

2022-2023



Africa PR & Communications Report



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COUNTRIES IN APCR

 Algeria	 Ethiopia	 Nigeria
 Angola	 France	 Rwanda
 Benin	 Gabon	 Somalia
 Botswana	 Gambia	 South Africa
 Burkina Faso	 Ghana	 Tanzania
 Cameroon	 Kenya	 Togo
 Congo	 Liberia	 Uganda
 Côte d'Ivoire	 Morocco	 Zambia
 Egypt	 Mozambique	 Zimbabwe
 Eswatini	 Namibia	

53.7%

**Of the 54 countries
in Africa, 29 were
included in the
survey.**



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ABBREVIATIONS

AfCFTA	-	African Continental Free Trade Area
AMEC	-	International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication
APCR	-	Africa PR & Communications Report
AVE	-	Advertising Value Equivalency
Comms	-	Communications
DEI	-	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
ETI	-	Employment Tax Incentive
FGD	-	Focus Group Discussion
IDI	-	In-depth Interview
NIPC	-	Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission
PR	-	Public Relations
RFP	-	Request for proposal
SMART	-	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound
WEF	-	World Economic Forum

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Most importantly, we would like to thank the communications experts, students, faculty members, as well as business professionals who took their time to be a part of this research.



FOREWORD



MOLIEHI MOLEKOA

Adviser, **APCR Committee**
Managing Director, **Magna Carta Reputation Consultants**

It is with great excitement that we present the first Africa Public Relations and Communications Report (APCR), exploring the multidimensional African PR & Comms industry. This report aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current state of the industry, its challenges, opportunities, and its prospects.

As the African continent continues to experience economic growth and social development, the importance of effective communication and public relations becomes increasingly evident.

The PR & Comms industry plays a crucial role in shaping the narrative of African businesses, governments, and civil society organisations and in promoting Africa's positive image on the global stage.

This report brings together insights and perspectives from leading practitioners

and experts across the continent, offering a unique opportunity to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by the African PR & Comms industry. It highlights the diversity of the industry, its potential for growth, and its capacity to drive positive change and impact.

We hope this report will be a valuable resource for anyone interested in the African PR & Comms industry and its future. We are grateful to all our partners for bringing this report to life.

We are confident that its insights and recommendations will inspire further dialogue and action and help to shape the future of this dynamic and important industry.

Enjoy the read!

INTRODUCTION



AYENI ADÉKUNLÉ SAMUEL

Chair, **APCR Committee**
Founder, **BHM Holdings**

Africa's Giant Communications Potential

A lot of predictions have been made about Africa's potential to rival other global economies. Everywhere you look, the verdict is that the continent is a goldmine for businesses to explore growth opportunities. Yet, not enough has been said about the care and upliftment of its biggest strength: the people.

When Covid-19 hit about three years ago, a big concern globally was how Africa would fare compared to the rest of the world. Would it survive the pandemic? Would the continent and its people recover after the dust settled? Africa survived and in impressive fashion. But how? How did the continent not get overwhelmed as widely predicted? How did it emerge from the turmoil with its clout intact, and ready to attain the economic position it is widely tipped for?

Many factors are attributed to the success, but the people's reception to genuine care and concern about their well-being stands right at the centre. This meant that they responded admirably to information and instructions provided through various communication channels, desperate to not fall victim to the tough days. It also meant the PR and Communications industry played a pivotal role in making concerted

efforts by public authorities and private stakeholders to yield positive outcomes.

It is important that we continue to share the lessons from the event long after the paranoia has ebbed: that the African people, when genuinely cared for, can respond swiftly with loyalty and perform the actions required to achieve business growth and economic prosperity. It is easy to forget, as history is being written and stories are being told about the monumental global achievements happening across industries in Africa today, that the people are the first cheerleaders before global attention.

But Covid is over. The world has opened up again, and economies are singing different tunes depending on how you're listening.

Africa is again, warming up to the rather elusive opportunity to take its rightful place in the global community and add its voice to the conversations - from truth, to democracy, culture, and sustainability. So, how will PR and Communications practitioners in Africa maintain relevance and what is their role and responsibility in ensuring the continent gets to where it's projected to be? The answer has many dynamics but is yet simple.

My view is that we must first communicate with care. We must prioritise the upliftment of the people and be willing to become useful vehicles in not only propagating positive agendas about the continent, but also working with stakeholders to make sure that actions meet words.

Ayeni Adékúnlé Samuel 🇳🇮



There are critical factors to consider and issues within the industry we must first identify, however. As such, the need for an exhaustive report that identifies, analyses and proffers solutions to the challenges facing the PR and Communications industry in Africa with quality research and verifiable data is long overdue.

When we set out to expand the Nigeria PR Report to the rest of Africa, many questions about the feasibility arose. We are not a homogeneous society, so how do we capture the essence of an extremely diverse people? Research and reports in the field of Public Relations from Africa had been unheard of. Yes, international organisations looking in have been able to capture fragments, but would we be capable of doing so from within the continent?

And so, a nearly three-year journey began - allowing us to understand and appreciate the nuances of the various cultures and practices and how it affects the practice of public relations - an aspect we are seeking to explore more of in coming editions.

This is why the maiden edition of the Africa PR & Communications Report is a momentous event in the history of PR practice on the continent. It, amongst many things, allows us to critically evaluate the journey, understand the problems, and suggest actions to explore opportunities based on verified data, facts, and experiences of practitioners across Africa.

The industry has made great strides with little guidance but the APCR can form a blueprint for how we adapt to changing realities from here on. We are already witnessing the advent of new digital technologies and how they will help us to work better. Investments in new digital tools and channels must form a core of our strategy to develop new talents in PR practice.

It is also our collective responsibility to lay a great foundation for the future of the industry by utilising real-time data to solve issues of disparity, exclusivity, brain drain and poor compensation among PR and Communications professionals. The APCR concretely highlights, with expert insights and data, action areas to embrace if we will achieve significant success.

Importantly, achieving Africa's growth potential will largely rest on leadership commitment to truth, fairness, and justice.

Ayeni Adékúnlé Samuel 🇳🇮



Practitioners in the industry must also, now more than ever, show unwavering commitment to responsible and ethical practice. It is not a myth that PR and Communications can directly transform or impact lives; our policies and attitude to practice must reflect responsibility, caution and care.

The BHM Research Intelligence team has put together a worthy material as a global reference to how we do PR in Africa over the next few years and the opportunities available. It will optimistically serve as a spring in our steps to building an environment that is beneficial to all — PR practitioners, stakeholders, clients, investors and more importantly, the African people.

METHODOLOGY

53.7%

Of the 54 countries in Africa, 29 were included in the survey.



4 Languages

through which survey was carried out.

3,000+

More than 3,000 experienced communicators and business executives from across Africa took the survey.

The research involved 3,194 experienced communicators and business executives across 29 African countries.

N. Africa

- Algeria
- Egypt
- Morocco

S. Africa

- Angola
- Botswana
- Eswatini
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- South Africa
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

C. Africa

- Democratic Republic of Congo

E. Africa

- Ethiopia
- Kenya
- Rwanda
- Somalia
- Tanzania
- Uganda

W. Africa

- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Liberia
- Nigeria
- Togo

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted via a video conferencing platform and lasted for 60 - 90 minutes, with four to five senior practitioners in each group. The groups were segregated by country but mixed gender. The insights from the conversations have greatly improved our knowledge of regional differences and the uniqueness of markets. Quotes from the discussions have been used throughout this document and are clearly indicated. The participants remain anonymous.

Interviews

Across Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, and Egypt, a total of 17 interviews were conducted. The interviews focused on professionals with more than a decade of experience representing businesses, individuals (such as celebrities, and politicians), NGOs, governments, and various other key stakeholders to drive local and global agendas using PR and Communications. The quotes used in this publication represent only a few conversations among many, but they are real and provide interesting insights.

Surveys

A total of 3,194 took the survey, including PR and Communications professionals from North, Southern, East, Central and West Africa.

A combination of methodologies was applied to collect both primary and secondary data. The methods include survey, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), interviews and content analysis. Data triangulation was used to ensure that the qualitative data validated the quantitative findings.

Essay contributions from industry practitioners are included in the report. Participants in the focus group discussions, interviews and surveys consented that only non-identifiable, aggregate-level information can be used for this publication.

01 Focus Group Discussions

02 Interviews

03 Survey

04 Essay Contributions

05 Secondary Sources

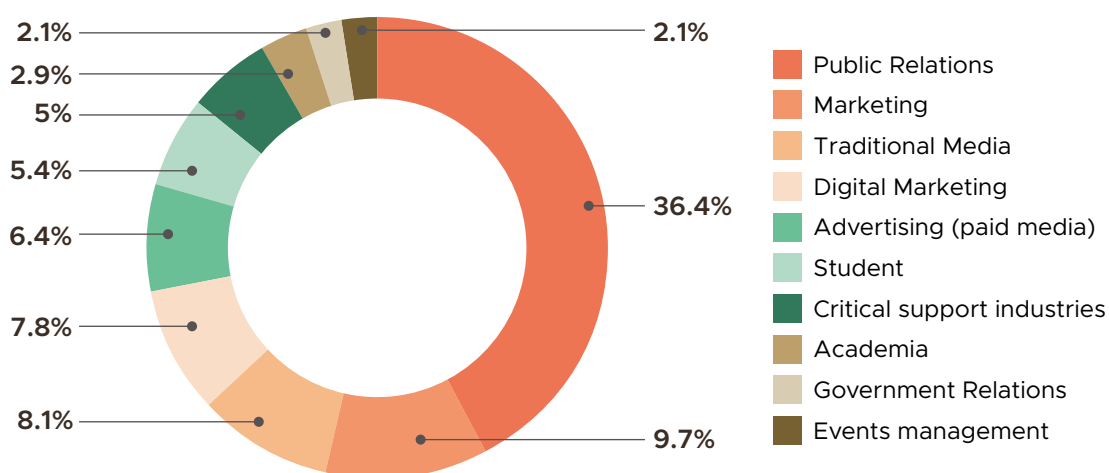
Participants who primarily operate from these 29 countries were captured, accounting for 53% of African countries participating in the surveys. The survey was fielded in English, French, Portuguese and Arabic languages in these markets and restricted to participants in the PR and communications domain. The design of the survey instrument captured the perspectives of academicians, professionals from a mix of industries and students in the field of communications.

The professionals in the study included those with one year to over 30 years of

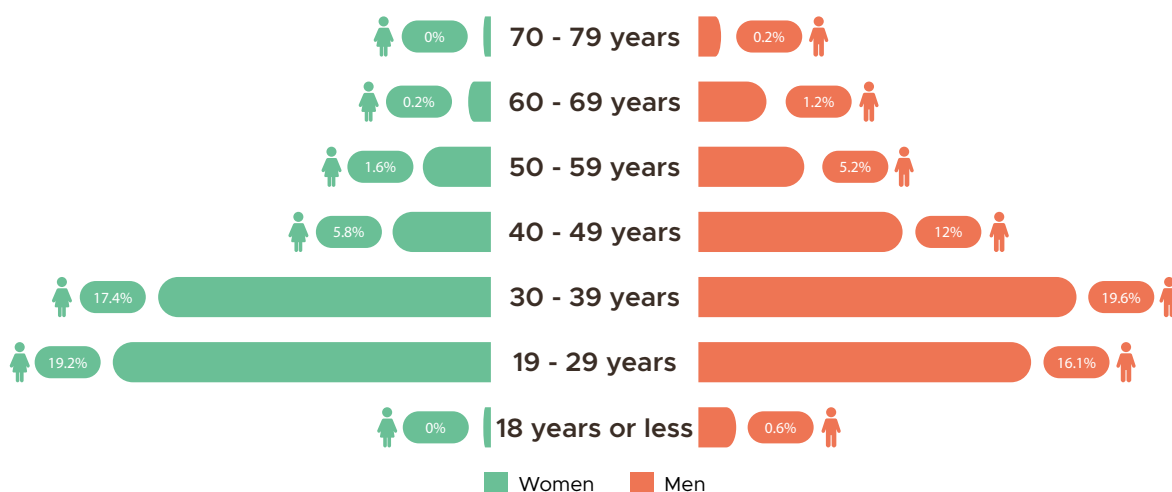
experience. Some are in-house communicators and PR professionals within organisations while others work in large and boutique agencies, freelance as PR professionals, and/or are C-suite executives with several years of experience in communications and PR.

Practitioners in the older age demographic are represented in the focus group discussions and interviews. This is balanced by the younger demographics of survey participants - 90% of which are 50 years old or younger.

Q: I am a professional in this industry



Q: My age is?



APCR - KEY STATS



3,133

Participants surveyed



Across

29

Countries

These are top 2 concerns of practitioners:

20.1%

Ethical and Professional Practices

19%

Fake News

These are top 3 issues that businesses or clients face:



Economic Instability



Funding and Cash Flow



Sales

Top 3 concerns for the future of the industry are:

17.3%

Artificial Intelligence

13.8%

Information Analysis

12.6%

Internet of Things



\$83 billion

Total FDI in Africa in 2021

Only



5%

of participants reported concerns about war and territorial disputes in their countries

Technologies that will influence the future of PR in Africa in 5 - 10 years

17.73%

Artificial Intelligence

16.8%

Social Networks

15.5%

Data Science

Only



1.3%

of professionals earn over \$50,000 per year



74.8%

of participants say there is a drastic drop in talent in their countries



81.1%

of participants admit to being overworked



AFRICA AT A GLANCE

AFRICA AT A GLANCE

From Algiers to Nairobi, Kigali to Alexandria and Abidjan to Lagos, the world's second-largest continent and second most-populous continent, with 54 countries and just about 2,000 languages, is the final frontier.

Africa has been argued to be the birthplace of the Hominidae, the taxonomic family to which modern humans belong. There is evidence that shows the continent has been inhabited by humans for over 4 million years. Now, the continent has the most physically varied population in the world. With darker skin colour variation in some Sudanic regions in West and East Africa - locations where radiation from the sun is most severe - to lighter or tan skin variations in the Northern area of the continent with a Mediterranean climate.

Africa is an enormously mineral-rich continent and has some of the world's largest reserves of fossil fuels, metallic ores, gems and precious metals. With diverse biological resources including equatorial rainforests, wildlife, and vast agricultural products.

The continent is culturally diverse with thousands of ethnic groups. From widely spoken languages like Arabic, Swahili, and Hausa to numerous indigenous languages, Africa's linguistic richness is a testament to its cultural heritage. In an attempt to understand the heterogeneous nature of Africa, many experts have tried to divide it according to geographical and ecological circumstances, with some consensus on five regions - Western, Northern, Eastern, Southern and Central Africa.

The Challenges of The Continent

Does Africa have challenges? Which continent doesn't? Transparency International, an anti-corruption NGO, scored 44 out of 49 African countries under 50 out of 100 in their 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index.

Climate change is also a key issue and poses a threat to its economic, social and environmental development. There have been warnings that warming has increased in the past 50-100 years, with indications that climate change will lessen crop yields and increase water scarcity, among other effects.

Hunger and malnutrition are also two important issues plaguing the continent. A 2021 report - Africa, Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition - showed that over 281 million Africans suffered from hunger. The numbers varied per region with the undernourished reaching about 2.4% in Southern Africa, 6.2% in Northern Africa, 20% in the Central region, 27% in Western Africa and 44% in East Africa.

The Future Is Truly African

Despite its challenges, the world is looking to Africa. The rest of the world has been seen and conquered. Europe and North America brought the First and Second Industrial Revolutions that led to most of the world's development today (their respective proximities and relationships with Australia and South America resulted in positive spillover effects that subsequently developed these latter



continents. Asia has enjoyed advancement and development for much of recorded history due to India and China.

With its inherent enormous natural and human resources, it's Africa's time. The continent holds great promise for the future. With a young and dynamic population, expanding middle class, and a growing consumer market, the continent presents immense opportunities for investment, innovation, and sustainable development. Initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) aim to enhance intra-African trade and foster economic integration, further fueling Africa's potential.

About two-thirds (roughly 65%) of unused arable land across the world is in Africa, a land abundant in various minerals such as cobalt, and lithium. The continent is a leading producer of agricultural products such as cacao, coffee, cotton, essential oils, and mahogany.

During the Africa Investment Forum 2022 Market Days held in November, Souleymane Diarrassouba, Ivorian minister for Trade, Crafts, and Small and Medium Enterprises, said Africa is the world's most profitable region, according to the OECD. Investors from the continent and elsewhere ought to seize its enormous investment opportunities."

\$83 billion

Foreign direct investment (FDI) to Africa in 2021

Source: UNCTAD World Investment Report 2022

According to the 2023 Africa Wealth Report by Henley & Partners, "The total investable wealth currently held on the African continent amounts to USD 2.4 trillion and its millionaire population is expected to rise by 42% over the next 10 years." Africans are not the only beneficiaries in the economic prospects of the continent, as foreign investors appear

to be in a race into the continent as revealed by foreign direct investments (FDI) of \$83 billion.

Africa's Perception Opportunity

For decades, Africa has been on the receiving end of a perception problem. Whether it's the erroneous view of hastily grouping a continent of 54 countries as a single nation, or misleading news reports of the poverty levels and conflicts across Africa, it has been an important issue that was left ignored.

In The Guardian UK in 2010, Senegalese-born French-British business woman and technology activist, Marieme Jamme, wrote on how negative perceptions were slowing Africa's development, "Most African countries have now celebrated 50 years of independence, but the negative message is still circulating. Sadly, members of the African diaspora, cut off from the reality of life in their countries of origin and searching for a new identity in the West, are sometimes complicit in this deception, telling stories that merely serve to perpetuate the negative stereotypes that are harming Africans," she said.

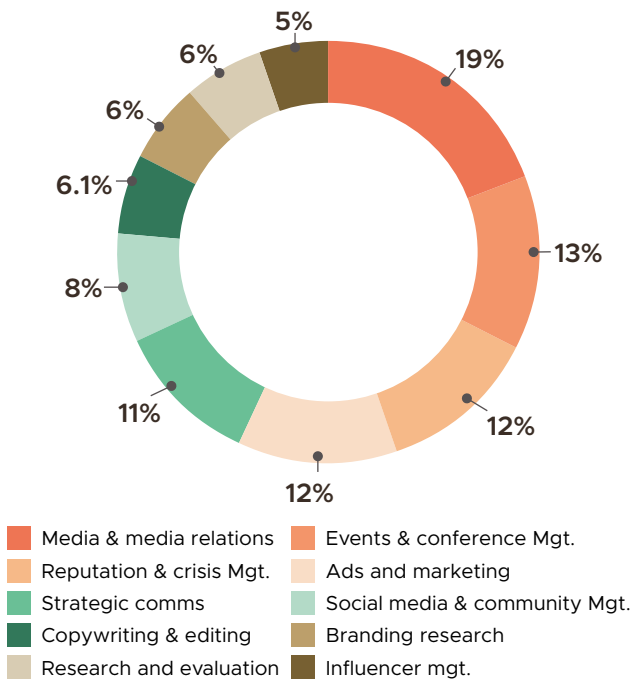
But gone are the days when we allowed the rest of the world to shape Africa's narratives. The Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Yemi Osinbajo recently said, "The stories of nations written by others focus on their own agendas. The negatives of course sell much faster. We must tell our own stories. I attend a lot of conferences and I have never seen a conference where anyone is speaking ill of their country."

This is a massive opportunity for African Public Relations practitioners in Africa. In every challenge there is opportunity. It is time for Africans to abandon the convenient truism that they have corrupt leaders and focus on identifying needs that can be monetized.

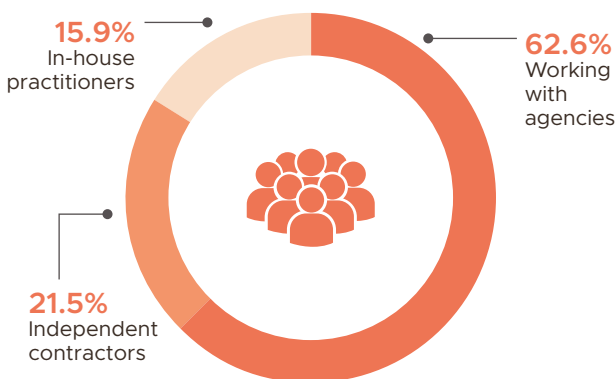
When Africans create businesses, the leaders are the first to boast about the hard work of their citizens. There is hardly a time when an African achieves something globally that they aren't celebrated publicly by their local politicians. Success has many relatives!

In the past two decades, the African entertainment industry has become an especially powerful force projecting a positive image of Africa. According to the Nigerian and African Tech Startups Reports, Lagos, Nigeria remains the tech startup capital of Africa, hosting 481 of the 633 on the continent.

Focus areas of professionals working with agencies:



PR & Communications professional engagements:



Embracing Advanced Technologies

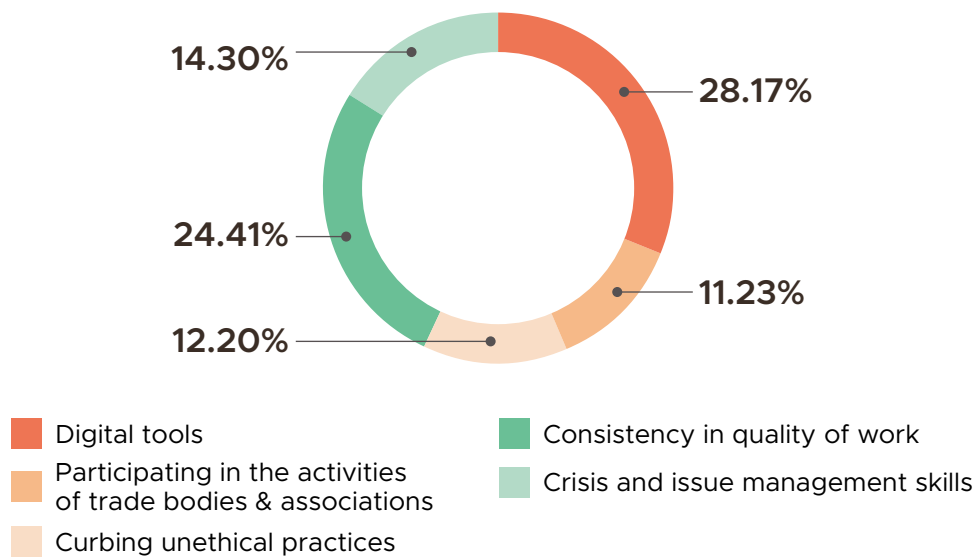
The PR and Communications industry is experiencing a welcomed transformation with the availability and evolution of new digital technologies to meet consumers' demands.

Industry professionals must now be proficient in utilising digital tools across the spectrum of their work, from campaigns to advertising. This includes a wider understanding and adoption of machine learning, artificial intelligence, virtual reality and even the metaverse.

Digital tools are essential for measurement and evaluation in PR and communications because they allow for real-time tracking and analysis of metrics such as website traffic, social media engagement, and media coverage. This information can be used to understand the effectiveness of campaigns and adjust strategies as needed. Additionally, digital tools can automate the process of reporting impact, making it easier for teams to share progress with stakeholders and demonstrate the ROI of their work.

Crisis and issue management is another aspect of PR that will be significantly impacted by the adoption of advanced digital tools. These tools, if appropriately deployed, can help to monitor information outlets for potential crisis or issue triggers, communicate swiftly with internal and external stakeholders during a crisis, track and measure the impact of a crisis on an organization's reputation and brand, monitor human consumption and trends to help predict changes in behaviour and forestall or mitigate crisis, and much more. More importantly, the growing demand for accurate and detailed performance data from clients further underscores the need for these digital skills.

Q: These are needed to stay relevant in my industry:



The adoption of advanced technology to execute PR is happening quickly and is here to stay.

Interview participant 🇳🇬



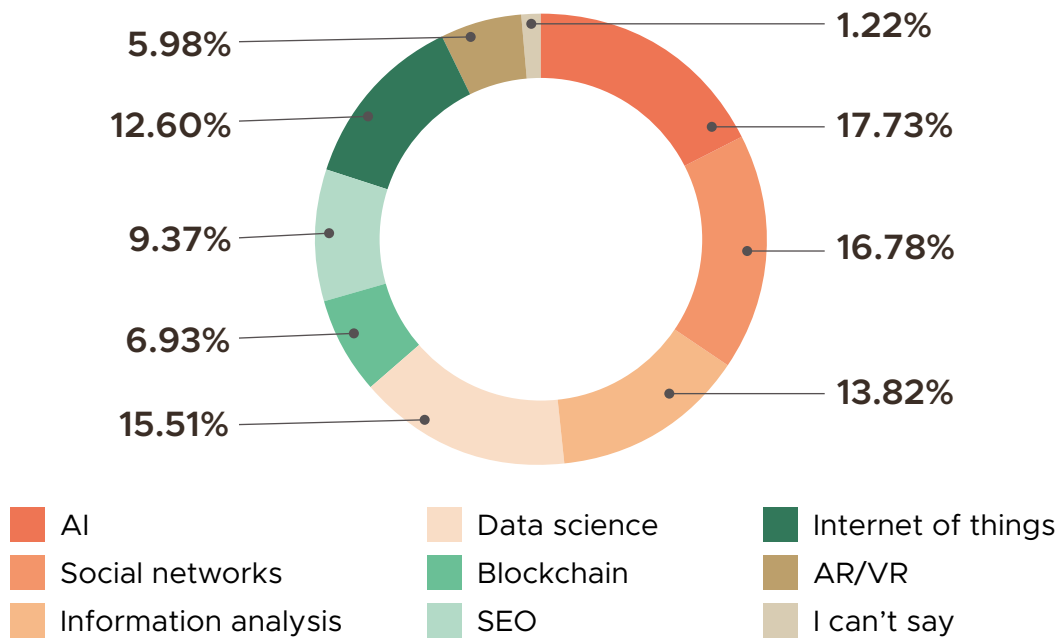
Admittedly, digital technology has brought many benefits to the PR and Communications industry, but it has also created new challenges. One of the major issues is the potential for large-scale manipulation of information. This was exemplified by the recent lawsuit against META (formerly Facebook), a technology conglomerate, for amplifying ethnic violence in Ethiopia through its Facebook platform. The company was accused of failing to properly moderate digital content. This study identified some of the main challenges facing the PR and Communications industry as keeping up with the changing market and audience, and convincing brands to adapt accordingly; combating the spread of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation,

and; dealing with an influx of unqualified practitioners claiming to be experts.

Interestingly, Artificial Intelligence technology is enjoying enormous popularity and adoption globally. ChatGPT has attained the status of a world wonder as it interacts with users in a conversational manner and generates responses to their queries in real-time. The tool will significantly be useful in improving the swiftness and quality of essays, stories, and copy for PR & Communications professionals.

