



**INSTITUTE FOR
PUBLIC RELATIONS**

The science beneath the art of public relations™

THE **TOP 19** PUBLIC RELATIONS INSIGHTS OF **2022**

COMPILED BY:

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INTRO

The Institute for Public Relations annually compiles the top research studies that we think public relations professionals should know about from the previous year. With transformations to the workplace, an increased focus on sustainability, the impact of COVID-19, and major breakthroughs in artificial intelligence and other technologies, there were no shortage of issues communicators focused on around the world. These opportunities and challenges are spotlighted in this guide. At the end of this report is a list of IPR resources and IPR signature studies published in 2022. Thanks to our Board of Trustees, comprising senior level executives and academic leaders in public relations, for driving the mission and work we do.

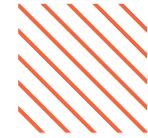
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Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion



1



[View full study here](#)

Women in the Workplace 2022

LeanIn & McKinsey

Why This Research is Important:

LeanIn and McKinsey & Company conduct an annual pulse study to provide companies with insights and tools to advance gender diversity in the workplace. While strides have been made over the past decade for the treatment of women in the workplace, there are still significant gender gaps that companies must address to improve recruitment and retention, especially for women of color.

Method:

A survey of more than 40,000 employees was conducted in 2022 along with a series of interviews with women of diverse identities, including women of color, LGBTQ+ women, and women with disabilities.

Key Findings:

- For every 100 men who were promoted from entry-level to manager level, only 87 women were promoted, and only 82 women of color were promoted.
- More female leaders have been leaving their companies.
 - For every woman at the director level who got promoted to the next level, two female directors chose to leave their company for better opportunities.
- 37% of female leaders have had a coworker get credit for their idea, compared to 27% of men leaders.
 - Female leaders were two times more likely than male leaders to be mistaken for someone more junior.

2

Disability Equality Index 2022

Disability:IN

Why This Research is Important:

People with disabilities face overwhelming hurdles in the workforce, from the hiring process to receiving accommodations on the job. With these issues coming to the forefront of companies' initiatives, Disability:IN and the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) analyzed how companies are performing on disability inclusion.

Method:

A survey of 415 companies (318 of those with operations outside of the U.S.) was conducted globally in 2022.

Key Findings:

- 60% of companies had company-wide hiring goals for people with disabilities.
- 30% of companies said they have a senior executive (someone within the first two layers reporting to the CEO) who has identified as a person with a disability.
- 61% of companies had an accessibility expert who could resolve accessibility issues with internal digital products.
- 55% had a centralized accommodation fund or budget margin for disability-related expenses.

[View full study here](#)

3

2022 Creativity Study: Diversity of Talent Emerges as Critical Challenge

PRovoke Media and Now Go Create, in partnership with FleishmanHillard



[View full study here](#)

Why This Research is Important:

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered the way every industry operates. Nearly three years after the start of the pandemic, creative fields such as PR were still reeling from its impact. This study revealed how the PR industry has responded to the creative challenges of the COVID-19 era.

Method:

A survey of more than 200 agency and in-house executives from across the world was conducted in early 2022.

Key Findings:

- More than two-thirds of agencies (68%) report they are more likely to be approached for big, creative ideas than they were 12 months ago (up from 56% in 2021).
- The proportion of agency respondents who said their firm had been designated as the lead creative agency jumped to 86% from 59% the previous year.
- Chief Marketing Officers or marketing heads (62%) are widely seen as the best type of client for this equation, with almost half of respondents (45%) believing they should be engaged directly, rather than via the communications function (30%).
- Client budgets (54%) and the PR industry's poor creative reputation (48%) were seen as the key barriers to PR agencies becoming the lead creative agency.

4

Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Survey

PwC



[View full study here](#)

Why This Research is Important:

For the past few years, stakeholders have increasingly pressured organizations to respond more effectively to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) matters. This cross-industry survey explored the DE&I programs that organizations had in place, and the impact they had on employee experience. The findings indicate a gap exists between leaders and their employees on how well they are communicating and addressing DE&I in the workplace.

Method:

A survey of over 6,000 employees across the globe was conducted in July 2022.

Key Findings:

- 54% of business leaders and 39% of employees said diversity is a stated value or priority area for their organization, indicating a gap between the two groups.
- 89% of business leaders thought they communicated to employees “frequently” about DE&I, compared to 83% of employees and 80% of HR professionals.
- Roughly a quarter (28%) of business leaders believed their organizations leveraged affinity groups effectively, compared to 19% of individuals who drove DE&I in the organization, and 18% of HR professionals.
 - That number was lower again for employees (15%), who were the target participants for affinity groups.
- 80% of respondents indicated their organizations had not yet adopted procedures for collecting and analyzing data on discrepancies in compensation, hiring, performance, and promotion.



