



break through

# Mind The Gap

How the public and public relations professionals  
value leadership and social media

**Results of the ComGap study in 10 European countries**

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This report presents the key findings of the ComGap study.

Additional information on the collaboration between EUPRERA and Ketchum is available on pages 49-51.

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# Outline of the study



# Overview and research questions

- **Communicating Leadership:** Both organisations and their leaders are facing audiences who have increased expectations as well as an even greater ability to share and disseminate any criticism. Positioning organisations in society, as well as CEOs and top executives as leaders, are now key issues for communicators.
- **The realm of social media communication:** Organisations have integrated digital channels in their communication strategies. But the conversational potential is not always exploited. Many public relations professionals are still struggling to tell their stories and to use the listening power of social media.
  - » Do communication practitioners know how to reach their audiences when talking about their leadership ambitions and their leaders? Does this match stakeholder expectations?
  - » What types of content and conversation do stakeholders expect an organisation to share on social media? Do PR professionals know about this?
  - » What are the lessons PR professionals can learn from stakeholder expectations?

## Insights based on two empirical studies

- ComGap 2014 is a study based on thorough academic standards. It combines a representative poll among internet users in 10 European countries with a survey of 1,346 communication professionals in the same markets.

# Representative poll among internet users in 10 European countries

## Methodology

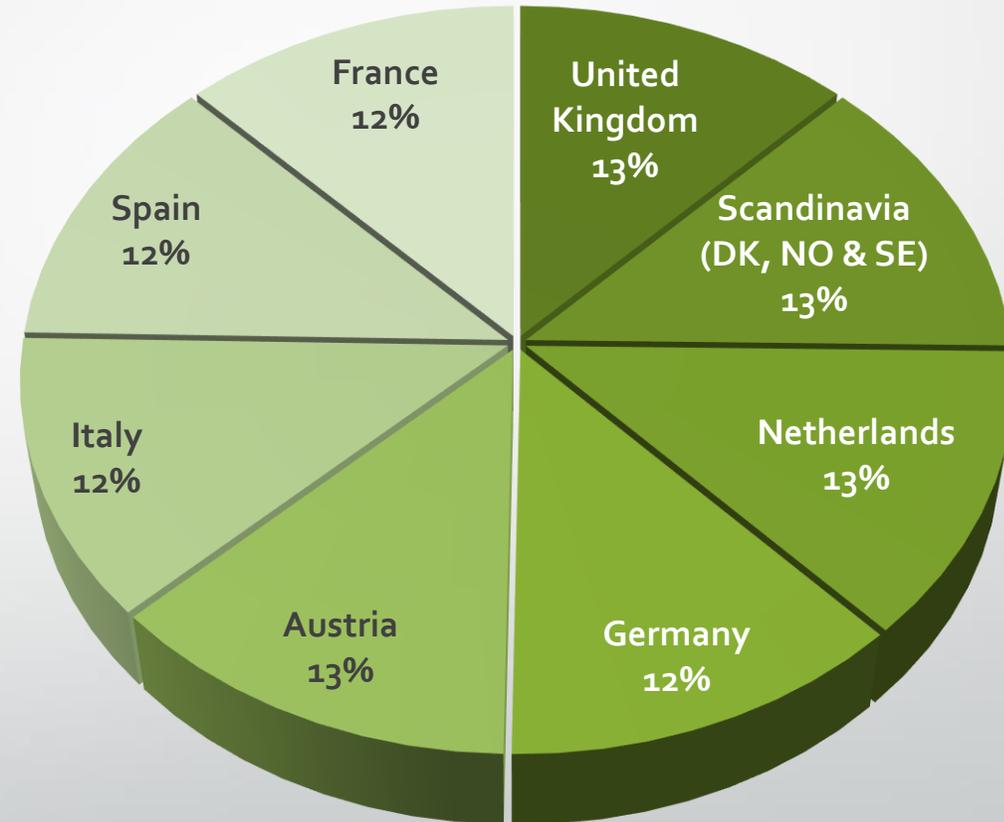
Sample: Representative online survey among 4,054 citizens in 10 European countries.

Demographics: The sample has been weighted for age and gender to accurately represent the population of each country. In total, the study includes 50.2% male and 49.8% female respondents.

Questionnaire: Survey with six closed questions; evaluated with descriptive and analytical statistics (SPSS).

Data collection: First part executed by market research specialist IPSOS in January 2014 (UK, FR, GE, IT, ES), second part in May 2014 by GMI (AT, DK, NL, NO, SE).

## Home country of participants



First survey based on a recoded subsample of the Leadership Monitor 2014 conducted by Ketchum, [www.ketchum.com/leadership-communication-monitor-2014](http://www.ketchum.com/leadership-communication-monitor-2014)

# Quantitative survey among PR professionals

## Methodology

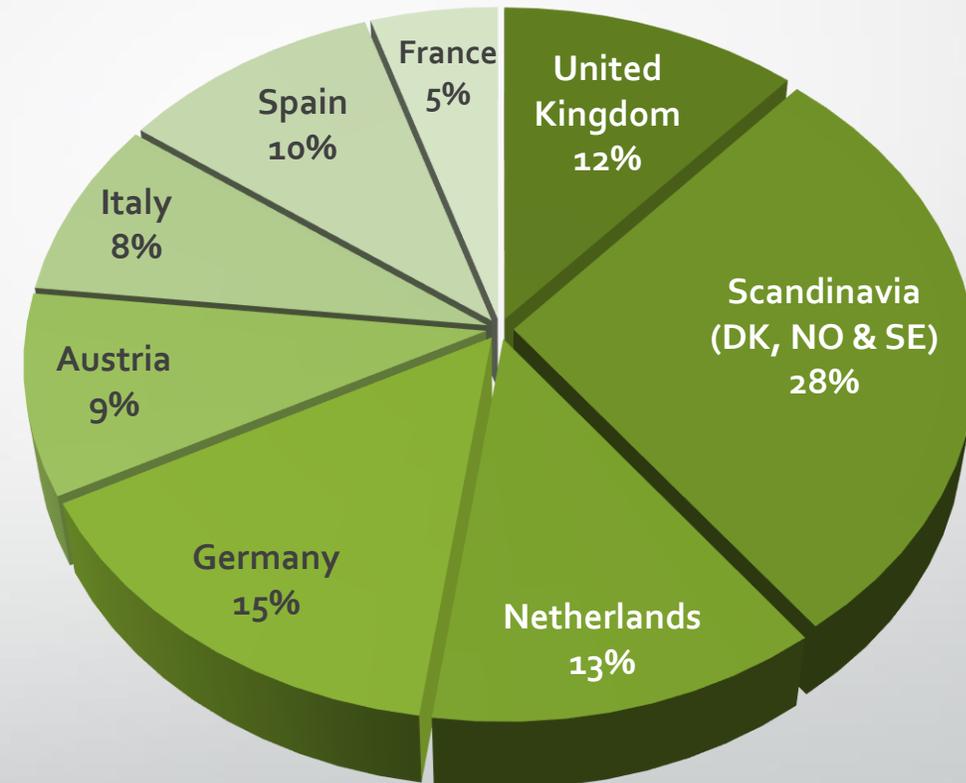
Sample: Online survey among 1,346 communication professionals based in 10 European countries.

Demographics: 44.2% male; 55.8% female; 43.4% head of corporate or organisational communication or agency CEO; average age 43.2 years.

Questionnaire: Six closed questions as part of a larger web-based survey, evaluated with descriptive and analytical statistics (SPSS).

Data collection: Executed by the researchers in March 2014; personal e-mail invitations based on the largest database of communication professionals in Europe.

## Home country of participants



Participants of this study are based in all parts of Europe – with a focus on markets with highly developed communications profession.

Based on a recoded subsample of the European Communication Monitor 2014 conducted by EUPRERA & EACD, [www.communicationmonitor.eu](http://www.communicationmonitor.eu)



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# Communicating leadership



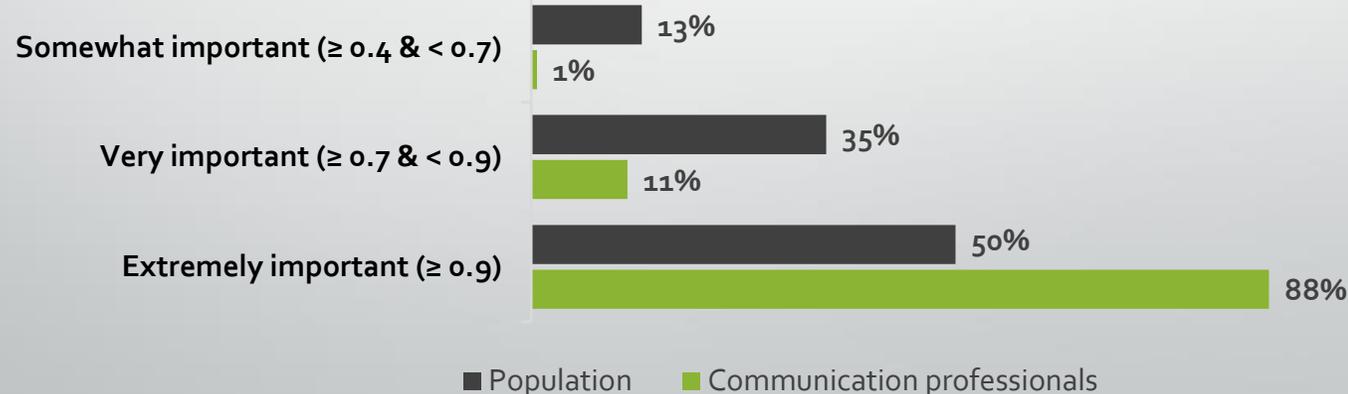
# The ComGap study explores four key questions on leadership and communication

- 1.** How important is communication for effective organisational leadership?
- 2.** Which communication activities are relevant to the leadership image of organisations?
- 3.** Which organisational attributes are important to the leadership image of organisations?
- 4.** What are the characteristics and behaviours of effective leaders?

# Great leadership needs effective communication

- According to 87.8% of communication professionals, effective communication is extremely important for great leadership. The general population also values communication very highly, but only half of them (50.5%) agree with the extremely strong vote of the PR professionals.
- In France, one quarter (24.4%) of the population states that communication is somewhat or even less important for great leadership. This is a sharp contrast both to the view of French PR professionals and to citizens in other countries.

## Importance of effective communication for leadership



Q1: Generally speaking, how important is effective communication to great leadership?

For this question, two original scales (PR professionals: 1-5, population: 0-10) have been recalculated to one uniform scale (0-1).

