

# **IPR TOP 15**

# **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

# **INSIGHTS OF 2023**

**Compiled by Olivia K. Fajardo and Katie McKechnie**  
*Institute for Public Relations*



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## Introduction

Annually, the Institute for Public Relations synthesizes some of the most important global research studies for communication leaders that impact the work they do. This past year, communication leaders guided their organizations through transformations in generative artificial intelligence as well as other critically important topics including:

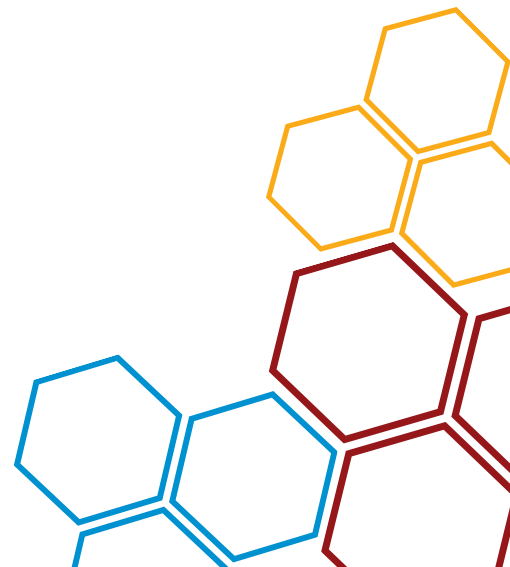
- AI & Technology
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- ESG
- Internal/Employee Communication
- State of the Industry

This report also includes IPR Signature Studies published in 2023. Thank you to the IPR Board of Trustees, comprising senior-level executives and academic leaders in public relations, for driving the work we do.

## About the Institute for Public Relations

Founded in 1956, the Institute for Public Relations is an independent, nonprofit foundation dedicated to *the science beneath the art of public relations*<sup>™</sup>. IPR creates, curates, and promotes research and initiatives that empower professionals with actionable insights and intelligence they can put to immediate use. IPR predicts and analyzes global factors transforming the profession and amplifies and engages the profession globally through thought leadership and programming. All research is available free at [www.instituteforpr.org](http://www.instituteforpr.org) and provides the basis for IPR's professional conferences and events.

*Report designed by Avery Ensing, Institute for Public Relations*



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# INTERNAL COMMUNICATION





# 1

## U.S. Employee Engagement Needs a Rebound in 2023

*Jim Harter, Gallup*

Gallup examined how employee engagement and workplace elements impacted organizational outcomes, profitability, productivity, and wellbeing. The research compared findings from annual Gallup engagement surveys from 2000 through 2022.

Employee engagement was defined as “the involvement and enthusiasm of employees in their work and workplace.” Engaged employees were “involved in” and “enthusiastic” about their work and workplace, whereas actively disengaged employees were “disgruntled” and “disloyal” because most of their workplace needs were unmet.

### **Method:**

During 2022, Gallup conducted quarterly surveys of approximately 15,000 U.S. full- and part-time adult employees of U.S. organizations who are members of the Gallup Panel.

### **Key Findings:**

- Employee engagement declined from 36% in 2020 to 32% in 2022.
- The engagement elements that declined the most from the 2019 pre-pandemic record-high engagement ratio to 2022 were:
  - Clarity of expectations (55% to 45%)
  - Connection to the mission or purpose of the company (37% to 33%)
  - Learning and Growing (38% to 32%)
  - Doing what employees do best (37% to 31%)
  - Feeling cared about at work (45% to 41%)
- 18% of full- and part-time employees said they were actively disengaged within the workplace.
- 20% of respondents said they were “extremely satisfied” with their company as a place to work in 2022 compared to 26% in 2020.
- Employees aged 35 and under were more disengaged compared to pre-pandemic measures of engagement.
  - Younger employee respondents felt less cared about and said they felt a “decline in opportunities to learn and grow” post-COVID.
- Women experienced more of a decline in engagement than men.

