

# The status quo and trends for the communication profession in Europe

## Results of a survey in 43 countries

The 2022 edition of the world’s longest running empirical study of strategic communication and public relations has explored current practices and future developments in companies, non-profits and other organisations including communication agencies across Europe. The full report, based on interviewing more than 1,600 communication leaders and practitioners, includes insights on diversity and inclusion, empathic leadership, CommTech and consulting in communications. Strategic issues for the profession in the next years and characteristics of excellent communication departments are identified as well. Detailed analyses are available for 22 countries and different types of organisations in the full report – available for free on [www.communicationmonitor.eu](http://www.communicationmonitor.eu).

### Diversity, equality and inclusion as a challenge for the profession

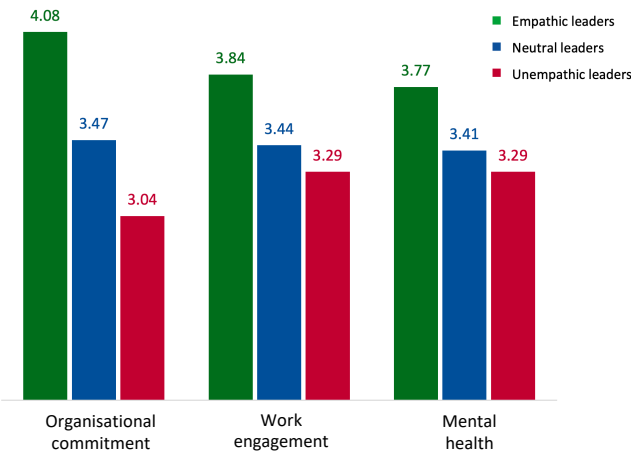
Only every second communication professional has followed the global trends and discussions about diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) (50.7%). About the same number of respondents confirms that the topic is heavily discussed in their country (49.5%).

Every second organisation considers age (51.6%), ethnicity (50.9%) and gender (50.5%) when planning and executing communication initiatives, while socio-cultural status, disabilities, worldviews and political opinions or spiritual beliefs are taken into account less often. Most practitioners acknowledge that diversity can impact trust with external and internal stakeholders, and they carefully consider diversity factors when producing content. But only one third believes in an actual change in the communication workforce towards diversity in the near future.

Responsibilities of communication units for DEI initiatives	
Creating organisational DEI policies	31.6%
Implementing organisational DEI policies	36.9%
Monitoring internal and external debates on DEI	36.4%
Developing plans for communicating about DEI	42.9%
Informing internal audiences on DEI issues and policies	45.4%
Informing external audiences on DEI issues and policies	37.0%
Evaluating and refining DEI communication plans and content	38.2%
Celebrating diversity, equality and inclusion internally and externally	45.2%

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### Better commitment, engagement and mental health levels when working for an empathic communication leader



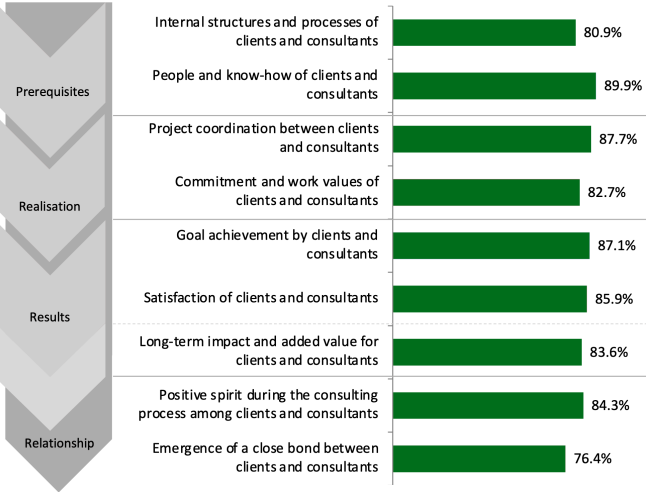
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### Empathic leadership in communication teams

During times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been arguments that leaders of organisations communicate with greater empathy. The survey explores this phenomenon and reveals a significant positive effect of empathic leadership on mental health, commitment and wellbeing (see figure).

Results show that three out of four practitioners (73.3%) have experienced empathic traits from communication leaders with the majority of respondents (56.7%) stating this has increased in the last year during the pandemic. The findings also show that communicators overall are committed to their organisations. Similarly, the respondents are generally highly engaged by their work. Perhaps the most encouraging figure is that only 1% are at risk of burnout.

Importance of various factors  
to secure the quality of consulting processes



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External consulting in communications:  
Complexity, quality and trends

The majority of communication professionals in Europe believe that the **need for external consulting is increasing**. Yet, at the same time, 63.9% of the respondents perceive the **consulting industry becoming increasingly diversified and complex**, and 60.1% state that **securing the quality of external consulting is getting more and more difficult**.

When asked about what is the most important dimension to secure the quality of consulting processes, respondents put **people and know-how of clients and consultants** at the top spot, followed by **project coordination between both sides** in the second place (see figure). A strong majority supports the idea of **quality standards for communication consulting**: 67.8% agree that the profession needs overarching **standards for consultants** to assess and secure the quality of consulting in communications, and 60.7% believe that the profession needs also **standards for clients**.

Characteristics of  
excellent communication departments

The **Comparative Excellence Framework for Communication Management (CEF)** has been applied to identify high-performing communication departments and their attributes.

Looking into topics researched in this survey, it is notable that these excellent communication departments are significantly **more often involved in communicating diversity, equality and inclusion initiatives** and anticipate a **greater impact of DEI**. They are also more often in charge of **developing DEI policies** for their organisations. Further, leaders of excellent communication departments engage significantly **more in all dimensions of empathic leadership**. When it comes to dimensions of digital transformation, excellent communication departments are clearly ahead of others, **driving innovation and early adoption of CommTech** and digital infrastructure.

About the study

The European Communication Monitor 2022 is based on responses from 1,672 communication professionals from 43 European countries, most of them senior leaders with more than 10 years tenure in the field. The strict selection of participants, a unique research framework based on established theories and statistical analyses fulfilling academic standards are key features of the study. Lead researchers Professors Ansgar Zerfass (Leipzig), Ángeles Moreno (Madrid), Ralph Tench (Leeds), Dejan Verčič (Ljubljana) and Alexander Buhmann (Oslo) are supported by national research collaborators from renowned universities across the continent.

Download the full report (PDF, 112 pp.) for free:  
[www.communicationmonitor.eu](http://www.communicationmonitor.eu)



*"We are currently experiencing a turning point in Europe which impacts our field fundamentally. Some trends are quite specific, but others can be observed across Europe and beyond."*

Professor Dr. Ansgar Zerfass, Leipzig University  
Lead researcher, European Communication Monitor

*"In times of crisis, disruption and distrust, strategic communication is key to uncover the truth. This year's European Communications Monitor has investigated topics that impact the future success of our profession."*

Kim Larsen, EVP, Global Head of Communication and Bran Experience, ING  
President, European Association of Communication Directors (EACD)

