

# THE 'GET HEARD' REPORT



An analysis of the opinions  
and impact of PR and  
communications professionals  
in the not-for-profit sector  
by CIPR Fifth Estate in  
partnership with Amazon PR.

May 2011



Often, the value a charity places on communications is a reflection of its view of the world around it. Communications, after all, is about listening and engaging. An organisation which respects the communities it serves, understands the importance of good relationships with policy-makers

and funders, acknowledges the efforts of volunteers and supporters, and takes seriously its role and influence within wider society, is a healthy, honest organisation, grounded in reality. Which means it is well positioned to secure maximum funding, increase levels of support, influence real change and benefit more people.

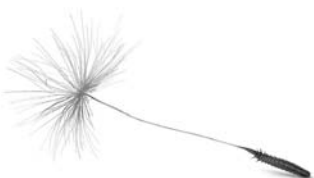
Within a struggling economy, it is hard to remain open and communicative. But it is even more vital. A charity that closes its eyes and ears to the outside world or sticks its head in the sand during difficult times will be less responsive to evolving needs in society and will certainly miss opportunities to reach people and have meaningful impact.

In this report, many voluntary sector communications professionals talk frankly about the internal challenges they face. It is frustrating to hear about charities that are failing to recognise the value their communications team brings, and to read about senior managers who are making decisions without understanding the reputational implications.

But it is encouraging and inspiring to hear from the many respondents who have worked hard to earn respect and understanding by demonstrating how their work makes all the difference to fundraising, campaigning and business development. And to hear about those senior managers who have recognised this and have elevated the role of communications, resulting in better performing organisations.

Over the next few years, charities will need to be more effective and efficient than ever. This will only happen if senior managers and communications teams work together and adopt a much more strategic and creative approach, based on mutual respect and support.

**Louise Morriss, MCIPR, Managing Director, Amazon PR**





Public relations has a fundamental strategic role to play in the success of an organisation. In the charity and not-for-profit sectors, where effective stakeholder engagement is paramount, the strategic value of communications should not be underestimated.

Why then, do we have a nagging feeling that it is?

This report was commissioned in 2011 by Fifth Estate - which represents the not-for-profit sector within the Chartered Institute of Public Relations - to investigate the extent to which PR and Communications is fully understood and valued at senior management level in the sector.

Whilst it is encouraging to see the impact of the work of PR and communications professionals, for many senior management teams and trustees, PR is still seen as an afterthought - a way to get an extra bit of 'free' publicity!

As well as analysing the results of both quantitative and qualitative research this report puts forward recommendations, for improving the situation, to both senior management and communications professionals.

But this report is only a snapshot and identifying the issues is only the start. We still have a long way to go in communicating and demonstrating the strategic role and value of PR and earning our place at the top table.

If we are going to improve the strategic impact of communications within our sector we need to be part of the solution - we need to Get Heard!

**Gill Dandy, FCIPR, Chair, CIPR Fifth Estate**

**“Every organisation, no matter how large or small, ultimately depends on its reputation for survival and success. Effective public relations manages reputation by communicating and building good relationships with stakeholders”**

*Chartered Institute of Public Relations - 2011*



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## Introduction

Communications is an essential tool for every charity and not-for-profit organisation. But the value placed on it as a strategic discipline can vary enormously, for a number of reasons.

Communications is sometimes seen as an add-on that takes place once key decisions have been made. It can be viewed as something an organisation does if it has budget left over once its core services are taken care of. With the current economic climate having a negative impact on many voluntary sector organisations, some communications professionals are finding themselves in an ever more precarious position. Equally, there are charities which see communications as an integral part of their structure and invest in the skills and resources of the team. This acknowledgement is evident in national and regional charities, both large and small, and it is those organisations which recognise the value of communications, that will reap the benefits as the sector goes through this challenging period of change.

This report looks at the extent to which communications is a valued discipline in the voluntary sector. It examines the advantages of recognising and valuing good communications, for both individuals and organisations, and the impact on both parties of communications professionals not being heard. It explores the extent to which funding affects the value given to communications and how good practice can make a significant difference when organisations are trying to establish their position and their voice in this new environment.