### **Implications for PR Practitioners:**

In 2021, the U.S. saw its first annual decline in employee engagement in a decade and this pattern followed into 2022. Employee engagement can be maintained by:

- Using organizational culture and values to guide business decisions
- Embracing flexible and hybrid work accommodations
- Providing clear expectations for employees across all demographic groups
- Maintaining strong connections between managers and employees
- Keeping performance, collaboration, employee wellbeing, and the customer at the center of how work gets done
- Equipping managers with the skills and tools to have ongoing meaningful conversations with employees



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# 2

## Reconceptualizing Employee Disengagement as Both Attitudinal and Behavioral: Narratives from China

*Hongmei Shen, Ph. D. & Chunbo Ren, Ph.D.*

Employee disengagement has had harmful effects on both organizational performance and culture. Dr. Hongmei Shen and Dr. Chunbo Ren sought to define and establish disengagement as a unique concept. They also identified which factors drove disengagement and explored the behaviors through which it manifests.

### Method:

To better understand what disengagement looks like and how to define it, the researchers conducted 24 in-depth telephone or audio interviews with public relations practitioners at agencies in China via WeChat. The interviews explored practitioners' perspectives on employee engagement and disengagement in the workplace.

### Key Findings:

- The researchers found that disengagement behaviors included:
  - An indifferent attitude toward work
  - Pulling away from being involved with colleagues and work events
  - A “who cares” approach to high priority tasks
- While disengagement and burnout are often perceived as similar, this study revealed a distinction between the two:
  - Burnout was not characterized by a lack of willingness to contribute, but rather a state of being overwhelmed that restricts one's capacity
  - Disengagement involves employees who possess the necessary capacity and bandwidth but lack the motivation to actively engage
- Burnout can be understood as a temporary state that if not remedied can eventually lead to the more long-lasting state of disengagement.

### Implications for PR Practitioners:

Employers should recognize the significance of an employee's alignment with both their role and the organizational culture as crucial factors influencing disengagement. A mismatch in these areas often serves as a predictor of disengaging behaviors. Additionally, employers should be mindful that they can adopt mitigating measures to decrease disengagement. The research outlined suggestions for organizations to improve engagement. These included the following:

- Fostering an employee-centered workplace and organizational culture
- Practicing “authentic organizational behaviors” (e.g., expression of gratitude, actions matching words, offering flexibility, listening to/caring for employees)
- Maintaining organizational transparency and building mutually beneficial relationships
- Supporting employee training and career advancement while offering mentorship

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# 3

## A Personal-Communicative Evaluation Approach to CEO Advocacy and Employee Relations

*Moonhee Cho, Ph.D., Sifan Xu, Ph.D. & Brandon Boatwright, Ph.D.*

“CEO advocacy” occurs when an organization’s top executive embraces or participates in political and social issues. This behavior creates organizational changes, both intentionally and unintentionally, while also impacting employee perceptions and relations.

Dr. Moonhee Cho, Dr. Sifan Xu, and Dr. Brandon Boatwright researched the factors associated with CEO advocacy and how these factors influence the sense of belonging among employees.

### Method:

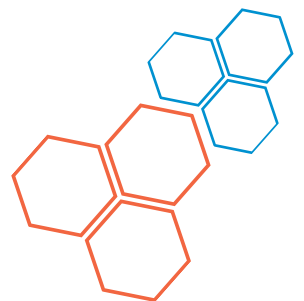
An online survey of 429 U.S. employees was conducted in March 2020. Each employee studied had recognized their CEO’s public and active advocacy on a social issue.

### Key Findings:

- Employees felt a greater sense of belonging when their values aligned with the values of the CEO.
- Employees whose values aligned with leadership at an average or below average level perceived the CEO’s views to be less representative of the entire organization.
- Employees whose values were highly aligned with those of the CEO felt a greater sense of belonging to the organization even when they didn’t think the CEO’s views were representative of the entire organization.
  - Improved access to CEO advocacy information slightly enhanced the positive effects of employee value alignment with the CEO.

### Implications for PR Practitioners:

Because CEO advocacy can influence employees’ sense of belonging positively or negatively, communication teams should work together with CEOs to carefully determine whether it is necessary or beneficial for them to share their personal views within the work environment. To achieve successful CEO advocacy and receive support from employees, the research suggests that organizations first identify the extent to which CEO and employee values align. Then, if any “incongruence” is discovered, organizations should hold discussions or meetings with employees before the CEO’s stance is further publicized. Lastly, the findings advise internal communication professionals to measure the extent to which employees expect the CEO’s opinions to align with the company’s public stances to avoid disappointment or damage to trust.