Similarly, the deployment of diverse Internet of Things (IoT) solutions such as IoT connectivity, device management, IoT vertical applications, and data analytics will help to automate tasks, access real-time data on customer preferences and behaviour, and uncover new opportunities to create new products and services. The implementation of IoT will encourage seamless operations, better customer understanding, improved decision-making and increased business value which are all critical requirements to achieve sustainable growth.

Q: These are the technologies that will change how we practise communications



Transitioning Beyond the Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 continues to ravage many regions of the world, with the World Health Organisation (WHO) reporting over 700 million cases globally since its initial tracking in December 2019. Among the most affected areas are Europe, which has seen over 270 million confirmed cases, and the United States, with 189 million. In contrast, Africa has been the least affected region, with 9.4 million confirmed cases.

As China continues to address the challenge of controlling the spread of COVID-19, attention towards the disease in Africa has waned. The pressing issues of food scarcity, population displacement, economic challenges, and political events, particularly elections, have become the primary concern for many citizens.

The political climate is particularly tense as elections take place in countries like Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Gabon, DR Congo, Algeria, Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda and South Africa in 2023 and 2024.

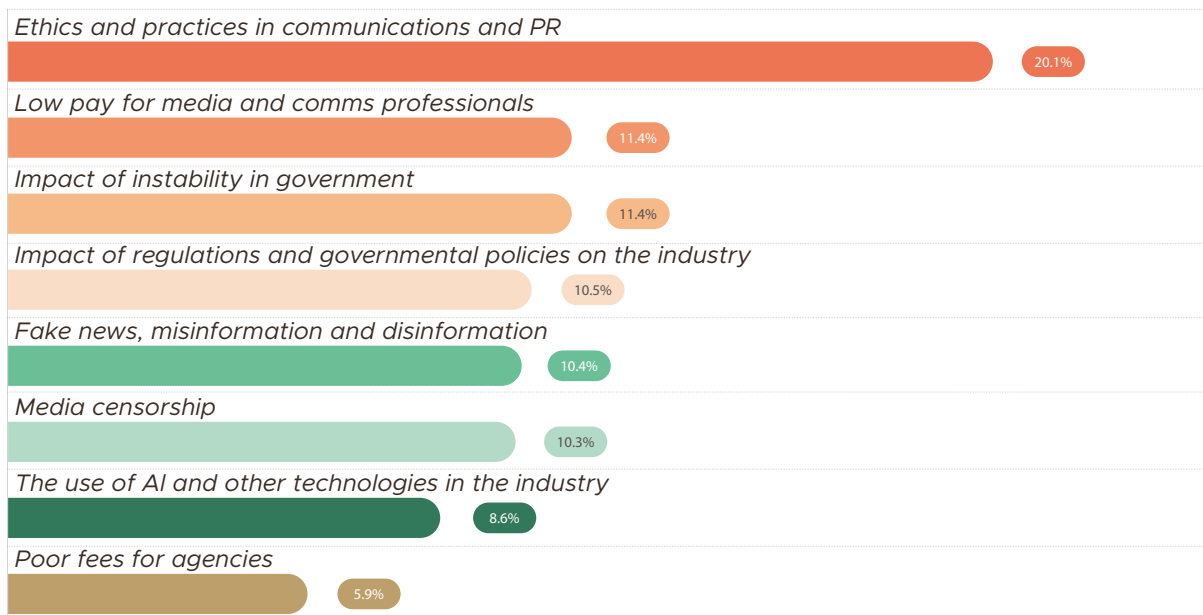
Beyond political tensions, the past year has been marked by a variety of global challenges, including inflation, economic downturns, and energy shortages.

PR and Communications agencies were indeed some of the most affected across industries at the height of the COVID pandemic. The industry struggled to retain clients as it became necessary to cut redundancies.

Operations are, however, slow to resume to the same degree with which cut-downs were implemented, as there remains general hesitation within the industry to spend at pre-covid levels.

As a result, there are rising concerns over brain drain, migration, unemployment, and issues related to the environment, society and governance. To effectively navigate these crises, communication professionals must remain adaptable and anticipate the needs of their clients in the face of an ever-changing landscape of fake news and misinformation.

Q: Looking forward to the next year, I am most concerned about:



Creating Innovative Markets and New Niches

The PR and Communications industry in Africa is expanding into new areas of specialisation. In 2023, organisations are recognising the importance of PR beyond traditional offerings, and those that can adapt and manage it effectively will see positive results.

Functional skills such as video editing, content production, freelance writing, and design are becoming standalone services. Additionally, professionals such as HR managers, accountants, and lawyers are also benefiting from the growth of the PR and Communications industry.

This development has the potential to create new professions and niches such as

communication lawyers, PR accountants, and celebrity headhunters, tailored to the needs of the industry.

One of Africa’s biggest exports is faith-based institutions. The continent is poised to play a significant role in shaping the future of major religions worldwide. As a result, new specialised fields such as faith-based public relations will become increasingly important for agencies, as clients from these institutions seek out teams that can effectively navigate and align with their specific religious nuances.

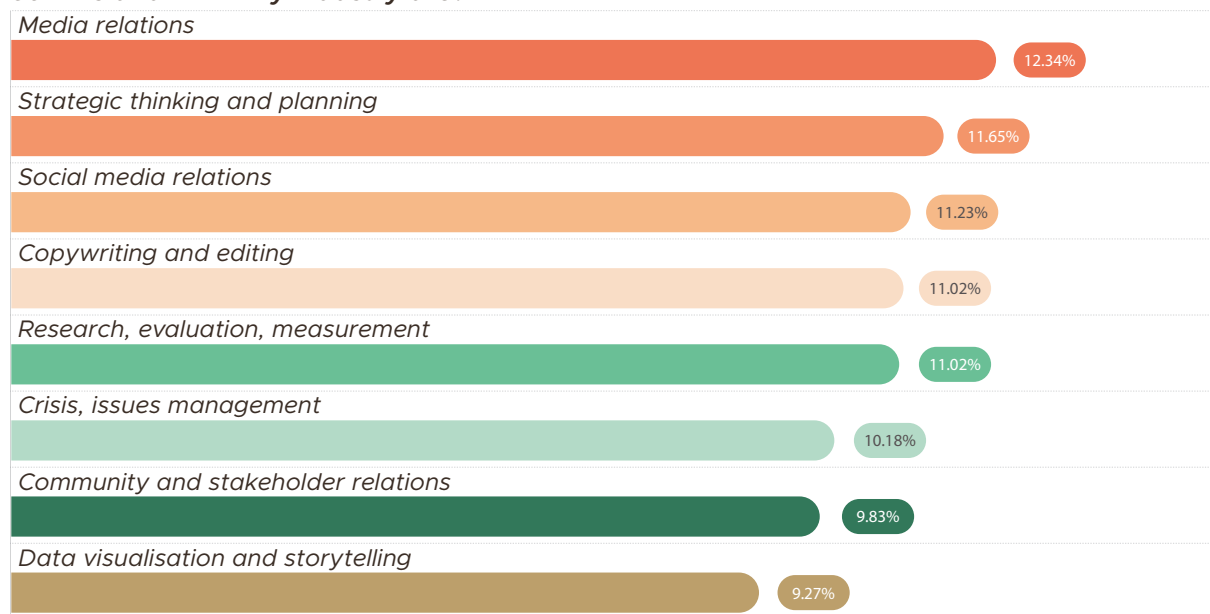
Countries like Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Niger are particularly well-positioned to take on leadership positions within faith-based organisations.

There has been evidence of practitioners thriving in the Public Relations & Communications Industry despite having no formal training in PR. I am familiar with a lawyer who now practises as a litigation communications professional; it’s a role that is new in this market and I’m unsure if it’s practised in other markets.

IDI participant 🇳🇬



Q: The critical skills and emerging areas of expertise that will matter in the future of Comms and PR in my industry are?



Experiencing Ethical Rebirth

Africa is undoubtedly on a path to becoming a force to reckon with globally. It is, nonetheless, critical to acknowledge and understand the roles and responsibilities of PR & Communication professionals to achieve the desired development on the continent. The flurry of activities and groundbreaking achievements is enough to inspire a spring in the steps of PR and Communications practitioners, towards achieving the continent’s full potential and staking its rightful place among global powerhouses. But there must first be a fervent desire to seek and provide urgent answers to the challenges that persist.

The PR & Communications industry must be self-critiquing. Practitioners are particularly concerned about ethical conduct within the industry, along with the inadequate compensation for media and communication professionals, and the effects of political instability on their work. Although it is almost inevitable that a maelstrom of unethical practices on the continent will continue to come to light as a result of years of unchecked business practices, it is essential for the industry to

proactively promote ethical behaviour by highlighting positive examples and providing education to practitioners on how to conduct themselves with integrity.

Genuine care and concern for the African people must begin to take centre stage in the industry’s strategies and actions. There must be policies and strategies to demonstrate empathy and foster inclusivity among all persons, and an establishment of accommodating environments for talents to thrive. It is imperative to also stay committed to upskilling professional practitioners by providing needed digital tools and resources, with adequate compensation.

More importantly, it is crucial that as Africa takes giant steps towards global prominence, partnerships with the rest of the world strategically prioritise good governance and justice. Governments must also be encouraged to play their part in implementing friendly policies for investments.

Only this way will the dream of a continent blazing the trail across industries for the betterment of its people and economy become a reality.

THE PR AND COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

THE AGE:
23-24 May 2022
Kigali, Rwanda



The time has come for Africans to stop dwelling on our past mistakes and forge ahead to regain our space in the comity of nations, reclaim our reputation and integrity as a continent, assert our cultural supremacy, and our status as the founders of the so-called western civilisation. Barbarism, as we know it, didn't start in Africa, yet, Africa is the “dark continent.” How ironic! It is time to retell the story of Africa, and that time is now.

Nkechi Ali-Balogun, FNIPR
Principal Consultant/CEO, NECCI Ltd 



THE PR AND COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

Public relations specialisations such as investor relations, crisis management, media engagement, internal communication, public affairs, public communications, stakeholder management, and event marketing are now the norm.

PR Specialisation and Niches

Professionals in the communications and PR industry are innovators in their own right, especially as they navigate the complex issues their clients experience. As the market evolves, however, new specialisations and niches emerge.

For instance, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in Nigeria, in conjunction with PR practitioners in academia, took the decision to unbundle the Mass Communications degree into a wide array of programs, allowing students to choose different specialisations including strategic communications, advertising, development communication, information, public relations, and journalism and media studies. In some African countries, mass communications, journalism and media are still bundled. However, the industry globally and in Africa has evolved far beyond any of this.

There is a significant dilution of the professionals in the PR and Communications industry. From the study, we see that only 36% of industry professionals consider themselves PR professionals and 9% as marketing professionals; while others consider themselves experts in traditional media, digital marketing, podcasting, advertising (paid media), events management, experiential marketing, government

relations, influencer management. There were others in related fields such as entertainment, artist management, corporate communications, brand promotion, development communication, fashion, healthcare, music, real estate, faith-based PR, tourism PR, photography, scientific communication, academia and even PR for sales.

PR and communications are literally married to each other.

Communication is broader and it could be internal or external. You could communicate with staff or with the media. Public Relations experts are now considered publicists and reputation managers. The word public refers to all your stakeholders.

IDI participant 



PR is not about writing an article and sending it out, it is consulting. I am as good or bad as a Bain, Mckinsey, KPMG consultant.

IDI participant 



More PR practitioners are required to scientifically report on the impact of their work and those who can adequately do this are guaranteed tremendous growth in the future.

Lifa communications in South Africa is doing quite well within the mining space, PR space, brand communications space. There are a number of companies doing that but it doesn't seem to be the obvious choice for young students and aspiring PR professionals who are gunning for bigger brands, those that are famous - Nandos, Steers, VW.

You can tell that the younger generations are looking for fun PR and forgetting that public relations is quite broad. It is not all about events and reporting about the fun event but whatever brand you are given, you execute awareness, entrench the messaging and reach the brand objectives.

IDI participant 🇿🇦



Client Management and Services

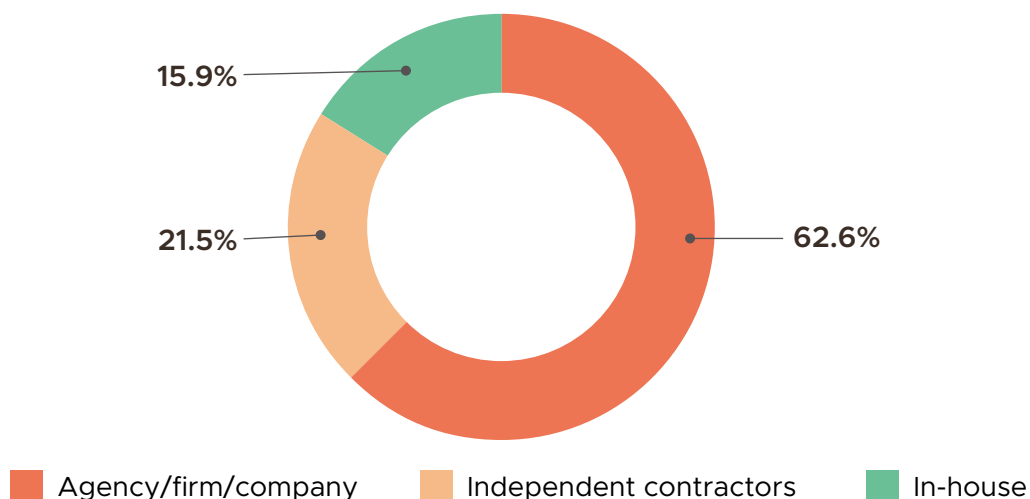
Communications and PR firms offer a full range of services - media relations, content creation, corporate social responsibility, financial and investor relations, public affairs, and government relations are popular.

Reputation management also has a fair share of work, which not only involves

preventing crises but also building brands. Some firms offer media trainings to clients - teaching how to talk to the media, draft a press release, respond to questions, and even dress for interviews.

In this study, we see 62.6% of participants working with agencies, about 21.5% are independent contractors and 15.9% are practising as in-house comms professionals within organisations.

Where the participants work



Professionals working with agencies focus predominantly on briefs for media and media relations (19%), events and conference management (13%), reputation and crisis management (12%), advertising and marketing (12%), strategic communications (11%), social media and community management (8%), branding research (6%), research and evaluation (6%), copywriting and editing (6.1%), and influencer management (5%).

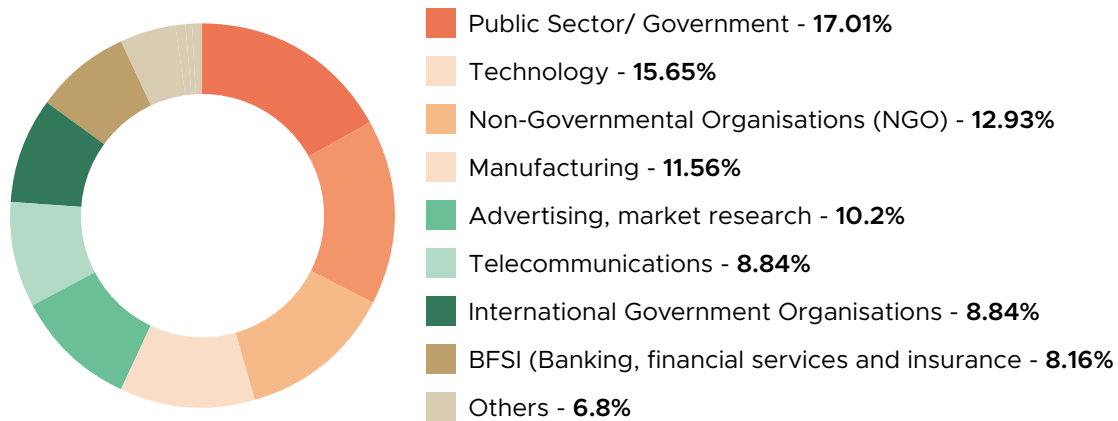
The agencies target the sectors of technology, telecommunications, FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods), BFSI (Banking, financial services, and insurance) Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO),

public sector/government, and manufacturing.

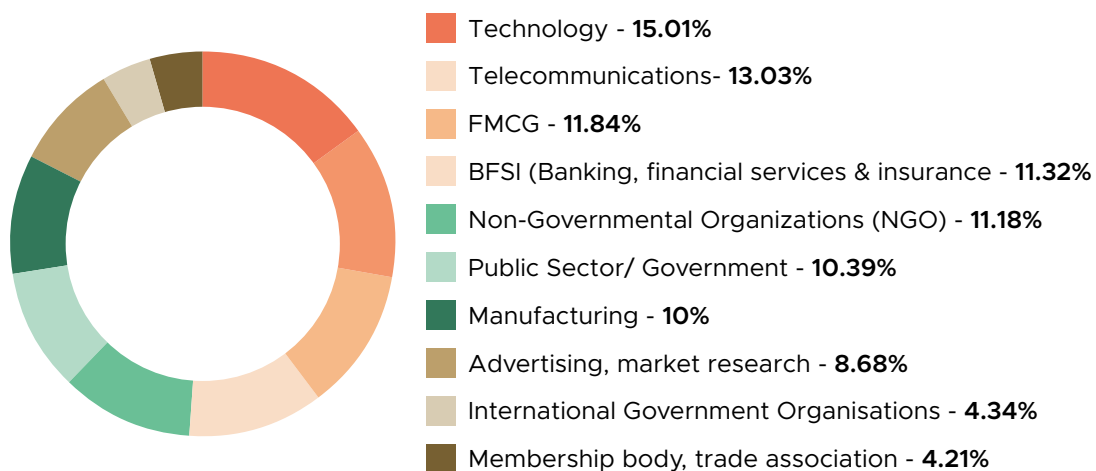
However, the public sector/government remains one of the top clients in the industry, followed by technology companies and NGOs.

The prime issues that businesses or clients face are related to economic instability (21%), funding and cash flow (17%), sales (15%), Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues (13%), talent acquisition and retention (11%), crisis and reputation issues (9%) and managing government relations and policies (9%).

Q: As a comms agency/firm/company, our clients are in these sectors



Q: As a comms company/business/team, we focus on these niche/areas



PR professionals are expected to have a working knowledge of their client's industry, whether it be politics or oil and gas. Preferably, someone with in-depth knowledge of the industry should be advising the team. In the past, some business sectors did not see the value and importance of engaging a professional PR team until damaging stories were reported about them. Fortunately, this is no longer the case for the majority of businesses - only 2.8% of practitioners are concerned about potential clients not fully understanding the importance of PR and communications.

The main industry stakeholders are the clients and regulators. And the biggest challenge is getting the client to understand and appreciate the PR function.

IDI participant ■■



In 2022, the trending hashtag 'HorribleBosses' and several calls to action on Twitter compelled organisations in the fintech and entertainment industries to

realise the importance of having a PR team. With 11.3% of practitioners specialising in BFSIs, these organisations were able to access the expertise needed to understand that reputation and public trust are just as significant as producing innovative products.

According to some interview participants, the tenets for success in today's PR industry involve:

- Knowing the client and their business adequately. Hiring an industry specialist to steer the comms and PR team, where necessary.
- Mapping the stakeholders correctly - internal and external audience(s), ranging from investors, to customers, employees, and the media. The media is always a stakeholder.
- Becoming a go-getter and a strategic thinker. Staying abreast of what's happening in the industry and around the world.
- Educating the client on best practices and conducting trainings as necessary.
- Having a long-term perspective that grows relationships with the client. Opening up other opportunities that the client may not see.

PR Consultants are relationship managers, and their job is to manage people and build relationships with them. Consultants must manage 'up'(bosses), 'down'(reports), and in parallel (peers).

Femi Falodun ■■

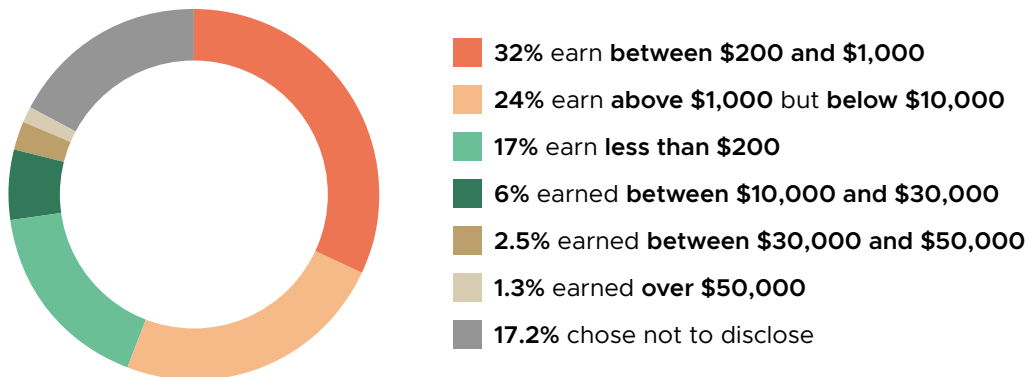


Revenue and Income

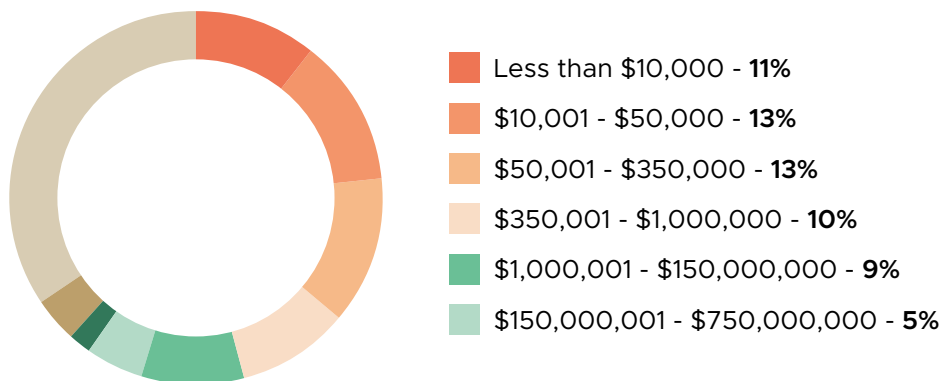
The business of PR and communications is both demanding and rewarding. Although, the quality of the reward varies from one agency to another. There are indications of significant income gaps among practitioners since not everyone is well-compensated for the meaningful work that they do.

About 35% of the industry audience could not share their company's revenue but it's interesting to note that about a quarter (24%) of the firms who shared the information make less than \$10,000.

Q: The range of my income per annum



Q: The range of my company's annual revenue (in USD) is?



I would not want to estimate the size of the industry but you will obviously find the large ones like Eclipse, Magna Carta (this used to be large at some point in time).

Globally, you have Fleishman Hillard, Weber Shandwick, and all the new ones that pop up ByDesign, Red.

Most of the ad agencies have now gotten into the PR business, and you have all the freelancers, the one-man shows--it is humongous. I think for a larger agency with a solid revenue book, you are looking at turnover easily at 100 million Rands (\$5.8 million)

IDI participant 🇿🇦



Many industry professionals are operating without proper certification or registration, which makes it difficult to estimate the true size of the industry, let alone, its revenues. For example, in the digital and new media space, not all campaigns or advertisements are executed by certified professionals.

A major issue that the industry is facing is trying to compete with charlatans (unqualified lowball competitors who distort prices) while still maintaining a standard of professionalism.

FGD participant ■■



In its forecast for 2022 - 2026, PWC in its Africa Entertainment and Media Outlook report, predicts that internet advertising will bring the largest gains in revenue, accounting for 64.3% of advertising spend, globally.

Awards and Recognition

There are many awards and recognition opportunities available in the public relations and communications industry in Africa. These awards can help to promote and raise the profile of businesses and individuals working in this field, and can also provide a valuable networking opportunity. Some practitioners, however, believe that awards are not always a true measure of a firm's contribution to the industry; and as such do not participate or submit for awards.

Awards are supposed to be empirical and I have not seen an award that does that.

IDI participant ■■



The industry boasts several internationally acclaimed awards. These include the SABRE, Prism, One Show, Platinum, IABC, Drum PR, and Loeries awards. According to practitioners, some of the recognisable industry awards in the industry include the EFIS, New Generation Awards, and FM Ad Focus, in South Africa.

Practitioners in Africa believe SABRE to be the most recognised and attractive international award; it recognises excellence in a range of categories, including corporate image, corporate social responsibility, crisis/issues management, digital campaign and social media campaign, amongst others. It is a Global Award with 30 years of experience and has a footprint across all the continents of the world.

APRA awards seem prominent on the African scene. Many times, awards in this industry target certain kinds of people.

FGD participant ■■



Measurement and Reporting

In the PR and advertising industry, measurement and reporting are essential to understanding the effectiveness of campaigns and strategies. By measuring key metrics, such as reach, engagement, and conversions, PR and advertising professionals can gain key insights into what is effective and what is not. By reporting on key metrics, they can share insights with stakeholders to help them make informed decisions about future campaigns.

PR and advertising agencies have long relied on metrics such as awareness, recall, and brand favorability to assess the effectiveness of their campaigns. However, with the advent of digital media, there is

now a wealth of data available that can provide much more insight.

One of the biggest challenges of PR is that there is no one metric that one can swear by. Yes, there are basic principles. People still use AVE, smart objectives but at the end of the day, there isn't a clear-cut metric. PR is still an art rather than a science. On social media, there is analytics in the background to complement what is done traditionally.

IDI participant 🇳🇷



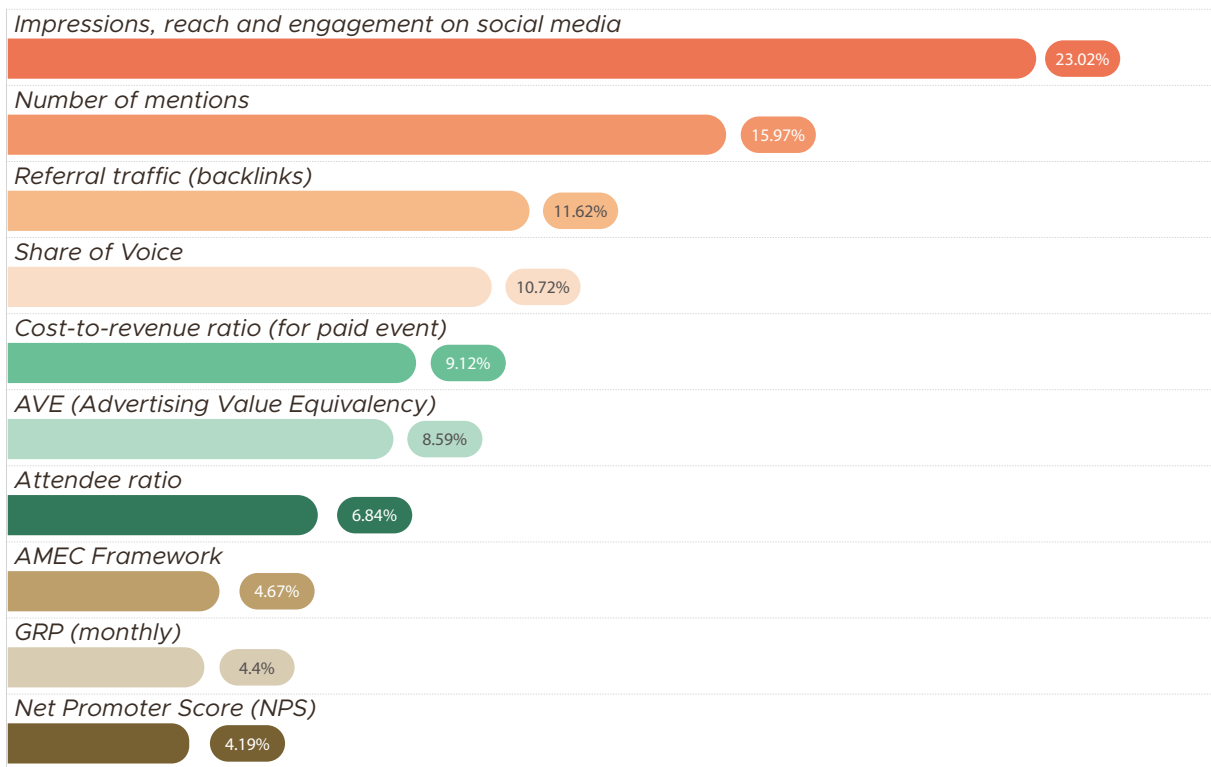
Digital media has transformed the way that PR and advertising agencies measure and report on the effectiveness of their campaigns. By tracking online activity,

agencies can now see how many people are exposed to their campaigns, how long they engage with the content, and what kind of response it generates. This data can be used to refine and improve future campaigns, making them more effective and efficient.