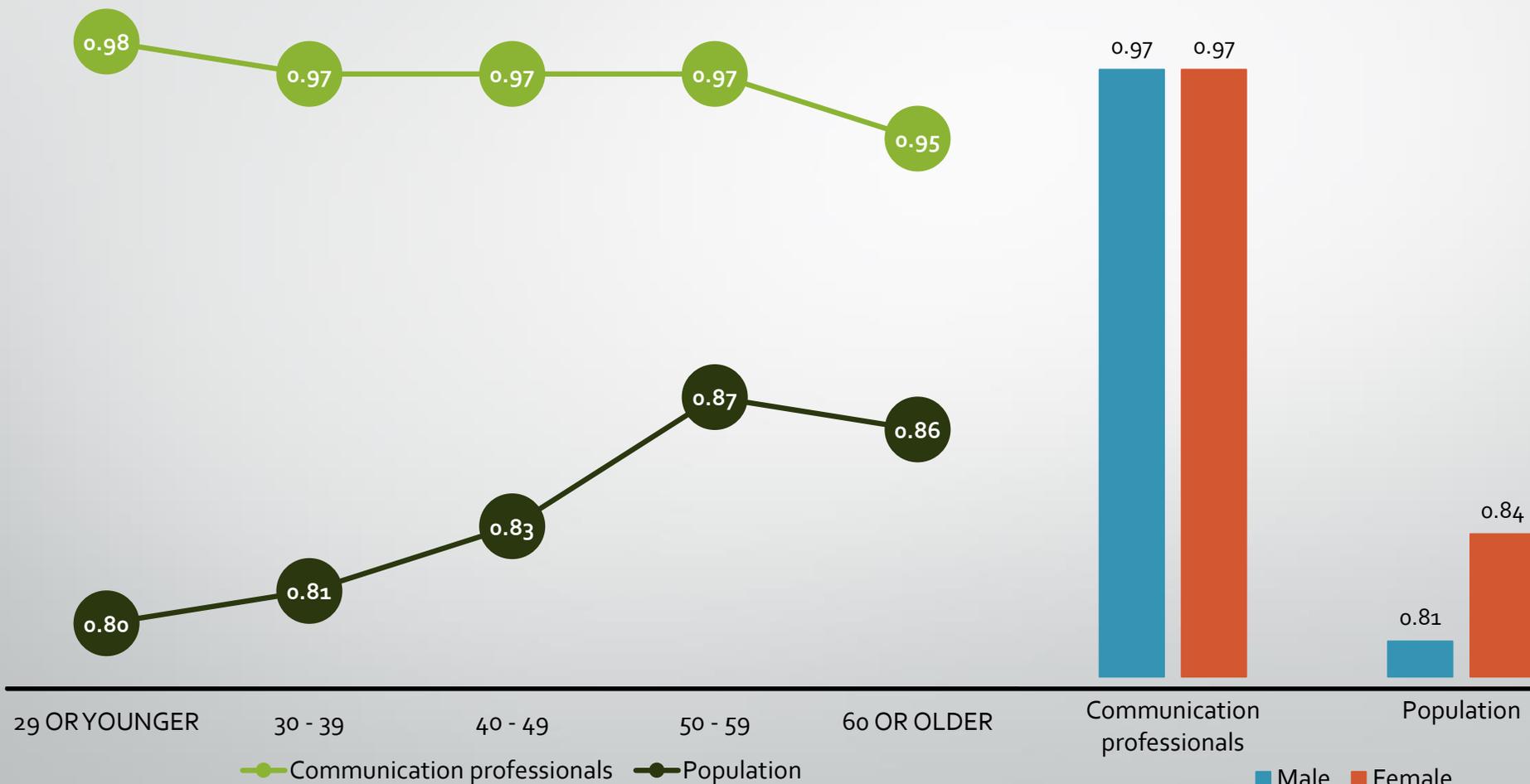
# Effective communication is extremely important for great leadership across Europe



- For half of the Scandinavian and Austrian population effective communication is extremely important to great leadership
- While professionals are convinced about the importance of leadership, the population's rating is lower

Q1: Generally speaking, how important is effective communication to great leadership? Percentages indicate respondents who voted extremely important (≥ 0.9 on the integrated scale 0-1; 5 on a 1-5 scale for communicators; 9-10 on a 0-10 scale for the general population)  
 ComGap - How the public and public relations professionals value leadership and social media

# Communicating leadership is more relevant for women and older publics



Highly significant differences between age and gender (Pearson correlation,  $p \leq 0.01$ ) of the population.

Q1 /  $n_{\text{Com.prof.}} = 1,346$   
Q1 /  $n_{\text{Population}} = 4,054$

Q1: Generally speaking, how important is effective communication to great leadership? Scale 0-1. Mean values.

# Speeches / personal appearances shape the leadership image of organisations the most

- For both publics (52%) and PR practitioners (74%) in Europe, **in-person speeches / personal appearances** have the **greatest impact** in forming the view of an organisation as a leader in the field, followed by corporate/organisational websites and TV interviews.
- In Austria, Scandinavia and the Netherlands in-person speeches and personal appearances are more important for the public (>65%), compared to the European average (52%). For their Spanish neighbours those activities are less important (30%). PR practitioners value them generally stronger in all countries.
- **The biggest gap** between the public's view and professional expectations (28%) is noted for print interviews, which are valued much higher by professionals.
- **Corporate or organisational websites** are the **most important channel** used by the Austrian population when forming its view on organisational leadership (70%), but only 20% of the French citizens share this view.

Q2 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = 1,346  
Q2 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054

# Top 10 communication activities driving organisational leadership perceptions

Population

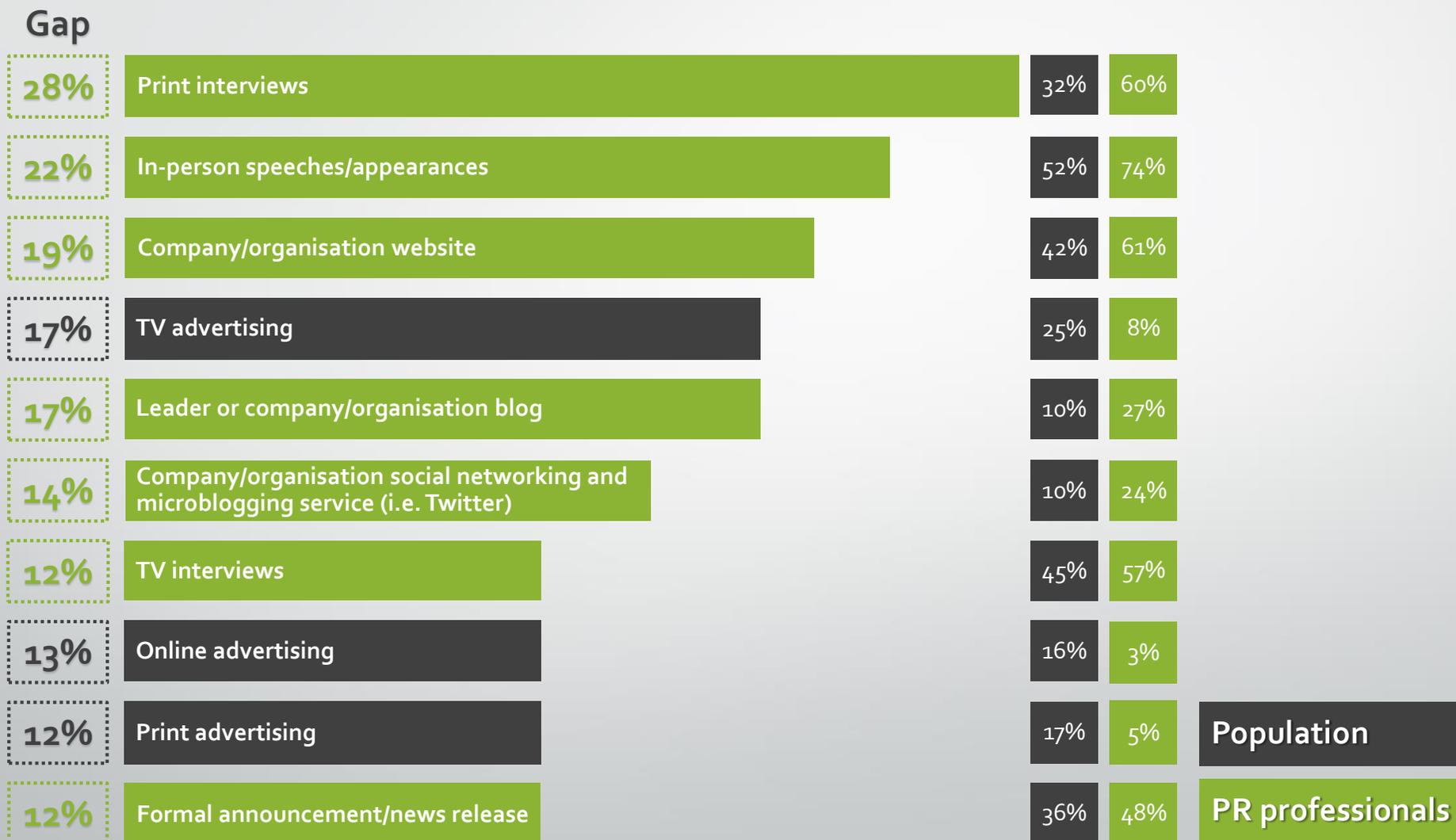
In-person speeches/appearances	52%
TV interviews	45%
Company/organisation website	42%
Annual reports/official company reports	37%
Formal announcement/news release	36%
Print interviews	32%
Communications to company employees that an employee made public	29%
Television advertising	25%
Print advertising	17%
Company/organisation social community site (i.e. Facebook)	16%

74%	In-person speeches/appearances
61%	Company/organisation website
60%	Print interviews
57%	TV interviews
48%	Formal announcement/news release
32%	Annual reports/official company reports
28%	Communications to company employees that an employee made public
27%	Leader or company/organisation blog
24%	Company/organisation social networking and microblogging service (i.e. Twitter)
19%	Company/organisation social community site (i.e. Facebook)

PR professionals

Q2 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = 1,346  
Q2 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054

# Gaps: PR professionals overstate the activities which form leadership image



Q2 population: In forming a view on the leadership provided by a company/organisation, which five communications activities have the greatest impact on your opinion?  
 Q2 communicators: When stakeholders form a view on the leadership of a company/organisation, which five communications activities have the greatest impact on their opinion?  
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Q2 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = 1,346  
 Q2 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054

# European PR professionals overestimate print interviews



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- The gap between the perception of PR professionals and the public in the United Kingdom is very high (39 per cent)
- Scandinavian professionals have stronger alignment with the public perception



Q2 population: In forming a view on the leadership provided by a company/organisation, which five communications activities have the greatest impact on your opinion?

Q2 communicators: When stakeholders form a view on the leadership of a company/organisation, which five communications activities have the greatest impact on their opinion? Item "Print interviews". Percentages show respondents selecting this item as a top five communication activity.

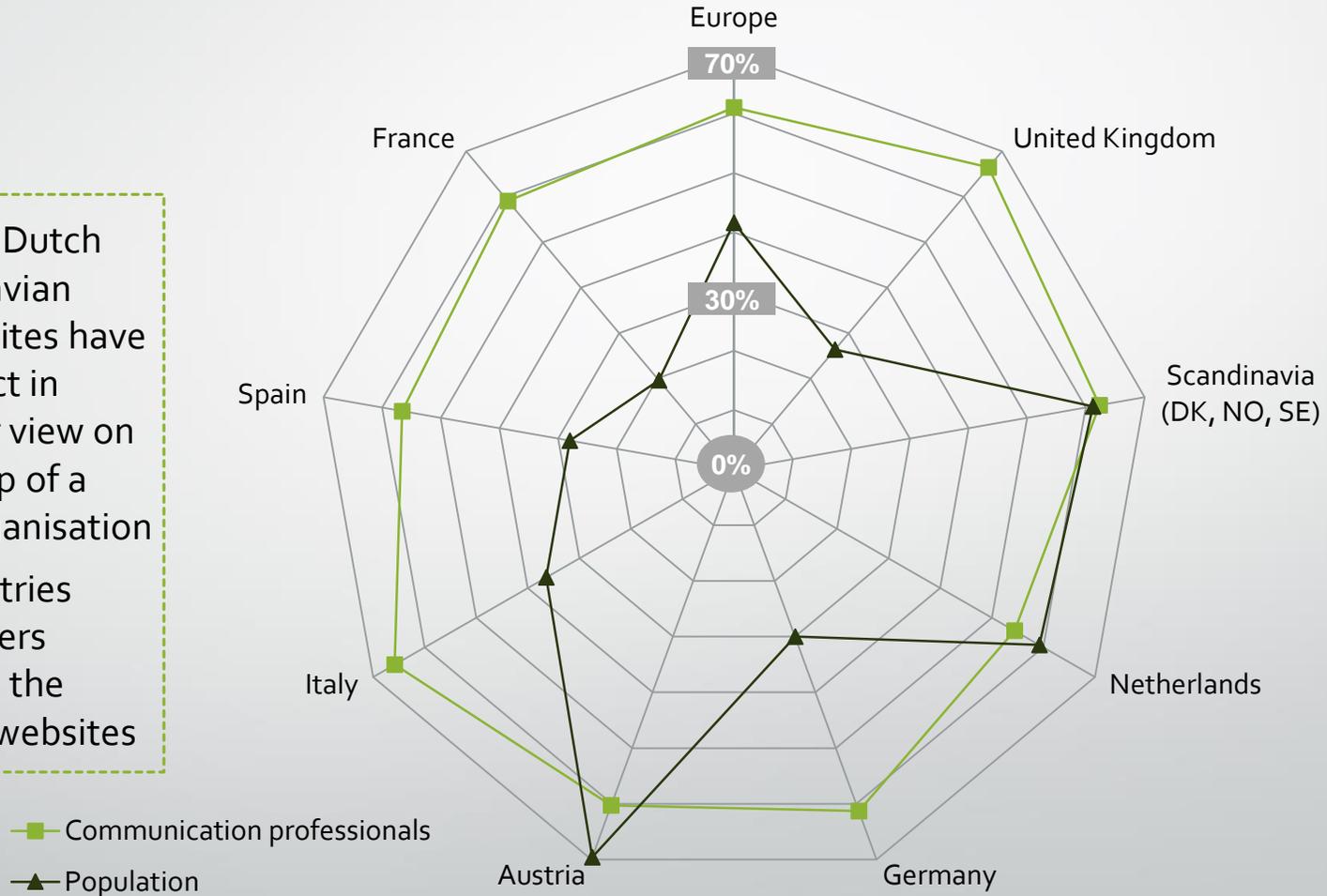
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Q2 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = 1,346  
Q2 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054