State of the Industry and Trends Around the World

5

European Communication Monitor 2022

EUPRERA, European Association of Communication Directors (EACD)

Why This Research is Important:

With changing digital expectations, higher standards for diversity and inclusion, and increasing demand for consulting in communications, communication practitioners must prepare and adapt. This study outlined current practices and future developments of managing communication in companies, nonprofits, and other organizations, as well as in communication consultancies and agencies across Europe.

Method:

A survey of 1,672 communication professionals in 43 countries was conducted throughout 2022.

Key Findings:

- Diversity, equality, and inclusion influence organizational policies and communication worldwide, but only 51% of communicators in Europe have closely followed global trends and discussions in this area.
- 73% of practitioners had experienced empathic traits from communication leaders (traits which allow leaders to “stand in the shoes” of others and see things from their point of view), which had a significant positive impact on commitment, engagement, and mental health.
- Very few communication departments established an advanced use of communications technology to digitize internal workflows and communication activities.
 - Organizational structures were identified as the main obstacle to rapid transformation.
- Quality of consulting in communications was difficult to achieve.
 - 3-in-4 respondents reported that they wanted to see appropriate standards that cover either consultants, clients, or both.

[View full study here](#)

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World PR Report 2022-2023

International Communication Consultancy Organization (ICCO)



Why This Research is Important:

This year's report is a robust reminder that our industry is enjoying a period of rapid growth, increased recognition for what we do, and a growing demand for services with no signs of slowing. However, challenges persist and the path to progress requires work, dedication, and investment.

Method:

A survey of 271 PR professionals from around the globe was conducted July – October 2022.

Key Findings:

- In every region, ESG was named as one of the top two investment areas.
- Respondents said that “strategic consulting” and “purpose and ESG” were at the top of the most relevant skills needed for PR executives across the world.
- The top strategy challenges were retaining key talent (59%) and motivating younger executives (35%).
- The most important objectives to clients' public relations goals were improving corporate reputation (63%) and increasing sales (52%).

[View full study here](#)

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[View full study here](#)

CEO for the Future: APAC

Korn Ferry

Why This Research is Important:

The COVID-19 pandemic put every organization's crisis communication skills to the test. Korn Ferry's "CEO for the Future: APAC" paper explores how leaders in Asia-Pacific have been forever changed by one of the world's most transformative crises, COVID-19.

Method:

Korn Ferry Institute interviewed more than 70 CEOs from across the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region from September 2021 – July 2022.

Key Findings:

- Of the 41 CEOs who spoke about leading through the pandemic, 17% said they have expanded their leadership repertoire during the crisis.
- The most common themes from the conversations with CEOs were about:
 - Making bold decisions quickly
 - Communicating more often and with more honesty
 - Leading with humility and empathy
- 23% of the CEOs talked about how their mindset and view of the world evolved during the COVID-19 outbreak, with some leaders saying they asked themselves fundamental existential questions.
 - For example, one CEO said he would revisit "what our purpose is, what we value, what we stand for" during the pandemic.
- Of the 53 CEOs who discussed lessons learned from the pandemic, nearly 23% spoke about digital transformation—one of the most significant changes seen by companies.
 - Companies lagging in enhancing their digital profile found themselves scrambling to operate in a digitally-focused world.

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[View full study here](#)

2022 Global Communication Report

USC Annenberg

Why This Research is Important:

Understanding the ESG environment, including how polarization affects the ability of organizations to achieve their goals, is imperative for public relations and communication professionals.

Method:

A survey of 1,600 communication professionals, journalists, educators, and students was conducted from Jan. 4 to Feb. 4, 2022.

Key Findings:

- 77% of respondents said polarization is a challenge for achieving their organization's communication goals.
- Public relations professionals believe media play the lead role in creating the current high level of polarization, especially "partisan outlets" including Fox News (61%), OAN (37%), CNN (35%), and MSNBC (30%).
- 60% of agencies had faced resistance from clients when they recommended incorporating social issues into communication programs.
- 64% of respondents use social media analysis to determine the level of polarization of their stakeholders on a specific issue.
- 44% of respondents said increased public engagement on a social issue was because of "a commitment to positive social change" while 33% said it was "to enhance brand reputation."



[View full study here](#)

State of Public Relations 2022

Chartered Institute of Public Relations

Why This Research is Important:

The Chartered Institute of Public Relations explored trends that will impact practitioners in the PR industry, including hiring and future growth and retention.