## Methodology

This report has been produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations' Fifth Estate Group in partnership with voluntary sector specialists, Amazon PR. The research was carried out amongst senior communications professionals in the voluntary sector.

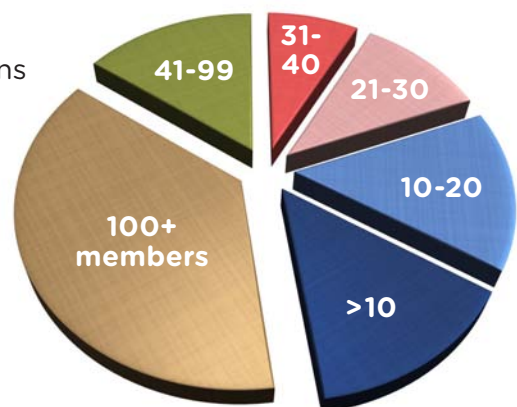
106 respondents took part in an online survey between 17 January and 11 March 2011. A breakdown of the types and sizes of the organisations they belong to is provided below.

### Type of organisation:

- 74% respondents belonged to national organisations
- 26% belonged to regional organisations

### Size of organisation:

- 37% 100+ members of staff
- 15% 41-99 members of staff
- 8% 31-40 members of staff
- 11% 21-30 members of staff
- 15% 10-20 members of staff
- 14% fewer than 10 members of staff



Qualitative telephone interviews with 21 senior communications staff from both national and regional organisations were conducted during the same period.

Respondents were able to contribute to the report anonymously. Pseudonyms have been used for those who are featured as case studies where the nature of their response is sensitive. The names of their organisations have also been omitted.



## 1. Defining ‘communications’

‘Communications’ can be defined in many different ways by organisations, depending on their size, their structure and the understanding senior management have of the discipline.

**Respondents to the Get Heard survey identify four key areas that their organisations understand by the term ‘communications’; media relations (91%), public relations (84%), marketing (73%) and internal communications (63%).**

The majority of respondents say the primary focus of their role is to promote public awareness campaigns (61%), closely followed by 55% who say their main function is to respond to media enquiries. Other responsibilities highlighted by respondents include support for fundraising and events, social media, public affairs and reputation management. What is encouraging is that more than three quarters of those surveyed (76%) feel their work has the right strategic focus for their organisation.



**“I’m responsible for all communications – website, press, publications, strategy, events, and some fundraising.”**

*Anonymous, Communications and Marketing Manager for a national medical research charity*

**“I have a wide remit covering all internal and external communications, marketing materials and website development. I am also responsible for developing our public affairs work, volunteers and fundraising as well as a pre-employment training programme, ‘Bridging the Gap’, in four different geographical locations.”**

*Sarah Cbilton, Director of Communications for ADS (Addiction Dependency Solutions)*

## 2. Feeling valued

**“I don’t think we’d be in our fifth year of growth if there wasn’t value placed on communications.”**

*Chris Morley, Marketing Communications Manager, National Gardens Scheme*

Communications professionals know the role their work plays in the strategic success of their organisations. More than 70% say their input means awareness and understanding of their organisation is greater. But almost 40% of respondents feel the role of communications is not valued. Two thirds of these say this is because they lack the resources to make a big impact. This perceived relationship between the budget available and the value given to communications is explored in more detail later in the report.

The attitudes of other staff are cited as factors that influence whether people feel their role is valued. Half (50%) say other staff think they know just as much about the discipline and therefore give no credit to the specialist skills and knowledge the team has. A similar number (54%) say there is a lack of cooperation between other departments and the communications team and that senior management don’t understand the importance of their work (48%).



“We are valued as PR/media/comms specialists within our organisation and we do take the lead in the direction, but at times we do have to work very hard to get senior team buy-in and we have to work hard to manage their expectations.”

*Anonymous, Communications Manager, a national health care charity*

“The senior team show how much they value communications by their investment in our work. For example the design team has top of the range, industry-standard equipment, we try to make the website as cutting edge as it can be – there is a willingness to be the best and to invest in what we do... I feel valued and that my voice is heard. The senior management team ‘get’ it.”

*Sue Mitchell, Communications Manager, Epilepsy Action.*

For more than a third (38%) of respondents who do not feel that communications is valued in their organisation, the impact is startling.

