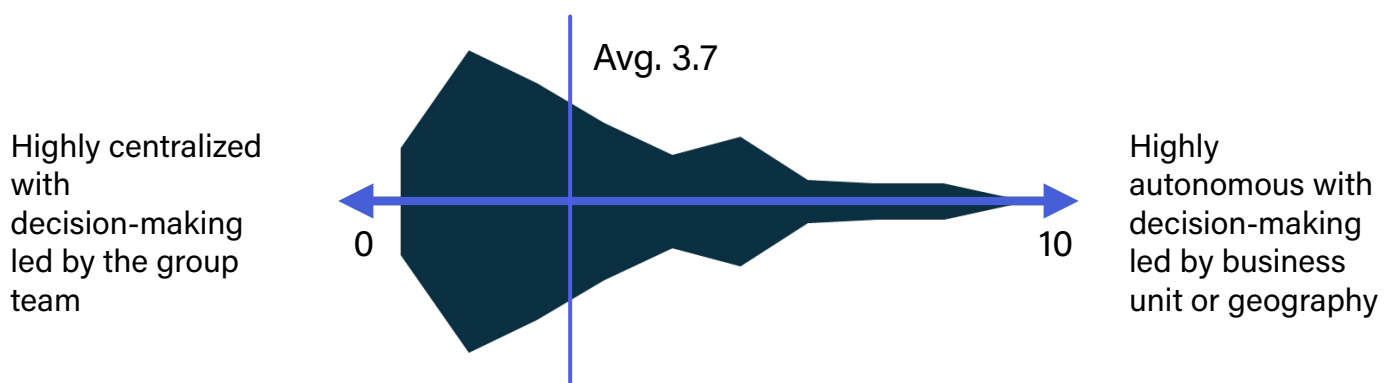
Functional ways of working

Respondents were asked a number of questions about ways of working within their Communications function, and the level of influence corporate communications and reputation had within their organization.

State the extent to which you agree with the following statements:

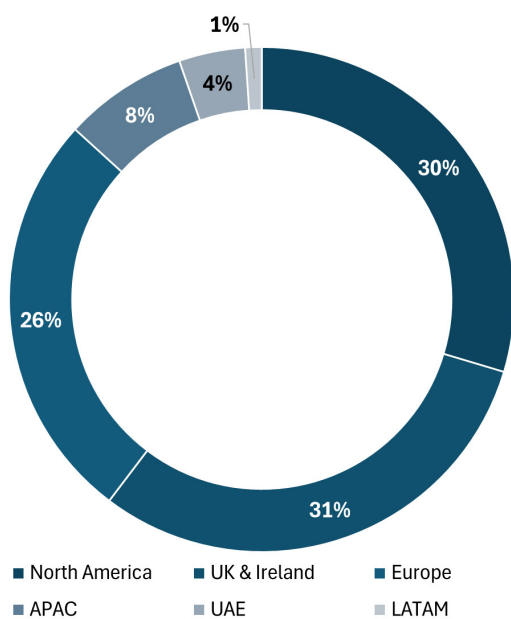


Describe decision-making in your function:

