



*In partnership with*



# State of the African PR Landscape 2022

# Reputation Matters®

Quantifying your value!

## OUR VISION

Africa's go-to reputation specialists building resilient businesses that you want to do business with.

## OUR VALUES

- Growth •Respect
- Excellence •Authenticity •Trust

## WHAT WE DO

Adding value to your reputation using our proprietary Repudometer® methodology.

## SERVICES

- Reputation Measurement •Employee Climate
- Brand Equity •Customer Satisfaction
- Competitor Analysis •Stakeholder Mapping
- Policy Development
- Reputation Mentorship •Consulting

## WINNING TEAM

We were awarded SABRE Africa awards in 2018, 2019 and 2020 for measurement and evaluation for clients.

## INVESTING IN THE COMMUNITY

We support the **Re.Bag.Re.Use** initiative. Empowering community members to crochet shopping bags from empty bread bags.

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# Foreword

**FRANCIS INGHAM MPRCA**  
 Director-General, Public Relations  
 and Communications Association

**“The African PR profession is clearly diverse, hard-working, innovative, and resourceful. And while the profession faces challenges, I am confident there is also huge opportunity ahead.”**

Welcome to the State of the African PR Landscape, the first report by PRCA Africa, which is the newest arm of the world's largest professional PR body.

Data, measurement, and evaluation is an increasingly indispensable part of modern PR practice. Likewise, surveys and data are an important part of the PRCA's mission as they help us build an understanding of our members' priorities and needs. Add to this the valuable support of the PRCA Africa board (members listed on p13), for which we are very grateful, and we are able to make our offering relevant to professionals operating on a local, regional, continental, or global level.

The insights from this report, as well as the impressive volume of responses to our survey, make it clear that the African PR and communications profession is diverse, hard-working, innovative, and resourceful. Many of the challenges faced are similar to those elsewhere in the PR world - but I am confident that there are also many opportunities in 2022 and beyond.

I, and everyone at the PRCA, will work hard to assist you in raising the profile of the profession, improving standards and ultimately ensuring that PR can be a force for good in your organisations and across society.



# Introduction

**JORDAN RITTENBERRY CMPRCA**  
 Chair, PRCA Africa  
 Chairman, Middle East & Africa, Edelman

**“Organisations which are able to effectively connect with key audiences and stakeholders have been more effective and resilient during the pandemic. Meanwhile, those without proper comms capacity have suffered.”**

The turmoil and tragedies of the last two years have tested us all as human beings, and as professionals, in many ways.

That impact has been felt differently in different parts of Africa, and elsewhere in the world, but what all geographies have in common is a heightened appreciation of the value of good communications.

Whether through public health campaigns promoting COVID-19 safety measures, to reassuring crisis communications from companies facing unexpected incidents, those organisations able to effectively connect with key audiences and stakeholders have been more effective and resilient during the pandemic. Meanwhile, those without proper comms capacity have suffered.

These trends are confirmed in this report, with the majority (67%) of African PR professionals feeling that the perception of PR has improved since the start of the pandemic. This, and 33% of respondents saying that business leaders are increasingly reliant on PR counsel, with another 27% feeling valued by their board, shows that the future is bright.

This does not mean there are not challenges ahead. Management and evaluation, and reduced budgets, are cited in this survey as the two biggest threats facing the African PR profession. They may appear separate issues, but the reality is that they are intrinsically linked - if PR professionals can be better at showing the value and impact of their work, they are more likely to secure better budgets and investment in their function. With measurement a tricky issue across the PR world, the PRCA is well placed to help raise standards in this area.

It's also positive to see that many PR practitioners feel the profession is viewed as ethical. It's hard to overstate the importance of strong professional ethics in any serious profession - this is true of lawyers, accountants and others, and it has to be true of PR as well.

I'm delighted to chair PRCA Africa, and to have the opportunity to work alongside a skilled and experienced board including regional chairs. On behalf of the whole board, thank you for your interest in this report. I hope its findings are helpful to you and your colleagues as you navigate the challenges and opportunities on the road ahead. I'm looking forward to meeting lots of you and being part of that journey.



# The survey

**More than 550 respondents from across Africa completed our survey earlier this year.**

Our survey of PR and communications practitioners from across Africa received more than 550 responses from a total of 27 countries.

Nearly half of respondents work in an agency role, while nearly a third are in-house. Of the remaining respondents, around half were freelancers or independent consultants, with the other half being PR academics in universities, suppliers to the industry, or other related professionals.