# Impact of websites for leadership image varies across Europe

- For Austrian, Dutch and Scandinavian people, websites have a great impact in forming their view on the leadership of a company/organisation
- In other countries PR practitioners overestimate the relevance of websites



Q2 population: In forming a view on the leadership provided by a company/organisation, which five communications activities have the greatest impact on your opinion?  
 Q2 communicators: When stakeholders form a view on the leadership of a company/organisation, which five communications activities have the greatest impact on their opinion?  
 Item "Company/organisation website". Percentages show respondents selecting this item as a top five communication activity.  
 ComGap - How the public and public relations professionals value leadership and social media

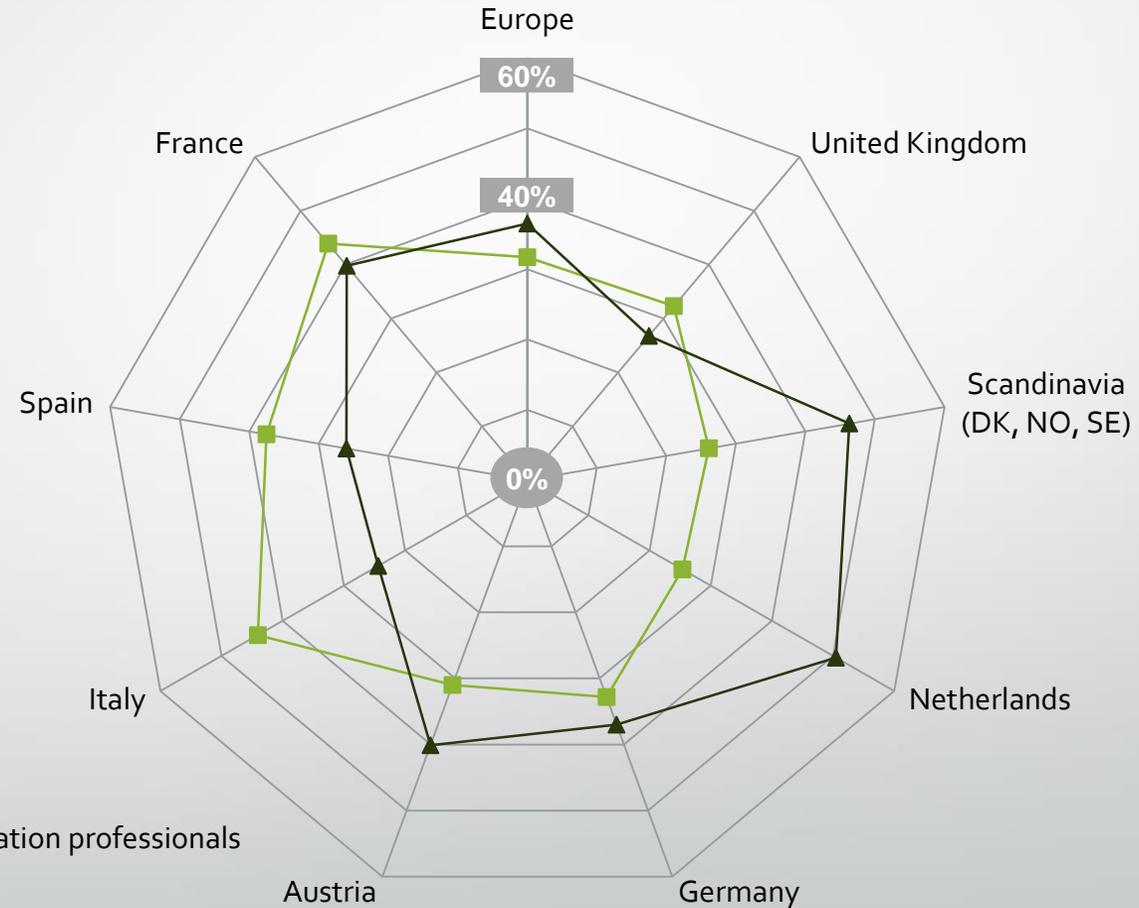
Q2 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = 1,346  
 Q2 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054

# The importance of annual and company reports in central and northern Europe



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- French PR professionals recognise the importance of reports for shaping organisational leadership in their country
- In contrast, Dutch PR practitioners are less aware of the public's preferences for official reports



■ Communication professionals  
▲ Population

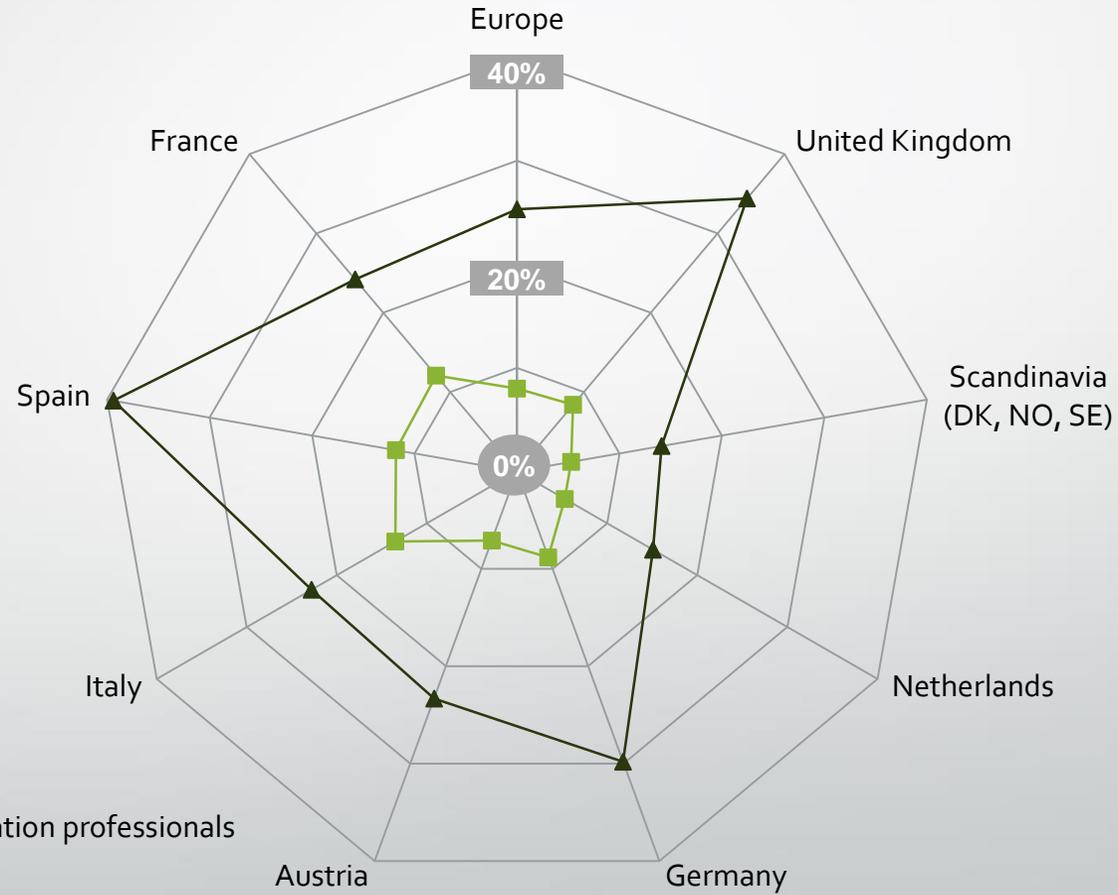
Q2 population: In forming a view on the leadership provided by a company/organisation, which five communications activities have the greatest impact on your opinion?  
 Q2 communicators: When stakeholders form a view on the leadership of a company/organisation, which five communications activities have the greatest impact on their opinion?  
 Item "Annual report/official company reports". Percentages show respondents selecting this item as a top five communication activity.  
 ComGap - How the public and public relations professionals value leadership and social media

Q2 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = 1,346  
 Q2 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054



# TV advertising is most relevant for building leadership image in Spain

- 40% of the Spanish people rely on TV ads when forming their view on organisational leadership
- In all European countries PR professionals believe much less in the power of TV than the respective population



Q2 population: In forming a view on the leadership provided by a company/organisation, which five communications activities have the greatest impact on your opinion?  
 Q2 communicators: When stakeholders form a view on the leadership of a company/organisation, which five communications activities have the greatest impact on their opinion?  
 Item "TV advertising". Percentages show respondents selecting this item as a top five communication activity.  
 ComGap - How the public and public relations professionals value leadership and social media

Q2 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = 1,346  
 Q2 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054

# For the population, trustworthiness and quality of products/services is key

Most important attributes for a company/organisation to be described as a leader	Rated among 5 most important		Gap
	Population	PR professionals	
Innovative **	32%	52%	20%
Quality of management **	26%	44%	18%
Customer service **	45%	28%	17%
Financial strength **	25%	37%	12%
Environmental responsibility **	26%	16%	10%
Corporate social responsibility (CSR) **	29%	37%	8%
Trustworthy **	56%	63%	7%
Philanthropic/Charitable **	7%	2%	5%
Ethical business practices **	25%	29%	4%
Customer-focused *	37%	41%	4%
Commitment to communities **	13%	16%	3%
A good place to work	39%	42%	3%
Diversity	9%	10%	1%
Respect	30%	31%	1%
Quality of products/services	50%	49%	1%

Opinions about supportive attributes for leadership differ widely between the public and PR professionals. Customer service is significantly underestimated by communication practitioners, whereas innovation and quality of management is highly overestimated.

Environmental responsibility is an attribute which is more important for the public to consider a company or an organisation as leader than for PR professionals.

Trustworthiness is the most important attribute for the public as well as for PR professionals.

Diversity has a very limited influence on the leadership perception of a company or organisation

\* Significant differences between the population and the PR professionals (chi-square test,  $p \leq 0.05$ ).

