

# Top Ten Public Relations Research Insights of 2014 from the IPR Board of Trustees



Compiled by  
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For the first annual edition of the *Top Ten Public Relations Research Insights for 2014*, the Institute for Public Relations Board carefully selected from a range of topics. The Board comprised of accomplished professionals and leading academics, chose these ten studies based on their rigor of methodology, findings, relevance to practice and accessibility. The first edition encompasses research ranging from building global leadership to testing the security of social media. Each year the IPR Board will continue to present top research insights that uncover *the science beneath the art of public relations™*.



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# #1

## Social media has limited influence on people's attitudes toward business and government

By: Public Affairs Council

### Why this research is important:

The annual in-depth survey of Americans' opinions on business and government, the Public Affairs Pulse, provides insights into the public's attitudes toward issues ranging from government regulation of business to corporate lobbying and political involvement.

### Method:

The 2014 Public Affairs Pulse survey, sponsored by the Public Affairs Council, conducted random telephone interviews with 1,609 adults living in the United States.

### Key findings:

- Social media has limited influence on people's attitudes towards business and government.
- Americans generally have a favorable opinion of major companies but prefer small businesses.
- Americans give business good grades on the basics, but corporations earn demerits on jobs, environmental protection and pay.
- Tech, retail and manufacturing are the most trusted sectors, while health insurance, pharma, banks and energy firms are the least trusted.

### About business



### About government



# #2

## Friends and family are the most credible sources of information on an organization

By: Ketchum Research

### Why this research is important:

The Ketchum Leadership Communication Monitor explores what the world thinks of its leaders—or more specifically, public sentiment towards the quality of their leadership and the effectiveness of their communication.

### Method:

The study surveyed more than 6,500 individuals in 13 countries, examining perceptions of leaders in business, politics, community, nonprofit, and union or organized labor organizations.

### Key findings:

- Friends and family are the most credible sources of information on an organization
- The “Leadership eVangelists”—a specific minority subset of consumers identified by the research—have a disproportionate impact on commercial and reputational outcomes.
- Business leaders are the most admired type of leaders and political leaders continue to come in last on every measure.
- The research finds open, transparent communication to be absolutely critical to effective leadership.



# #3

## Content is still king, but consumers are shaping their own content-discovery experience

By: Nielsen Research

### Why this research is important:

The research suggests that advertisers and media companies need to get over themselves, and stop worrying about platform proliferation. Instead, the focus should be on delivering to their audiences—wherever they are.

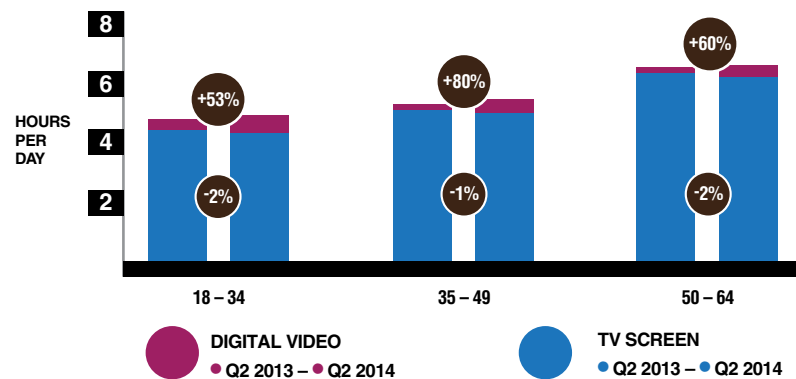
### Method:

A hybrid methodology developed by Nielsen combines a census level accounting of page views and video streams where Nielsen measurement tags have been deployed in order to project audience and behavior to the full universe of all Internet users.

### Key Findings:

- A shift in consumer behavior and a resounding growth in consumption on digital platforms. Content is king, but viewing habits vary by demographics.
- Overall, American's average daily time spent watching live TV decreased in the third quarter of 2014.
- Conversely, the average daily time a consumer spends using a smartphone has increased in 2014.
- Timeshifting content (using a DVR or video-on-demand technology) continues to resonate with consumers, and while still a small part of overall usage across platforms and devices, daily time spent using a multimedia device continues to climb.