These practitioners represent companies, public institutions, and non-profits of all sizes, from those employing just a few people to those with more than 5,000 staff, in sectors ranging from aviation and the arts, to textiles and tourism.

Respondents have a broad range of ages and levels of seniority, ranging from 25% holding the role of chair, CEO, managing director or founder, to 5% holding an intern or entry-level role, and everything else in between.

Of those who specified their gender, a slight majority (52%) were female. PRCA surveys in other regions find that women often account for two thirds or more of the PR workforce.

A small number of those responding to the survey (4%) said that they have a disability. Roughly 15% of the world's population live with disabilities, according to UN estimates, but they are often underrepresented in the labour market.

## METHODOLOGY

This Census is based on a sample of 566 respondents from across the region, with data gathered between 21st January and 27th February 2022. The survey was generated by Reputation Matter using sample sources from the PRCA's own database, a public link on the PRCA website, as well as respondents recruited by APRA (African Public Relations Association).



# 1

## The present landscape

### WHAT PRs DO

PR and communications professionals' roles cover a wide range of responsibilities. We asked respondents to choose the main function or functions of their role from a list of options. The average respondent chose eight options from the list, indicating how versatile PR practitioners need to be.

Communications strategy development (63%) was the most common response. More than half chose media relations strategy planning and reputation management (51% each).

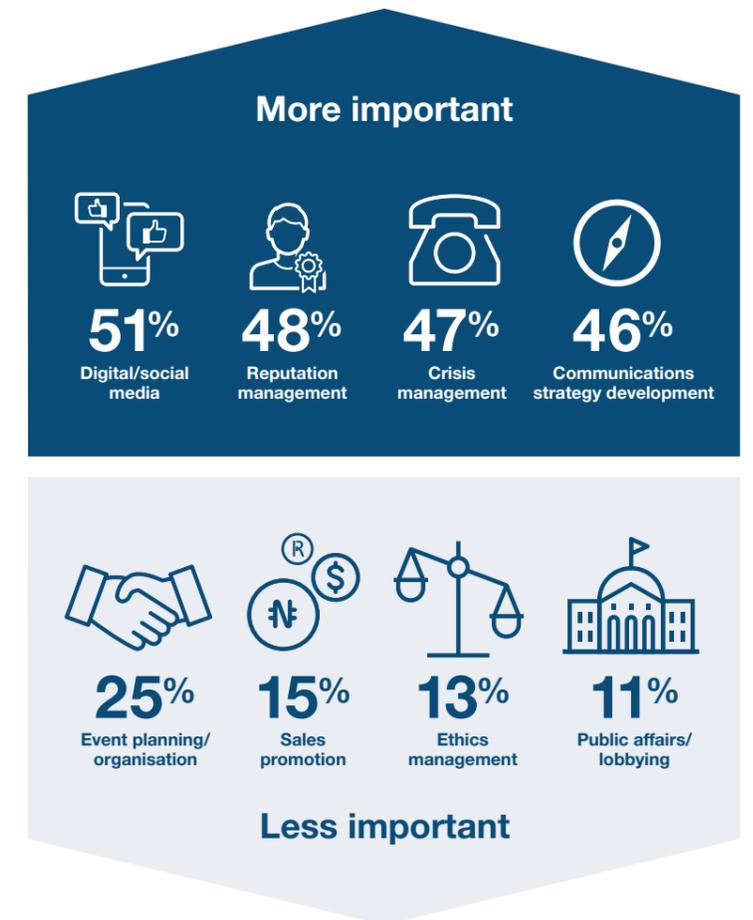


### A CHANGING ROLE

We also asked respondents which PR activities they thought had become more important in their country in the past two years - and which had become less important.

Digital and social media is a clear leader in terms of increased importance. It was closely followed by reputation management and crisis management, both of which have been particularly relevant during the pandemic. COVID-19 may also have contributed to a decline in the importance of event planning and organisation.

While several functions are getting much more important, not as many are seen to be decreasing in importance. This reflects a growing understanding of PR's wide-ranging capabilities, but also indicates PR practitioners facing increasing pressures on their time and resources.