According to findings from the survey, when measuring campaign performance, practitioners use impressions, reach, and engagement on social media, referral traffic, share of voice, number of mentions, cost-to-revenue ratio (for paid events), Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) and Barcelona Principles.

S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-bound) objectives are important to identify ahead of projects and campaigns, as they determine all aspects from strategy to execution. So, the right metrics and measurements like those stated above must be used.

Q: The specific metrics I use to measure and track campaign performance



TALENT, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION



TALENT, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Practitioners are facing a skills gap. The largest gaps identified are in strategic thinking and planning, data visualisation and storytelling, research, evaluation and measurement and copywriting and editing.

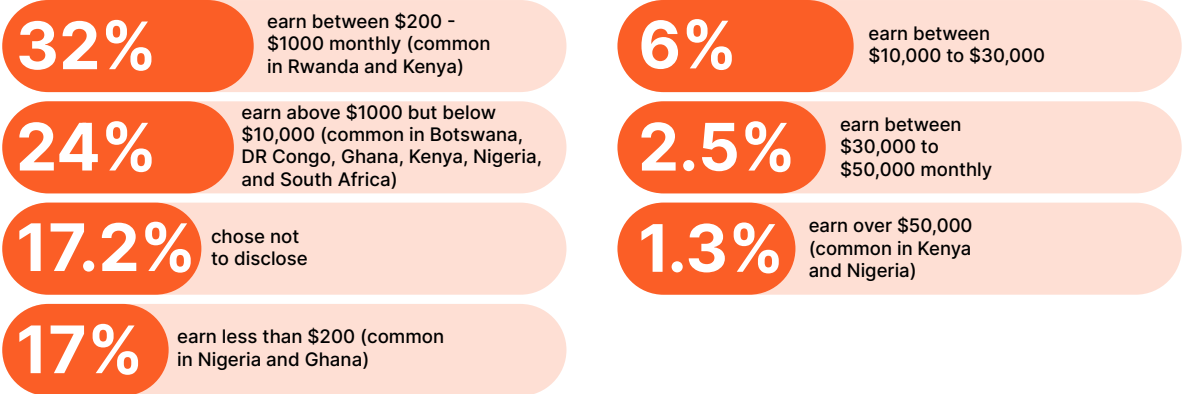
Compensation and Remuneration

Findings from the survey show that, a significant majority (73%) of industry professionals earn less than \$10,000 per month -- 17% earn less than \$200; this was common in countries like Nigeria and Ghana. A third (32%) of the professionals earn between \$200 - \$1000 monthly, as seen in Rwanda and Kenya. Another 24% earned above \$1000 but below \$10,000 as

monthly income, as was the case in Botswana, DR Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. Only 6% of practitioners earned a monthly income within the range of \$10,000 to \$30,000, and 2.5% earned between \$30,000 to \$50,000 monthly. As expected in any population sample, a small percentage (1.3%) earn over \$50,000 monthly, as seen in Kenya and Nigeria.

FMCG, banks, oil and gas, telecommunications, breweries, service companies, radio stations, and the government make up some of the biggest spenders.

Personal income range



Q: The range of my current personal income (USD monthly) is?

Most of the younger generation of people coming into the sector would move for the money but there will always be more money on the table. How does that impact your experience? You can make \$2000, \$5000, or \$10,000 extra and become an account director but you still won't be able to manage a global brand because you don't know how to work in different geographies. To get to a certain level, you need to have a global perspective.

IDI participant

When practitioners were asked if they would prefer a 50% increase in their current income or a lateral move to the same or similar position in any country of their choice, the answer clearly showed that the shortcomings in remuneration can still be filled by other perks. When practitioners leave an agency, they are likely to move into another role within the same industry. There is also the belief that in-house corporate communications get paid more than on the agency side.

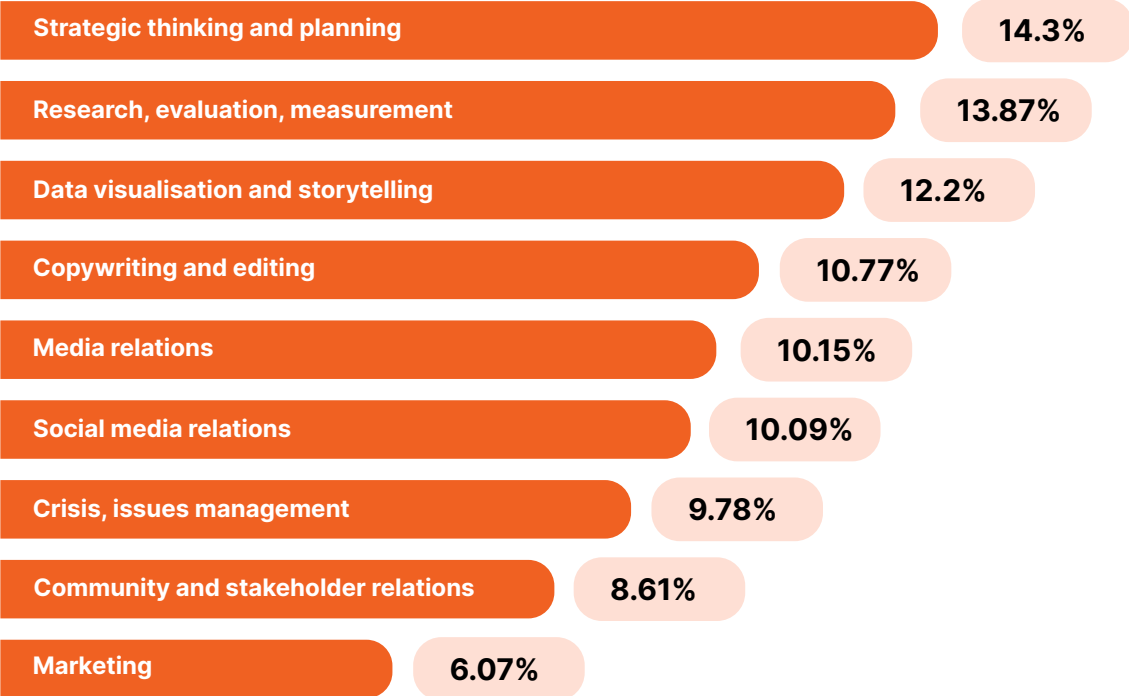
A small proportion of practitioners (5.9%) expressed concern about the poor fees agencies make. More (11.4%) were concerned about the low remuneration for industry professionals. Although salaries are generally low across the continent, PR professionals are confident that the quality of work coupled with more private investments will lead to favourable salary benchmarks for the industry.

Skill Gaps

As the industry evolves into new specialisations, practitioners are facing a skills gap. In this study, the largest gaps identified are in strategic thinking and planning (14%), data visualisation and storytelling (12%), research, evaluation and measurement (14%) and copywriting and editing (11%).

There is a need for continuous training; formal education or industry-approved training institutions. There is also a call to action for employers to encourage on-the-job training and exposure to address deficient skillsets. 21% of practitioners believe that media and social media relations are essential skills that are in short supply. 9.7% of practitioners are looking for talents skilled in crisis and issues management, and 6% need those with marketing skills.

Q: These are the skill sets gaps that exist in my industry at the moment.



In Nigeria, the PR industry is mostly filled with people who graduated from broadcasting, journalism, media, and communications.

The industry is filled with copywriters and media people who move into PR... Motivational speakers and thespians (comedians) have also entered the scene and are getting paid to do PR.

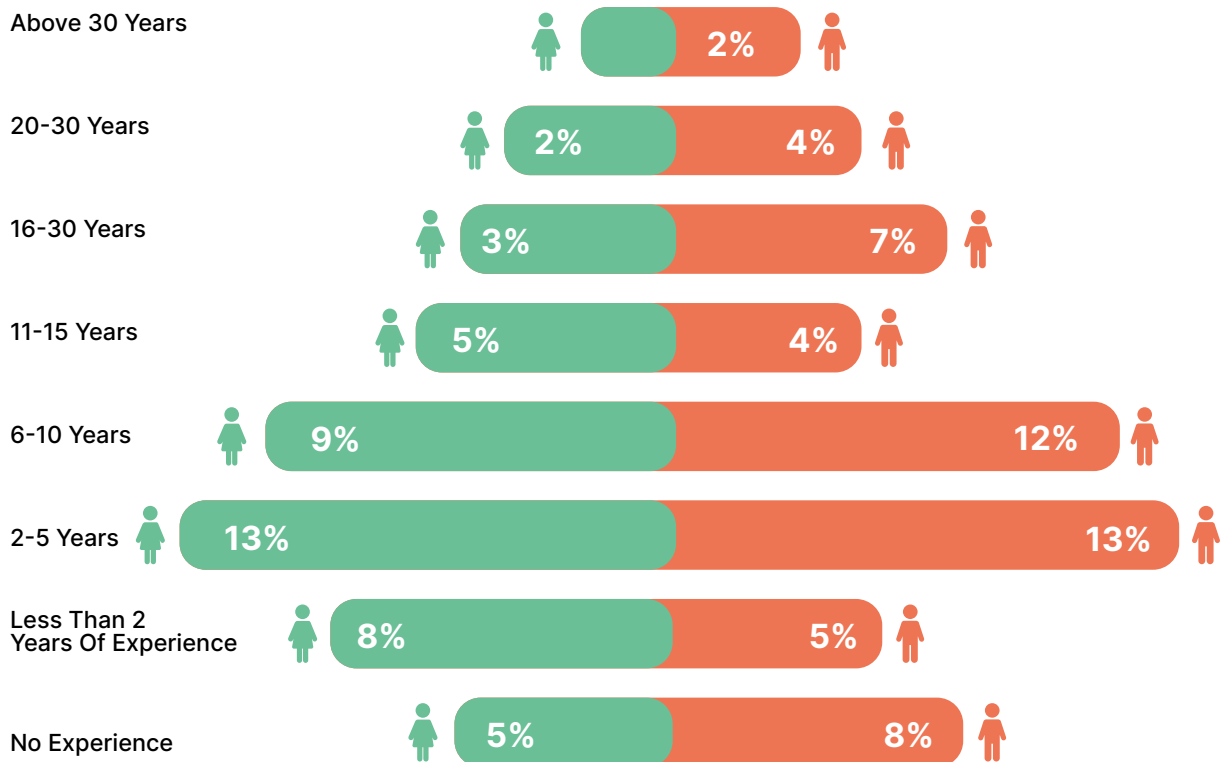
70% of the people I know in PR were recruited from the media and communication sector. They can be people who speak good English, write columns in newspapers, have a programme on TV/radio, or have a strong social media following. The social media influencers are new on the block.

Consciously and unconsciously they begin to feed the public and set agendas.

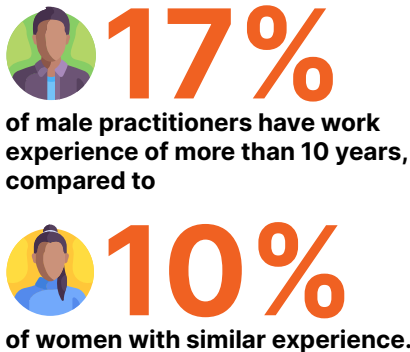
IDI participant



Experience vs. gender



From this industry sample, male practitioners have more opportunities to aspire for and occupy leadership positions than women, if promotion is based on years of experience alone. About 17% of male practitioners have work experience of more than 10 years, compared to 10% of women with similar experience. In entry and middle-level positions, the opportunity to access are almost equal between the genders, as there are just as many men to women, to fill positions requiring an experience of 5 years or less.



Recruitment, Training and Retraining Processes

Internships are the most effective recruitment method for new hires. Employers can assess each candidate's work ethic, skills, capacity, and fit for the organisation. Management training programs are also good to identify potential candidates.

It is common for headhunters to target experienced and talented hires as their work improves. Referrals are also a means of recruitment but it is simply a subtle method of headhunting.

Those seeking employment in the PR and Communications industry need to balance their boldness with their risk-taking. The more creative, the better. Sylvester

Chauke, CEO of DNA brand architects secured one of his early jobs in the industry by applying using a pizza box. Today he runs an agency that stands for black excellence and empowering the black community in South Africa. Some firms still rely on acquiring CVs from job recruitment platforms such as LinkedIn and others solicit graduate recruitment from educational institutions.

I am a qualified microbiologist and dropped out of my Master's programme to take up a scholarship offer at an ad agency. Then I had my postgraduate in media and mass communication; with the intent of being a copywriter. That was 20 years ago and I never left.

IDI participant 
”

In some African countries, companies have a legal requirement, every year, to recruit graduates and interns. In South Africa, the government created the Employment Tax Incentive (ETI) to encourage employers to hire young and qualified but inexperienced individuals. In Egypt, platforms like Wuzuff in addition to LinkedIn and headhunting are used when recruiting. Bilingual writing in English and Arabic is one of the skills gaps that need to be filled.

A majority (70.5%) of practitioners in this study believe that insufficient resources are allocated to staff training. Generally, training and retraining are conducted internally and by institutions approved by the industry. Training workshops are also organised by firms or stakeholders.

In our organisation, people have been recruited in the most unique ways.

For example, I have a colleague, who had his CV details printed on a pair of Chuck Taylor All-Star. His entire CV on a pair of shoes!



IDI participant 🇳🇷



Talent Retention in the Industry

PR and Communications agencies lost a lot of good clients during the Covid pandemic. Clients that experienced a significant impact on their revenue had to do away with non-essential services. Agencies also had to downsize to counterbalance the eroded income. Despite the fact that activities are returning to normal, not all agencies are rehiring. We see a rise in the use of freelancers with existing staff taking on more work.

On the client side, there is hesitation to resume spending at pre-covid levels and in some parts of Africa, large companies are exiting. In April 2022, Standard Chartered Bank announced a full exit from these African countries: Angola, Cameroon, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe. In Tanzania and Cote d'Ivoire, the banking group will be divesting from its other operations to focus on Corporate, Commercial and Institutional Banking (CCIB).

Firms are struggling to retain talent as employees demand better remuneration, HMO (Health Maintenance Organisation), pension, bonuses, and overall work-life balance. Talents are leaving not only

companies but also countries due to the social and economic climate. Post-covid, practitioners are prioritising happiness, mental health, and quality time with family over jobs.

Employees don't relocate simply to find a better job; but for quality healthcare, education and effective governance.



Early investment in a talent's growth and development is a way to build loyalty. Structures like mentorship programs, training, and online professional courses sharpen the skills of employees and can increase jobsatisfaction. Incentives such as gym memberships and free lunches, standard parental leave, and healthcare coverage are nice to have. While many companies now embrace hybrid and remote work, it will be ineffective if employees still work extremely long hours.

Having a work-life balance is no longer a concept; talents actively seek jobs that offer it. While talent levels are drastically declining across African markets. Firms should properly motivate and encourage talents that are still available. It is important to keep in mind that even ex-employees can be an excellent source of referrals.

There is no one way to retain talent. Some talents would want to stay if you look after them and the key, I think, is to understand what moves talent. Each talent has a different life goal and you need to understand that so that you understand the motivation behind somebody and the way they work

IDI participant 🇳🇷



Experts in this study share their nuggets to retaining talent:

- Having a growth and succession plan. This has to be clear.
- Leadership's openness to growth and retention conversations. Availability to discuss with employees how they can grow within the organisation.
- Infusion of young talent. This has to be accompanied by promotion and financial incentives.

There has been a significant exodus of professionals from the industry. When talents leave a firm, they do so with their expertise, ideas, technical know-how, and knowledge of the firm's internal workings. About 62% of practitioners agree that there is a significant financial loss associated with losing these trained employees. Brain drain is severely affecting companies and their ability to perform at their highest level.

Impact of Brain Drain on the Industry

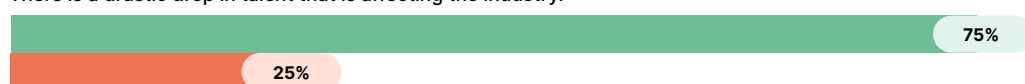
There is an overwhelming fear of brain drain on the continent. Some organisations report more than one employee leaving in a week and more than five in a month. 90% of practitioners in this study believe that more professionals are willing to leave and 80% are convinced that even entry-level staff are already considering their exit from the country. 81% strongly agree that the remaining staff who stay are overworked.

90%

of practitioners are willing to leave and are convinced that even entry-level staff are already considering their exit from the country.

Increase in brain drain and exodus of professionals from the industry

There is a drastic drop in talent that is affecting the industry.



Prospective entry-level staff are already considering their exit from the country.



There is now more allocation to training and recruitment of staff.



The remaining staff are overworked.



More people are willing to leave the country.



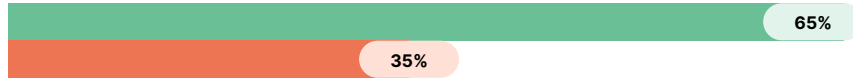
● Strongly agree ● Strongly disagree

Increase in brain drain and exodus of professionals from the industry (Cont'd)

There has been no significant impact of brain gain or drain in the industry.



There has been a significant brain drain and an exodus of professionals from the industry.



There has been a significant brain gain and influx of foreign professionals into the industry.



● Strongly agree ● Strongly disagree

The process of recruiting and training replacements takes time and resources, and other employees are saddled with more work and responsibilities, which reduces team engagement, motivation, and morale. In such circumstances, it is difficult to maintain a healthy and optimistic workplace.

Gender Gap

Gender parity does not happen by accident; it requires conscious and deliberate efforts to increase opportunities for marginalised genders. Although more women study PR at universities, men still dominate the workplace.

A small majority of practitioners (53.4%) believe that there are more men in the industry, 31.2% believe there are more women and 15% think it is an equal split. As earlier indicated, gender parity can be seen in junior roles that require experience of 5 years or less. However, in the more senior roles, female leadership is not common.

The industry has been predominantly male but that is changing. Although the senior positions are still male-dominated.

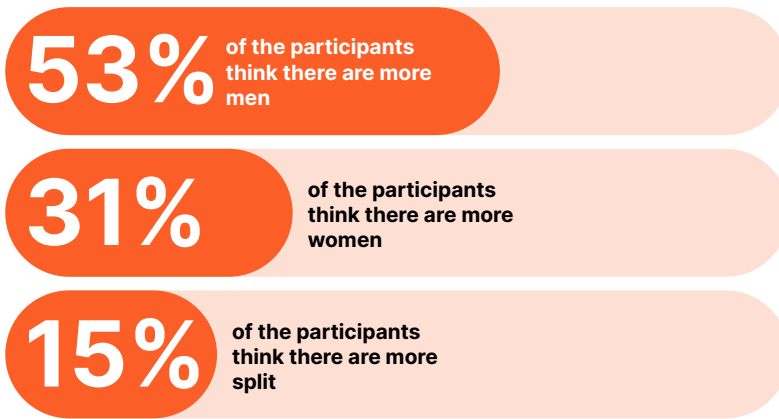
IDI participant 🇳🇬



Professionals agree that skill, competence and technical know-how are the major factors to be considered when deciding who to hire. Gender, whether male or female, can be an added advantage depending on the dynamics of the role.

Despite the challenges, several African women have been able to succeed in the PR and advertising industry. These women have often had to overcome significant obstacles, and with more women entering the field, there is an expectation that the gender gap will begin to close and that African women will have an equal opportunity to contribute.

Question: What is the approximate gender split in your industry?



Cultural Diversity and Inclusion

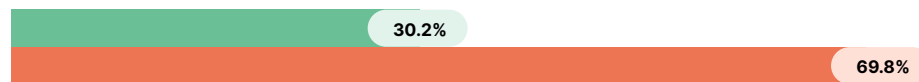
Diversity and inclusion mean that everyone can participate on a level playing field in terms of pay and representation. The majority of industry professionals (66%) agree that there are gaps regarding diversity and inclusion.

A majority of participants (81.4%) believe that people with disabilities are not

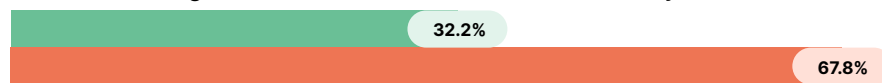
properly represented in the industry. Although schools provide some consideration for students with disabilities to ensure they succeed in their academics and obtain their degrees, the number of those practising is quite small. Some organisations are not afraid to hire members of the LGBTQ community, however, 49% believe there is still unspoken bias or discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Q: Diversity, Equality, Equity and Inclusion

Mental health is prioritised in the industry



There is a strong racial/tribal discrimination in the industry



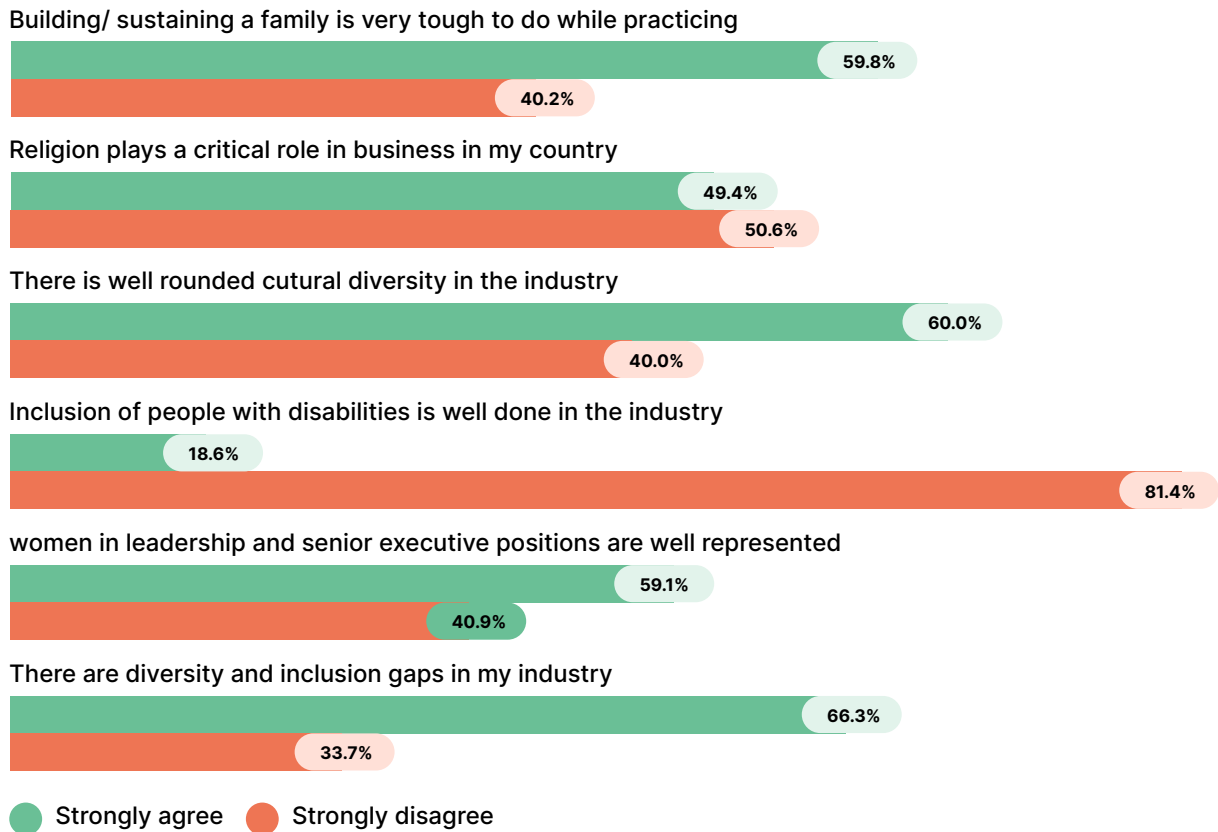
There is an unspoken bias or discrimination based on sexual orientation



The industry favours younger people



● Strongly agree ● Strongly disagree



What does diversity and inclusion mean? Very difficult question because there are a lot of cultural nuances when it comes to that.

I will say in our context, that means the male-to-female ratio. It also means diverse backgrounds from different parts of the country. We tend to be Cairo-centric or focus on the big cities but people from different parts of the country bring fresh and different perspectives.

We are a small company so we don't have the luxury of opening up diversity and inclusion beyond this. Ideally, larger organisations that have the capacity to do so will also include people with special needs, people who need to only work part-time, different levels of education etc.

IDI participant 🇪🇬



INVESTMENT APPETITE ACROSS THE AFRICAN MARKET



As Africa becomes more integrated into the world economy, global firms are pitching their tents on the continent. The uptick in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Private Equity (PE) and Venture Capital (VC) inflows point to Africa becoming the next global market arena.

Paul Mwirigi Muriungi
Managing Director, COG 



INVESTMENT APPETITE ACROSS THE AFRICAN MARKET

China remains Africa’s largest trading partner. In 2007, the country invested \$1 billion in the continent, and by 2020, Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in Africa reached \$43 billion. The East Asian country imports oil, liquefied natural gas, timber, gold and copper, uranium, cobalt and lithium from African countries such as South Africa, DR Congo, Nigeria, Zambia, Ethiopia, Angola, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Algeria, Tanzania and Mozambique. The world’s most populated country, it appears, simply cannot do without Africa; seeking resource security, mutual economic dependence and political solidarity.

The world’s strongest economy, the United States, in comparison, has invested \$8.6 billion dollars in Africa since 2021. In December 2022, at the US-Africa Leaders’ Summit in Washington DC, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the United States Trade Representative and the AfCFTA Secretariat covering expanded engagement between the two regions and intends to “promote equitable, sustainable, and inclusive trade, boost competitiveness, and attract investment to the continent.”