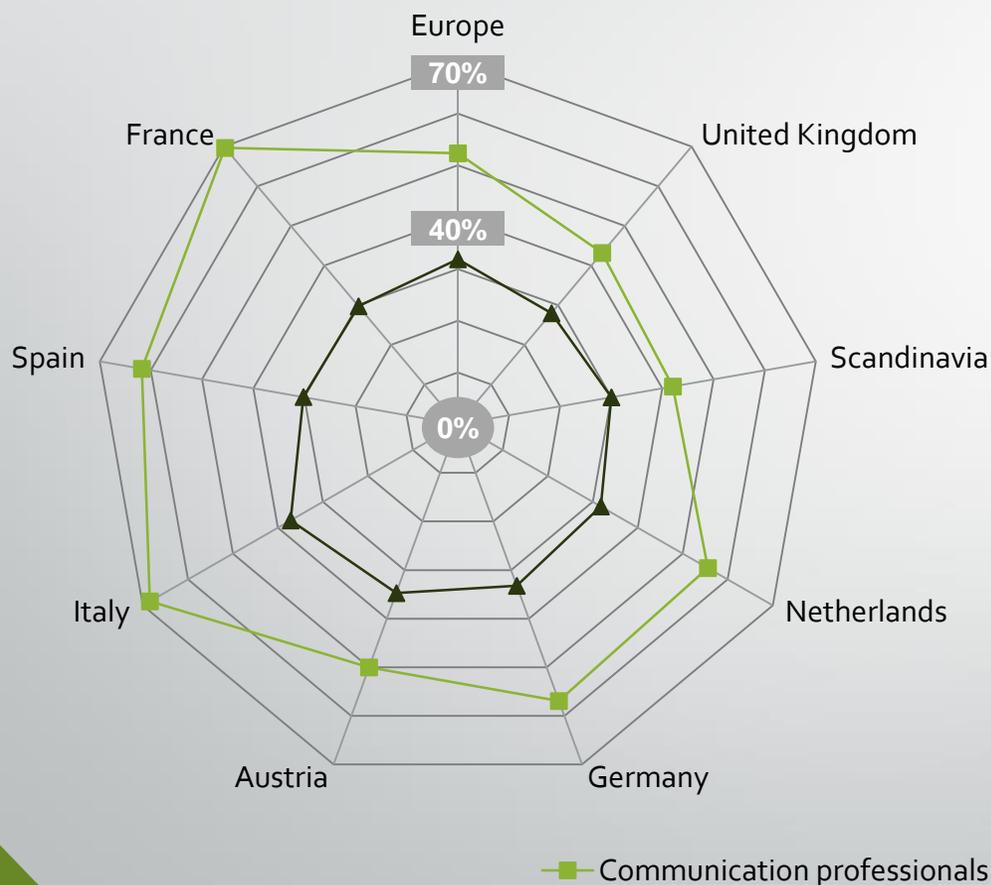
\*\* Highly significant differences between the population and the PR professionals (chi-square test,  $p \leq 0.01$ ).

Q3 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = 1,346  
Q3 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054

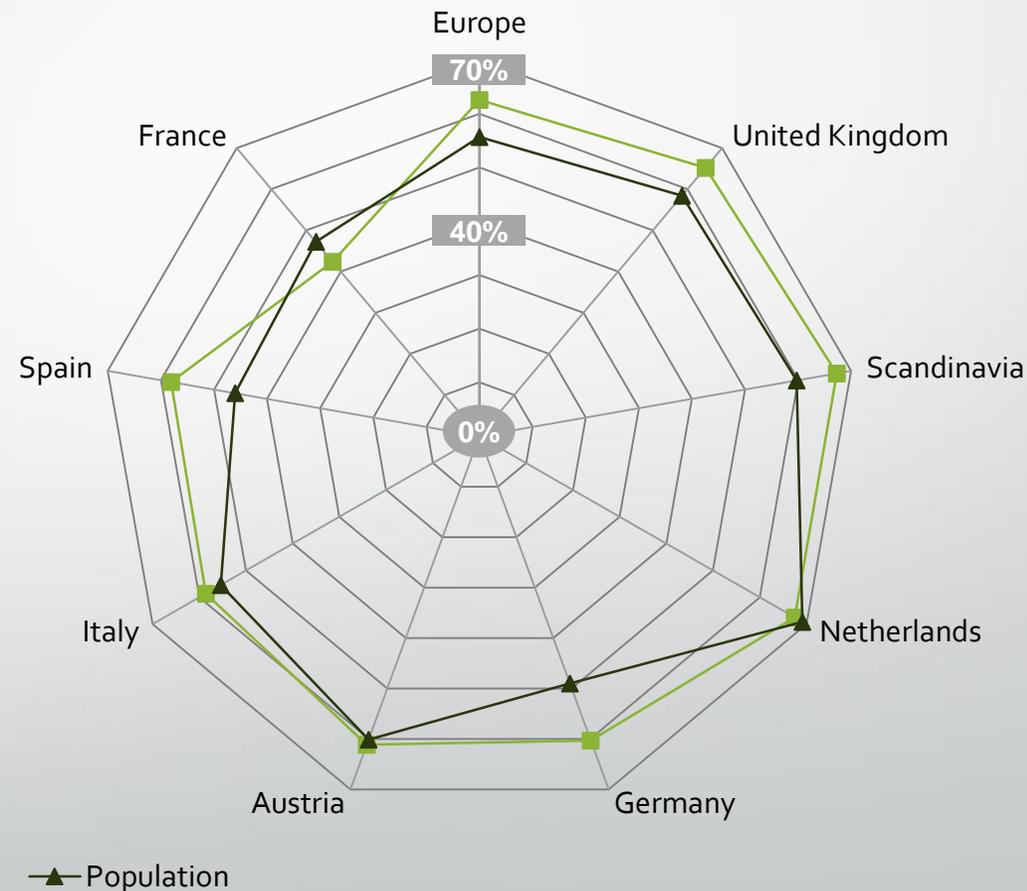
Q3: Listed below are some attributes that might be used to describe a company or organisation. Please select the five that you feel are most important for an organisation to demonstrate to be considered a leader. ComGap - How the public and public relations professionals value leadership and social media

# PR professionals overestimate innovation, but agree with the public on trustworthiness

## Innovation



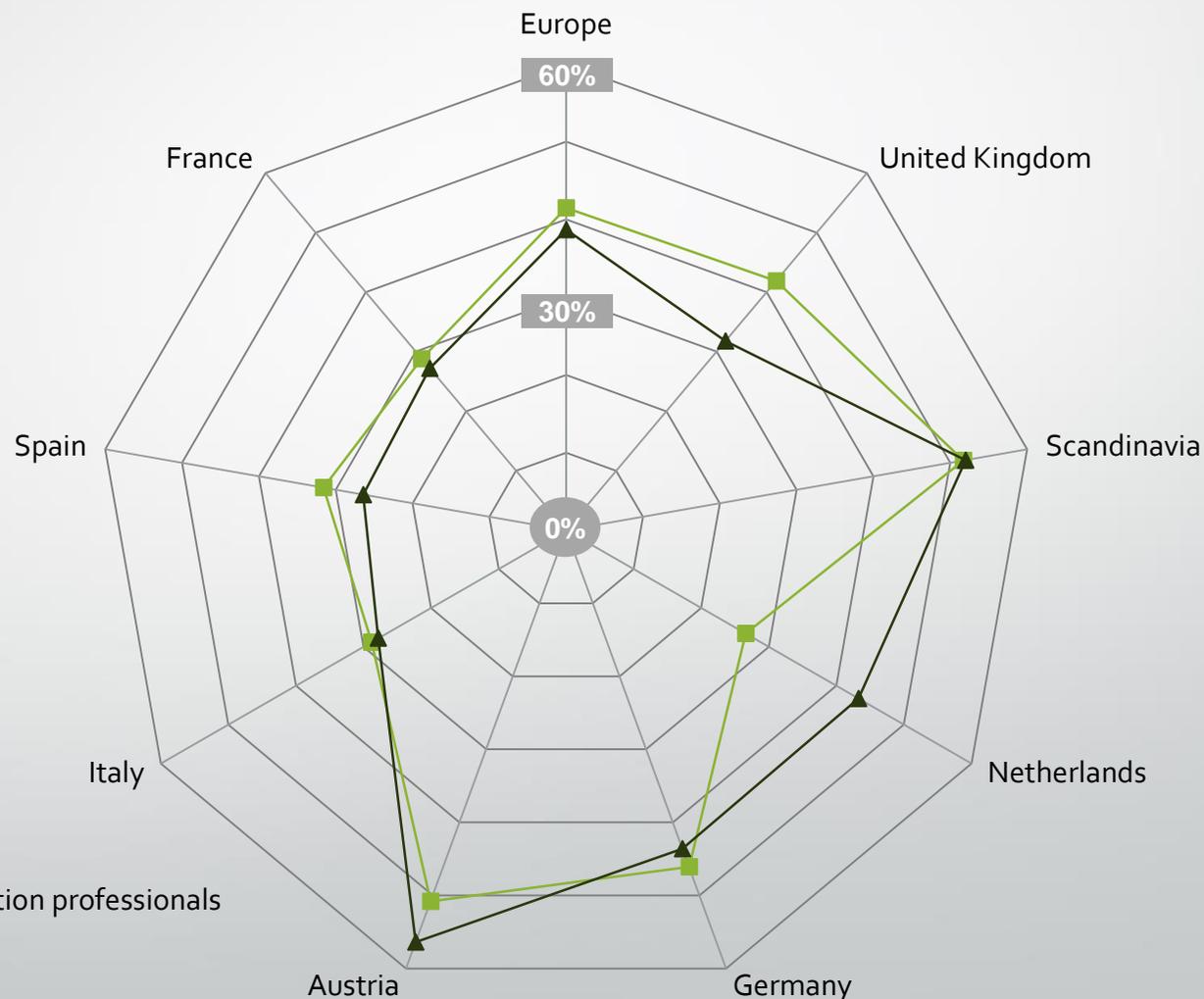
## Trustworthiness



Q3: Listed below are some attributes that might be used to describe a company or organisation. Please select the five that you feel are most important for an organisation to demonstrate to be considered a leader. Items "Innovative" and "Trustworthy". Percentages show respondents selecting the item as a top five attribute.

# Employer branding is an essential part of communicating leadership

- In Scandinavia and Austria “a good place to work” is one of the most important attributes of corporate leadership
- Dutch professionals are the only ones who underestimate the relevance of this dimension



Q3 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = 1,346  
 Q3 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054

Q3: Listed below are some attributes that might be used to describe a company or organisation. Please select the five that you feel are most important for an organisation to demonstrate to be considered a leader. Item “A good place to work”. Percentages show respondents selecting this item as a top five attribute.