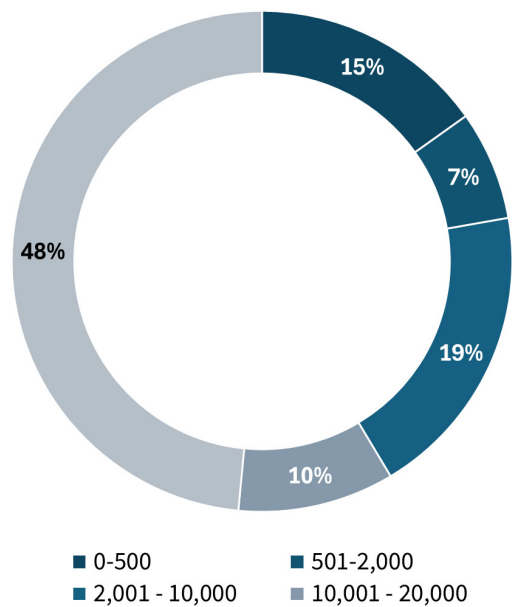


Demographic data

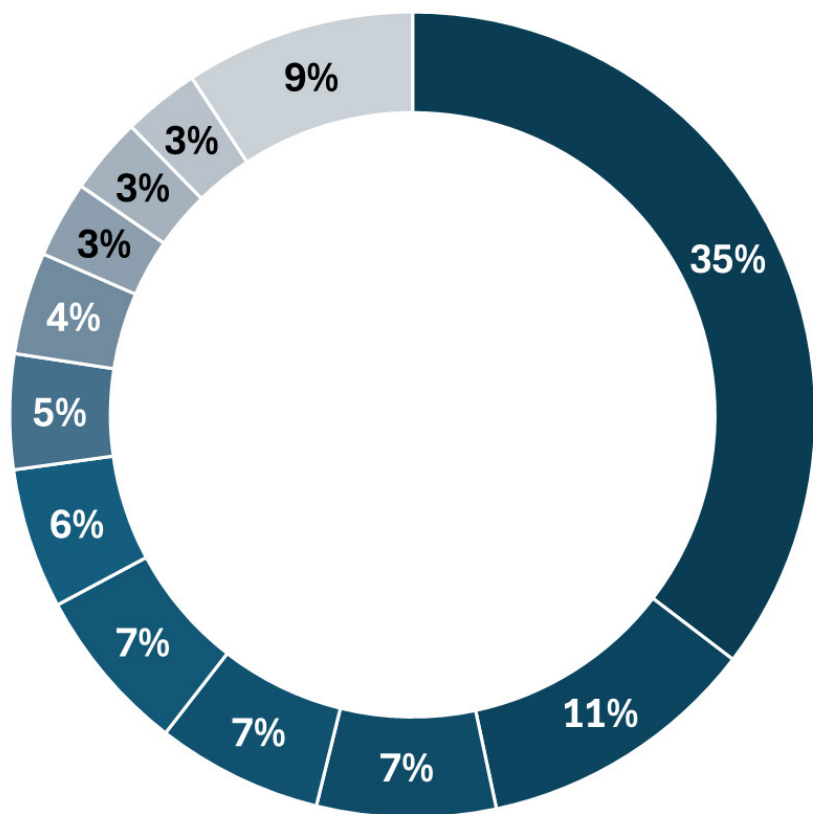
Location



Headcount



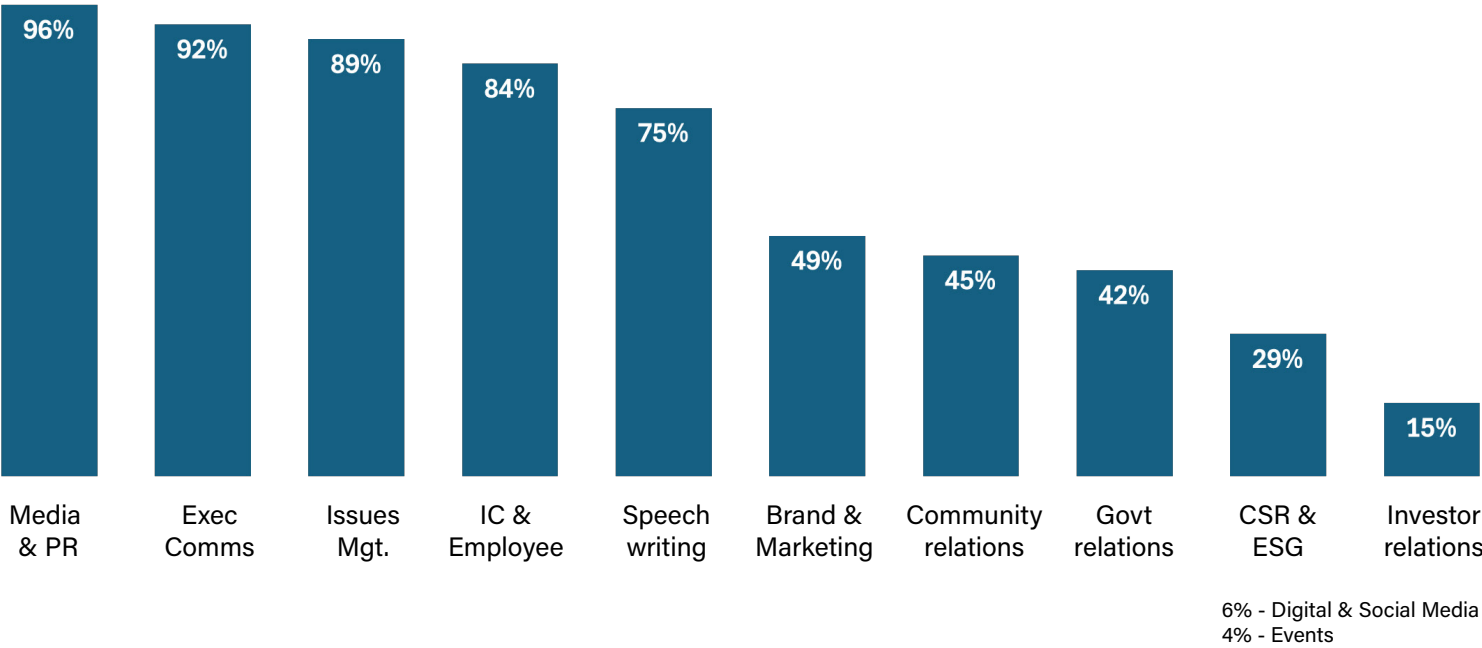
Sector



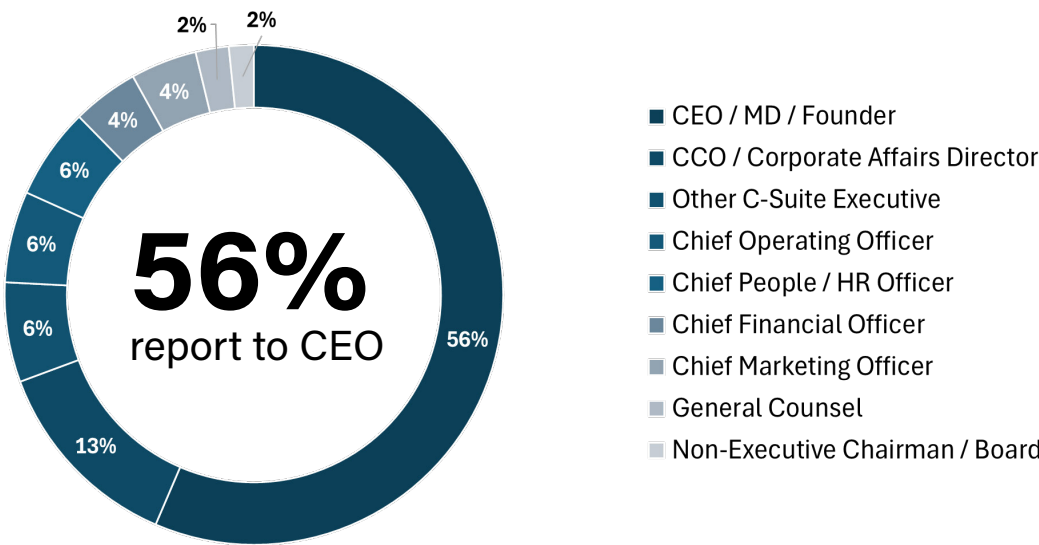
- Banking, Insurance and Financial Services
- Telecommunications, Media and Technology
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Utilities, Energy and Industrial
- Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals
- Automotive
- Professional Services
- FMCG
- Transport and Distribution
- Government and Charitable Sector
- Other

Demographic data, contd.

Which of the following functions fall under your direct responsibility?



To whom do you report?



Methodology

We conducted a global survey of communications leaders, collecting over 200 responses across diverse industries and regions. The survey was administered online, with participants recruited through professional networks, and responses were analysed in aggregate to identify key trends and insights.

This report was produced by the Global Communications Search Partnership (GCSP) which is a collaboration of four leading executive search firms.

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