- **100% of those people who don't feel valued in their current role feel like leaving their jobs**
- **Half of them say the lack of recognition their position is given makes them doubt their ability to do a good job**
- **There is a sense of powerlessness as almost 60% feel there is nothing they can do to change the situation**

As well as impacting on them personally, respondents feel that this lack of recognition has a detrimental effect on the organisation. Three quarters (75%) say communications are confused, inconsistent and lacking a clear strategy and the same number say it means there is insufficient internal communication, resulting in poor relationships between staff teams.

“I don't think [the organisation] values PR and communications... they saw comms as an imposition and my role as a threat... [I] tried to explain how important it was to achieve credibility amongst influencers and potential funders. However, the organisation is fundamentally prejudiced towards the outside world which it thinks wouldn't understand its work and is therefore unwilling to engage with it.”

*Anonymous, Communications and Fundraising Director, a national children's charity*

## **CASE STUDY:**

### **‘Paul Thompson’, Communications Manager, a social care charity**

‘Paul’ is the sole member of the communications team and has been in post for 18 months. He feels the value of communications has fallen steadily during that time due to budgetary pressures and the attitude of the organisation.

“Communications and PR is important for the organisation but it's not considered to be critical to its success. It's a ‘nice to have’, not a ‘must have’. There has been

*continued overleaf...*



no investment in or expansion of the team. Communications also sits at a very low level in the organisational hierarchy. I have little involvement in conversations among the management team and meetings are not structured to include input from the department.”

Paul says this lack of structure meant he was left out of debates about policy decisions and the fundamental positioning of the charity, both of which are key communications issues. He says it’s a malaise that is entrenched in the organisation.

“I’ve seen organisational charts which have completely omitted communications by mistake. Even when I send out a direct request for comment or a case study I get no response. The culture of the organisation is ‘we don’t do this’.”

Paul feels that the economic downturn has exacerbated the situation. He says the volatility of the commissioning environment has meant the charity is concentrating on its core services and finding areas for growth, rather than trying to ‘punch above its weight’. A third of all staff have been made redundant, including him.

Paul’s experience has been one of frustration and he felt helpless to change or improve his situation, despite talking to friends and seeking training through external agencies like the Media Trust.

“I haven’t taken other steps to improve the situation. I have focused on my exit strategy instead. Sometimes I’ve felt the need to bring it to a head but I’ve found it very difficult to work around it as I recognise things aren’t going to change.”

### 3. The role of the Chief Executive

More than a third (35%) of respondents report directly to the Chief Executive of their organisation and this role appears to be key to the extent to which communications is recognised and senior staff feel valued. **More than three quarters (78%) of those who feel their voices are heard in their organisations attribute it to the Chief Executive understanding the importance of communications.** Similarly, amongst those who do not feel acknowledged, 83% say this is because the Chief Executive does not understand communications and the role it has to play. Amongst those who feel they are not being listened to, 67% have expressed their concerns to their CEO.

**The support of the Chief Executive can go a long way to helping senior communications professionals feel valued**

“The value of communications is recognised at board level, which has ex-communications professionals on it. They demonstrated this by appointing a Chief Executive who is a strong spokesperson and very media-savvy.”

*Anonymous, Head of Communications, umbrella organisation in the voluntary sector*

The majority of respondents say their Chief Executive has a background in the voluntary sector (64%) and almost a fifth (18%) say he or she has experience of communications or marketing.

“The senior management team are excellent, they have a good understanding of communications and some of them have had experience of working with the media. We’ve gone from three to five staff in the [communications] team in the last year.”

*Lisa Sinclair, Communications Manager, Crimestoppers UK*



## CASE STUDY:

### **'Stella', Head of Communications, national welfare charity**

'Stella' has a very broad remit in her role as Head of Communications for a national welfare charity. Her responsibilities include developing the communications strategy, managing the brand reputation, advertising and public affairs. She says her Chief Executive is accessible and good will is there, but this has little effect.

"The organisation is very much controlled from the top down. PR and comms are seen as 'bolt on' activities to the work of other departments. People within the organisation have very little understanding of what communications is or its potential. They are very appreciative of the results, but don't always appreciate the process or efforts that go into generating them.