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# AI & TECHNOLOGY



# 4

## Overperception of Moral Outrage in Online Social Networks Inflates Beliefs About Intergroup Hostility

*William J. Brady, Ph.D., Killian L. McLoughlin, Mark P. Torres, Kara F. Luo, Maria Gendron, Ph.D. & M.J. Crockett, Ph.D.*

Some social media newsfeed algorithms push evocative content to increase engagement and clicks. Often, “politically extreme” social media users create a majority of the political content that users see which can have polarizing effects. It’s vital to understand how online social network platforms influence users’ social knowledge of politics, morality, and opinion.

Dr. William J. Brady and colleagues analyzed whether social media users perceive more anger and outrage from political posts than how the author originally intended. This misunderstanding of tone affects belief in polarization, extremity, and normalizes a sense of hatred on platforms.

### Method:

Five field studies took place from July 2020 to March 2021. Researchers had U.S. Twitter users review political posts and judge how outraged they believed the author was when posting.

Two of the five studies specifically focused on Democrats vs. Republicans. 523 participants were randomly assigned to view one of two simulated Twitter newsfeeds and 1,013 participants were asked how they made social judgments while using Twitter.

### Key Findings:

- Social media users tended to perceive more expressed moral outrage than the authors intended/reported.
- Participants who consumed outrage messages had amplified beliefs in:
  - Outrage expression being “the norm.”
  - Affective polarization (feeling more positive about one political party while becoming more negative toward the opposing party).
  - Ideological extremities (belief that our parties or groups are ideologically extreme).
- Users who had the highest daily political social media use overperceived the most moral outrage.
- Social media users never assumed an author meant to express positive emotions, such as happiness.

### Implications for PR Practitioners:

Frequent social media users tended to overperceive other users’ moral outrage. This online expression of outrage worsens polarization and normalizes users’ expectations to see and interact with outrage on social media platforms. Possible solutions may include:

- Change how platforms are designed
- Adjust which posts are rewarded on platforms
- Help users better understand how platforms work
- Make users aware that these platforms can foster biases and misperceptions
- Increases awareness that social media posts are not representative of online or offline social networks
- Investigate the social media features that cause the most extreme exaggerated perceptions of emotions

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# 5

## A Longitudinal Study on AI Adoption Among Employees Through a Lens of Diffusion of Innovations

*Shan Xu, Ph.D., Kerk Kee, Ph.D., Masashiro Yamamoto, Ph.D., Wenbo Li, Ph.D., Rachel Riggs, Ph.D.*

Dr. Xu, Dr. Kee, Dr. Li, Dr. Yamamoto, and Dr. Riggs sought to better understand the adoption attitudes of artificial intelligence (AI) in the workplace over time. Specifically, they sought to understand this adoption process through the lens of diffusion of innovations theory, which explains how different types of people and groups perceive and adopt technologies over time, and how that impacts adoption rate and acceptance. The scholars wanted to see how employees perceive the threat of AI (e.g., job security) and other negative attitudes of AI by employees over time.

### Method:

The researchers conducted three surveys to adult American employees in March 2022, April 2022, and May 2022. The final sample included 890 participants for the first survey, 671 for the second, and 553 for the final survey.

### Key Findings:

- The survey found that previously held negative views (e.g., threat) of AI negatively influenced attitudes of AI adoption, and that previously held positive views of AI (e.g., compatibility) positively influenced AI adoption attitudes.
- Trialability, or the ability to test and use AI technologies, was found to positively impact individuals who already had a positive attitude toward AI, increasing their positive perceptions.
- Observability, or the ability to observe others using AI, was found to decrease the negative perceptions of AI for participants who previously held negative views.
- Employees' support for AI adoption had a downward, decreasing trend over the 3-month study period.

### Implications for PR Practitioners:

To increase positive perceptions toward AI, organizations can use a mixed approach by demonstrating AI's usability, benefits, and compatibility with current work processes. For those employees who are interested in AI, organizations can offer opportunities to test AI while employees who are more cautious can directly observe others using AI.

[View full study here](#)



PRovoke Media and Sandpiper explored how professionals in the communication industry feel about the role of AI. The report analyses how AI tools offer new capabilities and opportunities but also pose some threats to the industry.

### Method:

A survey of 406 communications professionals from varying sizes of businesses around the globe was conducted in March 2023.