### DIGITAL GROWTH IS FUELING AN INCREASE IN MEDIA TIME



Link: <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2014/content-is-king-but-viewing-habits-vary-by-demographic.html>

# #4

## Social media sites are seen as the least secure channel to communicate private information

By: Pew Research Internet Project

### Why this research is important:

Privacy is a concern for Americans and most of these concerns deal with the surveillance of digital communications. This study is important to understand privacy behaviors and attitudes, as well as how Americans feel about the protection and privacy of their personal information.

### Method:

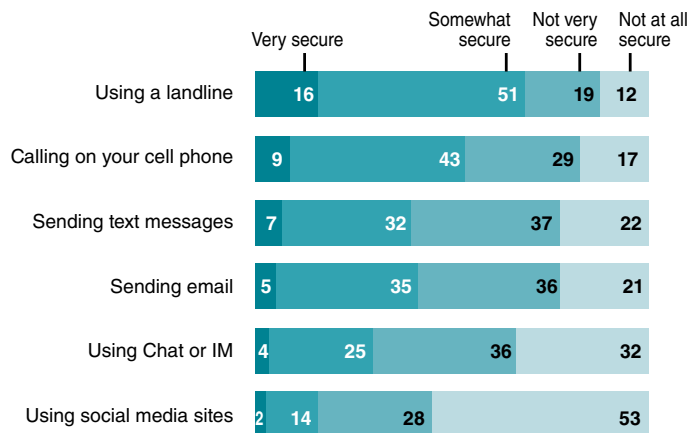
Pew Research Center conducted an online survey through a research panel of 607 adult internet users.

### Key Findings:

- Respondent perceptions of privacy and sensitivities about different kinds of personal information varied, but their lack of confidence in the security of digital communications channels is universal.
- There is not a high level of confidence in the security of everyday communications channels—particularly when it comes to use of online tools.
- The public felt communicating private information via calls placed on a landline telephone or cell phone was the most secure channel for sharing private information; text messages and email were not as widely trusted.

### The public feels most secure using landline phones, least secure on social media

*% of adults who feel varying degrees of security when sharing private info with another trusted person or organization*



Source: Pew Research Privacy Panel Survey, January 2014  
N=607 adults, ages 18 and older



# #5

## Advocating a point of view to influence business practices and to reinforce corporate culture is important for employee communication

By: Institute for Public Relations

### Why this research is important:

IPR commissioned a Best-in-Class research program to identify best practices for employee communication in an environment that is increasingly globalized, digitized and empowered. With identification, the research informs a comprehensive picture of the state of organizational (internal) communications today with specific pathways regarding development, direction and distinction.

### Method:

The first phase of research included in-depth interviews with senior internal communication professionals from top 10 global companies. Following the qualitative analysis, a quantitative industry survey of 156 internal communicators followed the socialization of qualitative findings.

#### Key Findings:

- Perceived efficacy in internal communications is limited. Respondents were reluctant to say that they contribute to the success of an organization, are as effective as they could be in evaluations, and even that they have goals that align with the overall organization.
- Most of the “Best-in-Class Factors” identified in the first study are widely recognized as important.
- Few of these factors are widely implemented. The gap between perceived importance and implementation is consistent and large.

## Mindset

(% finding each belief to be of high importance (top two box))



**91%**

An organization should be able to clearly and concisely articulate the purpose and value of change for its future success and for employees.



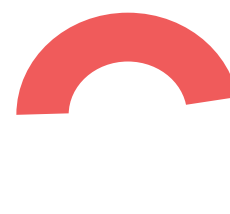
**74%**

To be successful, internal communicators should be seen as business people, with an expertise in communications.



**71%**

Strong internal communication will have a positive return for the total organization that need not be proven at every juncture.