"Whilst the Director of Marketing and Communications sits on the board, his primary focus is on fundraising. I wanted to be part of the senior management team meetings to be kept in the loop with strategic decision making. My request to join these meetings was refused.

"I have been asking for an extra member of staff for nearly two years and been unsuccessful, whilst other teams with a fundraising remit have been allowed to expand."

## CASE STUDY:

### **Sarah Burden, PR Manager, Devon Air Ambulance Trust**

Sarah Burden began her career with the Devon Air Ambulance Trust 14 years ago and has gained her knowledge and experience on the job. As a small, regional charity, relationships are close and the Chief Executive is instrumental in making her feel valued and acknowledged.

"Our CEO certainly recognises the importance of comms. We have a small management team of four people and I am included in their meetings so that the communications side of things is represented. One thing that works particularly well is that the Community PR Officer and I share the same office as the Chief Executive; I don't feel that there are any barriers between us."

Sarah was considering her next career move two years ago, but the arrival of the new Chief Executive made her re-think her plans. As well as changing the PR strategy, the Chief Executive has introduced training and development schedules to the organisation.

"We have a one-to-one every month and an appraisal every year. I feel able to ask for extra training and the charity is funding my NLP (neurolinguistic programming) course," says Sarah. "I feel trusted and appreciated."



## 4. Making your voice heard

The support of the Chief Executive can go a long way to helping senior communications professionals feel valued, but in order to really feel that they are being listened to there needs to be understanding and acknowledgement from the senior team as a whole.

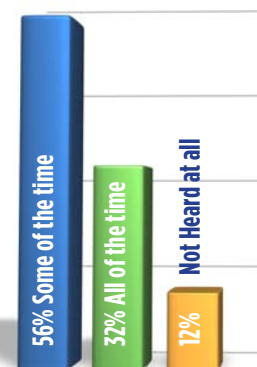
“I wouldn’t still be here if I didn’t think there was a degree of ‘we listen to what you say and we make decisions on the opinions you express’. I’m possibly the most experienced person in the organisation in terms of communications so it would be slightly strange if my views were not listened to.”

*Chris Morley, Marketing Communications Manager, National Gardens Scheme*

While the majority of respondents feel their voice, or that of their team, is heard at the most senior levels of their organisation some (56%) or all (32%) of the time, **almost one in eight (12%) feel they are not heard at all.**

Senior communications professionals feel the clearest indication that their voice is not being heard is that they are not involved in strategic decisions within their organisation (92%). They also cite not being regularly included in senior management meetings (67%) and the fact that senior staff are rarely on message (50%). For those who are involved in meetings on a regular basis, 42% say their opinions are not recognised or given any value.

Respondents feel this lack of input into strategic decisions could have a detrimental effect on their organisation. The majority (83%) feel the senior team is making decisions without understanding the implications or opportunities for communications. Two thirds (65%) feel that not being listened to could damage the



reputation of their organisation because they would not be aware of, or be able to manage, risk situations. Around half of those questioned also feel not being heard by their senior team would affect the organisation’s ability to meet its aims (53%) and make it more difficult to attract donations (44%).

Almost 50% of those who feel their voice is now being heard, when previously it wasn’t, attribute the change to having demonstrated the value of communications through a specific campaign or project. And more than 40% of those feel recognition for their role is now greater because they gained confidence and pushed for acknowledgement.

**The majority (83%) feel that the senior team is making decisions without understanding the implications or opportunities for communications**

“We’ve achieved the right balance between our input being sought and respected, and us being able to offer our advice – we never have to feel as though we can’t suggest things. But you have to earn that respect. It’s very important to communicate, to explain how you’re doing things and to show interest in other teams like fundraising, and show how you can support those areas of work.”

*Mike Blakemore, Media Director, Amnesty International*

“There is an increasing need for us to demonstrate the value of communications which is as it should be, and we must respond with context and explanations, not excuses.”

*Anonymous, Head of News and Media, a national children’s charity*



## CASE STUDY:

### Nikki Hill, Deputy Director of Communications, The Stroke Association

Nikki Hill has been in post for three years. She is responsible for campaigns, media relations and policy, and manages a team of 12. She feels it is down to communications professionals to make themselves heard.