Method:

A survey of 768 public relations practitioners was conducted from Feb. 2 – March 12, 2022.

Key Findings:

- 72% of recruiters at agencies said they were hiring additional public relations team members.
- Respondents said industry demand for talent is overwhelming due to difficulties hiring people because of a “low number of applicants with the required skills.”
- 56% of practitioners said they are working more hours than they are paid for.
- A third of PR practitioners said they are likely to search for a different job in the next six months.
- PR professionals said a “good team and colleague relationships” is what they enjoy most about their work but cited limited opportunities for a promotion.

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[View full study here](#)

Most Trusted Brands of 2022

Morning Consult

Why This Research is Important:

With brand trust becoming increasingly more sought after, organizations benefit from understanding consumer patterns in their industry. Morning Consult analyzed the specific companies, products, and factors that earned or maintained consumer trust in 2022.

Method:

A survey of 2,200 U.S. adults, 1,299 South Korean residents, and 1,000 residents each in Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, and the U.K. was conducted April 8-14, 2022.

Key Findings:

- Small businesses were generally the most trusted brands across all markets (ranging from 63% in Japan to 82% in India).
 - China is the exception with only 37% trusting small businesses.
- Respondents in Japan were the least likely to factor trust into purchases, with 65% saying “When I trust a company, I will purchase from them, but not necessarily any more than I would from another company I trust less.”
 - 39% of Japanese respondents said they have lost trust in a brand compared to the 66% of Indian respondents.
- Health care and financial services were considered the two industries where trust is the most important. Retail & e-commerce and automotive & mobility were the two industries where trust was least important.
- Good value and product quality were ranked as the most crucial elements to building trust globally.
 - International respondents ranked other elements as less important, such as ethical business practices and good customer service.

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[View full study here](#)

CEO Expectations for Future Trends

PwC

Why This Research is Important:

Communicators should be aware of the trends, opportunities and challenges that CEOs believe will change and affect growth of their organizations to help counsel, mitigate risk, and reduce uncertainty.

Method:

A survey of 4,446 CEOs was conducted October – November 2021.

Key Findings:

- Nearly 40% of CEOs do not think their companies will be economically viable a decade from now if they continue on their current path.
 - About half or more of surveyed CEOs cited the following reasons for this: changing customer preferences; regulatory change; skills shortages; and technology disruptions.
- CEOs rank cyber risks (49%) and the global health situation (48%) as the top threats to growth.
- No matter the threat, CEOs are most concerned about the near-term impact on the top line.
- 22% of respondents have made a net-zero commitment, meaning they plan to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to near zero and remove their remaining unavoidable emissions.
 - 29% said they are working toward making a net-zero commitment.

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[View full study here](#)

Executives Feel the Strain of Leading in the “New Normal”

Future Forum

Why This Research is Important:

With burnout becoming a major issue for workers, executives are left wondering how to help their employees. Future Forum examined executive leadership and workplace trends related to remote work and burnout.

Method:

This Future Forum pulse survey studied 10,766 workers between August 3–21, 2022 in the U.S., Australia, France, Germany, Japan, and the U.K..

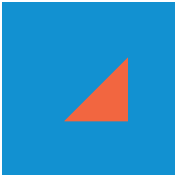
Key Findings:

- Burnout was on the rise globally with an 8% increase from May 2022 to October 2022.
 - Women reported scores 32% higher than men for burnout.
 - The most significant increase was in the U.S. where 43% of desk workers reported feeling burned out.
- People who reported feeling burnt out are three times more likely to look for a new job in the upcoming year.
- Executive scores for overall satisfaction at work dropped from 40% in 2021 to 34% in 2022.
- Employees said that executives can address their workplace issues by allowing for location and schedule flexibility.
 - Workers who had full schedule flexibility reported 29% higher productivity and 53% “greater ability to focus” than workers who did not have flexible schedules.



The Future Of Work

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[View full study here](#)

Hybrid Work Is Just Work. Are We Doing It Wrong?

Microsoft

Why This Research is Important:

The COVID-19 pandemic affected workers' priorities and made the hybrid model more desirable for employees. Microsoft examined how leaders approached the transition to hybrid work, including outlining employee and leadership challenges and needs. Managers noted how they would like to better support their employees, but do not have the resources to do so.

Method:

A survey of 31,102 full-time employees was conducted in 30 countries around the world from Jan. 7, 2022 – Feb. 16, 2022.