# Customer service is clearly underestimated as a leadership attribute by PR professionals

- Across Europe, customer service plays a major role for publics when identifying a company or an organisation as a leader
- Many communicators underestimate this, especially those in Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Italy



■ Communication professionals  
 ▲ Population

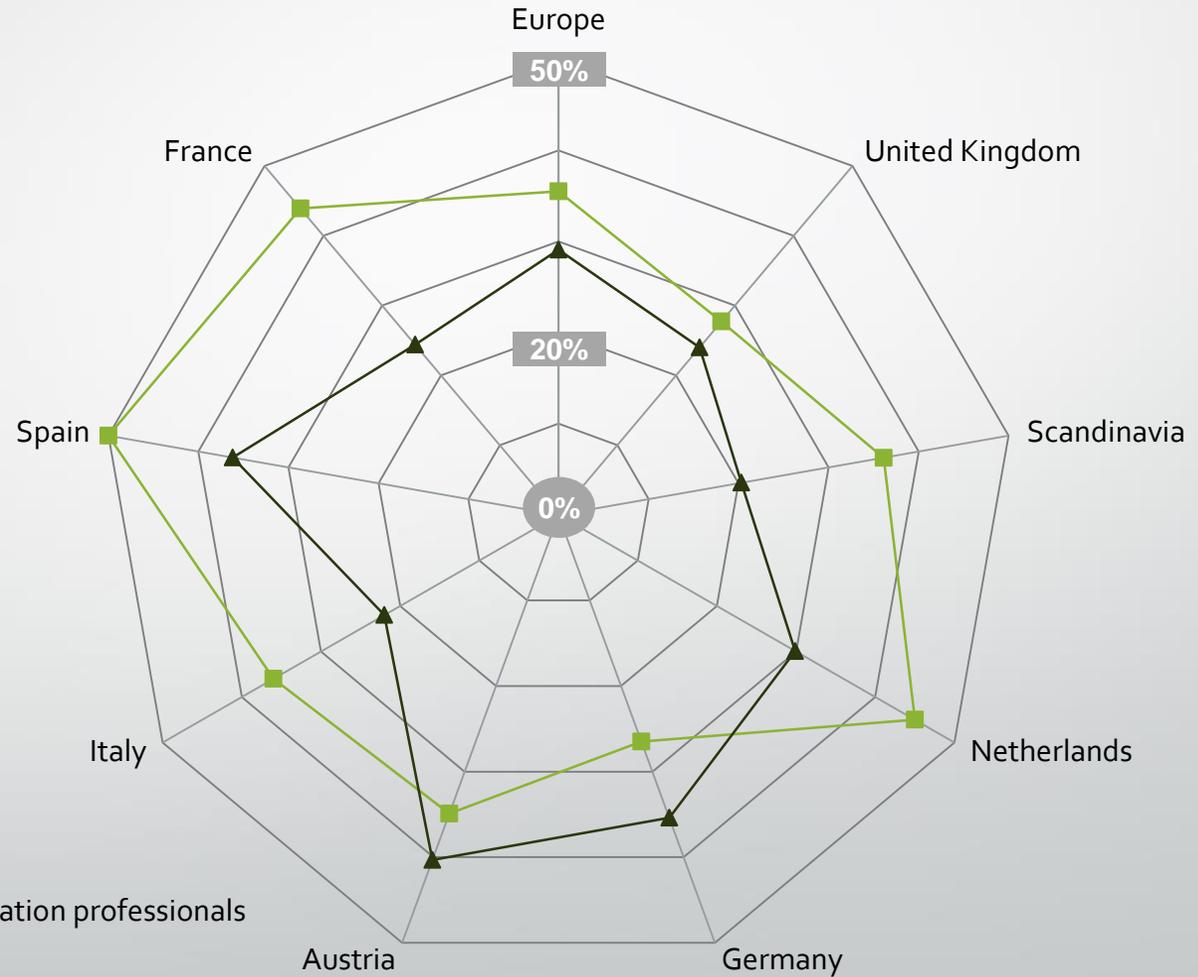
Q3: Listed below are some attributes that might be used to describe a company or organisation. Please select the five that you feel are most important for an organisation to demonstrate to be considered a leader. Item "Customer service". Percentages show respondents selecting this item as a top five attribute.

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Q3 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = 1,346  
 Q3 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054

# The relevance of CSR in demonstrating leadership differs widely across Europe

- CSR is an important leadership indicator for more than one third of the population in Austria, German, and Spain, but less relevant in the UK, France, Italy and Scandinavia
- Most communicators overestimate CSR; only German and Austrian professionals underestimate CSR



Q3: Listed below are some attributes that might be used to describe a company or organisation. Please select the five that you feel are most important for an organisation to demonstrate to be considered a leader. Item "Corporate social responsibility (CSR)". Percentages show respondents selecting this item as a top five attribute.

# Most important characteristics of effective leaders

- Both **public relations professionals** and the **public agree** on the most important characteristics and behaviours of effective leaders: **communicating in an open and transparent way**.
- However, from the public's point of view any leader has to **admit mistakes** as good as he or she can. PR professionals think that this behaviour is less important.
- In all countries, with the UK and Italy as notable exceptions, the **population prefers a leader who leads by example**. For British and Italian publics the most important characteristic of an effective leader is that he or she admit mistakes.

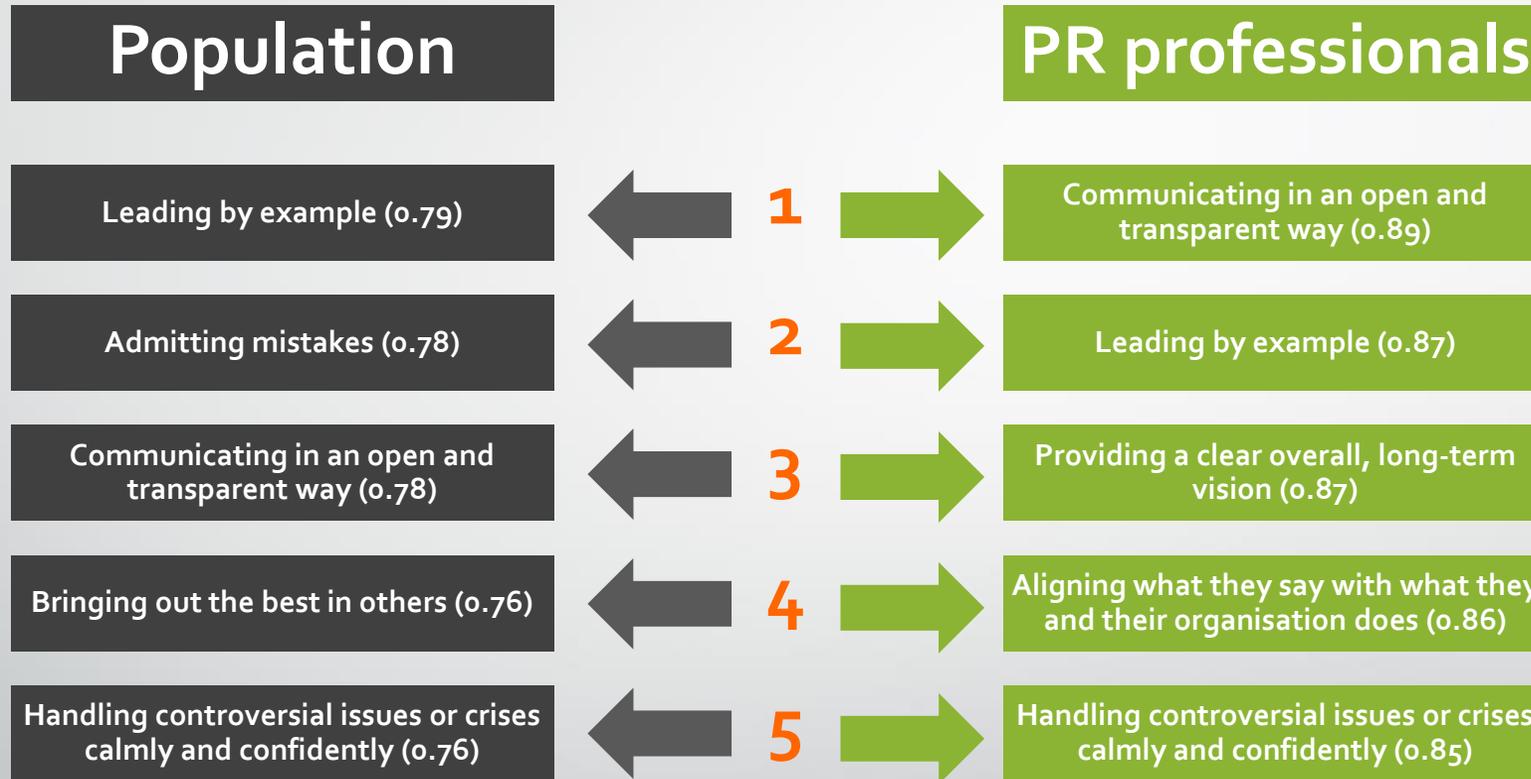
Differing perceptions by communication professionals when compared with the public's views



Q4: Listed below are specific behaviours often seen as being characteristic of effective leaders. When it comes to being an effective leader, how important is it to demonstrate each of the following characteristics or behaviours?

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# Top five behaviours for effective leaders



For this question, two original scales (PR professionals: 1-5, population: 0-10) have been recalculated to one uniform scale (0-1).

Q4 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = Min. 1,303  
 Q4 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054

Q4: Listed below are specific behaviours often seen as being characteristic of effective leaders. When it comes to being an effective leader, how important is it to demonstrate each of the following characteristics or behaviours? Scale 0-1. Mean values.

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# Characteristics and behaviours of effective leaders

Most important characteristics or behaviours to be demonstrated by leaders			Gap	
	Population	PR professionals		
Providing a clear overall, long-term vision **	71%	90%	19%	PR professionals overestimate leadership characteristics which are linked to communication – although they are quite relevant for the population
Aligning what they say with what they and their organisation does **	72%	90%	18%	
Communicating in an open and transparent way **	77%	95%	18%	
Telling a compelling story about their organisation in simple language that is easy to understand **	63%	80%	17%	
Handling controversial issues or crises calmly and confidently **	74%	91%	17%	
Bringing out the best in others **	76%	88%	12%	Coping with diversity is underestimated by PR professionals as a leadership behaviour
Leading by example **	79%	91%	12%	
Taking active steps to ensure diversity in their organisation **	63%	51%	12%	
Showing respect for different cultures – at home and internationally **	68%	76%	8%	
Showing respect for the organisation's history and culture **	63%	58%	5%	
Admitting mistakes	77%	82%	5%	Decision-making is equally accepted as an effective leadership attribute
Using inspirational rhetoric **	51%	47%	4%	
Demonstrating an ability to work with different personality styles **	70%	67%	3%	
Making tough decisions	75%	75%	0%	

\* Significant differences between the population and the PR professionals (means, independent samples T-test,  $p \leq 0.05$ ).  
 \*\* Highly significant differences between the population and the PR professionals (means, independent samples T-test,  $p \leq 0.01$ ).

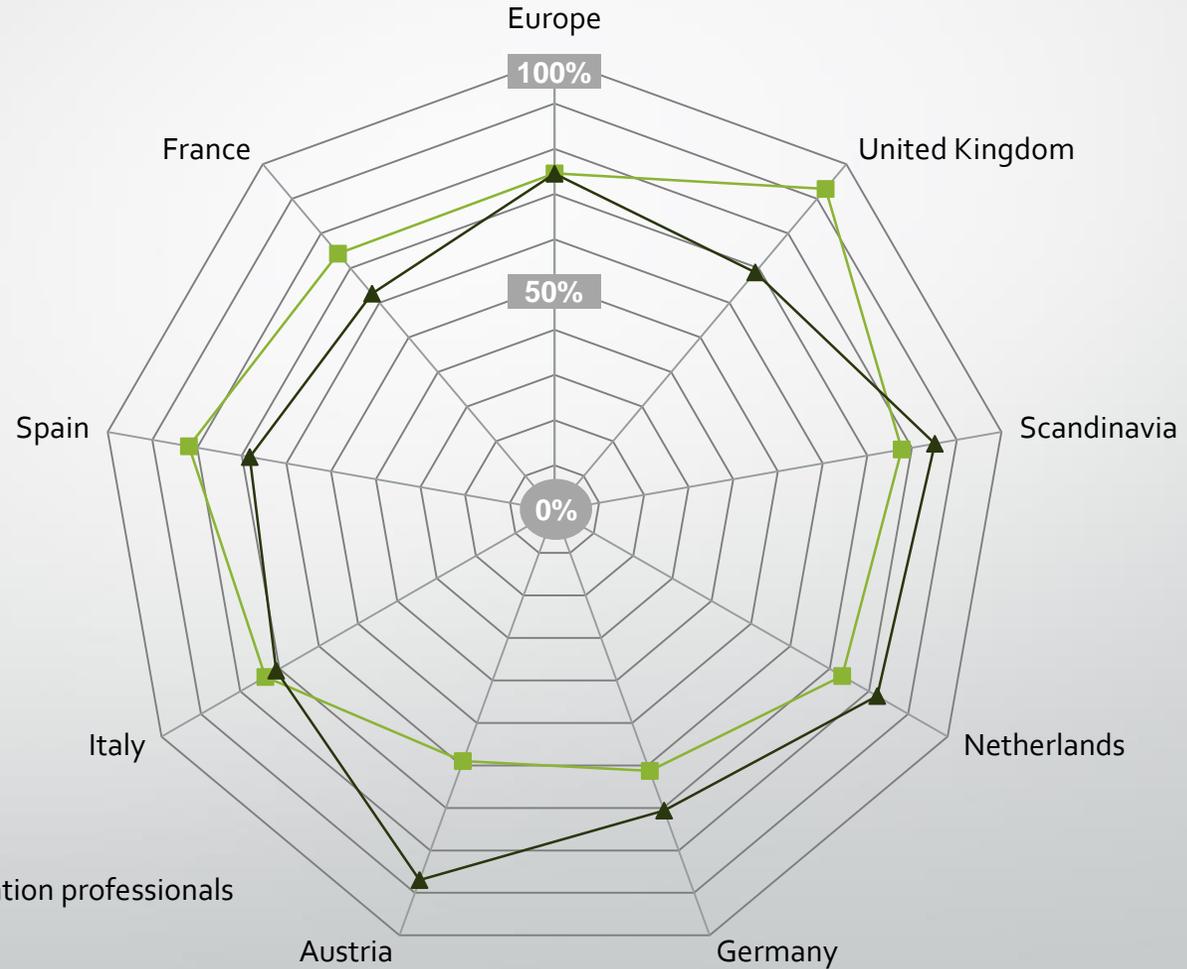
Q4 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = Min. 1,303  
 Q4 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054