### Key Findings:

- 61% of communication professionals said that they were already using AI in the workplace.
  - 89% of communication professionals said they expected AI to become part of “business as usual” within the next six months.
- 91% of respondents aged 35–44 said they view AI as an opportunity rather than a risk, followed by respondents under 35 years old (84%), and respondents aged 45 years or older (83%).
  - 29% of all respondents said they’re worried advances in AI will replace or reduce their roles.
- 49% said that they believed AI will have a positive impact on the quality of work produced across the communication industry in the future.
- 8% believed industry leaders should move faster to integrate generative AI to capitalize on the opportunity.
- 59% said they need to move faster to manage risks.
- 11% said their company has policies or guidelines in place for using generative AI tools and 35% said they plan to implement guidelines.
- Positive attitudes toward AI differed by region, as 90% in both Asia Pacific and the Middle East/Africa held positive attitudes toward AI, followed by 84% in Europe and 82% in North America.
- 41% said they think industry leaders have a strong understanding of AI.

### Implications for PR Practitioners:

As the use of AI continues to expand within the communications industry, organizations should stay updated with how it’s used in the workplace and how employees feel about these changes. The report recommends key topics that organizations should offer training on so their employees learn to work alongside non-human peers and to grasp AI’s complexity and impact:

- *AI Basics*: A ‘101’ to understand the long history of AI, its essential concepts, and applications.
- *Use Cases*: Understand the role (generative) AI can play in day-to-day tasks such as content writing, creative concepting, media monitoring, and crisis management.
- *Tools & Prompting*: Learn to use the right tools for the right task (content, creative, ...), and how to get the best out of them through effective prompt engineering.
- *AI Ethics*: Understand what responsible AI usage means and its key principles and practices.

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# ESG





# 7

## What The Data Says About Americans' Views of Climate Change

Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center studied how Americans view climate change and what actions they think corporations and the government should take to address this issue. The study examined age, political, and regional differences.

### Method:

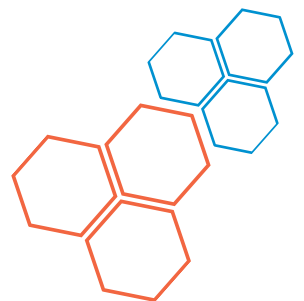
A survey of 10,701 U.S. adults was conducted March 13-19, 2023, to better understand participants' attitudes about climate change, legislation, and energy issues.

### Key Findings:

- Americans believe multiple sectors such as corporations (67%), state elected officials (58%), the federal government (56%), and the energy industry (55%) need to do more to address climate change.
- Most Americans (69%) favor the U.S. becoming carbon neutral by 2050 and support the incentivization of wind and solar energy production by the federal government (66%).
  - 90% of Democratic-leaning Americans *support* the U.S. becoming carbon neutral by 2050.
  - 65% of Republicans aged 65 and older *oppose* the U.S. becoming carbon neutral by 2050.
- 74% of Americans support the country's participation in international efforts toward reducing climate change effects.
- 69% of Americans said the U.S. should prioritize the development of renewable energy sources.
- 48% of Americans aged 18-29 said the U.S. should phase out the use of fossil fuels completely.
- 37% of U.S. adults said climate change should be the top priority for Congress & President Biden in 2023.

### Implications for PR Practitioners:

The increasing public concern for environmental responsibility impacts how professionals manage organizational reputation, stakeholder communication, and crisis management in the face of climate change. PR practitioners informed about public perceptions of climate change can better guide initiatives and campaigns.



[View full study here](#)

# 8

## Public Perceptions of Climate Mitigation Policies: Evidence from Cross-Country Surveys

*Era Dabla-Norris and colleagues, International Monetary Fund*

Communicators need public support for climate mitigation to successfully implement climate change policies. Existing beliefs about the fairness of policies, costs and advantages, and the efficacy of these policies play a significant role in generating support. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) examined characteristics and beliefs associated with climate risk perceptions and preferences for climate policies.

### Method:

Nationally representative surveys of nearly 30,000 individuals were conducted between July 5 – Aug. 11, 2022, across 28 countries.

### Key Findings:

- The share of people who thought that climate change would affect their lives tended to be higher in emerging market economies, many of which are more vulnerable to climate change.
- Most respondents said climate change is already affecting the world, ranging from 54% of respondents who agreed with that statement to 89% in the Philippines.
  - 63% of Americans thought climate change is already affecting the world.
- Up to 50% of respondents in some countries were neutral or had no opinions about the need for policy action.
- 60% of respondents in Colombia, Mexico, and the Philippines perceived the personal effects of climate change to be imminent. Only 20% felt this way in The Netherlands and Norway.
  - 13% of American respondents and 11% of Australian respondents said they think climate change will not harm them during their lifetimes.
- 65% of respondents in Australia, China, Brazil, Italy, and Spain favored subsidizing low-carbon technologies and renewables