“It has to be about building the reputation of good communications, about being good at what you do and having a certain amount of gravitas, so that when you speak you ensure you’re listened to. I am invited into key meetings and will happily go to directors to talk to them about what’s happening, knowing they will take my advice on how to proceed. People recognise when they need to involve communications. It’s based on respect.”

As a result of this proactive approach, and demonstrating to other teams that she knows her subject inside out, Nikki finds staff readily seek her advice in the early stages of an issue arising. She says communications professionals cannot assume that colleagues understand their work and appreciate what it involves.

“It’s up to us as communicators to ensure that we are heard internally. You have to understand where the other person is coming from. I have seen press officers in the past who feel they are not being listened to, but you actually have to take some responsibility. You need to be reading the policy documents, understanding the wider context – otherwise you won’t be heard.”

***She stresses the importance of cross-team communication and making a conscious effort to arrange regular meetings to generate awareness and understanding.*** But Nikki does acknowledge that in order for this approach to be successful there has to be a level of openness to knowing more about the role of communications, otherwise you may be fighting a losing battle.

“I have been in previous roles where the research department wouldn’t listen to the communications team because no one had a PhD. So sometimes there’s not much you can do!”

## 5. The impact of resources

There is a strong relationship between the budget and staff allowance given to a communications professional and the value they perceive their role to have. **64% of senior communications professionals feel that not having the resources to make a big impact is the reason that their role isn’t valued by their organisation.** Amongst the 75% of respondents who felt their role was recognised and valued but is not any longer, 67% say this is because the budget for communications and PR has been cut. Interestingly, only one respondent suggested their value to their organisation was demonstrated by how much they were paid.

**“When the money disappears, communications is often first in the firing line. Charities can’t do away with fundraising or policy, they take a long, hard look at campaigning but media relations, PR and marketing are prime for cutting as pressures force the question of how much is really needed.”**

*Anonymous, Communications and Fundraising Director, a national children’s charity*

The current economic climate has obviously impacted on the sector. Happily, a third of respondents (34%) feel their position is secure because the value of their skills is understood, while another third (33%) say they do not feel their position is at



risk because their organisation needs the job to be done irrespective of how much strategic input they have. But almost one in four feel their job is at risk – either because communications is seen as a luxury that can be cut in hard times (16%) or because the senior team think a more junior member of staff can do the job (6%). The situation is unclear for 15% who are not sure how their role will be affected.

“We need to develop a more commercial approach and be able to adapt our roles. If people can’t do this, they could be in danger. People who are on contracts are at greater risk because there will need to be a really strong argument to get a contract renewed.”

*Anonymous, Head of Marketing and Communications, a national health care charity*

“Communications is recognised as invaluable – even more so in the current situation. We need to maintain our profile in terms of campaigning and fundraising, to keep the supporters we have and to bring in new supporters. PR is definitely recognised as a cost effective way of communicating with large numbers of people.”

*Mike Blakemore, Media Director, Amnesty International*

**Almost one in four feel their job is at risk – either because communications is seen as a luxury or because the senior team think a more junior member of staff can do the job**

“If anything, they give more weight to communications now. I don’t have more resources, but the senior team certainly see comms as important in supporting fundraising and raising the profile of the charity. I feel my role is as secure as anyone else’s at the moment.”

*Anonymous, PR Manager, a children’s charity in the West Midlands*

“In better economic conditions there was some ambition to punch above our weight and to make a name for ourselves. However, as the commissioning environment has become more volatile it’s more about holding it together and finding limited areas for growth... communications has fallen way down the list of priorities.”

*Anonymous, Communications Manager, a social care charity*

## 6. Sources of support

“I established a network of people working in social care communications at a national level to support learning development, share best practice and help coordinate activities. We all meet up on a quarterly basis. It has certainly benefited me; I have learned from people. I have also received credit for taking the lead in setting up the network.”

*Iris Steen, Head of Marketing and Communications, Social Care Institute for Excellence*

The primary source of support for communications professionals is friends who have similar roles in other organisations. Almost three quarters of those surveyed say these are the people they turn to for advice.