**47%**

There are shared viewpoints up and down the chain of command about the total organization at-large and the way to communicate

Link: <http://www.instituteforpr.org/best-in-class-practices-in-employee-communication-through-the-lens-of-10-global-leaders/>

# #6

## Building global leadership is the most urgent issue for business leaders

By: Deloitte

### Why this research is important:

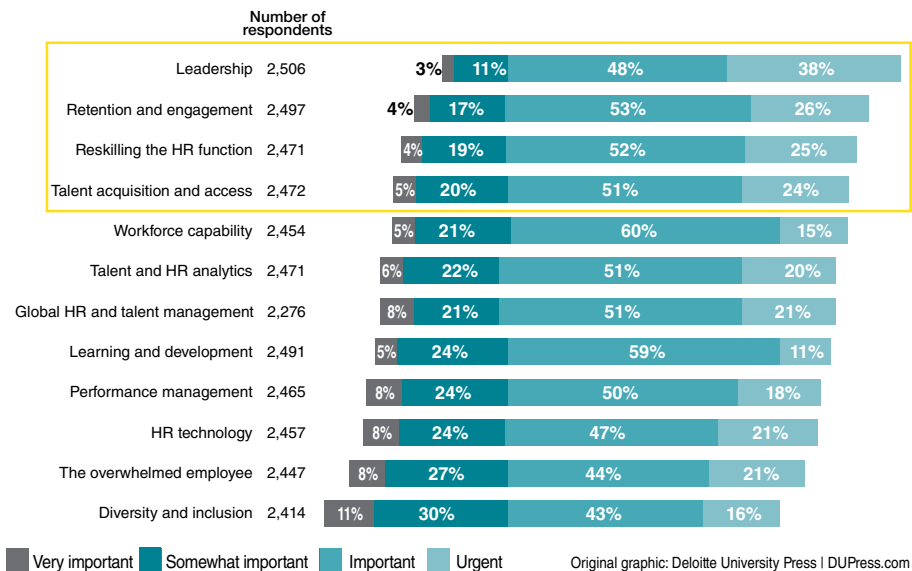
The changes in the workforce and workplace are significant and disruptive. There also is a significant gap between the urgency of the talent and leadership issues leaders face today and their organizations' readiness to respond. The "Global Human Capital Trends 2014" highlights that organizations have to manage people differently—creating an imperative to innovate, transform, and re-engineer human capital practices.

### Method:

Deloitte surveyed 2,532 business and HR leaders across industries in 94 countries, including all the world's continents.

### Key Findings:

- Leadership, retention, HR skills, and talent acquisition are the top global trends in perceived urgency.
- Leadership is the top priority in developed and growing economies.
- Human capital priorities vary by industry, with one exception: Leadership.
- Companies report generally low levels of readiness to respond to the trends.
- The largest capability gaps are reported in leadership, analytics, reskilling HR, talent acquisition and access, and overwhelmed employees.



Link: <http://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/human-capital/articles/human-capital-trends-2014.html>

# #7

## Consumers no longer consume media in a linear and predictable way

By: Millward Brown

### Why this research is important:

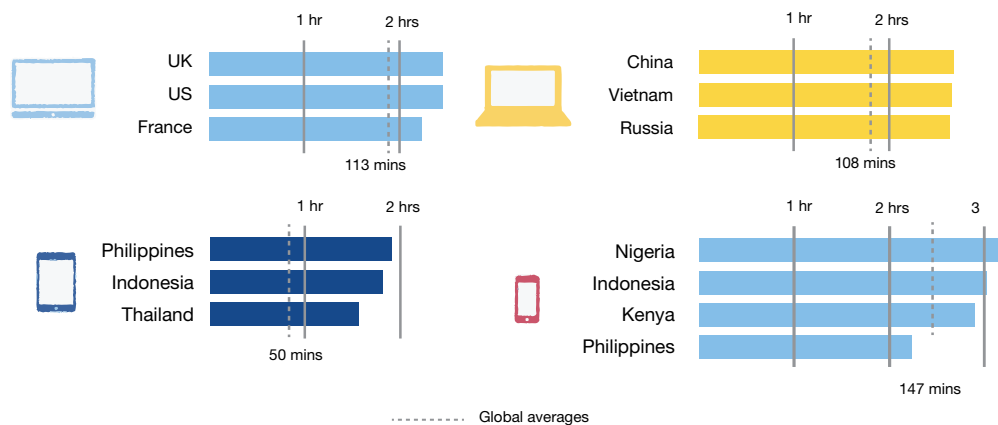
The study explores how to engage with people to build a meaningfully different brand in a multiscreen world. According to the research, campaigns must mirror the way people live now, such as interacting with multiple screens over the course of the day. The study also aimed to establish how well the creative content is resonating with the consumers.