### Implications for PR Practitioners:

Climate change mitigation is a global topic that demands international collaboration, and the success of these endeavors relies on widespread public support. Although small amounts of information on policy benefits can increase support for climate mitigation policies, this support may be short-lived if policy trade-offs are not made explicit. PR professionals should realize the importance of helping the public understand the relative costs and benefits of available policy options. Most individuals believe climate change policies can only be effective if many countries adopt measures to reduce carbon emissions. The public may be more inclined to embrace costly policies if they observe other countries taking similar actions, as it increases the likelihood of policy effectiveness and demonstrates fairness. PR professionals play a vital role in the communication of how policies work and their effectiveness in reducing emissions, ultimately providing the information that could lead to win-win solutions in climate policy.



[View full study here](#)



The Yale Program on Climate Change Communication researched Americans' viewpoints on climate policies, highlighting similarities and differences between political parties.

## Method:

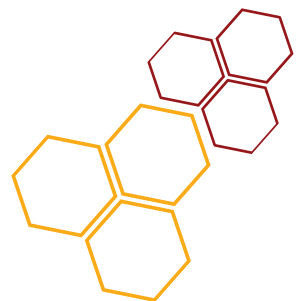
A national survey of 861 registered U.S. voters was conducted from April 18 – May 1, 2023.

## Key Findings:

- Only 11% of registered voters think the U.S. government is responding well to climate change.
- Overall, respondents across the political spectrum supported building energy-producing infrastructure in their local area, including solar farms (64%), wind farms (57%), and nuclear power plants (34%).
- 89% of moderate/conservative Democrats supported creating more parks and green spaces in low-income communities and communities of color.
  - 75% of liberal/moderate Republicans supported this initiative.
- 84% of moderate/conservative Democrats said they'd support federal funding of low-income residential buildings to make them energy efficient.
  - 68% of liberal/moderate Republicans said they'd support this funding.
- 32% of respondents said they would donate money to organizations fighting climate change, followed by 31% who said they would volunteer for such an organization, and 28% who said they would meet with an elected official or their staff about climate issues.
- 84% of moderate/conservative Democrats supported transitioning the U.S. economy from fossil fuels to 100% clean energy by 2050.
  - 58% of liberal/moderate Republicans supported the clean energy transition.

## Implications for PR Practitioners:

Practitioners who advise on climate-related communication should stay updated on partisan attitudes and/or bipartisanship consensus on the climate crisis to better target audiences, create strategies, and direct initiatives. Practitioners' up-to-date knowledge on these topics can make or break PR efforts due to the dynamic nature of public behavior and opinion toward environmental issues.



[View full study here](#)

Many public relations practitioners advise their clients and colleagues on how to effectively communicate their organization's role in the climate crisis. PRCA examined how communications practitioners play a role in environmental communication.

**Method:**

A survey of 230 communications practitioners was conducted from June 1-27, 2023.

**Key Findings:**

- 95% of practitioners were actively advising clients/colleagues on how to communicate about the climate crisis.
- 47% of clients/organizations were implementing sustainability policies and practices.
  - 44% were taking measures to reduce their carbon footprint.
  - 38% were contributing to debates on the topic.
  - 34% were educating consumers on their communication and carbon footprint measures.
- 44% of respondents said the knowledge their clients/organizations have of climate change is often "incorrect" or "misinformed."
  - 58% feel like their client/organization needs to be an expert on the climate conversation to contribute to the debate.
- 57% of respondents said they felt like the organization they work for is not doing enough to tackle the climate crisis.
  - 33% of respondents said they had been required to travel for meetings that could be held online.
  - 20% have had clients/bosses who do not believe in the climate crisis in general.

**Implications for PR Practitioners:**

Practitioners should recognize the growing importance of climate-related communication and to stay informed about environmental issues to effectively incorporate them into communication strategies. The authors recommended some tactics to help communicators remain prepared to address climate matters:

- Have a full understanding of the clients' level of knowledge about the climate crisis while guiding them toward informed communication.
- Prepare to address challenges related to climate crisis communication, including clients who talk but don't act and concerns about potential negative perceptions.
- Always provide accurate information and strategic guidance. This simultaneously demonstrates a commitment to ethical and accurate communication.
- Push back against greenwashing and guide clients toward genuine sustainability initiatives to maintain credibility and trust.
- Position PR practitioners as valuable partners in promoting impactful messages about the climate crisis.