Key Findings:

- 53% of employees were more likely to prioritize health and wellbeing over work after the COVID-19 pandemic than before.
- Managers felt wedged between leadership and employee expectations.
 - 74% of managers said they don't have the influence or resources to make change for employees.
 - 54% of managers said leadership is out of touch with employees.
- 38% of hybrid employees said their biggest challenge is knowing when and why to come into the office.
 - 28% of leaders created team agreements for hybrid work to define why and when to go to the office.
- Meeting habits changed — meetings now start later on Mondays, finish earlier on Fridays, and there are fewer meetings at lunch time.
 - 9-11 a.m. and 2-3 p.m. were the most popular meeting times.

**Why This Research is Important:**

The legitimacy and usefulness of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a heavily discussed and debated topic. This study revealed how organizations can use AI as a tool to gain advantages that help create better competence, increased autonomy, and stronger relationships.

Method:

A global survey of 1,700 respondents was conducted and 17 executives were interviewed in the spring of 2022.

Key Findings:

- 64% of workers derived at least a “moderate value” from AI from AI by creating value for individual employees in the following ways:
 - **Increased competence**
 - AI makes many people better at their job by giving them sharper insights and more detailed, granular information. It enables employees to make better decisions, deepen their understanding of their job, and identify business opportunities.
 - **Increased autonomy**
 - Using AI often affords individuals more autonomy by providing guidance and empowering employees to make their own decisions based on AI recommendations—and without the direct support of a manager.
 - **Stronger relationships**
 - Using AI can help individuals deepen relationships with coworkers, customers, business partners, and other stakeholders. In many cases, teams interact when deploying the AI solution, leading to improved relationships. In other cases, the use of AI improves processes and creates a better working environment.



View full
study here



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[View full study here](#)

2022 Future of Work Report

Morning Consult

Why This Research is Important:

Understanding different kinds of workers and their values is useful in decision-making for both employers and employees. Morning Consult examined workers' priorities, work preferences, and lifestyles in this new era of work. Workers were separated into five distinct archetypes based on their values and preferred work environments.

Method:

A survey of 6,610 U.S. adults was conducted Jan. 21-25, 2022.

Key Findings:

- **Minimalists** do not prioritize a sense of meaning or pride in their career, and they are fairly satisfied with their jobs.
 - Minimalists have the strongest preference for a hybrid work environment.
- **Transactionalists** view their job as utilitarian and embrace a more traditional approach to work.
 - Tend to be younger, part-time, and do not prioritize career growth.
 - Tend to prefer in-person work.
- **Traditionalists** see their job as a means of living and a source of some satisfaction.
 - Differ from transactionalists by reporting higher job satisfaction and longer tenure.
 - Strongest preference for in-person work among all groups.
- **Aspirationalists** see their careers as a means of making real impact on the world and are drawn to employers with strong cultures and lucrative career paths.
- **Lifestylists** work to support their personal priorities and hobbies.
 - Care about work as both a means of providing and a source of benefits.
 - Strongest preference for remote work.

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[View full study here](#)

Trust: The New Currency for Business

PwC

Why This Research is Important:

Organizations are increasingly recognizing the impact of consumer and employee trust on customer loyalty as well as employee retention. PwC explored executive and consumer perspectives on brand trust with this in mind, identifying a significant gap between executives and their consumers and employees.

Method:

A survey of 503 business executives, 2,508 consumers, and 2,002 employees in the U.S. was conducted in May 2022.

Key Findings:

- A trust gap exists between the perceptions of executives compared to consumers and employees.
 - 87% of executives think consumers “highly trust their companies” where only 30% of consumers said they do.
 - 84% of executives think their employees “highly trust their companies” compared to 69% of employees who said they do.
- Executives and consumers are less aligned on trust issues than executives and employees.
 - 47% of business executives said trust is “more bottom-up than top-down” while 27% of consumers and 35% of employees said the same.
- Affordability (offering affordable products and services) was the leading way to build consumer trust with 34% of consumers choosing that as a way to gain trust.
 - Employees listed being treated well as the best way to earn their trust (47%).
- 71% of employees said they would leave their organization if it lost their trust.



Internal Communication



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Integral Employee Activation Index 2022

Integral

Why This Research is Important:

Employees' ability to relate to their organization (especially concerning their values) impacts how likely they are to advocate for their organization, among other behaviors. The 2022 Integral Employee Activation Index explored employees' relationships with their organizations and the behavioral outcomes of these relationships.

Method:

In the summer of 2022, Integral partnered with The Harris Poll to survey more than 2,000 employed individuals in the United States.