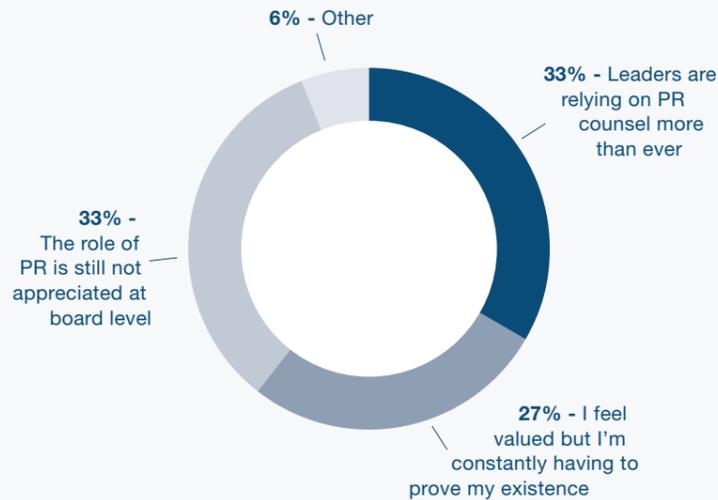
### PR'S STANDING IN THE BOARDROOM

Across the world, PR professionals are increasingly taking more strategic and senior positions in companies - but there are still organisations where it is a relatively ignored or misunderstood discipline. The same is clearly true in Africa, with a third of respondents saying their counsel is valued more than ever, while another third say the discipline is not appreciated by business leaders.

Some of the responses written in the 'other' box will be familiar to PR professionals across the world.

One says that the boardroom only takes notice of PR "when there is a reputation crisis - and even then, the lawyers' opinions come first". Another says that PR "needs to be brought into the conversation earlier", while several agency professionals say there are some boards considering PR in a strategic way while others still see it as a transactional or tactical function.

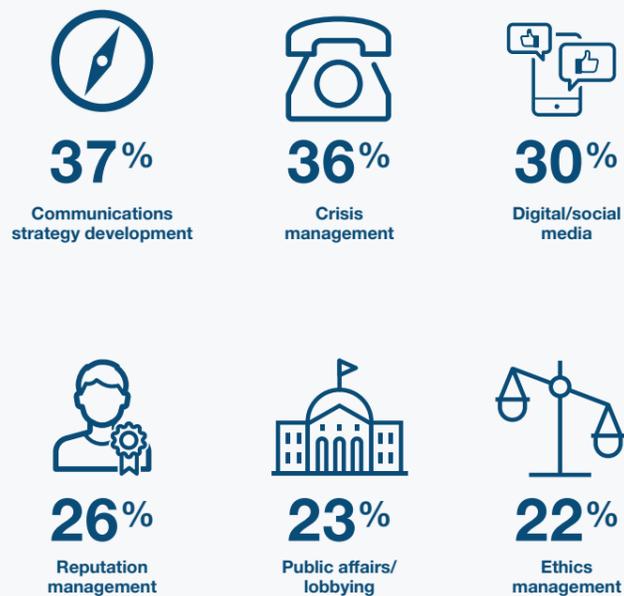
In your experience, how would you describe PR and communications' standing in the boardroom?



### TRAINING NEEDS

The PRCA wants to assist African PR practitioners in becoming more strategic and improving their standing in the boardroom. Training is one of the offerings we will provide in the region as part of this.

We asked respondents what training they would like to attend in their region. Strategy, crisis, and social are clear priorities.



### ETHICS

Respondents were also questioned on whether they had been asked by someone to act in an unethical way, or had decided to do so, in the last 12 months.

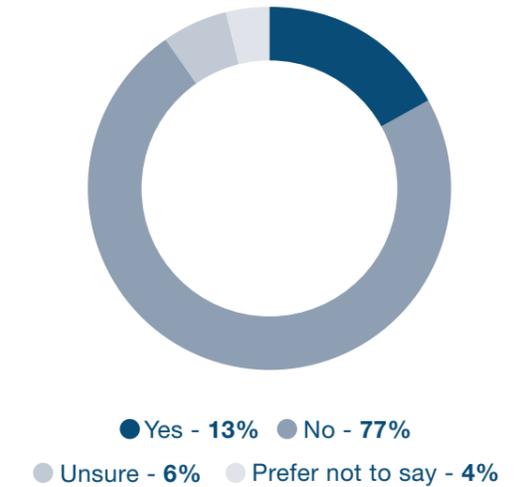
A small but significant proportion said that they had, but the vast majority answered 'no'.

Respondents were also asked to rate how ethical they thought the PR industry is regarded in their country, on a scale from zero to 10, with zero meaning not ethical at all and 10 meaning very ethical.

The 6.1 mean average score is a good starting point, offering African PR practitioners a sound springboard to engage conversation on the issue of ethics.