A quarter of those who feel their role is not valued by their senior team say in order to change the situation they would highlight case studies from other organisations to show where communications has made a difference. Sharing knowledge and good practice is obviously considered extremely valuable to professionals in the sector.



“I’ve found Twitter really useful and discovered lots of contacts through it who are doing the same job as me. There is also an Association of Air Ambulances (AAA) in the UK and the comms teams across the country are going to start setting up quarterly meetings so that we can pick each other’s brains. To be able to share ideas and initiatives is great. With regard to the AAA we are all working in a similar field, but do things differently. This means we can discuss what works, what doesn’t, and pick up ideas and solutions to problems as well.”

*Sarah Burden, PR Manager, Devon Air Ambulance Trust*

“Third sector communications is quite unique and it’s good to be around other professionals in similar roles.”

*Anonymous, Head of Communications, umbrella organisation in the voluntary sector*

Far fewer people, however, currently seek support from the sector. Around a fifth turn to the Media Trust (22%), the CharityComms website (22%) or CharityComms events (21%), and 16% look to the CIPR.

***These professional networks, events and information sources (together with the informal personal networks of friends and colleagues) can help PR professionals to make the case for greater recognition and additional budget by providing examples of effective working methods and best practice.***

***Networks can also be vital sources of advice, places to share information and find support***

## **CASE STUDY:**

### **Jeanette Edgar, Communications Director, Lakeland Arts Trust**

Jeanette Edgar is part of a management team of four and says it would be difficult for her to feel more valued in her organisation. The Lakeland Arts Trust has a well-defined personal development plan and having been brought in from quite a different role, she has been given training centred on learning about the sector. She says networks are a key source of support for her and the Trust:

“We have had specialist external help on the design and build of our website and have developed a strong relationship with Cumbria Tourism, which has a very good PR and Marketing Officer, along with the District and County Councils, which is important and mutually beneficial as they are effectively our stakeholders. In terms of strengthening our position in the sector and securing funding, I think the most important thing is networking. Although the sector is definitely improving, I don’t think people within it are as used to networking with strategic and measurable outcomes in mind as in the commercial sector.”

Since Janet has been in the role, she has encouraged networking and has established links with ten regional arts and craft houses to work on PR strategies together. This has helped them to secure funding collectively, although there isn’t always an equal distribution of the work involved. Janet also makes thoughtful use of formal sources of support for herself and her team.

“In terms of CharityComms, the Media Trust and others, our part-time Development Officer often comes to me with ideas or opportunities from these sources.”



## Conclusion

This report has highlighted a number of key issues for communications professionals in the voluntary sector. Overall, the sector appears to have a broad understanding of the role of communications but there seems to be less recognition for the actual skills needed and the level of work communications can involve.

*How much recognition can be achieved is, as we have seen, largely dependent on two main factors:*

*1. The attitude of the Chief Executive*

*2. The budget available to demonstrate communications' worth through a significant piece of work*

But respondents to the survey have also shown that regular communication can build acknowledgement over time. Support comes through understanding, so it is worth investing the time to organise meetings, presentations and training to demonstrate the successes of the communications team.

*It is also clear that personal and professional networks are extremely valuable.*

Examples from others can help professionals to demonstrate to their senior team the value of believing in or investing in communication skills or resources. Networks can also be vital sources of advice, places to share information and find support.

## Towards a better relationship

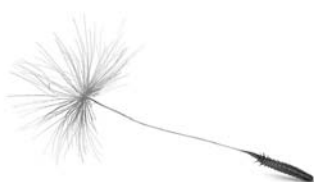
'Get Heard' has been an extremely interesting project and we are enormously grateful to all those who took part. It is encouraging to see that the majority of the respondents felt that the role of communications was valued in their organisation. However, there is clearly work to be done, both on the part of communications professionals and senior management. It is with this in mind that this report recommends a number of guidance points for both senior management and communications professionals, drawn from the experiences and best practice shared by those who have taken part in the research.

This section of the report makes recommendations for senior management and communications professionals. It offers guidance on how to generate greater understanding of communications, highlights the benefits this can bring to an organisation and suggests actions PR professionals can take to demonstrate and increase the value given to communications by their organisation.