Key Findings:

- 28% of all employees said their organization's values do not align with their own, and this percentage was much higher among non-managers (38%) versus managers (21%).
- When an employee felt their organization doesn't reflect their values, they were more likely to say they may quit (28%) or do harm to the company (23%).
- The percentage of employees reporting negative feelings dropped slightly from 33% in 2021 to 29% in 2022.
 - Fewer employees reported being grateful (33% vs. 38% in 2022) while more said they were indifferent (12% vs. 9% in 2022).
- 80% of employees said they are loyal employees to their organizations.
 - 85% of employees who said they enjoy social activities provided by their organizations indicated they are loyal to them.



[View full study here](#)



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The C-Suite's Role in Well-Being

Deloitte

Why This Research is Important:

When it comes to employee well-being, some executives have made it clear that employee mental and physical health are a priority. Deloitte examined how executives go beyond workplace wellness to workplace well-being — for themselves and their people. Executives were more likely to be optimistic about their employees' well-being than employees said they were, but both groups were experiencing well-being challenges.

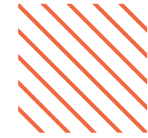
Method:

A survey of 1,050 C-suite executives and 1,050 employees was conducted Feb. 8 - 21, 2022.

Key Findings:

- 56% of employees said their company's executives care about their well-being, while 91% of the C-suite said their employees would say the C-suite cares about them.
- 68% of the C-suite admitted that they aren't taking enough action to safeguard employee and stakeholder health.
- 55% of employees and 77% of executives said they believe companies should be required to publicly report their workforce well-being metrics.
- 57% of employees said they are seriously considering quitting for a more supportive job, and nearly 7-in-10 executives said they are thinking about doing the same.
- Less than 6-in-10 employees said their company integrates well-being into the workplace culture and people's jobs.

[View full study here](#)



Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG)



19



Measuring Sustainability, Creating Value

Accenture

Why This Research is Important:

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) is becoming integral to many organizations' operations, but how well companies are measuring, evaluating, and reporting these efforts and key performance indicators isn't always clear.

Method:

A survey was completed from August - September 2021 of 640 finance leaders across six countries.

Key Findings:

- 78% of financial leaders said they were trying to understand the financial risk that is associated with ESG.
- 59% launched a new mission in their company in the last 18 months due to ESG considerations.
- 49% of respondents said that their main challenge for measuring ESG performance was the "inability to identify the right metrics and draw actionable insights."
- 26% said their company had clear, reliable information to establish ESG key performance indicators.
- ESG reporting was embedded in core operational systems in 31% of companies.

[View full study here](#)

IPR Research from 2022

The Top 17 Public Relations Insights of 2021

Published annually, this report highlights the top research studies published the previous year that all PR practitioners and academics should know about. Topics include behavioral science, internal communication and culture, mental health, and diversity and inclusion.

<https://instituteforpr.org/top-17-insights/>

2022 IPR Disinformation in Society Report

The annual “IPR Disinformation in Society Report” examines how disinformation – news that is intentionally misleading – is spread in U.S. society. The survey of 2,200 Americans conducted Nov. 10-14, 2021 by Morning Consult explores the prevalence of disinformation in the U.S. and the parties most responsible for sharing it.

<https://instituteforpr.org/2022-disinformation-report/>

The Perceptions of Sustainability

Cision and the Institute for Public Relations examined the conversation around sustainability topics on social media. This report focused on the “E” in ESG: Environment.

<https://instituteforpr.org/cisionipr-the-perceptions-of-sustainability/>

Disinformation in Canada Report

Leger, McMaster University, and the Institute for Public Relations investigated how disinformation — defined as deliberately misleading or biased information — is spread in Canada including some comparisons to the U.S. The report also explored the perceived breadth of reach and impact of disinformation on trust in Canadian society.

<https://instituteforpr.org/2022-disinfo-in-canada/>

IPR Research from 2022

Deconstructing Series

Deconstructing is an IPR blog series devoted to building a greater understanding of theoretical and practical terms and concepts that may be commonly used but not widely understood in the communication industry. Topics covered in 2022 include:

Nudges

In this edition of *Deconstructing*, we explored the definition of nudges, the psychological processes that underpin nudging, ethical implications, and tips for communicators on using nudges successfully.

<https://instituteforpr.org/deconstructing-nudges/>

Stakeholder Capitalism

In this edition of *Deconstructing*, we explored the history and tenets of stakeholder capitalism, how leaders should think about stakeholder capitalism, and the criticisms of the approach.

<https://instituteforpr.org/deconstructing-stakeholder-capitalism/>

Psychological Safety

In this edition of *Deconstructing*, we explored the concept of psychological safety in organizational teams and how it significantly improves happiness and productivity in the workplace.

<https://instituteforpr.org/deconstructing-psychological-safety/>

<https://instituteforpr.org/category/deconstructing/>



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About the Institute for Public Relations

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