### Method:

The study surveyed more than 17,000 consumers across 37 countries. In all countries, a 15-question survey was conducted via interviews on smartphone or tablet devices with 16- to 45-year-old multiscreen users, or those who own or have access to both a TV and either a smartphone or tablet.

### Key Findings:

- The typical UK multi-screen user consumes almost seven hours of screen media each day, including 148 minutes on TV, 111 minutes on their smartphone, 97 minutes on laptops and 55 minutes on tablets.
- Brands should evaluate the multiscreen landscape by considering both the scale of screens (reach/opportunity to contact) as well as the receptivity of people to various marketing approaches, both within and across screens.
- TV is generally more of a starting point and digital devices are generally used more to continue/complete tasks.
- A typical multiscreen user consumes 7 hours of screen media per day during a 5 hour period.



# #8

## Consumers around the world are prepared to pay more for environmentally-friendly products

By: WPP

### Why this research is important:

TGI's and Kantar Media's "What Makes the World's Consumers Tick 2014" study collates and compares responses to attitudinal statements. The attitudinal survey provides simple mindset portraits of brand users, potential customers or any group of the population.

### Method:

The data was collected from more than 800,000 respondents in almost 70 countries to understand the values of different groups of people within and across geographies.

### Key Findings:

- 50 statements on attitudes and perceptions are compared, including statements on media, self perception and personality, motivation, interests, etc.
- On only one of the 50 statements are US adults an outlier. Asked whether they agree with the statement, "I don't want responsibility; I'd rather be told what to do," only 11% of US adults agreed. Great Britain also scored 11% and lowest-ranking Germany, 10%. The global average level of agreement with the statement was 27%, with India and Venezuela scoring the highest levels of agreement at 51% and 52%, respectively.
- However, the US scored below the global average in agreement with the statement, "I try to keep up with developments in technology." Only 41% of US adults agreed, compared to a global average of 48% and just 8 points higher than lowest-ranking Chile (33%). The greatest level of agreement was found in the Philippines at 79%.

### Correspondence Analysis of Mobile Phone Brands and Lifestyle Statements



Link: <http://us.kantar.com/tech/digital/tgi-what-makes-the-worlds-consumers-tick-2014-study/#sthash.niMtOISG.dpuf>

# #9

## Journalists do not like to access password-protected content on organizational websites

By: Business Wire

### Why this research is important:

The survey explores the ever-changing and ongoing exchange of news and information. This survey presents a roadmap for communication professionals for creating and building useful, successful relationships with small and large media alike.

### Method:

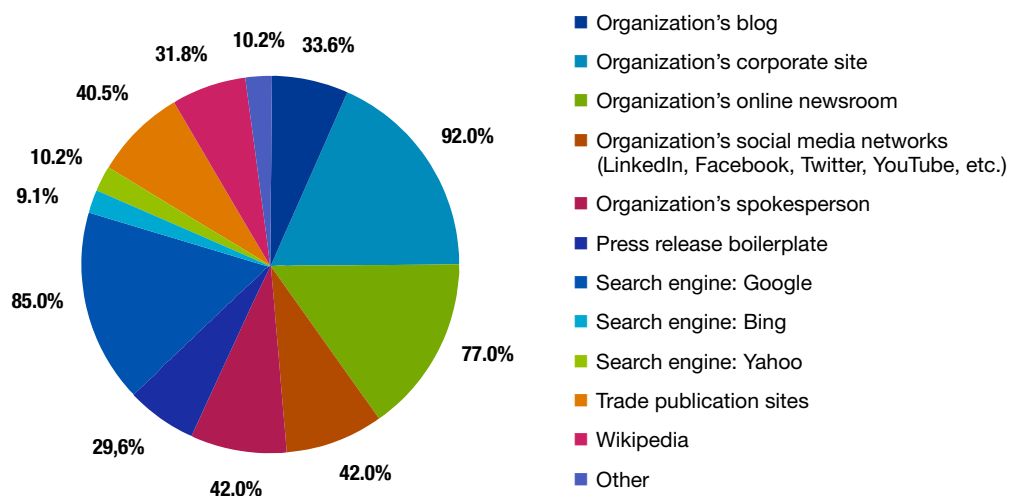
Business Wire surveyed more than 300 North American journalists representing a wide range of news organizations.