## Recommendations for senior management

**Your attitude to communications is key to professionals feeling valued and listened to. Take time to understand what their role involves and acknowledge they are professionals in their field**

This report highlights the importance of the senior management team's attitude in how valued and listened to communications professionals feel. The majority of respondents identify the Chief Executive's understanding of communications as being key in how valued they feel, and more than 80% of those who don't feel their voice is heard say it is because the senior team give no credit to their skills and expertise. Ask for briefing sessions on communications and the value it brings. Invest time in understanding the team's abilities. Spend a day with them - you might both be surprised by what you learn. And bear in mind that your attitude will influence how other departments and staff view the communications team.



## **Involve senior communications staff in strategic decisions to ensure communications are consistent, to maximise PR opportunities and to identify and manage any risks**

Communications is a vital part of your organisation's strategy. Senior professionals can manage any risks that arise, but more importantly they will spot them in advance so that, where possible, they can actually be avoided. Being fully aware of all of the organisation's activities will allow you to maximise PR opportunities. 'Stella', Head of Communications for a national welfare charity, says she doesn't feel that communications is valued because her input is not sought by the senior team in discussions about the charity's brand. She also finds herself reading about fundraising stories with real media potential that the communications team has not been alerted to. "I feel very undervalued and frustrated. There is lots of potential not being actualised."

## **Don't regard communications as a luxury that is only invested in when funds allow. It is essential to building and protecting your organisation's reputation, awareness of your work and promoting good internal relationships**

Consistent and well-thought out messaging is important in building and maintaining your external reputation, particularly in uncertain times which the sector is currently facing. This background is what all your organisation's other activities take place against, be it fundraising, events or funding applications - so it is vital to get it right.

## **Recommendations for communications professionals**

### **Be proactive. Don't assume that the senior team and your colleagues in other departments know what communications involves**

As communication professionals it is your role to 'communicate'. Arrange training sessions for senior management and colleagues in other departments to help them understand what your role involves. Mike Blakemore, Media Director for Amnesty International, says he has had to work to raise the profile of communications internally. "I think our work was previously taken for granted by some. But you can't expect it not to be if you don't communicate with people."

### **Organise regular cross-departmental meetings or briefing sessions to manage expectations and to encourage a two-way flow of communication**

Regular meetings will generate understanding about what you are able to achieve for the organisation. It will help departments to be aware of what each other is doing and foster good relationships and communications. Remember, it is not about you telling colleagues your news; it is about sharing information and giving recognition and respect to each other.

***Regular meetings will generate understanding about what you are able to achieve for the organisation***

### **Shout about your successes. Find ways of showing your organisation what you have achieved**

Almost 50% of respondents say they felt more listened to after having demonstrated the value of communications through a campaign or project that gained them greater recognition. But nearly two thirds of people feel they do not have the resources to make a big impact to show the value of what they do. Achievements do not have to be momentous to be worth sharing with colleagues and senior management. Regular, good internal communications will demonstrate your worth over time.



## Demonstrating your worth will help you to argue your case for more resources

Every department would like a bigger budget. But just as you have to illustrate the need for funding to a grant provider or a donor, you have to show senior management what you could achieve with more money. Show them the benefits to the organisation and the long term impact of this investment.

***Shout about your successes. Find ways of showing your organisation what you have achieved***

**Join or build networks with other communications professionals, learn from others' experiences and build an external support system. Use their examples and ideas to make your case for more resources or greater commitment from other teams**

Three quarters of respondents say their friends in communications roles in other organisations are where they go to for support and advice. There are also likely to be more formal networks within your region or your sector that you can share ideas and best practice through. There is also a range

of professional support services available from groups such as the CIPR's Fifth Estate, which offer workshops and training to help you gain skills and confidence. There is a list of contacts you may find useful at the end of this report.

## Thank you to...

Amazon PR and the CIPR Fifth Estate Group would like to thank all those who took part in the online survey and those who were interviewed for this research.

We encourage your feedback and thoughts on this report.





## CIPR Fifth Estate

Set up in 1990, Fifth Estate is a sectoral group of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations and aims to support anyone in the not-for-profit sector who has public relations in their job description. The group holds regular meetings with speakers from the media, not-for-profit organisations and other relevant sectors.