Q4: Listed below are specific behaviours often seen as being characteristic of effective leaders. When it comes to being an effective leader, how important is it to demonstrate each of the following characteristics or behaviours? Percentages indicate respondents who voted important ( $\geq 0.7$  on the integrated scale 0-1; 4-5 on a 1-5 scale for communicators; 7-10 on a 0-10 scale for the general population).

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# Making tough decisions is important behaviour for leaders in some countries

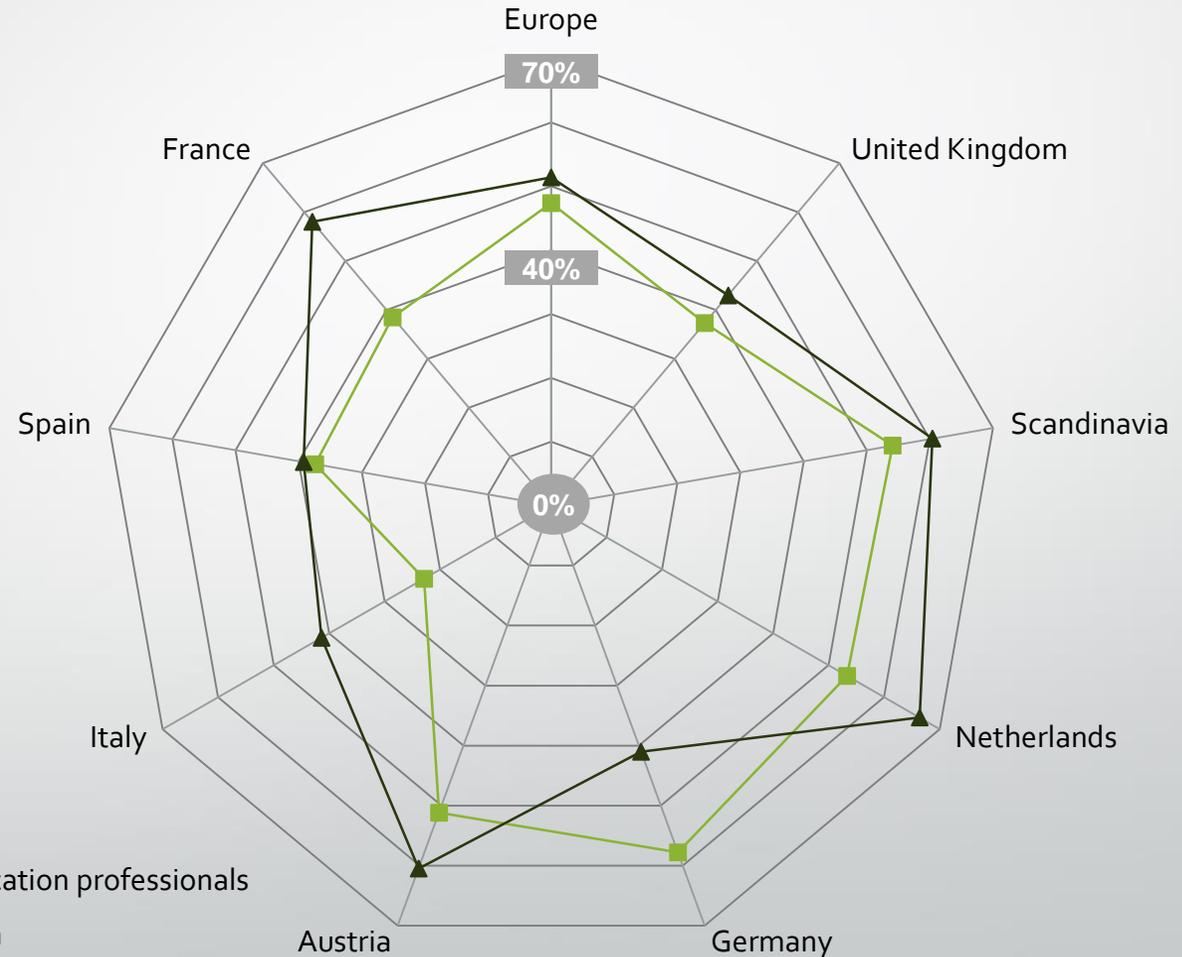
- Demonstrating tough decision making is valued most highly by Scandinavian, Dutch and Austrian people
- PR professionals in the UK widely overestimate the relevance of this behaviour



Q4: Listed below are specific behaviours often seen as being characteristic of effective leaders. When it comes to being an effective leader, how important is it to demonstrate each of the following characteristics or behaviours? Item "Making tough decisions". Percentages: Agreement based on scale points 0,7-1.

# No consensus on inspirational rhetoric as a characteristic of effective leadership

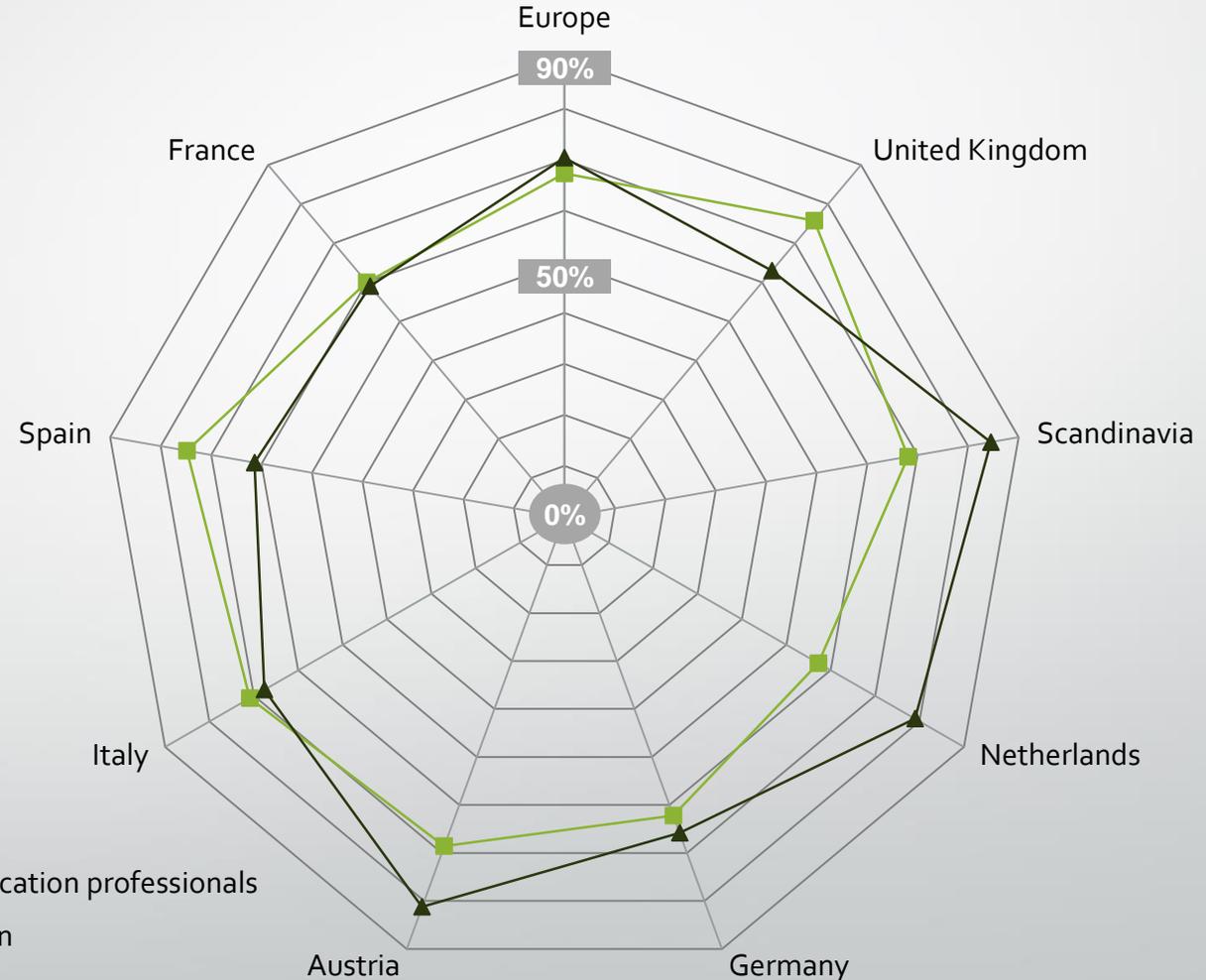
- For Austrian, French, Scandinavian and Dutch publics, inspirational rhetoric is an important character of an effective leader
- This is valued less in Italy, Spain, Germany and the UK



Q4: Listed below are specific behaviours often seen as being characteristic of effective leaders. When it comes to being an effective leader, how important is it to demonstrate each of the following characteristics or behaviours? Item "Using inspirational rhetoric". Percentages: Agreement based on scale points 0,7-1.