### Key Findings:

- The top two methods of how media receive news were email alerts and press releases.
- Despite the incredible growth of mobile, media primarily access online newsrooms with desktop computers.
- Journalists want professionals to provide supporting multimedia within the press release. More than half said they were more likely to review a press release that includes multimedia than one that does not.

### Where do you look when researching an organization?

(Select all that apply)



# #10

## Top executives are still geared towards traditional mass media and less convinced of social media

By: Dr. Ansgar Zerfass & Muschda Sherzada

Paper presented at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual International Public Relations Research Conference  
Miami, Florida, USA, March 2014

### **Why this research is important:**

The research explores how CEOs and members of the executive board shape the basic understanding of communication in organizations. How the priorities, structures and resources are decided and communicated with important stakeholders is also examined.

### **Method:**

It is based on a quantitative survey of 602 CEOs and board members in Germany. The research questions address the perceptions and expectations of CEOs and executive board members concerning a) the relevance of public opinion and contribution of communication performance to organizational success, b) the communicative role of top executives and their interaction with professional communicators, c) the objectives and values of corporate communications, and d) the importance of various disciplines and instruments.

### **Key Findings:**

- 96.2% of the respondents believe that mass media coverage influences corporate reputation, only 71.9% agree that social media has an impact.
- CEOs and board members focus on primary stakeholders (customers, employees) instead of secondary stakeholders (politicians, activists).
- Top executives are still geared towards traditional mass media and less convinced of social media.
- Top executives rate speaking as more important than listening in corporate communications.
- Communication professionals are not always first choice when CEOs and executive board members reflect on public opinion and strategic communication.

Link: <http://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/IPRRC17-Proceedings.pdf>



### **About the institute:**

IPR is an independent nonprofit foundation dedicated to *the science beneath the art of public relations™*. The organization focuses on research that provides timely insights and applied intelligence that professionals can put to immediate use.

### **Key Research Areas and Commissions:**

#### ***Measurement Commission***

The IPR Measurement Commission is composed of researcher-practitioners and thought-leaders in public relations research, measurement, and evaluation drawn from four segments of the global public relations industry: (i) corporations, government, and non-profits; (ii) public relations agencies; (iii) research firms; and (iv) academia. The mission is to develop and promote standards and best practices for research, measurement, and analytics that contribute to ethical, strategic, and effective public relations.

#### ***The Coalition for PR Research Standards***

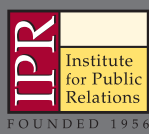
The Coalition for Public Relations Research Standards—a group in which the Institute for Public Relations is a member—has developed voluntary PR standards in areas ranging from traditional media and social media measurement to the communications lifecycle, ROI, and ethics. GE, GM, USAA, McDonald's USA, and the University of Florida, along with about 93 other organizations have already pledged their commitment to deploying these standards within their organizations. Now, we invite you to join the growing list of those leading the way toward established standards.

#### ***Organizational Communication***

The Commission on Organizational Communication completed and published a qualitative study on Best-in-Class Practices in Employee Communications followed with a quantitative study testing best practices with several hundred global leaders for employee communication. IPR's Organizational Communication Research Center is a comprehensive growing database of research articles and information about employee communication. With over 90 abstracts, it is truly the go-to resource for employee communication practitioners who understand the science underlying their work.

#### ***Science of Social Media Research Center***

As social media continues to have a tremendous impact on the public relations profession, the IPR Science of Social Media Research Center (SSSM) is an important resource for both practitioners and academics. This repository shows how social and emerging media are impacting networking and relationship-building, earning and influencing trust, building influence, improving reputation, and controlling the socialization of ideas in PR. The research center knowledge is becoming a major element of IPR professional development offerings. In 2014, the editors created a social media case study competition for practitioners, faculty and graduate students with the top three winners receiving a total of \$1750 in prizes.



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