It was also announced at the Summit that the US intended to invest USD 55 billion in Africa over the next three years while USD 15 billion would be deployed in “two-way trade and investment commitments, deals, and partnerships that advance key priorities, including sustainable energy,

health systems, agribusiness, digital connectivity, infrastructure, and finance.”

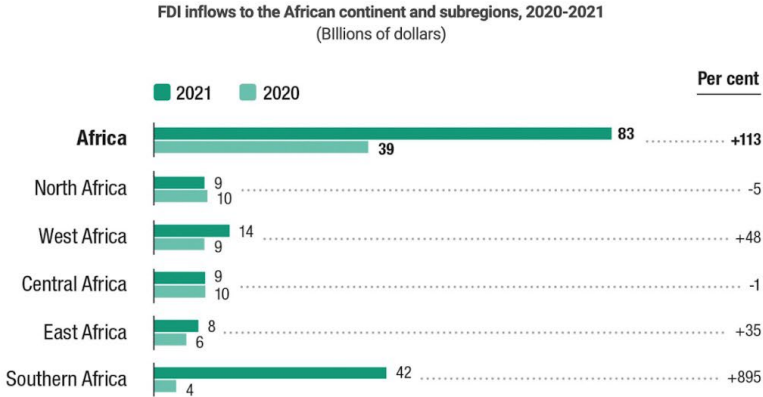
Total FDI hit a record \$831 billion in 2021, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development’s (UNCTAD) World Investment Report 2022 states. There was a ‘moderate rise’ in FDI with 45% caused by an intra-firm financial transaction in South Africa.

“If we exclude this transaction, the increase in FDI flows to Africa, while still positive, would be more in line with what we observed in other developing regions,” James Zhan, director of UNCTAD’s investment and enterprise division Northern Africa, said.

PR and Communications can only smile to the bank for the foreseeable future because these investments will continue to open African subsidiaries that will need to communicate with their stakeholders, and make informed business decisions based on a thorough understanding of the realities within Africa that will benefit them and their stakeholders.

Investments Across the Region

Across the various regions, each tells a different story. In Southern Africa, FDI increased to \$42 billion in 2021, almost ten times the investment in the previous year. These were primarily influenced by a large corporate reconfiguration in South Africa.



Source: World Investment Report 2022

The biggest recipient of FDI in the Southern region, South Africa, also saw new project announcements worth over \$5 billion from a clean energy project finance deal sponsored by UK-based Hive Energy and a greenfield project by US-based Vantage Data Centers to build its first African campus.

Investment in West Africa increased by 48% to \$14 billion, with Nigeria - the region's largest FDI recipient - doubling its flow to \$4.8 billion. The country's oil and gas sectors were to thank for the increase. Ghana's extractive industries also saw the country's 39% push to \$2.6 billion while Senegal's FDI increased by 21% to \$2.2 billion.

In comparison, however, Central Africa's FDI stayed stagnant at \$9.4 billion; even though certain countries within the region received an influx. The Democratic Republic of Congo's FDI rose by 14% to \$1.9 billion - predominantly from investment in offshore oil fields and mining. Despite the announcement of two international deals, Congo's FDI fell by 8% to \$3.7 billion. There was a decline of 5% to \$3.9 billion in 2021. Egypt was Africa's second-largest FDI recipient, despite its investments dropping by 12% to 5.1 billion while Morocco's rose by 52% to \$2.2 billion in 2021.


Market opportunities in solar energy, digital currency, and technology where more job opportunities are expected.

IDI participant 





TRUST, TRUTH AND DEMOCRACY IN PR AND COMMUNICATIONS



With the industry on the brink of a new chapter, we can no longer win at the expense of others. If we don't review, tweak or reinvent the way we work and the solutions we put forward, we will be left behind or cancelled.

More than ever, purpose-led brands are required, and with this, PR and reputation management have the incredible opportunity of contributing real purpose to organisational fitness.

Mary Gearing

Deputy Managing Director, Magna Carta 



TRUST, TRUTH AND DEMOCRACY IN PR AND COMMUNICATIONS

Contrary to what PR practitioners may think, the public is not the only one gullible to fake news.

Ethics and Practices in Communications and PR

The issue of ethics and regulation in public relations has always been a dodgy one. Nigeria and South Africa in particular have been the epicentres for divergence.

Fresh off the tree of bad apples is Digital Vibes, a bogus communication agency in South Africa, awarded millions of dollars by the Ministry of Health, as a Covid-19 related communications contract.

Again in South Africa, corruption allegations have resulted in the executives of the implicated global giants - Bain, KPMG, McKinsey, and SAP - contending with more than reputational and legal issues in international markets.

Global players are those big guns mentioned in the Panama papers who are managing PR for shell companies, and governments.

IDI participant 🇳🇮



In the Gulf, you have the Middle East PR Association (which is GCC centric, it doesn't really extend to North Africa). In Egypt, there is no governing body or ecosystem or platform or forum for professionals in the PR industry to interact, network, or align.

IDI participant 🇸🇦



Media Censorship

The media plays a critical role in communication and public relations in Africa. This is because the media is often used as a tool to spread propaganda and misinformation, which can lead to conflict and instability. Ahead of the Ugandan election in January 2021, the government ordered the blocking of all social media platforms.

Twitter was banned by the Nigerian government in June of the same year for seven months after deleting the President's tweet that threatened secessionists. In August 2021, social media platforms were also restricted during Zambia's presidential and parliamentary elections.

Only a handful (10.30%) of PR practitioners are concerned about media censorship in their countries.

Before the advent of new media (social media), during the military regime, radio stations were shut down, and newspapers were burnt before circulation, to manage PR.

Even in 2022, PR professionals take unethical steps to make sure their client is happy. It's unfortunate. There is no guideline. It is left to the individual's moral and ethical compass.

IDI participant 🇳🇮



Impact of War and Territory Crisis

War and territorial crises have a limited impact on the public relations industry in Africa, as the continent is relatively peaceful with few ongoing conflicts or cross-border disputes. While historically, wars may have hindered the growth of the industry and territorial disputes led to conflicts that caused economic and political instability in the region, human rights abuses and disrupted trade and economic activity, PR professionals believe that the industry has evolved.

However, it is important for PR practitioners to be aware that the industry can still be affected by these issues and develop strategies to mitigate risks and effectively communicate during such situations.



5%
of participants reported concerns about war and territorial disputes in their countries.

Impact of Covid and Other World Health Crisis

The PR industry was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with some companies experiencing job cuts due to redundancies during the peak of the crisis. However, according to a survey, only 5.3% of

participants in the industry are concerned about the long-term impact of Covid-19 on their industry. On the positive side, the pandemic has given many professionals in the industry the opportunity to learn and develop new skills, particularly in the area of digital technology.

Covid forced brands to look at how they communicate so if you look at internal comms when Covid happened, everybody learnt how to do virtual events.

IDI participant 



Impact of Instability in Governments

Across the continent, a little over a tenth (11.41%) of industry professionals are concerned about instability in governments. In the past, there was a “culture of silence” in African states under military regimes, especially for the media. Most senior PR professionals feel the industry has opened up by way of democratic governance which has made the environment more conducive.

Although there are still pockets of disputed political elections, coups and changes in governments across the continent, the industry remains a strong outlet for proper governance and accountability in most countries. There is still a threat of coups and terrorist activities throughout the continent, albeit low, which can destabilise peace and undermine the practice of media and public relations.



11.41%

of industry professionals are concerned about instability in governments

Governments are waking up to the power of reputation management. If you consider stuff like alcohol and tobacco which we know are bad for society, PR would be effective in presenting them in a more useful and acceptable perspective.

You will find a lot of third-party associations that have been formed, that are clients of bigger agencies.

A lot of CEOs of larger companies are now also waking up to reputation management. Their company may have a PR agency but they will work with an individual (image manager) to pump their own profiles. They look at not only what they say and don't say but also at how they step out in public.

IDI participant



Impact of Governmental Policies on the Industry

In 2010, Themba Maseko, former chief executive of South Africa's government communications agency was pressured to push government advertisements only in the New Age Newspaper. This illegal policy meant that a lot of other newspapers that depended on government spending lost out. These are the kinds of policies that still exist in the industry.

In this study, 10.51% of practitioners are

concerned about government policies in the industry. Beyond individual client briefs, the PR and communications industry has the wherewithal to develop policies and set the stage for future successes. To do this, practitioners believe that a combination of self-regulation and professional licensing is needed, especially in the area of media pluralism and freedom of speech.

A majority of practitioners believe that the PR and Communications practice is guaranteed more freedom in a democracy than under any other form of government. In spite of the belief that governments across the continent have not helped to grow the industry, particularly in the areas of education and training for industry professionals, private practitioners have been able to push the boundaries to establish global best practices in the industry, locally.

10.5%

of practitioners are concerned about government policies in the industry

A few years ago, JSE required that public companies must publish their financial results in the newspapers. That policy was reversed and now you can put the results online. That impacted at least 4-5 pages of advertisement in any newspaper.

IDI participant



Fake News, Misinformation and Disinformation

While practitioners are aware of the evolving phenomenon of fake news and its detrimental effects on credibility, only 10.37% of professionals are concerned about its impact on the industry. The anonymised use of social and digital media, and the ability for anyone to publish are some of the contributing factors. Some practitioners have called for some kind of regulation on the use of social and digital channels. Others are encouraging the use of fact-checking platforms like Africa Check and Google Fact check Tools that can help to identify accurate information on the internet.

Contrary to what PR practitioners may think, the public is not the only gullible to fake news. In June 2021, many media outlets around the world published news about the first woman to give birth to decuplets, without any shred of evidence, and the story is yet to be proven true. The fake news travelled far and wide on both traditional and digital media, much more than the valid news of the first nonuplets who were born about a month earlier.

Cracking down on fake news has proven to be incredibly difficult and fact-checking organisations and tools must develop as quickly to counter it. In the

communications industry, there is increasing use of AI both for generating and checking fake news.

Xinhua, a state-run news agency in China unveiled its AI-powered news anchor, heralding the possibility for auto-generated fake news to exist beyond written content and pictures. Ultimately, seeing is no longer believing and audiences will begin to see visual content that looks real but it is still very much fake news.

Fake news is a nightmare and it is because of social media and the ignorance of its usage.

Unfortunately, more people have access to social media than they do to a proper education so there is no understanding of how to validate what is and isn't a credible news source... and people believe everything they read. It is mind-blowing how easy it is for something to spread and for people to believe it without critical thinking.

IDI participant 

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AFRICACOMMSWEEK 2022

UNDERSTANDING THE MARKETS

AFRICACOMMSWEEK 2022

UNDERSTANDING THE MARKETS

Peculiarities in PR and Communications Across African markets

The PR and communications industry in Africa presents several peculiarities across different markets, such as:

- **Cultural and linguistic diversity:** The continent of Africa is home to a wide range of cultures and languages, which can make it challenging for PR practitioners to effectively communicate with different audiences across countries.

66.7%

of Portuguese-speaking participants believe that their industries were culturally diverse

Professionals across the survey generally agreed that the industry was culturally diverse and well-rounded. In countries such as Nigeria, Rwanda, Ghana, South Africa and Kenya, 58.7% of English-speaking professionals agreed that the industry was culturally diverse, while 41.3% argued differently. For Portuguese-speaking professionals in countries like Mozambique and Angola; and French-speaking professionals in Benin Republic and Ivory Coast, 66.7% and 61.9% of participants agreed that their industries were culturally diverse.

- **Low public trust in PR:** In some African countries, the public has a low trust in PR and communications professionals, which makes it difficult for PR practitioners to effectively engage with stakeholders. Participants in FGDs and

IDIs cutting across Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya and Egypt admitted to the dwindling trust in PR as the populace becomes more politically conscious, and has increased access to the internet.

The drop in trust is a global concern. The 2022 Edelman Trust Barometer reveals that over the last decade, trust in all news sources has dropped, except for owned media (43%), which rose one point.

- **Limited access to media and the internet:** In parts of Africa, access to traditional media such as radio, and newspapers are still prevalent. According to Afrobarometer, more than 80% of people in Africa own a mobile phone with access to a mobile phone network. Yet, the International Telecommunications Union's 'Measuring Digital Development Facts and Figures 2022 Report' indicates that only 23% of Africans in rural areas have access to the internet which makes it challenging for PR practitioners to effectively reach audiences as quickly as possible.
- **Limited PR professionals:** From content analysis in this research, there is a limited number of easily recognisable PR professionals in smaller countries such as Cape Verde, Eswatini, Comoros, Mauritius and a few others. This can make it challenging for businesses and organisations to find qualified PR practitioners to work with, and for young university graduates to aspire to.
- **Lack of regulation:** In quite a number of African countries, the PR industry is poorly regulated, which has led to ethical issues and a lack of accountability.

With over 100 agencies, it is difficult to monitor all activities but if all these agencies practise some self-regulation, then the industry benefits.

IDI participant 🇿🇦



On the regulation side, the challenge is to make sure that the regulatory framework is properly executed and that standards are appropriately set.

IDI participant 🇰🇪



In all survey locations, media and members of the press are seen as key stakeholders in the industry. With so many players sharing the PR and Communications space, a regulatory body is needed to oversee processes and ensure propriety. Other important stakeholders who can drive this agenda, in addition to the aforementioned, are social media influencers and the heads of PR and communications across the different organisations (whether private or public).

11.3%

of industry practitioners are concerned about quacks and charlatans and participants who operate in the industry.

The Public Relations Society of Kenya lacks the legal mandate. It has not been empowered enough to be able to manage professionals in this market. If I were to give an example of an ideal law society of Kenya: it would discipline its members, suspend members, and give members the recognition or permit to practise.

Here in Kenya, one of the reasons why we are struggling is because everyone thinks that they can practise PR. Our professional body needs a legal mandate to manage and regulate PR professionals by demanding professionalism and discipline.

IDI participant 🇰🇪



The case where anyone with media or journalism experience can open a PR firm and compete for clients, resulting in proliferation and opportunism should not be allowed. A proper professional body is needed to grant licences to professionals, similar to the standards that exist in the fields of law and medicine. Training, monitoring, and control of professionals are essential.

Females are dominant in Egypt, for sure. I don't know the reason.

IDI participant 🇪🇬




THE FUTURE



Photo Source: Launch of The Happy Times free positivity newspaper | Hotwire

Even in matters of conflict, these principles ring true. As the Setswana saying goes, “Ntwa kgolo ke ya molomo,” which loosely translated, means, “One need only fight with their words. Once more, consultation and engagement are a recipe for real results. Communication and engagement remain a force for good in shaping the future and building the nation, with cultural ideology today being used to inform modern PR practices.

Taazima Kala-Essack

General Manager and Lead Consultant, Hotwire 



THE FUTURE

Public Relations (PR) in Africa is undergoing a transformative phase, driven by shifting dynamics in technology, communication, and the continent's socio-economic landscape. As Africa continues to grow and evolve, the future of PR holds immense potential and opportunities.

To put the worth of the African PR & Comms industry in perspective, Statista says Africa's annual ad spend alone is worth \$5.1 billion. As the industry enjoys speedy growth, it can be attributed to increased recognition of the value of effective communication in building and managing relationships between organisations, governments, and the public.

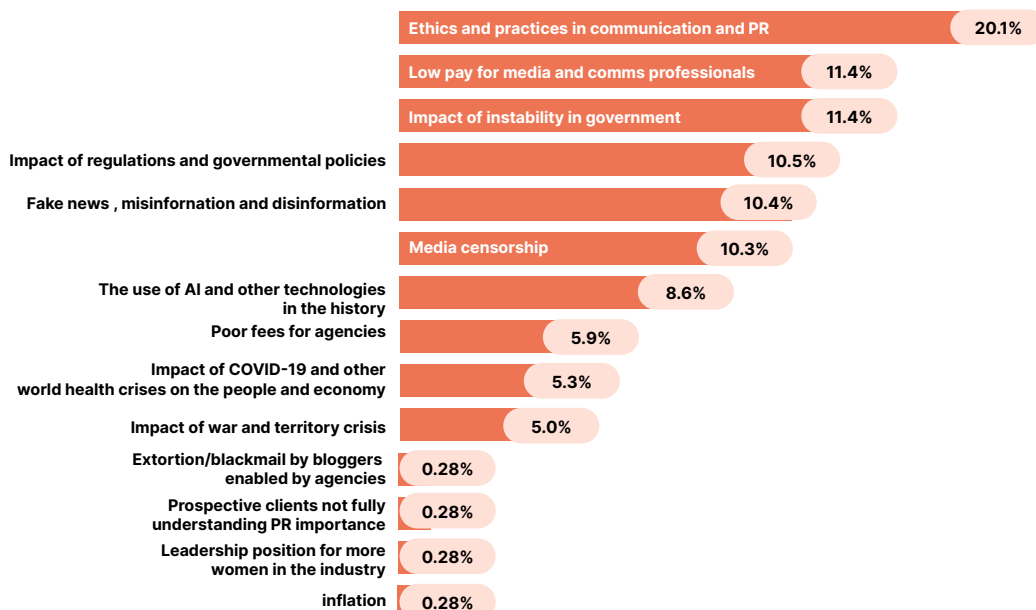
In the digital age, technology plays a crucial role in shaping the future of PR in Africa. More emerging themes such as streaming, AI, blockchain, and broadband internet penetration (5G and more) are changing marketing, media, communications, and consumer behaviour in Africa. The rise of social media platforms and streaming services such as Showmax, Netflix and Prime Video are also contributing to the change in the

perception of Africa as the "Dark Continent". Non-Africans now want to visit Africa. The World Tourism Organization surveyed 20 African countries in 2020 and deduced that they collectively earned \$39 billion from foreign visitors in that year, which was a pandemic year! With a growing number of Africans gaining access to the internet and mobile technology, PR professionals are leveraging these platforms to create impactful and targeted communication campaigns.

The demand for data-driven decision-making is also shaping the future of PR in Africa. As organisations strive to measure the impact of their PR efforts, data analytics and insights become vital tools. By leveraging data from social media, website analytics, and audience demographics, PR professionals can refine their strategies, optimise messaging, and demonstrate tangible results to stakeholders.

The future of PR in Africa lies in its ability to navigate cultural nuances and cater to diverse audiences. With over 1,500 languages (OECD, 2022) spoken across the continent, PR professionals must

Q: Looking forward, I am most concerned about:



employ localized and culturally relevant communication strategies. By understanding the cultural context, values, and aspirations of different African societies, PR can foster meaningful connections and build trust with target audiences.

Furthermore, the future of PR in Africa lies in its role as a catalyst for positive change. PR professionals are increasingly focusing on corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, sustainability, and ethical

practices. By promoting transparency, accountability, and social impact, PR can contribute to Africa's development agenda and enhance the reputation of organisations operating on the continent.

What lies ahead? Africa being the Final Frontier for global investment will automatically make African governments fall in line. Corruption will reduce because social media has made African governments more accountable.

Country	Election	Date
Benin	National Assembly	24 June 2023
Central African Republic	Local	Jan 2023
Comoros	Island Governors	2023
Côte d'Ivoire	Local	2023
Djibouti	National Assembly	2023
Egypt	Local	2023
Gabon	Presidential, Legislative & Local	2023
Ghana	District, Local & Unit	2023
Guinea	Local	2023
Guinea-Bissau	People's National Assembly & Senate	2023
Liberia	President	10 Oct 2023
Libya	Parliamentary	2023
	President	2023
Madagascar	President	2023
Mali	Local	June 2023
	House of Representatives & Senate	Oct & Nov 2023
Mauritania	National Assembly, Regional & local	2023
Mozambique	Local	11 Oct 2023
Nigeria	President, House of Representatives & Senate	25 Feb 2023
	State Assemblies & Governors	11 Mar 2023
Sierra Leone	President, Parliamentary and Local Councils	24 June 2023
Somaliland (autonomous)	Presidential	2023
South Sudan	President, National Assembly, local	2023
Sudan	Presidential, Council of States, National Assembly, State Legislatures, State Governors, local	Jul 2023
		2023
Swaziland	Senate, House of Assembly, Urban local, Tinkhundla	2023
Togo	Regional	2023
	President, Senate, House of Assembly & local	

2023 African election calendar. Source: Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA)

Q: Critical skills and emerging areas of expertise



Perceived Growth, Gaps and Opportunities

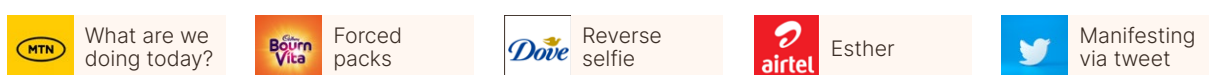
Practitioners believe that these critical skills and emerging areas of expertise will increase in the foreseeable future. 12% of professionals believe media relations, strategic thinking and planning (11.7%), social media relations (11%), copywriting and editing (11%), research and evaluation measurement (11%), and crisis-issue management (10%) will remain relevant as core areas of expertise.

Practitioners were asked to share a case study of the best campaign (local/regional or global campaigns) in 2022. The case studies shared were mostly foreign campaigns. Notable mentions with multiple nominations include: What are we doing today?(MTN), Forced packs (Bournvita), Reverse selfie (Dove) and Esther (Airtel).

Other campaigns mentioned include: Manifesting via tweet (Twitter), The beginner (John Lewis), Ready to go hands-free? (Samsung), Empty plates (UAE Media Office), and The closer (Heineken).

Impact of Social and Digital Media on PR

The impact of social and digital media on the PR industry has been largely positive, allowing professionals to have more time to create quality content and be efficient in their storytelling. Social and digital media have made information for government, businesses or individuals readily available to the public in real-time. Digital tools now allow professionals to work remotely and optimise their channels of communication whilst cutting down on the cost of doing business.



Digital media effect is huge, transformative and much more fast-paced. Social media trends and conversations are driving the news agenda and not vice-versa. It is also unpredictable to know where the next big trend will come from.

At the same time, there is also a generation of people that are not interested in branded content, so you need to be very careful how you communicate for your client without being pushy and commercial.

IDI participant 🇳🇮



Trends Affecting the PR Industry

Digital and social media, and other types of technology like AI and machine learning, have extensively and positively disrupted the PR industry on the continent. This is largely due to the shift from offline to online consumption of information. PR practitioners are now expected to align with global trends in the management and communication of information.

Digital technology presents the opportunity to take PR to the next level across different sectors. Practitioners must understand new technologies like AI and machine learning, and also understand how audiences are wired, to get ahead of the curve, or else the practice will become obsolete. Like the way Kodak became obsolete.

FGD participant 🇳🇮



Although companies have begun to focus on achieving diversity and inclusion and ESG, the actions will have to go beyond checking boxes. The need to implement sustainability practices will become a necessity. The reality of the abuse and neglect of many decades will lead to a salvo of extreme measures needed to save the present climate, whether it's in business, governance, or the environment. More than ever, businesses have to align or at the very least have a middle ground with the needs of citizens.

Ghana experienced a complete shutdown of market stalls and big businesses have been forced to rethink their marketing strategy beyond advertising. The ESG is also gradually beginning to play a pivotal role in PR practice on the continent, especially in the areas of climate change and carbon footprint.

Gone are the days when you only needed to present the annual report to clients.

Now, brands are almost expected to create a sustainability report that aligns with the ESG lens. So, I think PR practitioners need to be au fait with that.

IDI participant 🇳🇮



International Trade and Opportunities for Africa

An exit of key businesses and industry giants from the continent is inevitable but there will be opportunities that will attract new ones. We can expect to see PR and communications play a vital role in business transformation initiatives to manage the new realities and challenges of an ever-changing context.

With interventions such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the continent is poised to further expand trade across countries within the continent. The World Bank has claimed that the right execution of the Agreement can pull “30 million people out of extreme poverty and raise the incomes of 68 million others who live on less than \$5.50 per day.” And that implementation of trade facilitation measures and other measures that cut red tape and simplify customs procedures can generate \$292 billion of the \$450 billion in potential income gains. To achieve these and more, the AfCFTA must transcend its paper status to actual implementation across 54 diverse countries.

With digital and social media savvy practitioners, implementation of trade-promoting initiatives, PR across Africa can become seamless and borderless, generating revenue for the industry from within and outside the continent. Practitioners can learn and execute world-class PR campaigns while operating from their countries. Additionally, practitioners can use storytelling and communication tools to describe the political, economic, cultural, and social landscape on the continent to global investors, emphasising the positive enabling environment for a successful business. Practitioners must tell the story of qualified human and natural resources, commodities, goods and services available on the African continent to attract foreign direct investment, global best practices, and technological know-how.

AI and Tech in PR Across Africa

The public relations and communications industry is evolving at a rapid pace, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and other new technologies is becoming more prevalent. AI can be used for a variety of tasks, including media monitoring, analysis and reporting, and can help PR and communications professionals to be more efficient and effective in their work. In

some organisations, AI is used to monitor online conversations in real-time, which can be helpful for quickly addressing any negative sentiment. Identifying fake news and dispelling them very quickly is also a task that AI can do efficiently.

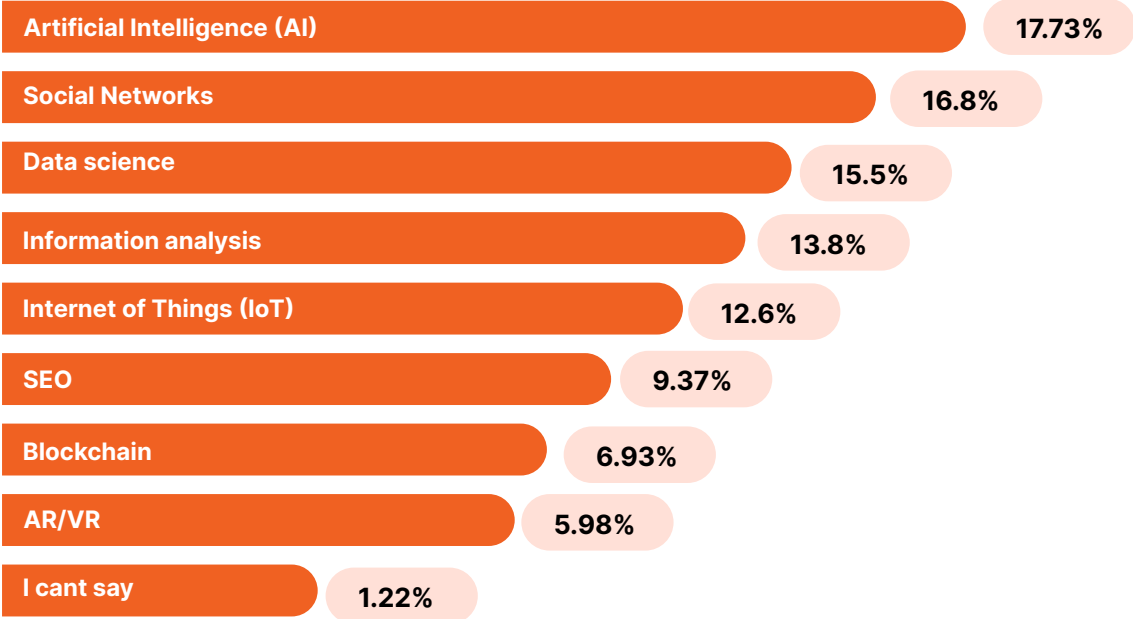
When asked about the technologies that would influence the future of PR on the continent, 17.73% of participants predicted that Artificial Intelligence (AI) would be most predominant in the practice of PR in the next 5 to 10 years. This is followed closely by social networks (16.8%) and data science (15.5%). 13.8% of responses also indicated that information analysis will become relevant going forward while 12.6% are convinced about the Internet of Things (IoT). Most industry players are not worried about the advent of AI and other technologies in PR practice. On the contrary, practitioners welcome the use of these technologies to boost their work. Young professionals must hone their skills in AI and other technologies to be relevant and globally competitive in the PR space of the future.