[View full study here](#)





WE Communications analyzed how the rise of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors have impacted businesses operating in China and what these business-to-business (B2B) companies can do to expand operations, generate ESG awareness, and increase sales.

### Method:

A survey of 300 communications professionals and marketers operating in B2B industries in China was conducted in October 2023 to better understand the direction of sustainability and ESG communications in China.

### Key Findings:

- 50% of respondents believed that sustainability credentials/metrics will be one of the top considerations influencing their customers' purchase decisions in the next 3 to 5 years – ranking it higher than any other factor.
  - 35% said sustainability credentials/metrics are essential to their short-term operations.
  - 70% identified “low carbon” as the most important ESG factor to B2B customers, followed by “eco-development” (67%) which ranked in second place.
- 47% believed that digital transformations and the use of AI will influence their customers' purchase decisions over the next 3 to 5 years.
- 60% of companies said they increased their marketing and communications expenses on sustainability/ESG programs this year.
- Environmental issues such as low carbon (67%) and eco-development (65%) were the most popular areas of focus, with respondents rating these topics as either “essential” or “high priority” for their organizations in the year ahead.
- 66% said green initiatives such as low carbon and eco-development are “high priority” or “essential” to their company's ESG strategies for the year ahead, followed by employee-targeted initiatives (57%).
- 35% rated the Chinese government agenda as “very important” when choosing which area of ESG their business should focus on, followed by global company and organizational priorities tied with brand purpose or values (34%).
- Energy and utility companies (48%) were the most likely to say sustainability messaging helps them acquire customer inquiries or leads.
- Chemical (62%) and manufacturing companies (60%) were likely to say ESG helped with brand awareness.
- 60% of *larger* businesses (5,000 employees or more) said ESG and sustainability programs had improved their brand awareness, followed by 56% who said it differentiated them from competitor brands, and 53% who said it provided them with more customer inquiries and leads.
  - 50% of *smaller* businesses (4,999 employees or less) said ESG and sustainability programs had improved their brand awareness, followed by 51% who said it differentiated them from competitor brands, and 45% who said it provided them with more customer inquiries and leads.

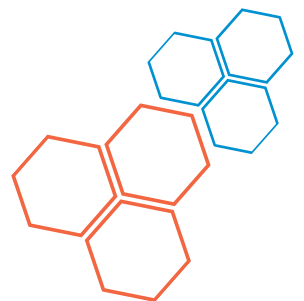


**Implications for PR Practitioners:**

The WE Communications report offers three essential strategies for organizations that want to shape their ESG approaches:

- Stay Up to Date:
  - Ensure your strategy meets your customers' needs, now and in the future. If your business doesn't currently have a clear ESG initiative or narrative, now is absolutely the time to develop one. If an existing or globally developed ESG plan hasn't been updated recently, it is time review. B2B brands operating in China need to make sure their ESG storylines are up to date, or they could lose out to competitors better support customers on their sustainability journeys.
- Balance Domestic and International Expectations:
  - There is no one-size-fits-all approach for B2B businesses in China looking to create an ESG strategy, as all multinational companies face different expectations domestically and locally in China. Considering a global range of stakeholders who have different opinions about sustainability and ESG can be a challenge for marketers. Often, the solution is to balance both global and local perspectives on ESG and tailor communications materials to these different markets.
- Sharpen Your Delivery:
  - If your businesses want to stand out, how you tell its story counts. Ensure you tell your stories in the places where customers are likely to be receptive to them. According to the report findings, owned and paid social and digital channels were seen as the most important ways to communicate ESG and sustainability stories. Earned channels, such as in-person interviews, feature articles, and events were viewed as being much less effective.

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# STATE OF THE INDUSTRY



Trust between businesses and their internal and external stakeholders can boost profitability and improve the bottom line. Conversely, a lack of trust can harm financial outcomes, negatively impact brand value, and harm recruitment and retention. PwC assessed the role and importance of trust in business and offered suggestions for how businesses can build trust.

### Method:

A survey of 500 business executives, 2,508 consumers, and 2,012 employees in the U.S. was conducted Feb. 17-23, 2023.