For further information please email Chair, Gill Dandy, at [fifthestate@cipr.co.uk](mailto:fifthestate@cipr.co.uk).

[Twitter.com/CIPRFifthEstate](https://twitter.com/CIPRFifthEstate)



## Amazon PR

Amazon is a public relations and communications agency working with clients in the public and voluntary sectors and social enterprises. It creates and delivers communications audits and strategies, stakeholder research and engagement, media relations campaigns, events, publications and copywriting to raise awareness, transform the way people think and help to deliver real change.

For more information visit [www.amazonpr.co.uk](http://www.amazonpr.co.uk)  
or email Kate Beard at [kate@amazonpr.co.uk](mailto:kate@amazonpr.co.uk).

[Twitter.com/amzpr](https://twitter.com/amzpr)



## CIPR

The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) is the advocate and voice of the public relations profession. It is the professional body for the UK PR industry with over 9,000 members involved in all areas and aspects of public relations both nationally and internationally. The CIPR represents its members and raises standards throughout the profession through education, training, research, policies, continuing professional development, good governance and a professional code of conduct all members commit to.

[www.cipr.co.uk](http://www.cipr.co.uk)



# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Quantitative research questions

- Q1** In your organisation what is covered by/ widely understood by the term communications?
- Q2** Which of these disciplines fall within your own role in the organisation?
- Media relations
  - Public relations
  - Internal communications
  - Marketing
  - Fundraising
  - Events
  - Volunteer management
  - Other (please specify)
- Q3** What is the primary focus of your role?
- Q4** Do you feel that your work has the right strategic focus for the organisation?
- Q5** If no, what do you think it should be focused on?
- Q6** Who do you report to in the organisation?
- Q7** Does your Chief Executive/ equivalent have a background in any of the following:
- Voluntary sector
  - Public sector
  - Private sector
  - Communications/ marketing roles
  - Fundraising
  - Other (please specify)
- Q8** Do you feel that the role of communications is valued within your organisation?
- Q9** If no, please tell us why you think that is
- Q10** Do you feel that, as a communications professional, your voice or that of your team is heard at the most senior levels within your organisation?
- Q11** How do you recognise that your voice is being heard?
- Q12** Have you always been heard within the organisation?
- Q13** If yes, what do you attribute that to?
- Q14** If no, what changed?
- Q15** What impact does having your voice heard at the most senior levels have on the organisation you work within?
- Q16** What issues/ problems do you think would arise if you weren't heard at the most senior levels in the organisation?
- Q17** How do you recognise that your voice isn't being heard?
- Q18** As a communications professional, do you feel you have you ever been recognised and valued within your organisation?
- Q19** If yes, what changed?
- Q20** If no, why do you think that is?



- Q21** What effect does not being valued have on you as a communications professional?
- Q22** What effect does your lack of involvement at a senior level have on the organisation?
- Q23** What do you think you could do to change the situation?
- Q24** What have you already done to improve the situation?
- Q25** What, if anything, would improve your position in your organisation?
- Q26** Where do you / would you go to for support/ advice?
- Q27** Do you feel your role could be at risk because of the current economic situation?
- Q28** Are the roles of others with communications responsibilities at risk because of the current economic situation?
- Q29** Do you feel that the role of communications is valued across the charity sector as a whole?

## Appendix 2: Useful contacts

### **The Chartered Institute of Public Relations**

CIPR Public Relations Centre  
52-53 Russell Square  
London WC1B 4HP  
[www.cipr.co.uk](http://www.cipr.co.uk)  
020 7631 6900  
[info@cipr.co.uk](mailto:info@cipr.co.uk)

### **The Media Trust**

4th Floor  
Block A, Centre House  
Wood Lane  
London W12 7SB  
[www.mediatrust.org](http://www.mediatrust.org)  
020 7871 5600  
[info@mediatrust.org](mailto:info@mediatrust.org)

### **CharityComms**

2-6 Tenter Ground  
Spitalfields  
London E1 7NH  
[www.charitycomms.org.uk](http://www.charitycomms.org.uk)  
020 7426 8877

### **KnowHow NonProfit**

[www.knowhownonprofit.org](http://www.knowhownonprofit.org)