# Leaders are expected to be able to work with different personality styles

- Dutch, Scandinavians and Austrians are most eager to see leaders demonstrating their ability to work with different types of personalities
- In Europe, PR professionals and publics are almost “on the same page” when it comes to coping with diversity

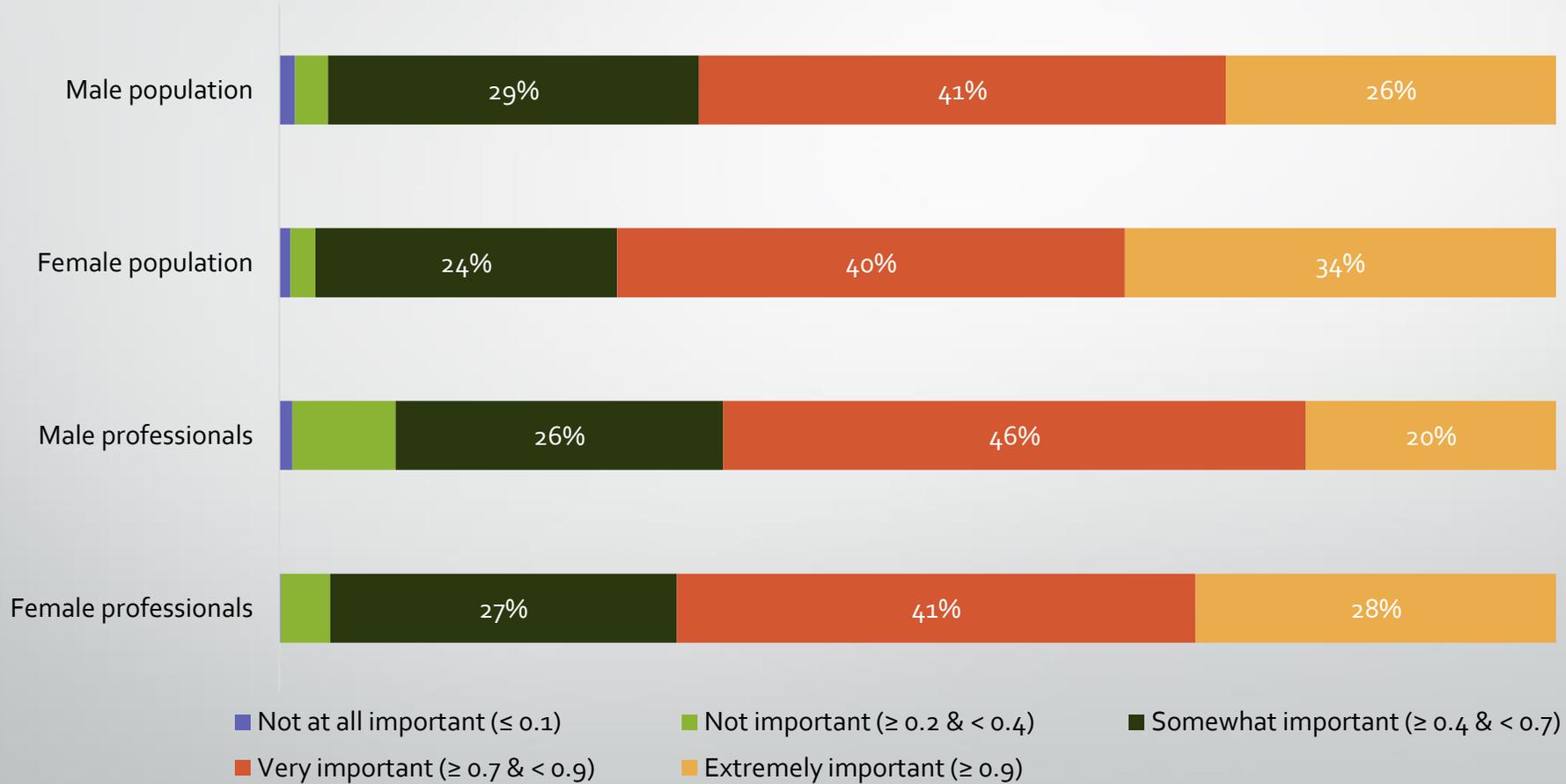


■ Communication professionals

▲ Population

Q4: Listed below are specific behaviours often seen as being characteristic of effective leaders. When it comes to being an effective leader, how important is it to demonstrate each of the following characteristics or behaviours? Item "Demonstrating an ability to work with different personality styles". Percentages: Agreement based on scale points 0,7-1.

# Gender gaps: Women value the ability to work with different personalities more highly

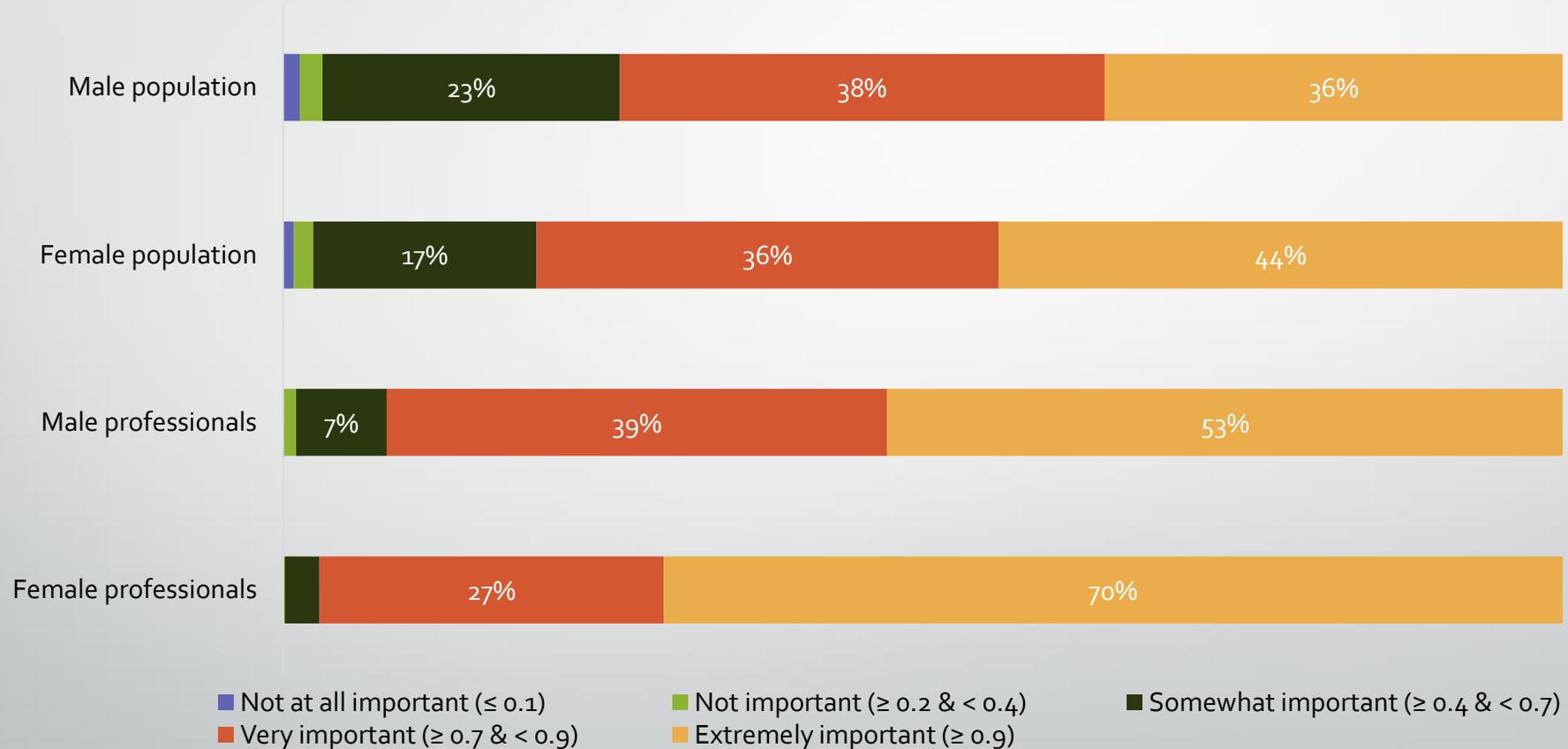


Highly significant differences between men and women ( $p \leq 0.01$ ).

Q4 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = Min. 1,303  
Q4 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054

Q4: Listed below are specific behaviours often seen as being characteristic of effective leaders. When it comes to being an effective leader, how important is it to demonstrate each of the following characteristics or behaviours? Item "Demonstrating an ability to work with different personality styles"

# Gender gaps: Communicating openly is much more important for women



Highly significant differences between men and women ( $p \leq 0.01$ ).

Q4 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = Min. 1,303  
Q4 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054

Q4: Listed below are specific behaviours often seen as being characteristic of effective leaders. When it comes to being an effective leader, how important is it to demonstrate each of the following characteristics or behaviours? Item "Communicating in an open and transparent way"

# Insight #1: Employees as ambassadors



## Finding

For the vast majority of both PR professionals as well as the population, communication is important or even very important for effective leadership.



## Recommendation for communication professionals

Communication enhances effective leadership, but it goes much beyond the planned activities of communication departments.

The communicative behaviour of every manager and employee is important. Programs aiming at helping managers and employees act as ambassadors of their organisation help to multiply the leadership impact of communications.

# Insight #2: The comms team as trainer



## Finding

Communication professionals as well as publics see in-person speeches/events as well as TV interviews as communication tools with the biggest potential to shape the leadership image of organisations.



## Recommendation for communication professionals

Communicators should develop their skills for training and coaching top management as well as colleagues in their public roles – from media training to more general 360 degree advice.

To be accepted by top management, PR professionals need to base their advice on empirical findings – not on gut feeling.

# Insight #3: It's the customers, stupid!



## Finding

Customer service is a major attribute for publics when it comes to describing a company as a leader. However, this issue is significantly underestimated by communication practitioners who tend to favour more abstract attributes like innovation, management quality and CSR.



## Recommendation for communication professionals

Getting closer to what the population expects from an organisation helps to improve leadership perceptions. A closer alignment between communicators and marketing/sales people might facilitate this.

# Insight #4: Establishing trust is key



## Finding

Publics and public relations practitioners agree: Trustworthiness is the most important attribute for any organisation that wants to be considered a leader.



## Recommendation for communication professionals

Building trust across all stakeholder groups requires open and transparent communication – including the willingness to admit mistakes.

Most organisations will need a cultural change to achieve this goal, and communicators can support these efforts.

# Insight #5: Walk the talk!



## Finding

When it comes to the attributes of effective leaders, communication professionals overestimate the role of an organisation's vision, while the population much more stresses basic attributes like leading by example and admitting mistakes.



## Recommendation for communication professionals

Again, counselling top representatives (not just the CEO) on their overall behaviour and interaction style is important for any communicator who wants to support the executive team on their way towards being perceived as effective leaders.



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# The realm of social media communications



# Two key questions on social media

- 1. What types of content and conversation should organisations share using their own social media?**
- 2. Which types of behaviour should companies exhibit on social media platforms?**

# Relevant content for owned social media channels



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Types of social media content and conversation expected to be shared	Selected all that apply		Gap
	Population	PR professionals	
Information on events or crises (e.g. weather, recalls, etc.) that affect customers **	33%	75%	42%
Responses to comments on the organisation made by others **	29%	56%	27%
Corporate social responsibility efforts **	36%	60%	24%
Financial news **	24%	39%	15%
Product and service information – current products **	49%	63%	14%
Product and service information – new or forthcoming products **	48%	61%	13%
Information about manufacturing processes **	32%	19%	13%
Personal information about leaders (e.g. their biography) **	17%	25%	8%
Information on product safety **	42%	38%	4%
Deals and/or coupons offering reduced pricing for customers/members	39%	41%	2%
Information about where the company/organisation sources its products and materials	35%	34%	1%

Communication professionals **overestimate the importance of most topics, especially regarding crises, third-party comments and CSR**

**Publics** are most interested in **product-related** news

**Looking behind company walls** and explaining production measures is a public demand not fully served by communicators

\* Significant differences between the population and the PR professionals (chi-square test,  $p \leq 0.05$ ).

\*\* Highly significant differences between the population and the PR professionals (chi-square test,  $p \leq 0.01$ ).

Q5 /  $n_{\text{Com.prof.}} = 1,346$   
Q5 /  $n_{\text{Population}} = 4,054$

Q5 population: Which of the following types of content and conversation, if any, do you expect a company/organisation to share using its own social media? Select all that apply.

Q5 communicators: Which of the following types of content and conversation, if any, do stakeholders expect a company/organisation to share using its own social media?

ComGap - How the public and public relations professionals value leadership and social media

# Information about where products come from might be valuable social media content

- Nearly half of the Spanish population expects companies to explain their sourcing policies on social media
- German, Austrian and Dutch PR professionals are aware of this issue, but it is less relevant for publics in those countries



Q5 population: Which of the following types of content and conversation, if any, do you expect a company/organisation to share using its own social media? Select all that apply.