### Key Findings:

- 91% of business executives said their ability to build and maintain trust improves the bottom line.
  - 94% of employees and 92% of consumers said that organizations have a responsibility to build trust.
- 46% of employees whose company had a trust-damaging event in the past year said they “expected it,” as their day-to-day work gave them firsthand information about potential blind spots their companies might face regarding trust.
- 79% of consumers said protecting their data is very important to building trust.
- 84% of business executives said they think that customers highly trusted their company, yet only 27% of customers said the same.
- 79% of business executives said their employees trust the company, but only 65% of employees agreed.
- 58% of consumers said they recommended a company they trusted to friends and family.
  - 64% of employees said they recommended a company they trust as a place to work.

### Implications for PR Practitioners:

Trust should be prioritized and integrated into corporate strategy and business processes to better prepare for crises and challenges as well as to increase alignment between organizational members and goals.

Executives cited five issues as their top challenges when it comes to building trust:

1. Current company culture
2. Diverse stakeholder perspectives
3. Negative, long-term, reputational issues specific to the industry
4. Inability to focus on trust because of pressure to deliver short-term financial results
5. Inability to change supply change processes and materials due to cost

Organizations can build trust by:

- Researching and defining what trust means to stakeholders, employees, and the organization.
- Training and assigning “relationship owners” to each client and investor. These “relationship owners” can anticipate and track changes in views, perspectives, and coordination.
- Embedding trust as a measure and evaluation of business success.
- Making trust more personal in day-to-day interactions and not overlooking the small things.
- Understanding the implications and consequences that a lack of trust could have on the organization.

[View full study here](#)





The Latin American Communication Monitor (LCM) analyzed trends in public relations in Latin America and what professionals are predicting for 2024. The research identified 10 key trends that will be in the spotlight in strategic communication and public relations.

### Method:

A survey of 1,134 communications professionals from 20 countries was conducted from May – June 2022.

### Key Findings:

- Multiple trends were consistent across the region:
  - Actions on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) reinforced stakeholder trust.
  - Empathetic leadership increased engagement, improved mental health, and reduced turnover.
- Five top priorities for 2024 were identified by communicators:
  - Strengthening the role of the communication function to support top-level decisions (42%).
  - Connecting the organization strategies with communication (38%).
  - Dealing with the speed and volume of information flow (34%).
  - Using big data and/or algorithms for communication (33%).
  - Exploring new ways of content creation and distribution (29%).
- 50% of professionals engaged in global discussions on DEI and considered it a highly debated topic at the national level.
  - 20% positioned DEI as one of their key strategic issues over the next three years.
- 73% perceived an increase in the need for external consulting in stakeholder communication, followed by an increased need for organizational communication structure and processes (70%).
  - 76% said the consulting industry is becoming more diverse and complex.
  - 61% said ensuring the quality of external consulting has become more challenging.

### Implications for PR Practitioners:

PR professionals should position themselves to track trends and stay up to date with what's to come within the industry. For example, the LCM report discusses how CommTech and AI are expected to significantly change the communications profession. PR professionals who understand how widespread these tools are, how commonly organizations use them, and the debate over its advantages and disadvantages are in a better position to advise their clients and organizations when issues surrounding this trend arise. Similarly, the LCM report found that external consulting is becoming increasingly relevant, diverse, and complex.

*\*Note: IPR is a sponsor of this Latin American Communication Monitor*

[View full study here](#)



HarrisX partnered with Ragan Communications to understand how CEOs and communications leaders view each other's roles and responsibilities, what they value most, and their views on trending industry topics, such as AI in the workplace.

### Method:

HarrisX conducted an online survey of 173 CEOs and 197 communications leaders (CCOs, CMOs, and SVP/VPs) in the U.S. from Aug. 11 – Sept. 11, 2023.

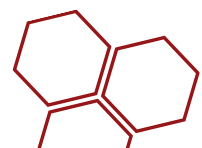
### Key Findings:

- Communications leaders reported trusting their CEOs “a great deal” when it came to topics including external communications (54%), diversity, equity, and inclusion (53%), and internal/employee communications (44%).
- 78% of CEOs said they oversee *external communications*, whereas communication leaders said CCOs (34%) or CMOs (11%) oversee external communications.
- 73% of CEOs say they also oversee *internal communications*, whereas 36% of communication leaders said the CCO oversees internal communications.
- CEOs (12%) and communication leaders (15%) both rated employee communications as the top strategy for bringing value to their organizations.
- CEOs (9%) and communication leaders (17%) ranked a competitive salary as the top strategy for attracting talent.
- Organizations preparing for a recession are most often doing so by cutting travel budgets (38%), cutting operating costs (37%), and creating emergency savings funds (35%).
- Of the communication leaders who have conducted layoffs, 58% said they have laid off at least 10% of their employees.
- 82% of CEOs reported having a *somewhat* or *very favorable* opinion of AI, followed by 78% of communications leaders who held the same opinions toward AI.
  - CEOs (46%) and communication leaders (59%) said they know “a little” about AI and how it works.
  - CEOs (45%) and communication leaders (27%) said they know “a lot” about AI and how it works.
  - CEOs (8%) and communication leaders (12%) said they “don’t know much” about AI and how it works.