The global trajectory of PR expertise requires professionals to be technologically savvy to provide seamless and quality communication. Other noteworthy technologies gathered from the findings that will change the PR landscape even though on a limited scale include SEO (9.73%), Blockchain (6.93%) and AV/VR (5.98%). Interestingly, about 1.22% of participants couldn't tell which technology will be relevant for PR practice in the future.

17.73%

of participants predicted that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be most predominant in the practice of PR in the next 5 to 10 years.

Q: Looking forward to the next year, I am most concerned about



CONCLUSION



CONCLUSION



ENIOLA HARRISON

Adviser, **APCR Committee**
Co-founder, **Africa Communications Week**

Public Relations in Africa Is Poised For An Interesting Future

Africa's PR and communications industry continues to grow and evolve and although the continent presents new and unique challenges, the future is exciting and full of opportunities.

The first Africa PR & Communications (APCR) report highlights the industry's wins, explores its challenges and opportunities, and underscores the enormous work to be done on the continent, particularly the role PR and communication can play in advancing the much-needed transformation and sustainable development of Africa's economy and people.

First, the emergence of new opportunities across the continent indicates it is an exciting time for PR practice. An unprecedented embrace of African culture and creativity across the music, film, fashion, arts, and tech industries globally means demand for reputation and crisis management is on a high, accounting for a quarter of the total services demanded in the PR and communications industry.

Africa's film industry alone has the potential to create over 20 million jobs and contribute \$20 billion to the continent's combined GDP. PR practitioners will be expected to appropriately cater to the reputation management demands of the creative and cultural industry with strategic deliberation and professionalism using new communication technologies, sound data, and experience.

A similar rise in reputation management demands is evident in the tech industry as it records all-time high capital investments and growth, with startups continuously seeking ways to sustain their brand image. The APCR represents a key source of data and expert insights to guide practitioners in building, managing and protecting reputations across various sectors.

PR practice in Africa over the next two years is poised to take an interesting turn as the continent makes its final sprint to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations. An important question to explore is how the

PR and communications industry will inspire public and private actions towards solving critical challenges that hamper Africa's development today for the continent to achieve the UN's SDGs by 2030.

A major area of concern also presents a growing opportunity for PR practice across the continent. Communicating about corporate environmental, social and governance performance will become unavoidable with 13% of responders in the APCR report citing ESG as one of the prime issues facing businesses and clients in Africa—only behind economic instability (21%), funding and cash flow (17%), and sales (15%). PR and communication professionals will need to become more skilled in building effective ESG strategies for their businesses and clients and well versed in implementing them. With African countries and economies at severe risk due to effects of the climate crisis, the PR and communications industry must understand its vital role in driving climate conversations, and in particular, shaping narratives on Africa's need for climate adaptation and finance.

Another emerging opportunity for the industry is the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement. There is a real need for AfCFTA signatory countries to raise awareness among stakeholders of the trade and investment opportunities opened up by the free trade area. The PR and communications industry will therefore be a critical vehicle to steer conversations around collaborative actions, emphasizing the need for deepening private sector engagement and commitment to the implementation process. There can be no better motivation for the industry than the World Bank's prediction that the AfCFTA—the largest free trade area since the establishment of the World Trade Organization—if fully implemented, has the potential to raise incomes by 9% by 2035 and lift 50 million people out of extreme poverty.

As the APCR states, these efforts cannot be accomplished without commitment to ethical practice and uncompromised professionalism. A lack of regulation of PR practice poses a real challenge in ensuring credibility and accountability for practitioners across the continent. Hence it behooves industry stakeholders to lay regulatory policies that will guide, monitor, and reward ethical and responsible practices among practitioners.

Among many other key indicators, the APCR also spotlights African governments' roles in providing the PR and communications industry with a solid foundation to thrive. At least 10% of practitioners sampled in this report are concerned about how government policies affect the industry. The APCR emphasizes a need for better legislative and regulatory policies, as well as strategic collaborations to elevate the standard and achieve growth of PR practice on the continent.

It is an important time for the PR and communications industry to play a role in driving Africa towards sustainable growth, as the continent continues to evolve and present new opportunities. The 2022-2023 Africa PR & Communications report (APCR), steered by BHM Research & Intelligence, provides much-needed insights to gain a deeper understanding of the industry's current realities, challenges and opportunities. These will hopefully inspire industry actions towards achieving short and long-term development goals.



50 million people

can be lifted out of extreme poverty by 2023 if the AfCFTA is properly implemented.

Source: World Bank

INSIGHTS INTO AFRICA'S MULTI- DIMENSIONAL INDUSTRY

9

EXPLORING THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL AFRICAN PR & COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY



ADEDOYIN JAIYESIMI

Co-Founder, **The Comms Avenue**

When I started my career in Communications over a decade ago, I knew little about the African PR and Communications Industry. In fact, I knew little about the field of Communications in general. I started as a writer, then an assistant editor and finally, as a Brand Communications Manager. This was when I realised there was a bigger space than the world of writing I was mostly familiar with. While landing a career in Communications brought me into that sweet spot where I could fully express my creative skills, I had to find my way. I remember being saddled with a brief one day, and I wasn't sure how to approach execution or even how to charge for my services. Special thanks to my professional colleagues who helped to demystify that brief!

As I run the day-to-day activities at The Comms Avenue, a capacity-building platform for Communications professionals across Africa, I realise there is still a need for demystification in the African PR and communications industry. One thing running The Comms Avenue has exposed me up to is just how vast the industry is. Before starting the community in 2020, my 'professional worldview' was very Nigerian. While learning the nuances of media relations and how to put together an effective communications campaign in Nigeria, I began to yearn for more. The

campaigns were great, and the visibility created for clients was also exciting, but I knew there had to be more work to be done as a Communications consultant.

I discovered what that 'more' was as I began interacting with colleagues from across the continent.

The way Africa as a continent is diverse and nuanced is the same way the practice of PR and communications is different.

As with everything else relating to Africa and how we tend to lump Africa erroneously into one basket, we make similar mistakes as regards PR and Communications.

Adedoyin Jaiyesimi 🇳🇮



Yes, the principles are the same, but their application varies across regions and countries. It was interesting for me to learn how colleagues in other African countries handled media relations; it was also interesting to note that the practice of Communications in certain parts of Africa is more advanced than in others. However, I think the most valuable discovery for me was learning the importance of

contextualising campaigns and plans across the continent. For instance, insights used for Nigeria cannot be directly applied to Angola; the people are different, the language is different, and the approach must be different.

And therein lies the complexity of the practice of PR and communications in Africa. It is multidimensional, and it is also diverse. One thing that unites us as Africans is our ability to tell stories. It is deeply ingrained in our culture, yet, I have found that this asset hasn't been properly maximised by African PR and communications professionals, especially in relation to taking control of shaping the continent's narrative. Many have spoken about how the Western media continues to showcase negative stories about the continent, but who will tell the true and balanced stories we want? More specifically, what is the story we want to tell?

To a large extent, media relations and tactical activities have defined the African PR and Communications industry. It has been looked at as a nice-to-have instead of a must-have that is critical to the strategic development of any organisation.

Adedoyin Jaiyesimi ■■



A Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) report indicated that

67%

of African PR professionals feel that the perception of PR has improved since the start of the pandemic.

Source: PRCA 2022 Report

This is where there is room for cohesion amongst those who practise PR and Communications across the continent. We need an avenue where we can share learnings and experiences. We need to be united in the story we want to tell and leverage PR tools to amplify this story.

During a roundtable session at the 2022 Africa Communications Week, I listened to a colleague from Rwanda speak about a campaign by a corporate brand that leveraged the power of storytelling, which resulted in significant behavioural change across the country. I was left in awe of the campaign's details and wondered how we could do something similar in Nigeria. The issue, however, is that after that conversation, the campaign details will probably be lost because it hasn't been documented as a case study. As media consumption trends continue to shift across the continent, the type of stories we tell and how we tell them will become highly crucial. Also, the work we do across the continent needs to be adequately documented.

While this is an encouraging figure, there is still more to do to ensure that the African PR and communications industry is where it needs to be.

The use of research, data, and the ability to measure our results are still areas that need to be worked on, and dare I say urgently. There is also a need for us to shift from tactical thinking to strategic thinking. We have exceptional PR and communications professionals across the continent, but until we begin to show how crucial our work is to the strategic objectives of the organisations we work with and our countries, the industry will continue to be sidelined.

I, however, see a ray of hope in the fire that the younger professionals across the continent carry. They are eager to learn, eager to make a difference and are asking the right questions. In addition, they are doing more collaborations across the continent; this will go a long way in ensuring that the practice of PR and communications in the continent becomes truly cohesive and impactful in its results. The multidimensionality of the industry is undoubtedly a blessing, but we need to steward it through strategic collaboration among practitioners within the continent to make sure it doesn't go the other way.

WHY WE NEED MORE DIVERSITY IN PR



ALASTAIR **MCCAPRA**

Chief Executive, **Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR)**

The story of the UK Public Relations industry in the post-pandemic era has largely been positive. In the face of global political, social and economic instability, research by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) reports a growing industry, greater respect felt by PR practitioners from colleagues and fellow professionals, an improved understanding and recognition of what PR can deliver from businesses, and an increased demand to match.

The industry is not immune from the ongoing impact of the pandemic, the invasion of Ukraine, climate change, and a cost-of-living crisis. Of course, we often rely on the success and vision of the businesses we work for and with. The increased respect – and scrutiny – that social media brings has seen businesses work with their PR teams and clients to ensure their reputation management, stakeholder relations, internal and external communications, and crisis preparedness put them in a position of strength to

navigate through – and out of – these challenging times.

However, times of unprecedented challenges and the resulting increased workload are not an excuse to shy away from getting our own house in order, particularly when addressing poor levels of diversity within the industry.

Alastair McCapra 

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This especially rings true in the UK, where years of reporting demonstrate that the PR industry lacks significant diversity. Despite the fact that most people working in the industry state that they are confident that diverse teams make for better efficiency and a better working environment, this does not reflect in their reality.

Nine in ten practitioners are white; fewer than that identify as having a disability or as being gay. One in four practitioners has attended a fee-paying school and is more likely to hold a senior post and be paid higher rates than those who did not. The industry is around two-thirds female, but half of the male practitioners occupy senior positions. This year, the gender pay gap is reported to have increased for the first time after years of shrinking.

Considering that working in PR comes with no barriers to entry, this is damning.

The reasons for this sustained failure to diversify range from recruitment practices to issues around inclusion. Alarmingly, at a time of increased demand, the vacancies most seen across the industry are at mid and senior levels that should be occupied by those with experience in PR. Far from lacking talent and passion from those in junior positions, the industry is suffering from a retention crisis. The industry's challenges now result from our long-standing failure to address this. Put simply, there are too many people starting their careers in PR who, after years of service, don't feel this is an industry they can or want to stay in. We are not developing our own people properly, so change is not really happening.

This was one of the key findings from our 2020 'Race in PR' report. The report looked at the lived experiences of black, Asian, and minority ethnic practitioners, and found common themes of being unable to progress in the same way as their white counterparts, feelings of an unequal playing field, consequently leading to a lack

of fair and equal opportunities. Eventually, having been made to feel as though they are inadequate, unable to progress or be their authentic self at work, many of these practitioners choose to become independent consultants.

The pandemic saw both our reputation and the recognised value of our work rocket, but with it exposed a vulnerability that means we are now lacking skilled and experienced talent and, thus, struggling to meet demand. Following years of steady growth, our improved business performance now needs to be matched with efforts to improve the experience of working in Public Relations for all businesses to thrive with the right people with the right skills.

We need to stop wasting good people. Only a serious change in the working culture can deliver this.

Alastair McCapra 



OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFRICAN PR IN A FLUID GLOBAL LANDSCAPE



ANTHONY MUTUA

Managing Partner, **AM Communications Ltd (Kenya)**

The global PR and Communications industry is valued at

Over

\$100 billion 

The global PR and Communications industry, valued at over 100 billion US dollars, is grappling with disruption fueled by rapid technological and social change. Innovation in communication technology, shifting audience demographics and heightened public scrutiny of businesses all point to a fascinating but unpredictable future for the industry.

The traditional PR practice – media relations, reputation and crisis management, brand communication, public affairs and lobbying, internal communication, investor relations, stakeholder engagement and corporate social responsibility – will undoubtedly retain its relevance into the foreseeable future.

However, what will change is how PR is managed, given the way new digital technologies are upending the way content is delivered and fragmenting audiences. That said, three major global megatrends are driving the transformation of the African PR landscape and creating novel growth opportunities.

1. Digital Disruption

Rapid digitisation of communication is already disrupting the traditional PR model in favour of a more digital-centric approach. The press release is no longer the primary tool for disseminating news and information through media. Editors and reporters are accepting content filed via online platforms like WhatsApp and Twitter. Journalists are uploading news stories on-site at client events. In this era of citizen journalism, where anyone can break the news on social media, newsrooms are under pressure to go fully digital or become irrelevant.

A 2019 report by the International Public Relations Network (IPRN) confirms that many practitioners view digitisation as the industry's most significant change. Fortunately, Africa is well into the digital content revolution.

The explosion in smartphone use has seen power shift from brands and their gatekeepers to news-hungry audiences who are consuming and pushing content online.

Anthony Mutua 🇰🇪



A recent survey by IPSOS in Kenya, for instance, concluded that the smartphone as a communication gadget offers “unrivalled access to cross-media opportunities – radio, TV, social media, print...” This spells the need for a different approach to media relations and brand communications. Nowadays, digital PR is integral to crisis and reputation management.

There is immense opportunity in digital for PR and communication firms to create, curate and tell stories from Africa in an exciting and authentic way, targeting both local and global audiences with the mobile screen as the main channel, thus reducing dependence on traditional media platforms.

The phenomenal success of revolutionary digital financial services like M-Pesa in Kenya is a clear demonstration that Africa has what it takes to fully digitise media, where content previously inaccessible due to cost or limited reach of traditional channels like newspapers, TV, radio and magazines, is now readily available to a broader audience.

2. Sustainability

The second notable megatrend revolves around civic and consumer activism underpinning greater scrutiny around businesses and products. While there is an opportunity for African PR practitioners to hone their reputation management capabilities, they have to reckon with heightened government regulation and public demand for greater disclosure around the environmental and social impact of businesses. Social licence is now the premium currency for brand equity.

In response to the greater need for transparency, more corporations are now going the extra mile to publish sustainability reports, financial data, and other mandatory regulatory disclosures. In Kenya, most leading publicly listed firms have made Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting an integral feature of their annual reports.

Sustainability will be a major driver of PR in Africa and the rest of the world. Beyond pitching Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) stories to the media, attention will shift to the actual impact of business activities on people, communities and the planet.

Anthony Mutua 🇰🇪



Rather than focusing on a project launch, the media will be more interested in a testimonial-based, human-interest story demonstrating a long-term transformative impact on beneficiaries.

3. Globalisation

The world has become one big village where local issues can be global news and vice versa. A story about human rights abuses on a flower farm in Kenya is likely to attract international headlines the same way the conflict in Ukraine would provide context for a story on high fuel prices in Kenya. This inter-meshing of global and local stories is now a reality from a PR perspective. Audiences are local and global at the same time, thanks to social media and news websites.

As Africa becomes more integrated into the world economy, global firms are pitching their tents on the continent. The uptick in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Private Equity (PE) and Venture Capital (VC) inflows points to Africa becoming the next global market arena.

African PR agencies are thus uniquely positioned to offer homegrown communication solutions to international investors and businesses eyeing this promising but untapped market. Big global

PR networks are already collaborating with local agencies to provide integrated marketing communications solutions.

The Future

However, despite the promising prospects, the PR industry in Africa will need to invest significantly more in research to support data-driven decisions. Getting reliable data about PR, especially in Africa, is a challenge.

Concise and authoritative industry reports will be highly valuable in benchmarking regional experiences against global best practices.

Anthony Mutua 🇰🇪

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We must also continuously invest in talent compatible with the transition into an intrinsically digital PR environment.

KGL FWD AND RWANDA COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK



AUTUMN MARIE

Founder and Managing Director, **KGL FWD**

It is said to whom much is given, much is required. As PR professionals in Africa, we are not merely telling our client's stories, we are telling the stories that have the power to change the narrative of Africa. This is a great privilege, opportunity, and responsibility. At times it may also feel like a lot of pressure, but I hope that we face it with vibrant excitement and energetic enthusiasm, knowing that we have the power to play a role in shaping what the world sees and hears about this great continent.

As a PR professional based in Rwanda, I have seen firsthand the role PR can play and the need for it in shaping the narrative of a country.

Autumn Marie 🇷🇼



When I first moved here in 2017, many people in the US were not aware of the innovative strides the country had made and it quickly became evident to me that if I were to do PR in this market its impact would extend far beyond my clients.

In the past, we had to depend on mainstream outlets to tell the story of Africa to the world. These mainstream outlets often created and perpetuated biases with the stories they told, the perspectives from which they told them, and the headlines they used to tell them. Technology and digital connectivity have completely transformed this. We now have the ability to reach people around the world at our fingertips with our phones, tablets, and laptops. We have more channels, more access, and more points of engagement than at any other time in history.

The Public Relations and Communication

Association's State of the African PR Landscape 2022 report spoke to 550 PR professionals and found that

51%

of PR professionals in Africa admitted that digital and social media play the most important role in PR in their country.

Source: Public Relations and Communication Association's State of the African PR Landscape 2022 report

According to Kepios, there are currently 4.74 billion people on social media around the world. That is 59.3% of the global population and usage is exponentially increasing daily. 190 million users worldwide joined social media in the one

According to the International Trade Association, as of 2021, the African continent leads mobile internet usage a full 13% above the global average.

Autumn Marie 🇳🇬

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year from October 2021 to October 2022. In addition, 2021 Eurostat data showed that 72% of internet users ages 16-74 in the EU read news sites, newspapers, and news magazines online and PEW Research Center reported in 2021 that more than eight-in-ten U.S. adults (86%) say they get news from a smartphone, computer or tablet “often” or “sometimes,” including 60% who say they do so often.

With such a large percentage of people consuming news online and communicating digitally, some have begun

to question if it will make the PR profession obsolete. On the contrary, it presents an opportunity for us as PR professionals to tell stories in a greater variety of ways, across more channels and using a greater variety of media channels. With people having so much direct access and engagement, it increases the need for reputation management and crisis management which ranked second and third place in levels of importance following digital and social media in PRCA's report. It creates more of a need for PR professionals and generates new roles such as advising clients how to navigate and harness the new constantly changing

The digital landscape has made PR more necessary than ever for the continent. We have more reach than ever before, which provides opportunities for more impact than ever before.

Autumn Marie 🇳🇬

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platforms and tools.

Our work can play a pivotal role in shifting and expanding narratives more than ever before. But to do so, we must be open to innovation, change, and new ideas. We will need to be flexible in our practice and invest time to constantly learn and relearn. Most importantly, we need to be open to young people leading.

It is these young people who use social media and content in their daily lives who will breathe new energy into the industry and together we will go far to change the narrative of Africa using the digital landscape.

ENHANCE YOUR COMPANY'S IMAGE THROUGH A CONFERENCE



BENJAMIN MAMPUYA

CEO, Compagnie Générale de Communication (CGC) and Associate Director, Clipse Africa

In recent years, business conferences for professionals have become increasingly numerous on the African continent. The phenomenon has grown as Africa has become a "trendy" topic for the Western media (American, European and Asian). They rightly present the continent as the continent of the future.

Multinationals have begun to think seriously about their strategy as it pertains to Africa and how to join the movement of this high-potential continent.

Benjamin Mampuya 

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If we look at the case of Francophone Africa, business conferences have mainly been driven by Western companies and institutions, anxious to bring a sense of "Africanness" to their brand or to

strengthen the local anchoring of their companies in Africa. Subsequently, African actors (financial institutions, inter-governmental organisations) have also opted for the organisation of these conferences – a type of communication action that allows them to assert their presence and consolidate their expertise on a given topic. The aim is to attract international investors.

Regardless of the organiser, the aims of these conferences stay the same: to garner an audience and improve their image.

Relying on the Media to Give a Conference Credibility

What kind of communication should be used to maximise image and awareness? First, it is important to focus your communication strategy on a broad press relations campaign. This action should not be neglected, as the media is the primary vector of information. A media outlet that

talks about your event is an excellent booster in terms of social presence, credibility and good image.

In concrete terms, the idea is to distribute press releases before and after the event. In the quarter preceding the event, send the media a "Save the date" text in the quarter preceding the event to inform them. This will be followed by one or two other press releases presenting the programme and the few key speakers at the event.

Why are these steps important? When the media announces an event, it generates more interest and can help to increase the number of registrations and even convince some high-profile speakers to take part in your conference.

Secondly, it is necessary to invite journalists to cover your conference. Their presence guarantees the reports and articles that will improve your public image. It is also a guarantee of quality for your partners and advertisers. The presence of journalists at your events is a way for them to promote themselves and gain visibility.

Finally, in terms of press relations, the last step is to send a press release to report the event. It is imperative to send out a report of what was said at your event, to give absent journalists material that informs them what to write about it.

Another step that can help you maximise the visibility of your conference is the "media partnership." It involves approaching one or more media outlets (TV, newspapers, radio stations, websites, or press agencies) and inviting them to be partners in your conference. Generally, this partnership takes the form of an exchange of visibility (banner or article on the media, in exchange for the media's logo on the conference's communication materials or other POS). This can be very interesting during professional conferences on specific topics for which your audience recognize specialised media. The

partnership can also be translated into the presence of journalists from these media outlets as panel moderators or masters of ceremony.

Promote Your Speakers and Partners on Social Media

It is important to rely on the reputation of your speakers and partners, especially on social networks, to make your event a success.

It is, therefore, essential to have a LinkedIn page and a Twitter account dedicated to the event. These are generally the social media platforms used by professionals, which are handy tools that can help gather the whole community and the prospects related to your event and its topics. You will thus be able to present all your information and that of your partners to the entire ecosystem and, more broadly, create a community of personalities interested in your activities.

On the speakers' side, these networks (LinkedIn and, to a lesser extent, Twitter) are great platforms for personal branding. Mentioning each speaker and moderator present at your event on these social networks maximises your chances of being shared and therefore increases your following and your targets.

Event communication remains an excellent way of positioning yourself with professionals and other economic players, as these events are often based on key topics that interest their communities.

Benjamin Mampuya 🇫🇷

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But as with any project, it is imperative to put in place an effective communication strategy to obtain maximum benefits in terms of image.

TIPS FOR HACKING CONSULTING AS A YOUNG PR PROFESSIONAL IN AFRICA



BLOSSOM DEJI-FOLUTILE

Senior Consultant, **BlackHouse Media (BHM)**

If you ask a non-PR professional to explain what their understanding of PR is, you would be shocked by their response. Some people think PR is publicity, others think PR is advertising, while most think PR is about distributing a company's press releases. As a young PR professional trying to find footing in the world of Public Relations, it may often feel like you're in a whirlwind of activities trying to find your footing. At least, that was my experience when I began my PR journey almost four years ago as a wide-eyed intern. Four years later, I can argue that I have been able to somewhat understand the art of Public Relations and have also highlighted key important areas to master in order to succeed in this field. For each point, I will share how I have been able to navigate these key areas and what I hope to continue to master going forward.

Client Relationship

I intentionally didn't title this as 'Client Management' because when you think about it, clients don't really want to be

managed. Having an actual healthy relationship with a client is key when you work in this kind of field. I have realised that understanding your client's expectations and working closely with them to achieve set goals, goes a long way in the overall success of campaigns executed.

Honesty is also extremely important because, in this line of work, it is highly important to build trust.

Blossom Deji-Folutile 🇳🇮

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There have been instances when a client would ask for something that was not ready, and instead of trying to 'manage' the client by telling them that the document was ready, I chose to be honest and this surprisingly helped in reducing anxiety and ensuring that quality work was delivered.

Media and Influencer Relationship

As pivotal as these sets of people are to Public Relations, they are often overlooked. Throughout my career, I have had to interact with journalists across business, technology, brands and entertainment beats. Public Relations is storytelling, and the media helps us to tell our stories. The major successes we recorded on the team on numerous campaigns were because our media partners continued to support us and helped tell our stories.

Team Relationship

I don't know who made the quote that a team is only as strong as its weakest link but this saying could not be more accurate. When you actually understand this, you'll feel the need to ensure that every member of the team you're working with is committed to doing great work. I have learned that everyone has their strengths and areas that need improvement, and the hack is to play to people's strengths while actively seeking ways to help each other improve in areas that require improvement.

Storytelling

There is always more than one way to tell a story, and I think an important part of the work that we do is finding out the right angles to tell your brand's story. One thing I am absolutely grateful for is the storytelling culture of the Consultancy where I work, which is BlackHouse Media (BHM). I have colleagues in other agencies who attend events and send out a press release from the event and call it a day. At BHM however,

for every story worth telling, you're required to find the business, brand, lifestyle and entertainment angles suited to it. I must not forget to mention the variety of social media content we put out for campaigns, ranging from threads to slidegrams, quizzes and the likes. Working like this helps you develop that nose for news that every media person is supposed to have, so you don't go to an event to tick boxes and sit pretty; rather, you actively look for the right stories to tell, people to interview, pictures to take and any other thing that will aid your storytelling.

Reporting

As one of our clients would say, the work that we do is show and tell. And how better to do this than by presenting data?

Despite the fact that reporting can be quite cumbersome, I enjoy doing them. They give you a brief moment to reflect on the work done, note your successes and discover areas for improvement.

Blossom Deji-Folutile 🇳🇮

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In 2021, I attended about three seminars on how to create effective PR reports because in the world of Public Relations, getting results for clients doesn't matter if they don't know about them. Reporting is the single most important part of a PR campaign because it shows the value of your work.