Q5 communicators: Which of the following types of content and conversation, if any, do stakeholders expect a company/organisation to share using its own social media?

Item "Information about where the company/organisation sources its products and materials". Percentages show respondents selecting this item.

# Social media: The public demands more information about manufacturing processes



break through

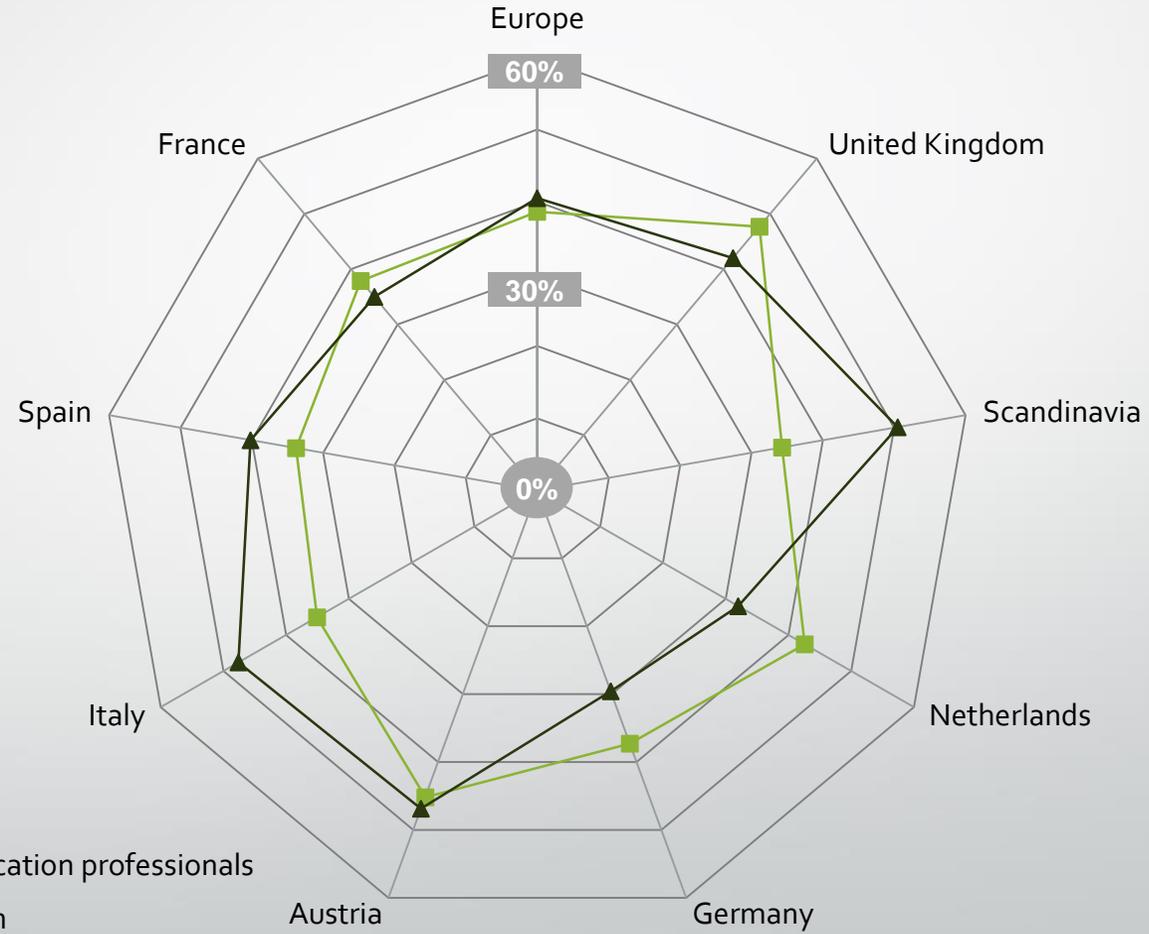
- 40 per cent of the Spanish, German and Austrian population expect organisations to inform them about manufacturing processes via their social web channels
- PR professionals in Spain and France are least aligned with public demand in this field



Q5 population: Which of the following types of content and conversation, if any, do you expect a company/organisation to share using its own social media? Select all that apply.  
 Q5 communicators: Which of the following types of content and conversation, if any, do stakeholders expect a company/organisation to share using its own social media?  
 Item "Information about manufacturing processes". Percentages show respondents selecting this item.

# Deals and/or coupons can be used to stimulate social media conversations

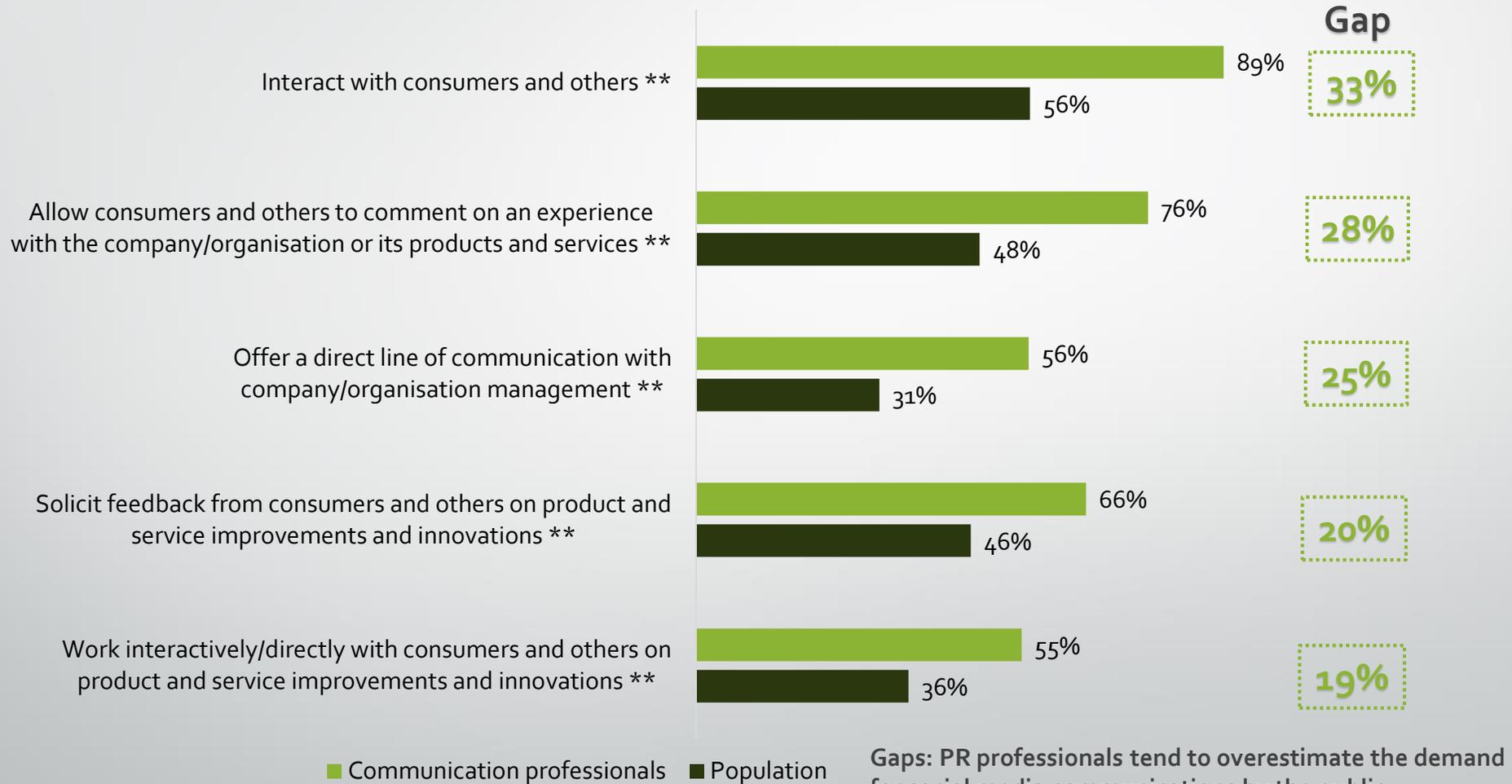
- The demand for offering consumer benefits on the social web is not fully served by companies in Scandinavia, Italy and Spain
- Communicators in France and Austria are well aware of the public's need in their countries



Q5 population: Which of the following types of content and conversation, if any, do you expect a company/organisation to share using its own social media? Select all that apply.  
 Q5 communicators: Which of the following types of content and conversation, if any, do stakeholders expect a company/organisation to share using its own social media?  
 Item "Deals and/or coupons offering reduced pricing for customers/members". Percentages show respondents selecting this item.

Q5 / n<sub>Com.prof.</sub> = 1,346  
 Q5 / n<sub>Population</sub> = 4,054

# What companies should do in social media... – from two perspectives



\*\* Highly significant differences between the population and the PR professionals (chi-square test,  $p \leq 0.01$ ).

Q6 /  $n_{Com.prof.} = 1,346$   
 Q6 /  $n_{Population} = 4,054$

Q6 population: Which of the following types of behaviour, if any, do you expect companies to exhibit on social media? Select all that apply.

Q6 communicators: Which of the following types of behaviour, if any, do stakeholders expect companies to exhibit on social media?

# Insight #6: Listen, listen, listen ...



## Finding

Social media communication activities could be more efficient: communicators tend to overestimate what stakeholders expect from companies on their social media channels.



## Recommendation for communication professionals

Listen to what your publics really want. Don't follow each trend. Instead, investigate the needs and potentials of each approach. Get in touch on multiple social media channels and with different approaches (e.g. Tweeterview, Google Hangouts).

# Insight #7: Storytelling is not a buzz word



## Finding

Stakeholders are much more interested in product-related news and information than in other company news on the social web.



## Recommendation for communication professionals

Build on core services and achievements, but make other corporate information also interesting by telling compelling stories. Storytelling is not a buzz word, but a great technique to create content – if it is linked to the needs of your publics.

# Insight #8: Social media is not universal



## Finding

There is no universal approach to address stakeholders through social media. Not only are there some specifics to every social media channel, but also wants and needs differ from country to country – even within the developed and highly integrated European market.



## Recommendation for communication professionals

Simple approaches to online communication bear limited potential. Targeted approaches aligned to organisational goals, cultural needs and country-specific traditions are key for successful strategies. This has to be based on thorough research and evaluation.

# Insight #9: Close the gap



## Finding

Generally, public relations professionals have limited knowledge of the expectations of publics in their countries about key issues like demonstrating leadership and using social media.

Major perceptual gaps indicate that many opportunities are not utilised and resources are directed incorrectly.



## Recommendation for communication professionals

Strategic communication is neither an art nor an experienced-based business. It is a social science – which means that communicating leadership and interacting on the web should be based on detailed knowledge and research about public opinion and stakeholder demands.



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# Background



# Research partners

## Ketchum – a leading global communications firm

- Ketchum operates in more than 70 countries across six continents. Named 2012 PR Agency of the Year (PRWeek and European Excellence Awards) and the winner of an unprecedented three consecutive PRWeek Campaign of the Year Awards, Ketchum partners with clients to deliver strategic programming, game-changing creative and measurable results that build brands and reputations. Ketchum is a part of Diversified Agency Services, a division of Omnicom Group Inc. [www.ketchum.com](http://www.ketchum.com)

## European Public Relations Education and Research Association

- EUPRERA is an independent organisation that aims to stimulate and promote innovation in the knowledge and practices of public relations education and research in Europe. With members from more than 30 countries – among them most universities and professors focusing on research and education in communication management across the continent – its main objectives are fostering joint research and knowledge transfer between academia and practice. [www.euprera.org](http://www.euprera.org)

## Partnering for advancing the profession

- EUPRERA and Ketchum cooperate in the fields of research and thought leadership by supporting the annual European Communication Monitor [www.communicationmonitor.eu](http://www.communicationmonitor.eu) and additional projects like this study.

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