Ethical standards are a hugely important part of public relations and communications best practice. All PRCA members must abide by, and are accountable to, the [PRCA Professional Charter and Codes of Conduct](#).

Acting or being asked to act in an unethical way in last 12 months



PR's perceived ethical standing



Average: 6.1 out of 10



# 2

## The pandemic and beyond

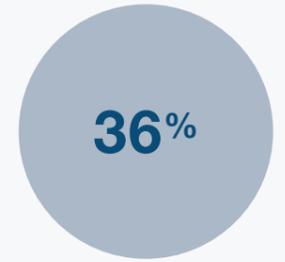
### JOBS AT RISK

The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for PR and communications professionals across Africa.

One of these has been job losses. In fact, a quarter of respondents said their organisation had made redundancies during the pandemic, and more than a third say the pandemic has impacted their employment. Happily, the majority of respondents are now back working full-time or part-time, although some say that their salary has been reduced or their workload increased.



of respondents' organisations have made redundancies during the pandemic



of respondents have had their employment affected by the pandemic

### BACK TO THE OFFICE?

Nearly half (47%) of PR professionals say that they will be back in the office full-time in the near future. Many will spend at least some of their time working from home, while a small number are unsure.



47%  
plan a return to the office full-time



28%  
will work remotely part-time



16%  
will work remotely full-time

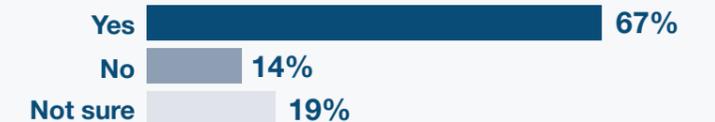


9%  
unsure

### PR ON THE UP

Across the continent, it appears that organisations have increasingly relied on their PR practitioners during the COVID-19 pandemic. Two in three respondents say that the perception of PR has improved over the past two years.

Has the perception of PR improved since the start of the pandemic?

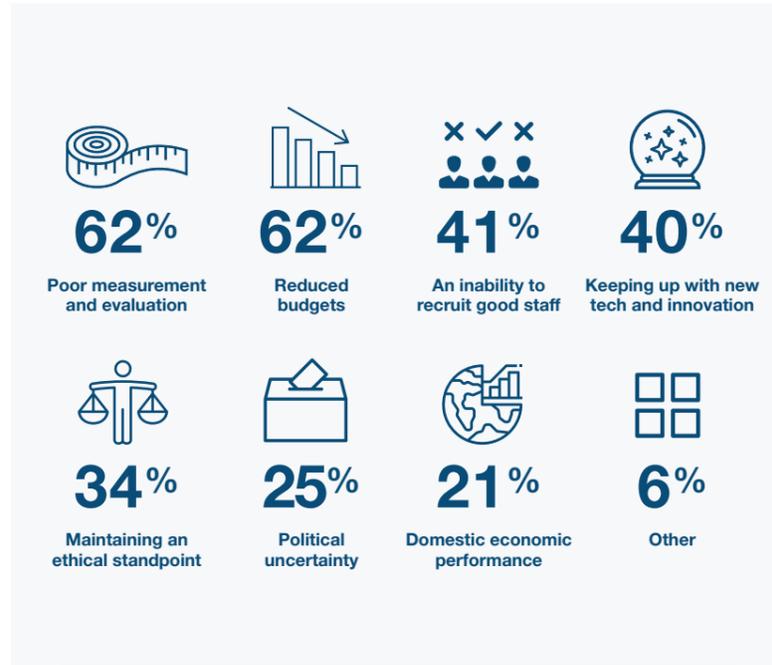


### FUTURE CHALLENGES

We also asked respondents what they think the biggest threats to the PR industry are in the immediate future.

Poor measurement and evaluation, and reduced budgets, are clearly the biggest concerns. Recruitment and retention, and technology and innovation, are also substantial threats.

In the answers provided under the 'other' category, several respondents talk about the contraction of the media industry, fake news, and a lack of training.



### EVALUATING MEASUREMENT

With poor measurement and evaluation seen as the joint-biggest threat to the industry, it is revealing that a quarter of African PR practitioners do not use any evaluation methods.

The most common form of measurement is Advertising Value Equivalents (AVEs), used by a quarter of respondents, followed by impressions, the Barcelona Principles and a variety of other methods. The PRCA believes that AVEs are not a rigorous or meaningful measure in many contexts, and that other forms of measurement are always preferable.



## Members of the PRCA Africa board

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Chairman, Middle East & Africa, Edelman

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