RETHINKING THE FUTURE OF PR AND COMMUNICATIONS PRACTICE THROUGH ACADEMIA



DR. DENISE **DIANA DUNCAN**

Lecturer, **Public Relations, Department of Communication and Media Studies, Central University, Miotso**

Public Relations has been around for nearly a century. Many people believe that Edward Bernays invented Public Relations in the 1920s. However, others point to Ivy Lee, who, in 1904, opened a "counselling office." From helping a company sell bacon by promoting what all Americans could refer to as a nutritious breakfast to staging events as far back as 1929 when he publicised the 50th anniversary of the electric light bulb by having Thomas Edison reenact its discovery, Public Relations began to evolve.

Public Relations has played and continues to play a significant role in today's business landscape. Public Relations functions have become the pivot for successful businesses, acting as sages within the communication fraternity. The communication practice brought about by PR's unwavering hope to thrive in a constantly changing world necessitates regular discussion. Although the image of the practice and its practitioners has

evolved, from 'loud talkers' to 'an English-commanding individual,' today, the PR practitioner is seen as a 'wise man/woman' whose advice is sought on issues such as how to build mutually beneficial relationships, engage in effective campaigns, awareness creation, and craft communication strategies to ensure a consistent brand presence.

As the practice evolves, we need to have a sustainable Public Relations agenda, both in theory and practice.

Dr. Denise Diana Duncan 🇬🇭

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This is a way to ensure a holistic approach to Public Relations training and practice. This shift is therefore required if Public Relations is to thrive for another 100 years. Academia is one area that can provide a

break from the norm to ensure the practice's survival. Academics must relook at pedagogical approaches and consider training PR professionals through the following lenses:

First, academics must consider instilling in students the concept of Public Relations research, as research is a surefire way to add to knowledge about Public Relations as a programme and as a practice. Students who conduct research not only broaden their understanding of the practice but also value the lessons, concepts, and topics discussed in class. This can only be profitable if businesses open their doors to students conducting Public Relations research. Thus, organisations can help by providing student researchers with Public Relations information students require. Although organisations indeed become research-fatigued due to the influx of students seeking information, there is a mutually beneficial relationship between the student and the industry in terms of research.

Second, academia must incorporate the component of student internships into their accreditation programming, as this aids in work-integrated learning. At the stage of curriculum development, this component must be featured with a convincing case made for such an addition to aid accreditation. This strategy will compensate for the constant cries and finger-pointing about teaching being merely theoretical. The addition of this component for work-integrated learning will combine theory and practice and thus produce a well-rounded graduate.

Third, there should be cumulative training for the practice of Public Relations. Training must have various levels, from the certificate level, through the diploma level, to the undergraduate level, master's level, and finally the terminal degree. By creating these openings, academics offer a ripe opportunity for individuals interested in

learning about the practice and pursuing the same. The development of these different levels of programming is the new way to go.

Fourth, the formation of research teams and consortiums. There should be a constant call for research and consortiums to engage minds on the practice and training of individuals in Public Relations. This will urge research conferences to help deliberate on pertinent issues concerning Public Relations and also help share Public Relations research conducted by various academics.

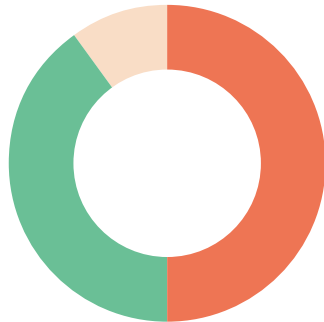
Finally, the need for research for scholarly publications. Academia must invest in Public Relations research to deliberately bring Public Relations concerns to the fore, and explore Public Relations trends in the industry in books and journals. Establishing the relevance of the teaching, learning and practice of Public Relations from the viewpoint of both scholars and industry players gives credence to the field in general. Progressive teaching and learning thrive on extensive research, and academics must seek grants and position themselves to receive grants from various institutions to engage in this research. This will help the industry and solidify content taught in class by providing evidence of real-life situations as recorded in the various textbooks used in the classrooms. It also serves as a means to contribute to the marketplace of ideas in the Public Relations sector.

Academia is the fuel which drives every career practice. Alienating the two will be the doom of any career hope for all.

Dr. Denise Diana Duncan 🇳🇬



The importance of academia in Public Relations cannot be overstated. Eventually, there must be a 50-40-10 percentage rule in teaching the course as a matter of resolution (Public Relations).



- Time spent on teaching - 50%
- Practical assignments and projects - 40%
- Public Relations research - 10%

According to research, students learn more effectively when they practise what they are taught in class. Lecturers must recognise this and develop a comprehensive teaching strategy by integrating these applied arms of teaching.

In conclusion, Public Relations as a practice and a course has seen many steeplechases. Over time, Public Relations has braced all storms and evolved from various stages to become a power to be held in the business world.

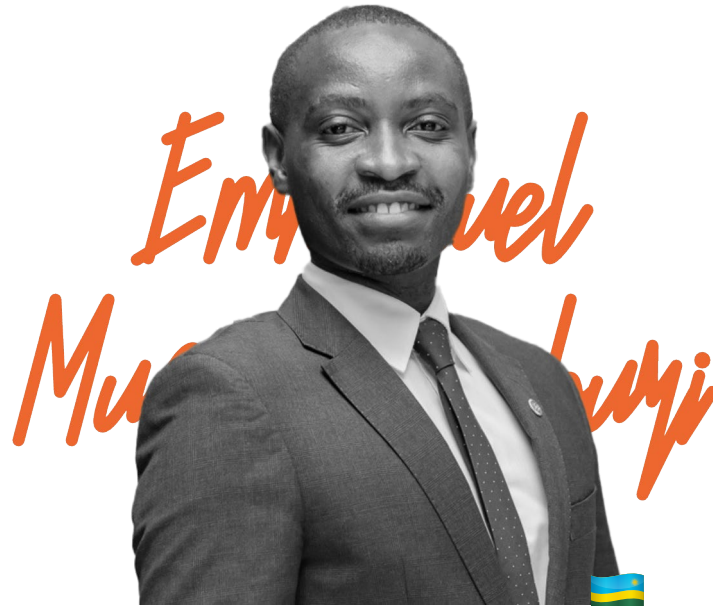
Those who train these practitioners must do so within the space of effective practicability and generalised sustainability if the teaching, learning and practice are to remain relevant.

Dr. Denise Diana Duncan 🇬🇭



It is critical to change the direction of Public Relations practice by combining theory and practice, conducting appropriate research, and developing programmes that provide opportunities for internships and an avenue for operative work-integrated learning. Public Relations is here today and is here to stay with all its tentacles.

A BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) IN THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROFESSION ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT



EMMANUEL **MUNYARUKUMBUZI**

Faculty Member, **African Leadership University, Rwanda**

With the technological disruptions such as the proliferation of social media platforms, the increased access to mobile phones in general and smartphones in particular, as well as the imminent widespread use of Artificial Intelligence (AI); Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented reality (AR), the PR profession has got to up its game. Luckily, DEI could offer some possible solutions to this ever-changing landscape.

One may start by defining PR – many definitions include aspects of creating, maintaining and developing good relationships between organisations (or eminent personalities such as movie stars or religious leaders) and their audiences. With the changes mentioned earlier, there is so much confusion about what the PR function is today, especially in Africa where many professionals still see it as a less sophisticated/mature PR market. Let's begin with all the job positions including keywords such as “information”; “Communication”; “Public Affairs”;

“Digital...”, etc. Most of these are part of or related to PR. It has become very common to group PR with sister professions, creating phrases such as “PR and Marketing” or “PR and Advertising”. Furthermore, think of other job titles that do not contain “PR” but still have a lot to do with the function. These include among others: content creators, social media managers, and event managers for some organisations. It is not strange if one is confused about the definition and the function.

In his article published on LinkedIn Dr Aijhson Joseph, outlined challenges that hinder the practice of PR in Africa. These include among others: a lack of understanding of PR as a central function in an organisation. Lack of specialisation in the PR profession is another – generalists can only do so much. The multitude of languages spoken on the continent sometimes complicate the transmission of messages, since some meaning is lost

through translations. In addition, the lack of technical know-how, questionable ethical/professional standards by some practitioners, infrastructural limitations and some cultural beliefs might clash with some company values.

Moreover, the image of Africa as a dark continent still prevails and perhaps the main challenge for professionals is to change the African Narrative as initiatives such as The Africa Soft Power Project and Africa No Filter are doing. But for this to happen, maybe there needs to be more DEI in the African PR industry.

DEI in African PR teams – a panacea?

The case for DEI in PR teams in Africa comes from the fact that many people in the industry work in silos and this has resulted in some guesswork as exemplified by the below example regarding the production and monetization of mobile apps:

“Everyone is guessing. Publishers don’t know what apps to build, how to monetize them, or even what to price them at. Advertisers & brands don’t know where their target users are, how to reach them, or even how much they need to spend in order to do so. Investors aren’t sure which apps and genres are growing the quickest, and where users are really spending their time (and money)” (apptopia, 2018).

Whilst communication processes have drastically changed, PR teams tend to lack diversity, to date. On one side, young graduates who understand the use of Tiktok lack the analysis of current affairs and the copywriting prowess of seasoned PR professionals who are yet to embrace the latest social media platforms – this speaks to the need for more diversity and inclusion regarding age.

On the other side, tech gurus from IT understand the ins and outs of the latest technological innovations such as mobile

Apps, VR, AR, AI and the like. They are conversant with data mining and visualisations of all sorts and this knowledge often sounds like Greek and Latin to many PR professionals. Yet they would benefit from this to enhance the efficiency of their campaigns – this raises our need to see more inclusion of technology.



About 17% of male practitioners have work experience of more than 10 years, compared to 10% of women with similar experience

People often think of Public Relations as an industry dominated by ladies. However, when you look at decision-making power such as approval and financing of the profession, think CEOs, board members, etc., one quickly realises these seats are largely dominated by men. A 2020 article in The Guardian Nigeria, on women’s leadership in PR, points out that though women account for more than 50% of PR specialists and managers in Africa, large PR associations on the continent have been disproportionately having men in the top leadership positions, and the largest firms and corporate communications departments are still overwhelmingly led by men. How do we help companies and individuals develop communications strategies around gender if our workplaces do not reflect them?



of participants believe there are more men in the industry.

Additionally, diversity is needed in PR teams: professions, disability, religion, language, sexuality and all the differences in a given community/audience to ensure no one is left behind and available capacity, nuance and knowledge are used to the maximum to achieve the full potential of the deployed efforts.

The Importance of Multidisciplinary Collaboration or DEI to Reach Desired PR Goals

DEI is pivotal in increasing efficiency and effectiveness. Innovation is usually a result of the collaborative and cross-fertilization of ideas by people with different professional backgrounds and beliefs (see Bizcommunity.com).

According to Steinheider and Legrady:

“Studies on interdisciplinary collaborations in organisational and scientific research and development teams have revealed that three processes communication, coordination and knowledge sharing significantly influence their efficiency and effectiveness”.

Perhaps DEI would solve issues of defining PR, ensuring companies stay on message as they strive to catch up with technology and meet seemingly insurmountable goals such as changing the African Narrative. Would DEI help PR professionals deal with specific challenges facing the PR function in Africa by having all hands on deck? Certainly, DEI would account for something. DEI will help to grow the industry in Africa and help it to evolve as the industry globally continues to quickly evolve.

THE CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PR AND COMMUNICATIONS CAREER IN AFRICA



FEMI **FALODUN**

Chartered Marketer and CEO, **ID Africa**

Over the near decade of managing Public Relations and Communications programmes for brands across the continent, I have been privileged to hire, train and work with diverse talents ranging from young interns just cutting their teeth in the industry, to seasoned executives with storied careers who've been there and done it all.

Common to the most successful of the professionals that I have studied, is the ability to excel and deliver on a number of roles and responsibilities which ultimately stand them out from the crowd, and make them exceptionally effective at their jobs. I consider these skill areas to be the most critical success factors that must be perfected by anyone who wants to have a successful career in African PR and Communications consultancy.

By mastering most, if not all of these skills, I've seen rookies with no academic background in marketing or

communications quickly grow to become superstars. I've also seen people with advanced postgraduate qualifications in communications-related disciplines really struggle to grow as professionals due to failure in two or more of these skill areas.

1. Relationship Management: This refers to the interpersonal relationship and ongoing interaction that an individual consultant develops and nurtures with the various stakeholders in their professional universe; i.e., colleagues, clients, vendors, journalists, cultural influencers, freelance content creators, production partners, etc.

PR Consultants are relationship managers, and their job is to manage people and build relationships with them. Consultants must manage 'up' (bosses), 'down' (reports), and in parallel (peers). A technically average talent with excellent relationships will succeed faster, for longer and go farther, than a technically exceptional talent with very poor relationship management skills.

The majority of the opportunities that we get as employers, employees or consultants in Africa are based on acts of faith and trust from others, as competence or know-how alone is never enough. Africans being very communal people with relatively high power distance — a significantly hierarchical society — put great value and importance on acts of respect, deference, personal connections and informal interactions.

African societies are generally collectivist, where people usually belong to ‘in groups’ that look after them in return for loyalty and allegiance. In most African societies, there is usually a high degree of interdependence amongst the members of that society. This trait also transfers into the African professional world and features prominently in how people do business.

Finding success with one’s co-workers, managers, clients, vendors, regulators, and partners is dependent on how well we treat them and how we make them feel over time. The better we treat these stakeholders, the more value they deliver for us and the work we do.

Femi Falodun 🇳🇮



2. Planning and Strategy Development:

This refers to the creation of high-level strategic plans and tactics which are based on the client’s objectives, target audience, and desired positioning. Strategy is built upon actionable insights gleaned from data generated during research. The art of strategic thinking and execution depends on the consultant’s ability to adopt and adapt tested models, or create new frameworks to guide the client on high-level decision-making.

This skill area includes all client advisory activities that consultants carry out, based on their domain expertise across disciplines such as marketing and brand management, Public Relations, public affairs, investor relations, digital comms, design, media relations, content creation, and other sector-specific knowledge.

Strategy work is about being able to analyse, identify and interpret problems; being able to come up with creative and logical solutions based on deep diagnosis and insights gained from research (planning).

Femi Falodun 🇳🇮



Strategy work in PR and comms generally includes the set of activities around the interpretation of and response to client briefs, including research, situation analysis and diagnostics, strategising, tactical ideation, media planning, budgeting, as well as project management. All of these require a mix of critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity and selling skills.

Strategy work is about being able to analyse, identify and interpret problems (responding to client’s brief); being able to come up with creative and logical solutions based on deep diagnosis and insights gained from research (planning); being able to convince the ‘boss’ or the person writing the cheque that the idea you have proposed is the right way to go (pitching and selling), and making sure that the set objectives are achieved (measurement and evaluation).

The ability to do all these efficiently is really at the heart of the most successful consultancies globally, whether in PR, marketing communications, management consulting or other professional services.

3. Project Management: The Project Management Institute (PMI) defines a Project as the “amalgamations of tasks, activities, and deliverables that must be structured and executed carefully to achieve the desired outcome.” PMI also describes Project Management as “the use of specific knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to deliver something of value to people.”

For a communications consultant, every client brief is a project — the collection of tasks, activities and actions to deliver value to stakeholders using a variety of communications skills, tools and techniques. In order to succeed, comms consultants must wear the project manager’s cap and execute their briefs by applying unique products, services and processes through the three phases of initiation, planning and execution.

In this context, project management requirements will include operationalising strategy, executing tactical plans, producing activations, managing budgets, keeping to the timeliness, monitoring campaign performance, and ultimately, achieving set objectives and goals, while making a profit.

The African communications project manager’s job is particularly made tougher due to a myriad of socioeconomic and political challenges like insecurity, inflation, low wages, unstable electricity supply, political instability and so on. While these conditions are not in any way ideal, they are a part of the work-life on the continent, therefore, being able to overcome them while delivering world-class services is a prerequisite to succeeding in the African PR and comms industry.

4. Storytelling and Content Creation:

Content is the vehicle that moves the message from a brand (and its spokespeople) to the target audience. Media is the road upon which content travels.

Writing and content creation is the ‘SI unit’ and foundational skill requirement of any communications practice. Every communications professional must be able to develop creative and effective communication materials. This should be second nature to them.

Beyond this, all professionals must also be able to brief and collaborate with an outside team of creatives including writers, designers, video editors, and others to conceptualise, produce and distribute high-quality multimedia content materials for paid, earned, shared and owned media channels.

A consultant’s ability to tell authentic African stories that connect with the people is based on their understanding of each region’s cultural nuances, the nature of the local media landscape, and the peculiarities of the audience.

No communication campaign will succeed without the smart use of relatable storytelling and effective content distribution across relevant media channels.

Femi Falodun 



In most cases, it’s not about how ‘polished’ the content is (i.e., aesthetics or production quality), but how easily the audience sees themselves in the material (i.e., authenticity and relatability).

A well-crafted piece of content will always generate some excitement with the media and among customers, even for a less-than-stellar product or service offering. That's how much people love stories. Being able to do this well serves the PR person greatly at every stage of their career, regardless of their role or campaign type.

As cool as creative content development may be, it is important to note that superstar practitioners never elevate tactical thinking above strategy. The 'horse' (i.e., the strategy: a clear articulation of SMART objectives, market segmentation, audience targeting, and crafting a positioning message) should always come before the 'cart' (i.e., the tactics: media choices, content formats, creative materials, influencers, etc.). Just as reconnaissance, mapping of the battlefield and selection of targets always come before the military General orders the firing of their army's first missile, likewise, a comms strategist must put strategic plans before tactical activities like content creation.

5. Business Development and Sales: At a certain level in business, every job becomes a sales role: selling vision and mission to the team, products to customers, services to clients, value to shareholders, etc. For comms consultants, every encounter with stakeholders is a sales pitch; every meeting, phone call, email, text message, tweet, blog post, handshake or editorial output is a reminder of why you should remain hired. Every touch point is an opportunity to sell or re-sell, and those who do the best job of selling the best reputation end up getting the best businesses.

Consultants must always be selling, and not only during RFPs.

The most successful practitioners are considered by their employers as superstars whose involvement in a pitch presentation process almost guarantees the company of winning the new business. Beyond the RFP pitch, smart consultants are also continually proposing new ideas to existing clients, championing the consultancy's perspectives and opinions to decision-makers on the client side, pitching stories to journalists and earning positive media coverage, and changing the behaviour of the target audience by persuading and convincing.

The ability to get people to buy 'us' — our vision, products, services and ideas — is critical to success, particularly in developing nations, where competition is not just about what is being sold, but also about how agreeable the seller is.

6. Research and Reporting: Research is necessary at the beginning, middle and end of all communication programmes and marketing campaigns. It is through research that we know what's wrong and what needs to be fixed (situation analysis and diagnosis), how well we are doing while fixing it (monitoring), and how good or bad a job we've done at the end (evaluation).

Research could be done through the analysis of primary data from original commissioned research and owned data collection tools, or from secondary data collected from third-party sources. The research methodology could be quantitative (e.g., through surveys and dashboards of digital platforms) or qualitative (through interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation). Usually, marketers deploy a mixture of methods for data collection, in order to get the most useful information for decision-making.

The ability to mine, analyse, interpret and draw actionable insights from various data sources and use them for problem-solving and planning is the hallmark of a great strategist.

The challenge in Africa however is the dearth of reliable data sources, readily available for practitioners to draw from. This is one of the reasons why the Africa PR & Communications Report (APCR) was initiated!

Femi Falodun 🇳🇮



Furthermore, in today's world, there is increased pressure and demand from brands for marketing and communications professionals to prove the worth and impact of their work on the client's business. This means consultants must now be able to account for the inputs, outputs, and outcomes of the work they do and present them in a meaningful, articulate, clear, coherent, convincing, and very honest manner.

Fortunately, for practitioners in Africa, there are useful tools such as the AMEC Framework that provide guidance on evaluating and reporting the value and impact of communications. Working knowledge and disciplined application of the framework have become a prerequisite for PR and communications practitioners.

Only

4.67%

of participants use the AMEC Framework for measurement

This work of research also includes daily tracking of media coverage, sentiments, tonality, competition activities, stakeholder feedback, market and cultural trends, as well as other performance metrics (e.g., sales, awareness, brand reputation, etc.) that are considered key results by the client.

As the industry continues to grow and becomes more influential in boardrooms across Africa, it is imperative for communications managers and consultancies to focus more on developing these six skill areas in their teams, especially for the younger talents just starting out in the industry.

Femi Falodun 🇳🇮



The bad news is that many bosses, mentors and tutors still don't properly emphasise the importance of these areas of skills, especially at the beginning of younger people's careers. I believe that all six can be truly mastered through deliberate, focused study (formal and informal), and lots of practice.

Even if a young professional fails to achieve a high level of proficiency in all of the six skill areas, a mastery of at least four will set them on a fairly certain course to an excellent career in the PR and Communications profession anywhere in Africa... and the world at large.

A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY FOR AFRICAN PR



FRANCIS INGHAM

Director General, PRCA and Chief Executive, ICCO

In a vast, varied, and transformational continental market, the opportunities for African PR practitioners are truly massive in scale, depth, and breadth, and this report conveys the exact same message.

Every part of the PR world has its unique challenges and opportunities, but there are certain common ones, too; the most obvious and positive one is growth. Year after year, our industry grows around the world. It grows in size. It grows in relevance. It grows in stature. The most obvious challenge is talent. We need help to recruit and retain.

And year after year, our industry matures. It continues on its trajectory of increasingly being the CEO's principal advisor – not just home to the band of people who write the press releases. All of this is great news for our industry.

What salient points would I identify for the African market in this post-covid era?

First, markets differ within regions just as much as they differ between continents. The PRCA operates globally, including in Africa. Therefore, as the market is markedly different in, say, New York compared with Singapore, likewise, it is different in Alegria compared with Nigeria, as well as in Kenya compared with South Africa. This means that we must tailor our approaches in terms of services offered and cultural practices conveyed and the organisation's outlook.

Secondly, African PR practitioners have the golden opportunity to avoid the mistakes of slightly older markets. If we are honest, the perennial problem of the UK and the US industries is that when they were first established, they understandably undervalued themselves. Having set an initial price point, it is difficult to shift it upwards. As global inflation bites, this will pose a problem for us all, and for this reason, I urge our African colleagues not to underestimate the value they bring and to bill accordingly.

More so, that talent is the key issue for every market worldwide. The data shows that this is especially true for the continent. Developing university PR courses that are practical rather than just theoretical is critical for the future. Delivering work-ready graduates saves organisations time and money and likely ensures that more new employees stick with their chosen careers.

There should be cumulative training for the practice of Public Relations. This training must have various levels.

Dr. Denise Diana Duncan 

Lecturer, Department of Communication and Media Studies, Central University.



Additionally, that investment in ongoing skill development and acquisition is vital. Across the world, we see management consultancies trying to move into our territory and provide the strategic advice we should be offering in their stead. This also involves moving from the 'media relations only' model that many practitioners provide to a higher level of consultancy.

And, of course, evaluation. Over the past fifteen years or so, we have seen a prolonged, sustained move from using meaningless – though easy – AVEs to something that has nuance. This is particularly pressing for the African market, where AVEs remain prevalent. In this regard, I would emphasise the value of the work of AMEC and the accessibility of the evaluation tools it provides for free.

Africa has the potential to be the world's most dynamic PR market.

Francis Ingham 



Those are my five practical operations. But allow me to end on a final note. Africa has the potential to be the world's most dynamic PR market. A young population keen to embrace new technologies, attitudes, and working methods. A growing middle class, equipped with the opportunity to learn from the mistakes of others and not to make them. Indeed, it is a golden age to work in PR on this fabulous continent.

We extend our condolences to the family and friends of Francis Ingham whose sad death was announced on Thursday, March 16, 2023.

We join the Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA), International Communications Consultancy Organisation (ICCO) and the global PR community in mourning an industry leader.

May his soul rest in peace.

NIGERIA'S BRAIN DRAIN: HOW CAN THE MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSION THRIVE?



FUNMILAYO FALOLA

Head of Global Communications, **ENGIE Energy Access (Africa)**

There is this maxim - you need to join in fighting the fire at your neighbour's burning house lest your house also gets consumed in it. When the very first wave of medical teachers started moving to the West and the Middle East in the mid-80s, many did not think that was the start of an alarming brain drain in Nigeria. If we give any thought to it, it seemed like a plague that struck the medical field only. Why? Soon, young doctors and nurses joined their teachers abroad for postgraduate studies, and not all of them made the return journey home.

Unfortunately, while several waves followed that of the 80s, we failed to realise that Nigeria's brain drain was not exclusive to one industry but about skilled professionals leaving. While the medical field still has the biggest gap created by migrating professionals, the recent wave has seen the brain drain bug cold-kiss the communications profession.

A random scan of marketing departments and communication agencies within the country will show a barrage of resignations from people moving abroad. One funny incident is a staff member who did not show up at work after closing out a

campaign on Friday. When his colleagues finally reached him over WhatsApp, "I had to leave the country in a hurry", was his reply as if he was not planning to relocate over several months. Funny story, but it is a testament to the fact that people in communications have joined the brain drain, and some are doing so with no caution.

A crippling economy, frail infrastructure, spongy security, human rights breaches, poor remuneration, and an unstable educational system are some reasons people leave. Empirical evidence shows that the trend is not ending soon. Many will be comfortable questioning the country's leadership as the root cause of the migration epidemic, and rightly so.

But as marketing communications professionals, we must also narrow our questions down to our leaders or regulatory bodies. If communications professionals are leaving, are ARCON, MIPAN, NIMN, EXMAN, et al. aware?

Funmilayo Falola 



If they are, what actions have they taken to salvage this and lessen its impact on the sector? How are they taking care of those who are not migrating? What are the policies in place to take care of new entrants into the industry?

Answering these questions throws up a ripple of sphinxes. The marketing communications industry depends on the knowledge, ideas, and expertise of professionals for solutions, and experiencing a massive brain drain is akin to an accident patient losing blood - chances of survival increasingly grow slim. The more we lose the best brains and hands, the greater the vacuum of professionalism in the industry.

Incidentally, as professionals leave, the growth of the industry may be stunted, an experience gap appears and thriving becomes more difficult. Within the office, marketing campaigns become truncated especially in cases where someone did not hand over properly because they had to 'leave in a hurry'. Realistically, it takes some companies a while to recruit new talent, so the burden to steady the ship falls on the colleague who stays put (or is probably awaiting VISA approval).

Thus, if you are asking how the marketing comms industry is affected by Nigeria's brain drain, permit me to pose a new question - How will the marketing comms industry thrive amidst another wave of brain drain?

Funmilayo Falola 🇳🇮



Conventional wisdom dictates that to keep professionals, make them happy. So, while we wait for the government to do its best in fixing education and enacting economic

policies that will stem inflation, we have our job cut out for us. Regulatory bodies within the sector must better the working conditions of marketing professionals, making the practice more flexible. Remember, some companies have had to accept remote working as a condition to keep some of these professionals working from their 'newfound lands'.