### Implications for PR Practitioners:

The relationship between CEOs and communication leaders remains as important as ever. This report provides insight into how CEOs perceived major issues in 2023 compared to their communication leader counterparts, and gives a snapshot of how leaders handled issues such as decreasing budgets and layoffs.

[View full study here](#)





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# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION



The state of women in the workplace is marked by both progress and challenges as companies work toward gender equality and workplace inclusivity. McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org analyzed the current state of women in corporate America and their workplace experiences.

**Method:**

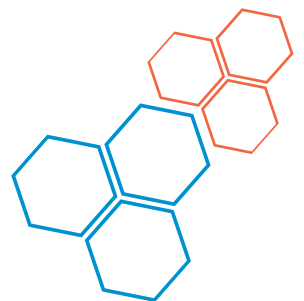
A survey of over 27,000 employees from 33 companies was conducted in May – August 2023, along with interviews of 33 female and nonbinary employees. In addition, data and HR policies from 276 private, public, and social sector companies across the U.S. and Canada were reviewed.

**Key Findings:**

- Men held 60% percent of manager-level positions in a typical company, while women occupied 40%.
- 23% of female respondents said their judgment is questioned in the workplace, 21% said others get credit for their ideas, and 21% said they're interrupted or spoken over more than others.
- 78% of women who faced microaggressions in the workplace "adjusted the way they looked or acted" to protect themselves.
  - Women who experienced microaggressions were 4.2 times more likely to always feel burnt out and 3.3 times more likely to consider leaving their company.
- 47% of female LGBTQ+ respondents and 49% of female respondents with disabilities said they tone down what they say at work to avoid being unlikeable.
- 36% of Black female respondents said they "code-switch to blend in with others."

**Implications for PR Practitioners:**

Organizations should address gender and diversity issues internally and evaluate how these topics play a role in external communications strategies. Organizations' DEI efforts must not be seen as mere public relations tactics, but rather as genuine commitments toward improving workplace equity. Companies should support inclusivity programs that consider the intersection of gender and race and create strategies for equality. Proper implementation of these actions can improve workplace morale, reputation, and internal communication.



[View full study here](#)



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# IPR RESEARCH FROM 2023



**1**

## **Disabilities in the Workplace: Culture, Communication, Support, and Inclusion with Voya Financial**

[View full study here](#)

This comprehensive report explores how organizations support and communicate about disabilities and caregiving in the workplace. Based on a survey of 1,014 employees who work in organizations with 15 or more people, this report can help organizations take specific and supportive actions for people with disabilities and caregivers.

**2**

## **Deconstructing: Artificial Intelligence Regulation**

[View full study here](#)

*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. This edition of *Deconstructing* explores current trends in U.S. AI regulation and suggests how PR practitioners can navigate the evolving parameters of AI regulation.

**3**

## **The Business Case for Focusing on Employee Mental Health With Cision**

[View full study here](#)

This research explored the conversation surrounding employee mental health including topics such as burnout, “quiet quitting,” and a four-day work week. This report provides suggestions for leaders to support employee mental health and analyzes how employees and companies discuss mental health on Twitter.

**4**

## **The Top 19 Public Relations Insights of 2022**

[View full study here](#)

Published annually, this report highlights the top research studies published the previous year that all PR practitioners, industry professionals, and academics should know about. Topics include diversity and inclusion, the future of work, internal communication, environmental social governance, and industry trends.

**5**

## **2023 IPR Disinformation in Society Report With Leger**

[View full study here](#)

In this 4th annual disinformation study, the Institute for Public Relations and Leger surveyed 2,002 Americans about their perceptions of the impact of disinformation in society. Our results found that the American socio-political landscape has been increasingly clouded by concerns over misinformation and disinformation, with both perceived as more pressing threats than critical issues such as border security, climate change, and terrorism.