Beyond the work environment and structure, salaries are a big deal. Yes, our work is largely passion driven because of the connectivity between people and brands, but going home with a sumptuous credit alert can play a part in reducing the temptation to migrate. Agencies and marketing communications departments may have to review salary budgets, and yes, the regulatory bodies can play a role in standardising pay packages. The debate here might be that all companies cannot pay the same, but providing a range could give more assurance.

It is also pertinent to improve the work tools. The more seamless or automated it is to monitor campaigns, analyse market data, and review PR sentiments among other tasks, the less the desire to japa. Invariably, this will lead to more productive work and ultimately contribute to the growth of the industry.

In the interest of long-lasting change, we hope that, as we do our bit within the sector, constituted leadership will get better and Nigeria's economy will experience a boom again. This is the ultimate certainty for professionals to stay put and contribute to nation-building.

Funmilayo Falola 🇳🇮



DATA VISUALISATION AND STORYTELLING: SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR EVERY PR PRACTITIONER



IRETOMIWA AKINTUNDE-JOHNSON

Lead PR & Communications Adviser, **ID Africa**

The world is driven by information. It's that simple. However, due to the over-saturation and increase in misinformation, the value of the right piece of information continues to increase.

As communicators and PR practitioners, we understand this and have used our written and verbal communication skills to pass the right (or, sadly, sometimes wrong) messaging and steer perception in favour of our clients for decades. It's one of the biggest pillars of Public Relations and communications.


Why is Data Important?


In 2023, when the world is leaning more toward visuals because of the demands and algorithms of social media, 'boring old text' just does not do it anymore. While great storytelling in whatever format will always be king, the average person in

Nairobi, Lagos, or Cairo wants to understand the 'why' and 'how'.

Thankfully, data, that is facts and statistics, can help solve some of these problems. The seeming battle is that many communications professionals were not initially trained with data. In fact, anything that seemed 'maths-like' in school tended to make us turn the other way. We can write a thought-provoking ten-page essay or 20-page pitch deck without batting an eyelid but throw in numbers and some of us begin to twitch. This is understandable but is no longer acceptable, unfortunately. Data is now king, and we need to adapt.

For instance, both these stories and headlines referencing one of Africa's top ICT firms are telling the same narrative. But at a first glance, the first story provides more context and gives the reader the right data to fuel their interest.

 **MTN Nigeria adds 1.7m subscribers in three months**
MTN Nigeria Communications Plc says it added 1.7 million subscribers to its network in the first quarter of 2022. MTN said this on Friday in...
30 Apr 2022



MTN Nigeria's Subscribers Increase In Q1 2022
MTN Nigeria Communications Plc, says it added over 1 million subscribers in the first quarter of 2022, MTN said this on Friday.

Data exists all around us, whether from desk research or for our clients and the work they do, and we need to know how to take that 'lifeless data' and breathe life into it by using it to weave the desired narrative - data storytelling.

Getting the Right Data

Most times, there is access to widespread data that can help practitioners weave the narrative, whether from old or new research. So, on the surface, there may be a mumbo jumbo of data saying a million things and at this point, it is important to mine for the right information.

- What is the objective of the data? What are you seeking to achieve?
- What's the action the reader is to take?
- Who is the target audience and what piques their interest?



Every year, the average attention span will decrease by

88% ↓

Data visualisation is the practice of translating or presenting information in a visual format such as charts, graphs, plots, infographics, animations, etc. These formats enable simplification and easy comprehension of complex data. And thankfully, it is not the reserve of data analysts. Every PR professional needs to have a good grasp of visualising data correctly.

Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic, author and CEO of Storytelling with Data, stresses that one of the key responsibilities of a data communicator is to reduce the "cognitive

load" on the recipient. "Every single element you add to that page or screen takes up cognitive load on the part of your audience, in other words, it takes their brain power to process. We should take a discerning look at the visual elements that we allow into our communications. In general, identify anything that isn't adding informative value, or isn't adding enough informative value to make up for its presence and remove those things."

Data Visualisation is What You Need Now

When all is said and done, another vital aspect of data storytelling is visualisation. A PR consultant can have all the right information and still turn off the target audience, or lose them completely. Some say the average human has an eight-second attention span, and there are indications that this span will reduce by 88% per year. We read through that line and saw the figures in bold text, yet there is a higher tendency that most will notice and grasp faster and better the same data presented below. Because it cuts away from all the text and is more aesthetically appealing,

load" on the recipient. "Every single element you add to that page or screen takes up cognitive load on the part of your audience, in other words, it takes their brain power to process. We should take a discerning look at the visual elements that we allow into our communications. In general, identify anything that isn't adding informative value, or isn't adding enough informative value to make up for its presence and remove those things."

With the attention span continuously plummeting, most people do not have as

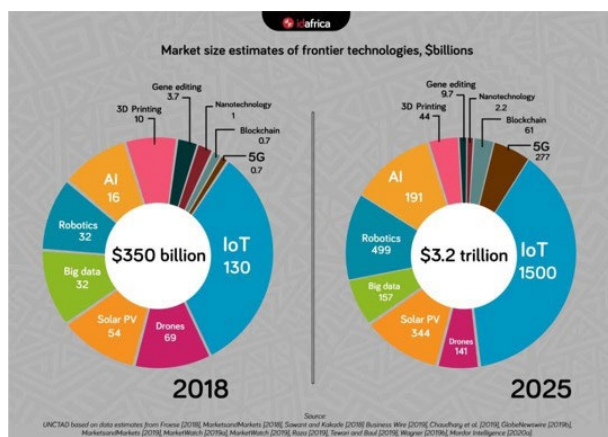
much time or patience to consume the content that practitioners have spent so long fine-tuning. And there is a high volume of facts and numbers, it can be all so confusing that they won't bother to go ahead with the seemingly cumbersome act of reading.

So, what tools are there? These are the most common:

Tables: These are rows and columns that can help with the comparison of variables. Beyond just storing information on Excel sheets, they can also be a great tool to show differences in simple data sets. One can easily tell that Team B is a better performer than A in every aspect.

	A	B	C
1		Team A	Team B
2	Mathematics	30%	70%
3	English	57%	83%
4	History	34%	75%
5	Biology	7%	69%

Pie Charts and Stacked Bars: They are sections that depict contributions to the whole, and are good for comparing sizes and showing the share of voice or market. But these will also be completely useless in showing patterns, trends, or any other details.



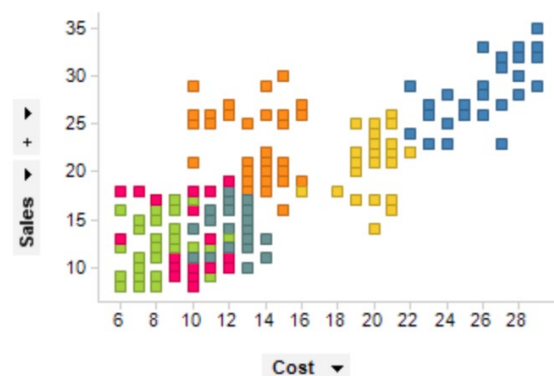
Sample pie chart | ID Africa

Line and Area Charts: These are perfect for reflecting changes and trends over a period of time, and if used well can also be good for predictive analysis. Line graphs, like the word denotes, use lines to demonstrate changes, while area charts show graphically quantitative data.



Sample line and area chart: |Beautiful.ai

Scatter Plots: These are graphs that show the relationship between two variables in a data set. It represents data points on a two-dimensional plane or on a Cartesian system. The independent variable or attribute is plotted on the X-axis, while the dependent variable is plotted on the Y-axis.



Sample scatter plot | Tibco

There are many more such as population pyramids, tree maps, etc. After selecting the best tool to express the data, consider the following:

1. Context: Data does not exist in limbo. And this is when the mastery of storytelling comes in handy. Why is this piece of information important to the reader? Why

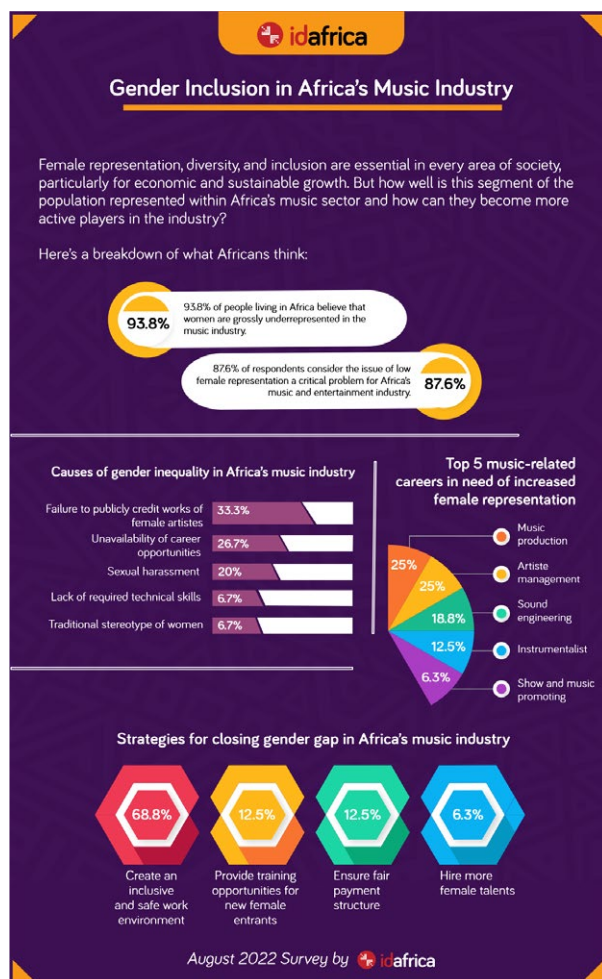
should they invest the next two minutes on your work, report or document instead of another? One needs to provide general background knowledge that situates the data within the mind of the reader.

For instance, at ID Africa, fortnightly we delve into an issue that affects Africa's young population for our 'Africa Facts' newsletter. In August we focused on gender inclusion in the continent's multibillion-dollar music industry.

As it turns out, streaming music in Africa alone is set to generate close to \$500M by 2025, yet women are not as represented as they should be. See how we were able to give that context at a glance in the infographic below.

2. Understanding Your Audience: While an understanding of the reader is intrinsic in data mining, it's an even more important aspect of visualisation. Why? Of course, they are the end-users, and you want them to take action! What are their needs with respect to the content being created? What questions do they care about answering? How is that piece of data going to help with that? These factors will help select the details to be called out.

3. Choose the Right Visuals: Don't use a pie chart to attempt to show trends or relationships between three products. Make sure that the visual is finalised, actually tells the agreed story, and that the reader can take away the intended action or message.



BEYOND AFROBEATS: SHAPING THE AFRICAN NARRATIVE IS NOT A ONE-SECTOR AFFAIR



ISIME ESENE

Quality Control Lead, RED

The African continent has achieved a global outlook on many frontiers, scaling various industries into powerhouses that continue to impact the world.

Isime Esene 



The African continent has achieved a global outlook on many frontiers, scaling various industries into powerhouses that continue to impact the world. Afrobeats, for instance, has captivated the hearts of many with its mesmerising hooks and melodious rhythms that have proven to retain enormous replay value over the years. We have witnessed various African artists take over the global stage, drop "song-of-the-year" hits and bring international acts into an appreciation of our race through noteworthy collaborations and nominations.

Nonetheless, international collaborations are the least of the many successes achieved by Africans in recent years. Major international record labels have successfully infiltrated this area of the continent's entertainment industry, snapping up the best talents that Africa has got to offer. Universal Music Group, Sony Music Entertainment and Warner Music Group have their eyes fixed on the number of growing music talents in the country. Artistes such as Wizkid, Davido, Burna Boy, Tiwa Savage, Sauti Sol, Diamond Platnumz and a host of other prominent entertainers have all been included on the rosters of these — and many more — record labels.

Additionally, the success of Afrobeats has seen artists like Wizkid take over the US Billboard Hot 100 with hits such as 'Essence,' becoming the song of last year's summer, while Burna Boy's 'Last Last' claimed the second spot on the US Afrobeats Songs Chart, quickly becoming a favourite across the world.

But Africa's unique sounds are not the only treasures it holds on the continent.

Other socio-economic sectors of the continent have also experienced exponential growth, rapidly growing at an almost parallel speed to the music industry. The movie industry has grown beyond the borders of the continent and has been able to stake its claim on the international scene. Particularly, the Nigerian movie industry or Nollywood as it is fondly called has transformed so radically that it has become commonplace to break box office records across digital streaming platforms, and even bag international nominations. Genevieve Nnaji's 'LionHeart' for instance, became the first Nigerian movie to be nominated for an Oscar award. This piece broke seemingly unreachable heights with this nomination, spurring a flurry of talents in shaping the narratives about African stories. EbonyLife Studios, owned by media entrepreneur and Forbes' 'Africa's Most Successful Woman' — Mosunmola 'Mo' Abudu produced international box-office hits such as 'The Wedding Party,' 'Blood Sisters,' 'Chief Daddy,' and more.

Beyond film, Africa's intellectual and human resources are tremendous. Both at home and abroad, Africans have shown exemplary professional competence, contributing to the socioeconomic growth of their host countries and increasing their GDP. The abundance of talent explains why international companies prefer to recruit remote workers from Africa and various educational institutions continue to make their presence known within the continent, offering these talents the opportunity to upskill and increase their capacity.

While Africa has a myriad of resources and expressions, many of its giant strides would have gone unnoticed and constrained solely to Africa without the efficiency of media marketing agencies telling the African story how it should be told: a narrative showcasing stories of talent, discipline, resilience, and impact made by Africans locally and in the diaspora.

Isime Esene 🇳🇮



Without storytellers, important narratives are buried in piles of historical debris. Thankfully, there are more and more of these agencies committed to showcasing African talent and exporting African content from across various sectors.

Within the Education sector, boutique PR & Marketing agencies such as Vive Africa are leveraging their wealth of experience and networks in Africa's frontier markets to bridge the gap between foreign academic partners/institutions and African students through effective communication and storytelling, providing academic and career opportunities for African students and professionals. Many other agencies such as these are putting in the work and making a difference in telling the true, authentic stories of the everyday African.

Indeed, Afrobeats is arguably the continent's biggest export, but it is not a standalone feature that encompasses the essence of the continent. As Africans, music is a huge part of our culture and national export, and while that is extremely commendable, we excel in other diverse sectors which have the potential to further correct the "single stories/narratives" about Africa across the globe and elevate the continent's status on the global scene.

“IMPACT WITH PURPOSE” TO DRIVE BRAND REPUTATION OF THE FUTURE



MARY GEARING

Deputy Managing Director, **Magna Carta Reputation Management Consultants**

The unprecedented and unexpected events of COVID-19 shocked the world and accelerated organisational change. The pandemic brought about some disruptive changes to PR and reputation management, providing an exciting opportunity for brands and practitioners.

It highlighted the urgent need for brands to rebalance and realign business priorities to drive brand loyalty and build sustainable reputations into the future. As a result, the financial performance of an organisation, alongside the leadership and vision, is no longer the leading indicator of a solid and credible reputation.

Brands have started to realise that profit goes hand-in-hand with an emotional connection. There is a re-prioritised need to achieve a higher purpose, beyond just excellent service delivery, quality products and innovative solutions.

While COVID-19 may have accelerated the need for organisations to move from being transactionally focused to more

purpose-led aspirations, it was not the only factor driving this trend.

Across markets, news headlines are dominated by economic, societal, and governmental (ESG) issues, from energy and water shortages to floods, war, health, gender-based violence and unemployment crises. As these issues continue to rise, the pressure on brands to not only engage on these topics but, more importantly, act on them increases year-on-year.

As such, leading brands have started to place “impact with purpose” at the centre of their reputation management strategies as leadership on ESG issues, market value and brand sentiment become more closely interlinked.

This is seeing many C-Suite executives pushing for reputation management with the purpose to become a core part of every organisation’s marketing and branding strategy and marketers believing that building trust will be the primary focus of future campaigns.

Although organisations have woken up to their responsibility to use their brands for good, central to the point of purpose is the role that creative, communication, and reputation management agencies can play. With the pressure mounting for agencies to do the same, brands are looking to the industry to apply creative thinking and energy beyond marketing challenges to business challenges ensuring that cultural tensions, inequality, climate change and much more are addressed.

But if agencies are going to play a bigger part, we need to recognise that creativity is just part of the solution.

Mary Gearing 🇿🇦



Research from McKinsey Global Institute highlights that the industry has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to boldly embrace what they have termed “the growth triple play” which considers creativity, analytics and purpose. All three elements are crucial and must work together to create positive change and future business growth.

With the trend of purpose-driven work growing over time, reputation management and PR become even more important in developing meaningful creative solutions with true impact.

Mary Gearing 🇿🇦



What would traditionally sit with the strategy and creative teams to ideate and develop (with PR supporting only at the

implementation stage) now forms one corner of a triangular brand-building approach. This approach relies on PR positioning that puts purpose within a greater narrative and harnesses the power of influencer engagement to endorse that position.

When this integration truly works together in harmony, magic brand moments happen to build reputations with purpose. However, if each part is done in isolation, no matter how strong the insights identified by the strategy or the importance of the societal issues being tackled, the opportunity to create purpose-first strategies with reputational benefits for brands will be lost due to the lack of integration.

In other words, if the creative discipline does not consider what would be newsworthy to a journalist by tapping into the institutional knowledge of PR and media relations specialists, then you only have a great idea that lives in an above-the-line or paid-for space. Similarly, if PR does not work with the creative to ideate and think beyond the news value of the idea, then the work will continue to sit in the traditional space of media releases and advertorials. And lastly, if the social media element doesn't complete the triangle, the opportunity to create an influential and talkability moment will be lost to the world of boosted and promoted content.

By working together and leaning on the expertise of each discipline, the focus of any future-fit strategy can shift from the channel to deliver the message to the influence-potential of the creative. Ideas can also move from the point of creative stunts and “cool-talkability” to experiences and impactful action.

The impactful actions or solutions give brands the credibility and permission to play in the purpose-first space and truly

own the societal leadership voice. Just identifying an injustice or shining a spotlight on it is not enough. To have true changing power and reputational benefits, a brand's role needs to focus on creating real solutions to real problems across the continent.

In today's continuous engagement world, brands (alongside their agencies) must tread carefully when addressing ESG issues at the risk of reputational topics such as greenwashing. It becomes even more challenging for brands to claw back credibility when caught.

Giving reputation management a seat at the table and key consideration in any

purpose-driven strategy will safeguard any brand and ensure that the purpose is not manufactured or hijacking a topic for awareness but because it is relevant.

With the industry on the brink of a new chapter, we can no longer win at the expense of others. If we don't review, tweak or reinvent the way we work and the solutions we put forward, we (and the brands we love to work on) will be skipped, scrolled, left behind or cancelled.

More than ever, purpose-led brands are required, and with this, PR and reputation management have the incredible opportunity of contributing real purpose to organisational fitness.



Photo Source: Redefine Properties' launch of Handpicked City Farms in South Africa, 2022 | Magna Carta Reputation Management Consultants

THE SECRET OF SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION



MOLIEHI MOLEKOA

Managing Director, Magna Carta Reputation Management Consultants

“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” — Maya Angelou

In practice, conventional strategic communication focuses on communicating the best message, through the right channels, to deliver specific goals. The only shortcoming in that approach is that it overlooks the fact that effective communication involves mutual or reciprocal action.

Communicating without demonstrating value for the audience is like an advertisement asking people to buy a product or service without conveying the benefit in it for them. Unless people can determine what’s in it for them, they’d be hard-pressed to follow through.

Communicating with purpose, while showcasing the value to achieve a goal is the secret of successful strategic communication.

Effective communication helps you evoke specific responses in your target audience. In those responses, it helps you get what you want out of the situation by allowing your target audience to benefit mutually from the deal.

This is true not just for effective communication within and between

businesses, but also for governments and nation-states, and even human relationships.

Communicating with purpose, while showcasing value in order to achieve a goal can be easily accomplished by following a four-step process: set a goal, know your audience, communicate the benefit, and communicate the call to action.

Set a Goal: For a business, this could be a collaboration with another business; for a government, this could be managing a national crisis; for a person, this could be a relationship goal.

Know Your Audience: What kind of collaboration may they be interested in? What does a population need in a time of national crisis? What may a specific person be looking for in a relationship?

Communicate the Benefit: Help your target audience understand what they get out of a partnership or collaboration. Demonstrate how the partnership will benefit both parties.

Specify the Call to Action: Use the benefit that both parties share to communicate a call to action.

By following this process, one can effectively overcome reluctance to follow through when two parties are

communicating through challenges.

Business A might be interested in landing a partnership with Business B. To do that, Business A will first set the goal, which is to secure the partnership. It will then try to understand the kind of partnership Business B may be interested in.

In the third step, Business A will help Business B understand how they benefit from such a partnership. Finally, Business A will use the common benefit for both parties to propose a call to action; in this case, signing the partnership.

Strategic communication isn't any different when practised by governments or nation-states. Let's take for example how countries leveraged strategic communication during the COVID-19 pandemic to disseminate critical information in a timely manner with the end goal of managing the pandemic effectively. Some countries met with early success in drastically reducing their infection rate, while others experienced persistent, overwhelming outbreaks. While there are several variables at play, the difference can be partly attributed to how communities have received, interpreted, and acted on information provided by government agencies, in addition to the speed and scope of government intervention.

According to the Rapid Evidence Brief (February 2022) issued by the Ministry of Health in Kenya, there are disparities among African countries on vaccines received and vaccines administered.

The publication attributed the disparities to the different public health communication strategies adopted by these countries. It found that health promotion activities and/or incentives and endorsements were key determinants that helped achieve a broader uptake of the

vaccine by effectively demonstrating its value to potential recipients of the vaccine, i.e., the target audience.

Similarly, a study cited in the World Medical & Health Policy journal evaluated the South African and Namibian governments' use of digital media during the pandemic. It highlighted the shortcomings of both governments for "simply transmitting information" without adequate engagement.

In doing so, both governments failed to achieve the intended purpose of their digital media messaging campaigns by failing to effectively demonstrate how vaccination was mutually beneficial for all parties.

While these are real-world examples, they should be applied within the unique context of your situation and to the strategies you're pursuing. Hopefully, this quick reference helps you develop effective communication strategies and tactics that will ultimately improve your business results.

Strategic communication requires you to see communication as a mutual exchange rather than a one-way street to generate interest and excitement.

Moliehi Molekoa 

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Communication is essential to any kind of relationship, whether business or personal. When done right, strategic communication can be a game changer for any individual or organisation. It is key to growing as a company and getting what you want while ensuring that your target audience benefits from engaging with you.

THE DANGER OF THE SINGLE STORY: COMMUNICATION AND REPUTATIONAL CRISIS IN AFRICA



NKECHI ALI-BALOGUN, FNIPR

Principal Consultant/CEO, **NECCI Ltd**

“Africa should be one of the world’s superpowers, yet, due to many challenges that plague the continent, it is one of the poorest continents and is often regarded as a dark one. The continent’s narrative is that of war, poverty, terror, corruption and disease, and regardless of its standards regarding education and achievements, it is looked down upon and ridiculed everywhere.”

Nkechi Ali-Balogun, FNIPR 



Africa is a bright continent with adequate human capital, geographical landscape and mineral resources that make the continent a good and fertile ground for any economy to thrive.

Some argue that Africa is a victim of the “single story” syndrome, which has contributed to the negative perception and unending reputational crisis that deepens

daily, with grave consequences. The crisis will continue to worsen. Unfortunately, Africa is quickly becoming synonymous with that single story.

As regards the danger this single story poses, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie once said that she believes the continent’s power can only be exposed in stories depending on “how they are told, who tells them, when they’re told, how many stories are told...”

There is no gainsaying that we have to tell our own stories, but the stories have to be based on some empirical realities. For instance, is Africa indeed a victim of the single story? Like the proverbial saying, are Africa and Africans the architects of their fortune or misfortune? Whichever way you look at it, you must agree with me that the case of stereotypes can be difficult to overcome, even for victims.

In the recently concluded 22nd edition of the NECCI Public Relations Roundtable in Lagos, the keynote speaker Mrs Dere Awosika, Chairman of Access Bank,

posited that Africans must rise to the occasion and disown every stereotyping messaging from the West and, instead, begin to create messages of prosperity, invention and development for the continent.

In her words, **“There are a lot of positive developments in Africa. We must not allow other continents to take ownership of our story. Africa is a continent of prosperity, invention, innovation and development. Therefore, allowing others to paint us as a continent of hunger, disease, and corruption, and referring to us as a developing continent must not be allowed to fester.”**

Africa has lived under the burden of political, economic and social conspiracies by world powers to the extent that Africans no longer believe in themselves and seek validation from a people who ordinarily should be looking towards them for survival. Afro-pessimism has eaten into the fabric of our existence as a people and a continent.

Nkechi Ali-Balogun, FNIPR ■■



Dr David Mrisho of the University of Tanzania, also speaking at the 22nd edition of the NECCI Public Relations Roundtable, posits that “consciously, the west chose to perceive Africans to backwardness, barbarism, and incapacity to develop until they came in contact with supposedly superior races that brought them development and civilisation.” According to him, this resulted in stereotypes, linking Africa to certain characters or behaviours like backwardness, barbarism, inability to develop, poverty, wars and conflicts, hunger and lack of history.

The question now is, did the West really bring civilisation to Africa? History records that Africa had a very successful structure for governance and a way of life before the advent of the white man’s brand of civilisation. In fact, we must insist that Western civilisation and culture have negatively and precariously contaminated the traditional values of Africa. Dare Arowolo (Lecturer, Dept. of Political Science & Public Administration, Adekunle Ajasin University, Nigeria) contends that Africa had established – well before the advent of colonialism – a pattern of home-grown political systems, governance processes and generally acceptable institutional rule-making arrangements, such that there was progression in the pace of civilisation of Africa and self-styled tempo of technological development. Arowolo further submitted that the dynamism and significance of Africa on the global continuum tend to support the argument that Africa would have evolved and sustained a level of development and civilisation without retrogressive contact with imperial forces.

Sadly, several decades of independence have not helped erase negative images of Africa. The reason can be attributed to the economic and political malaise afflicting Africa since the late 1970s. This has worsened matters to the extent that it has revived the old colonial perceptions that regarded Africans as incapable of independently developing themselves. This notion is supported by the very deceptive ways the west came to our land to steal our resources with the pretext of bringing their so-called civilisation and their Greek gifts along with them. The story of John Williamson, who started Mwadui Diamond Mining in Shinyanga, Tanzania, about 70 years ago, is a typical example. Does it not sound ridiculous when it is recorded in history that Mungo Park and his cousins came to Africa to discover rivers that existed before the advent of the white man in Africa and have been serving the indigenous communities for years?

The Narrative Must Change

Dr David Mrisho believes that as long as Africa continues to behave as it currently does, negative perceptions will persist in the minds of many people in the West. And as long as negative perceptions persist, Africa's quest for rebranding and locally driven, inclusive and sustainable development cannot be achieved.

We believe that the time has come to do something drastic to debunk these long-held “Afro-pessimistic” notions of Africa as a backward continent plagued by conflict and poverty. The time has also come for us to be truthful to ourselves by identifying the reasons for such pessimistic notions, to rewrite our stories. It is time for us to intentionally create new stories from our numerous successes to help redefine the ‘Dark Continent’ narrative. Again, Dere Awosika charges Africans to rise to the occasion and disown every stereotyping messaging from the West and now begin to create messages of prosperity, invention and development for the continent. According to her, **“There are a lot of positive developments in Africa. We must not allow other continents to take ownership of our story.”**

Collectively, through various forms of communication, we can find a more structured and definitive way to tell our stories. This could herald the emergence of a movement for change, as well as a new narrative to overcome the negative voices that have overshadowed Africa for decades.

We believe that Africa, as the next global frontier, needs to tell her stories and tell them well. We need to champion this new drive to reshape our continent and change that single story of Africa and Nigeria, in particular, as “a place of catastrophe” and a shit-hole.

Nkechi Ali-Balogun, FNIPR ■■



As experts in communication and messaging, we must begin to create and generate positive messaging that truly reflects who we are as a people because the continent is blessed and endowed with some of the best natural resources you can find anywhere in the world. We are ambassadors of our culture. The ecosystem of Africa is created for a purpose.”

The time has come for Africans to stop dwelling on our past mistakes and forge ahead to regain our space in the comity of nations, reclaim our reputation and integrity as a continent, assert our cultural supremacy, and our status as the founders of the so-called western civilisation. Barbarism, as we know it, didn't start in Africa, yet, Africa is the “dark continent.” How ironic! It is time to retell the story of Africa, and that time is now.

THE GROWING CAMEROONIAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH IN THE PR INDUSTRY



SANTHER MBACHAM

Founder & Managing Director, Image Nation

“The media is the most powerful entity on earth. It has the power to make the innocent look guilty and the guilty look innocent, and that is power because it controls the minds of the masses.” – Malcolm X.

‘Africa in miniature’, as Cameroon is called, is home to over 27 million people, is one of the greatest football nations on the continent, home to 250+ tribes speaking almost as many languages, boasts some of the world’s best gastronomy, home to a large variety of flora and fauna, many of which can be found in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, harbours the second wettest places in the world, Debundscha, and is the homeland to some of the world’s most brilliant scientists.

More than ever, these messages have been made available and spread worldwide with the help of the fourth estate, the media. Listing these things is exciting. However, the question of whether we have leveraged these facts and narratives for

our economic and social prosperity is a loud one.

The nature of the media landscape can determine how we consume or receive our news and entertainment. Going by this, we can’t help but smile at Cameroon’s media landscape evolution, from the talking drums to the town hall village meetings to print, TV, Radio, and now, digital media.

Public Relations has been a misunderstood one, and through the years, it has been a challenge to get business owners and individuals in Cameroon to understand its importance and the key role it plays in the success of their brands.

Santher Mbacham 



Public Relations is a “strategic communication tool used to build mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their public,” as defined by the Public Relations Society of America. In other words, it is a strategic communication tool to build credibility, gain and enhance visibility, show authority, and protect a brand’s image and reputation.

This field has been a misunderstood one, and through the years, it has been a challenge to get business owners and individuals in Cameroon to understand its importance and the key role it plays in the success of their brands. The media landscape, evolving with the advent of technology and digital media, is beginning to create those opportunities for this strategic communication tool to be best understood and maximised to its full potential in the Cameroon business ecosystem.

The media landscape’s growth has mostly been in favour of the PR industry in Cameroon.

With 9.15 million internet users and 4.30 million social media users in Cameroon (as of January 2021), digital media has been of utmost importance to advertisers, with almost every company – big or small – making it a part of their market spend. What does this do for the PR industry, then?

Leaders who are accessible have a key role in building knowledge, career advancement, and positively influencing their network on diverse, relevant topics.

Santher Mbacham 



Accurate Data and Insights

The advent of digital media has given PR professionals the tools to accurately measure their campaigns, as opposed to the huge difficulty in tracking data in traditional media. For example, private newspapers have never operated on a subscription model, and the data that could have been gathered from that alone is lost to both these media houses and advertisers alike. Hence, the accuracy and the quality of the data and insights derived from digital media can help in knowing exactly how, where, why and what you need to strategically communicate to gain a return on objectives.

Value for Money can be Shown

With the aid of this data, PR professionals can now show value for money spent on different campaigns.

Larger and Diverse Audience Reach

Because social media is a global village, PR professionals leverage this to tell stories that can cut across borders and are not merely exclusive to the Cameroon public.

Media Accountability

PR professionals use this medium to correct information – put out by news outlets – that can damage a nation’s branding. This is key to owning and telling stories that positively impact our nation's branding.

Improvement in the Quality of Content

According to statista.com, we have up to 5 billion internet users in the world. Hence, whatever is put there, especially for companies, has to be of a global standard. This has helped to improve the quality of content produced, which adversely has a positive impact on our nation's branding.

Feedback, Conversations in Real Time and Active Contribution

Digital media have provided active contributors, contributing directly to the discussion as opposed to passive contributors, and no sure way of including audience voices in real time for traditional media. This helps to course-correct in real-time, which is key to the campaign's success.

Access to Thought Leaders

The presence of thought leaders on social media and the access it brings cannot be overstated. Leaders who are accessible have a key role in building knowledge, career advancement, and positively influencing their network on diverse, relevant topics. This is how thought leaders create value for themselves and attract the right businesses.

Multimedia Content

The most exciting thing about the growing media landscape – digital media – is that content isn't restricted to one format. You can consume the same information in different formats; this helps to maintain and keep the attention of diverse audiences.

Rise and Growth of Influencer Marketing and Talent

The majority of brands in Cameroon seldom carry out campaigns without involving influencers. These influencers have diverse audiences and different styles of influence, and brands leverage their passion points to achieve their marketing communications objectives.

Rise of PR Agencies

Brands have realised the importance of creating value for customer loyalty, having a great image and reputation, to attracting international investment, and having longevity in the market, all of which significantly reduce market spend. Who better to do this for them than PR agencies? Because of this, there has been a significant rise in PR in Cameroon in the past three years.

The list of the PR opportunities that come with the growing media landscape is inexhaustive. But then again, it is of utmost importance that for this to continue growing and permanently seal its place, there needs to be available and accurate data for traditional media, as is the case with digital media.

HOW YOUNG PEOPLE IN AFRICA CAN BECOME INFLUENTIAL THROUGH STORYTELLING



SEYNABOU DIA SALL

CEO, Global Mind Consulting

With 70% of Sub-Saharan Africans aged under 30, Africa has the youngest population. Therefore, the continent's various development opportunities lie in its youth and potential, making it clear for our governments and private sector what, where, and at whom to direct initiatives, investments and long-term efforts.

70% of Sub-Saharan Africans are under 30 years old.

Source: United Nations

Global Mind Consulting was founded ten years ago because the world's perception of Africa did not reflect the abundance of creativity, innovation and resilience throughout the continent. In general, the international media and public sphere tended to only depict Africa through famine, disease and coup, ignoring the economic, social and cultural transformation led by a new and inspiring generation.

As PR experts, our mission is to help in decision-making and organisational behaviour by proactively communicating with various stakeholder groups. By understanding the environment in which organisations evolve, we help implement strategic communication plans that are understandable to all internal and external targets. But more than that, we are convinced that PR and communications

must act as a spotlight on African youth and help us identify and promote a generation that constantly contributes to changing the African narrative. In other words: allow young African people to act as the influential generation they already are by giving them the proper tools and platforms.

Before being of cultural or political relevance, Africa has always represented an economic interest. To fully benefit from it, Africa must assess, construct and drive win-win partnerships with international organisations and institutions. In the best interests of its inhabitants, territories and economies, these partnerships must be developed with Africa's young people at the forefront.

Now the question is: what role for PR and communications in 2022 and the next 10 to 15 years?

Inspire: PR and communications have true inspirational power. By identifying key players and creating platforms and moments for them to share their stories and experience with a large audience, PR helps younger generations learn about and identify themselves with African role models. For a young African girl to see a Senegalese or Kenyan scientific woman awarded an international prize in the media, it brings the possibility for her to become one herself a little bit closer: "If she did, why not me?". The same applies to

youth around the continent, seeing more and more young people involved in projects they often initiated themselves, acting as true entrepreneurs.

Raise Awareness: PR and communications are also one of the most strategic tools to raise awareness and inform on key issues such as education, employment, and health, depending on the environment the organisation evolves in. By naming the challenges we face and explaining to what extent a public or private organisation meets them via the implementation of a sectorial study or a digital awareness campaign, for instance, PR helps nourish a conscious and aware new generation able to make informed decisions.

Equip: PR and communications are an evolving sector, evolving in an evolving world. That's a lot of evolutions to consider and anticipate while implementing PR campaigns and communications strategies, especially towards youth. More and more young people make their voices heard through social media campaigns and hashtags, viral videos, petitions and advocacy. They are not impressed nor scared to call out political and public leaders and make them face their responsibilities. Our role as PR experts is to create and give this generation the tools and platforms they will need to tell their stories and be heard.

Promote: This is when storytelling comes into action. Storytelling, is telling the story of a generation that is committed and determined to bring some change to their community, country, and continent. To change a narrative they don't believe in and which does not reflect their reality. PR experts are responsible for promoting this young African expertise and its talents by highlighting our AfroChampions and showcasing to the world what is truly happening on the continent.

Invest: At the end of the day, this new generation needs African governments and organisations to believe in them and invest in their potential. And you may have noticed they are not waiting for anything or anyone to take action. As part of Public Relations, lobbying and advocacy campaigns must contribute to addressing a strong message to political and public leaders, as well as increasing the resonance and impact of our youth's actions.

Youths must make them [African governments] understand the necessity to invest in our future and, therefore, in the generation that will build and support it.

Seynabou Dia Sall 🇳🇪



Behind the idea of storytelling lies the broader notion of our shared narrative and how young people from all over Africa can be involved in shaping it.

PR and communications experts must prepare young people today for them to be able to act tomorrow. They need to master the 'codes' and know how to demonstrate their ambition, their actions and impact in the most relevant and efficient way, to be able to act as genuine change-makers in every strategic sector of our continent.

African youth have this invaluable capacity to embody every change and transformation happening worldwide while remaining true to our fundamental values, cultures and traditions, making them the best ambassadors Africa could ask for. As PR and communications experts, we have here the opportunity to participate in building the foundations of a proud and independent African continent, open to the world and betting on its youth. Let's change the narrative together.

PUBLIC RELATIONS IS REALISING ITS MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY IN AFRICA



STEPHEN **WADDINGTON**

Managing Partner, **Wadds Inc.**; Committee Adviser, **APCR**

Public relations has a huge opportunity to help organisations create economical and societal value, and realise its potential as a management discipline.

Public relations practised in a professional domain is poised to realise its potential to help organisations manage complexity related to economic, societal, and international challenges.

The contemporary challenges facing national and international organisations in Africa demands the expertise of public relations. Organisational purpose and issues related to the environment, society, and governance (ESG) have risen-up the corporate agenda since the COVID-19 pandemic. Diversity, inequality, and representation have all become boardroom issues that organisations are expected to address.

ESG has raised the importance of the management of relationships within an organisation. In this situation, public

relations is understood as a growing area of management practice that provides a licence for organisations to operate. It is also a growing body of knowledge and a developing professional sphere.

Almost every aspect of management has a requirement for public relations. This includes strategy, planning, stakeholder management, external relations and internal communications. Managers for their part have limited preparation for working in the public sphere or indeed the management relationships internally or externally within an organisation.

Good management requires that close attention be given to relationships, of course to avoid difficulties, but more importantly to realise value aligned to ESG, and make better decisions and plans that will be more likely to be successful with support from communities.

Public relations practice makes use of communication to understand, engage and

influence relationships and the behaviour of individuals. The outcome is trust, reputation, and behaviour change. It is expertise in communications in all its aspects, including understanding social and societal factors, listening and the development of strategy, the creation and telling of stories, and an understanding of the potential and weaknesses of different communications channels.

The Page Society, a professional association for senior public relations and corporate communications executives and educators, suggests that the role of the public relations function is also to support management in building corporate character. It suggests that public relations can assist the alignment of mission, purpose, values, culture, business model, strategy, operations, and brand to create the unique, differentiating identity of the enterprise.

A recent report by management consultancy Deloitte examined the role of corporate affairs directors. Through a series of 30 interviews with senior practitioners in FTSE100, Fortune500, and Euronet organisations.

It's an excellent piece of work for several reasons. It's notable that a management consultancy is legitimating the role of public relations at the most senior level in management. It also describes its priorities as supporting growth, employee engagement, and navigating social change.

Deloitte emphasises the point that public relations is a strategic management function first and foremost. It provides the content for practitioners to optimise their value to an organisation to contribute to research, planning and decision making. Practitioners who recognise the opportunity for public relations are also playing a role in developing standards and driving forward professional practice. African practitioners are at the forefront of developing a professional approach both at home and internationally thanks to their commitment to education, qualifications, and continuous training.








The dialogue between education, theory and practice in public relations needs to be improved to advance practice within management.

Here too, it is fantastic to see a new generation of young well-educated African practitioners entering the profession with a commitment to continuous professional development. This will accelerate the development of practice and is welcomed.

Stephen Waddington 



Regardless of these variances, it is evident that all CA Functions have evolved in recent years, and have become increasingly broad in their remits. Core responsibilities include:

 Internal communication	 External communication	 Government affairs
 Campaigning	 Digital and social media	 Investor relations and financial PR
 Storytelling		

Source: Deloitte 2023 Corporate Affairs Report

BOTSWANA TRADITION AS A BEDROCK FOR SUSTAINABLE PR APPROACHES



TAAZIMA KALA-ESSACK

General Manager and Lead Consultant, **Hotwire**

Many a scholar, poet and even philosopher has written of the rich culture and near-intoxicating rhythm that Africa boasts. More recently, we are seeing the true spirit of Africa rising in the innovation of her people. In Africa, we have always had the tools required to solve real issues and sustainably ensure we shape a brighter future. This spans a multitude of sectors, with veritable forces of progress and excellence to be found across the breadth of the continent. Communications and Public Relations (PR) are but one area that deserves a considerably closer look, not as an emulation of the wider world, but as a source of inspiration.

The reality is, while we may not feature front and centre on the global communications and PR stage, the very fundamental building blocks of countries like Botswana are prime examples of basic PR principles.

Taazima Kala-Essack 



The reality is, while we may not feature front and centre on the global communications and PR stage, the very fundamental building blocks of countries like Botswana are prime examples of basic PR principles. These include a structure of communication and engagement in communities, and basic protocols and ways governing how we interact: “Bua” – speak, “Therisanyo” – consult, and “Dipuisanyo” – dialogue. These words in Setswana (the language of Botswana) have the power to shape mindsets, behaviours and actions; they influence today’s delivery of PR in Botswana – or at least of PR done well and responsibly.

Although a diverse dialect, our language and deep reverence for the community are rooted in the ideology of communicating and engaging, of building relationships and understanding, as well as preserving the sanctity of what true consultative dialogue can bring. Community leadership and engagement in Botswana are prime examples of this, working to help shape better societies. As a matter of fact, they are aligned with the basic definition of PR as building mutually beneficial relationships.

The traditional gathering at the heart of a community has always been the Kgotla (traditional law court), at the centre of all civil, moral and community matters. Historically, all issues affecting the well-being and social stability of a community are engaged here. The conduct within the Kgotla is well-governed, and respect, or “Botho” is the order of the day. Pregnant with meaning is Botho, such that no English equivalent can even unpack what it stands for, though many an adjective may try – respect, inclusion, etiquette. It is a common understanding and practice from all participants. Mafoko a kgotla a mantle otlhe, meaning, everyone has a say, and their say is valid and deemed equally important.

Here, leaders of a community help in countering false beliefs by supporting societies and communities to discern truth from falsehood so that they can then make better decisions. In the Kgotla, key updates are shared, fostering a healthy information landscape for all to be informed, involved, and inspired.

When the HIV pandemic first hit Botswana in 1984, it did so with fury. In a country that had never seen a health issue ravage with such a lack of restraint, stakeholder engagement was as critical an effort as modern medicine. “In 2001 alone, an estimated 320,000 people in Botswana were living with HIV—slightly more than one in four. (...) Beyond the human toll, HIV also threatened to unravel the country’s decades of economic and social progress.” So dire were infection escalations that, in 2001, the President at the time, His Excellency Dr Festus Mogae, noted that “Botswana is threatened with extinction.”

Beyond life-saving medical interventions, behavioural change campaigns pioneered through PR’s community education and engagement were paramount, leveraging community leader influence, consulting

local leadership in all villages across the nation, and leaning on their endorsement to shape perceptions. As citizens across the country saw faith and community leaders rally to drive HIV testing, the adoption of treatment and changes in sexual behaviours, the power of community and building of trust became a veritable weapon for progress. It was anchored on the principles of therisanyo and dipuisanyo, cultivating relationships and human interaction with purpose.

Fast forward to 2021, and similar approaches and principles help engineer and curate an approach to deal with COVID-19, mobilising the power of the written and spoken word, the immense strength of consultation and relationship dynamics and the idea that through these simple human interactions and respect for community structure, we can change behaviours to improve – and save – lives.

Even in matters of conflict, these principles ring true.

As the Setswana saying goes, “Ntwa kgolo ke ya molomo,” which loosely translated, means, “One need only fight with their words.”

Taazima Kala-Essack 🇸🇩

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Once more, consultation and engagement are a recipe for real results. Communication and engagement remain a force for good in shaping the future and building the nation, with cultural ideology today being used to inform modern PR practices. Those who return to these basic fundamentals that Botswana’s founding fathers shared will see the best outcomes and impacts by far.

When Botswana launched its largest public

entity going private, Botswana Telecommunications Corporation, in a milestone IPO, these very principles came into play for what was among the most successful bourse listings in Botswana's history. Community after community, diKgotla (plural of Kgotla) and town halls were at the heart of a public education strategy that focused on consultation and engagement to explain the concept of buying shares in a manner those in the most rural village would understand – likening buying cattle to investing in your wealth. In bringing people along on this education and growth journey, the communications team not only built respect and trust, but also, a culture of growing further together, of ownership, and of community progress and shared value. This was certainly not the example of such, for, decades before, Botswana's Founding President Sir Seretse Khama called on the nation to play a part in the growth of education in the country.

In a Kgotla setting, people were educated on the need to establish a local university and were urged to look inwards to resource its establishment. After the all-inclusive discussions, people resolved to adopt the *Motho le motho kgomo* (One Man, One Beast) campaign, donating cattle (a measure of wealth in itself) to fund the building of Botswana's first university, the University of Botswana, which stands tall today as among the best in the region.

It is these building blocks of community, communication and culture that even inform modern-day society, nation-building, policymaking and more. Indeed, *Therisanyo* is even encouraged in families and communities at large when it comes to

wider socio-economic discussions at any and every level, as an effective tool for government and other critical stakeholders to discuss policies and programmes towards socio-economic progress. It is proven and demonstrated on a daily basis. "Participatory dialogue is an important policy tool that can offer a range of practical means, and, therefore, should be considered as part of building more cohesive societies, as well as building peace, including in post-conflict societies."

Botswana remains a unique place to do PR within. Our unique approach has always been a cornerstone of Botswana's journey towards growth and prosperity, and this fact remains today, indeed, perhaps now more than ever before.

Taazima Kala-Essack 



In our traditions, we find the very discipline and best practices to shape a stronger future, not only for ourselves but for the profession and the globe at large.

As Sir Seretse Khama once said, "A nation without a past is a lost nation, and a people without a past is a people without a soul." The founding President's words are especially true for communications, PR and socio-economic progress at large, as we celebrate the principles and heritage of our culture, and leverage them for best practices in our future.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AS A TOOL FOR SOCIETAL CHANGE IN AFRICA



YOMI BADEJO-OKUSANYA

President, African Public Relations Association (APRA)

Background of PR in Africa

The use of public relations techniques is not a new concept on the African continent. It can be traced back to the dawn of African civilization. According to Narty in Rensburg (2002:5), the concept of public relations was practised in Africa prior to colonialism. Pharaohs in ancient Egypt used word pictures on impressive monuments to proclaim their achievements. Narty goes on to explain how the role of the spokesman in traditional villages is very similar to that of a public relations practitioner. No African chief, according to tradition, ever spoke directly to a visitor who came to the chief's seat of power. A spokesman handled all interactions and communication with the chief. These spokesmen were well-versed in the village's customs and traditions. Such people rose to positions of prominence and were held in high regard by the general public. This, incidentally, is still the case in some of Africa's most remote and traditional rural areas. Thus, public relations is not a foreign concept in

the African context, but it has been practised in a different format and is deeply ingrained in African culture (Rensburg, 2002:6).

Many other examples can be given to illustrate the fact that PR has been present for a long time:

- African marital affairs is another example where the concept of PR was found. During the initial stages and through the negotiations of the marriage contract, a mediator plays a crucial role in the success of the union.
- In traditional music and dancing, drums convey messages that may announce an important event in the day-to-day activities of the people in the village.

In an attempt to explore the historical development of contemporary PR in Africa, Okereke (2002:2-3) is of the opinion that PR started in the 1940's in Africa. During

this time colonial governments dominated most African countries and the key issue that was identified as a need was public information. In Nigeria, for instance, public relations practices were introduced from Britain through the vehicle of colonialism. The British decided to employ the tactics of public relations through mobile cinemas, posters, television programs, etc. These programs were aimed at sensitizing Nigerians on what they were doing for the benefit of the nation as well as what the colonialists expected of Nigerians in return. Since that time, public relations have been recognized as a profession in Nigeria and in other West Africa States. In 1963, the Nigerian Institute of Public Relation (NIPR) was established as a regulatory body for PR practice in Nigeria, and it is the first PR professional body in Africa to be recognized and regulated by law through Decree 16 of June 1990 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

What then is Public Relations?

According to the Mexican Statement:

"Public Relations is the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organizational leaders and implementing programmes of action which will serve both the organization's and the public interest."

While The Institute of Public Relations of Britain defines PR as

"the deliberate, planned, and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics."

The definitions of PR presented above focus on the development of strong partnerships between an organization and its stakeholders. Several factors are consistent regardless of which definition of

public relations you use. PR is a component of an organization's overall marketing and communication function.

PR is critical in assisting an organization's diverse public in engaging them across media platforms such as third-party and social media. PR must safeguard the reputation of an organization and, when necessary, provide crisis management.

Yomi Badejo-Okusanya ■■



PR is critical in assisting an organization's diverse public in engaging them across media platforms such as third-party and social media. PR must safeguard the reputation of an organization and, when necessary, provide crisis management.

PR aims to create and shape global conversations, improve the reputations of nations and corporations, and raise awareness of issues, causes, and initiatives. If we use these skills to create a positive perception and progressive reputation for Africa, more investors will flock to the continent, and travel and tourism will increase. These factors will spur development across the continent. Africa is set for a bright future if PR is leveraged as a key tool in enabling this to happen.

What is the role of PR in the development of society?

Reputation Management: The practice of influencing stakeholder perceptions and public conversations about an organization and its brands is known as reputation management. Monitoring perceptions and

conversations, responding to reputation threats, and proactively seizing opportunities to improve reputation are all part of it. Simply put, reputation management is the proactive use of PR to safeguard or improve your reputation.

Your reputation is made up of other people's perceptions of what you say, do, and sell.

Yomi Badejo-Okusanya 🇳🇮



Your reputation is made up of other people's perceptions of what you say, do, and sell. Your employees, products, services, and even your community presence, all contribute to the development of your reputation. Every interaction a customer has with your company is an opportunity to change your company's reputation (for better or worse).

The role of public relations in reputation management is to enhance your image in the eyes of others by utilizing PR outlets and techniques.

In the current digital climate, reputation management has become an even more pressing concern. Fake news and digital scams have made it critical for businesses to earn and maintain customer trust.

Furthermore, there is a saying that bad press does not die with yesterday's news. Because digital content can live for years, brand wounds are more difficult to heal.

Yomi Badejo-Okusanya 🇳🇮



Because digital content can live for years, brand wounds are more difficult to heal. This is where PR is needed to build the brand, spread the organization's message and minimize the effect of negative publicity.

Public Affairs: Public affairs is a specialized function of PR that is critical in promoting societal development. It combines government relations, media communications, issue management, corporate and social responsibility, information dissemination and strategic communications advice. Public affairs, unlike government relations, is concerned with the impact of public policies, actions, and legislation on its constituents.

Strategic communication, like public relations, is central to public affairs. Public affairs ensures that businesses have a channel to build relationships and communicate their point of view to relevant stakeholders, especially when new policies and regulations are being developed. It ensures that issues affecting the public are adequately identified and dealt with amicably to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

Democracy: Relationships between politicians, the media, and citizens are increasingly shaping modern democracies. PR professionals play an important role in information management, which includes mass marketing, opinion polling, and advertising. They work behind closed doors for the benefit of the public, government, and business. Public relations practitioners assist the public in understanding and appreciating the activities and motivations of the media, businesses, and government, putting the public in a much stronger position to prevent the manipulation of their opinions. PR fosters formidable and mutually beneficial relationships. These

relationships, which are essential to the advancement of democratic processes and principles, are formed through PR appurtenance such as public campaigns, public participation, image building, lobbying, etc.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):

CSR can refer to a variety of initiatives and actions, but it is most commonly understood as a concept in which businesses incorporate social and environmental concerns into their day-to-day operations. It consists of an organization's planned, active and continuing participation with and within a community to maintain and enhance its environment to the benefit of both the organization and the community. This can involve partnerships, volunteer activities, philanthropic contributions and public participation. Simply defined, this concept means giving back to the society from where the organization gets its resources thereby leading to its development.

A well-developed CSR concept automatically boosts societal growth and development. A good example is the African Public Relations Association's (APRA) one-day FREE public relations conference for students and civil servants from various African countries. APRA's CSR initiative has been staged in all of the countries visited by the association during

its 33-year history of holding its annual conference, which is the association's flagship event. The conference's 34th edition will be held in Lusaka, Zambia, and APRA will once again engage Public Relations/Communications students from tertiary institutions in the Lusaka area, as well as civil servants in the corporate communications department.

Another notable example of a worthy CSR is the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program which aims to transform young people and institutions by driving inclusive and equitable socio-economic change in Africa. Since launching in 2012, the Program has supported nearly 40,000 young people in Africa to pursue secondary or tertiary education.

In conclusion, the importance of public relations in society cannot be overstated. I am a staunch supporter and proponent of "Affirmative PR." In a nutshell, affirmative PR ensures that PR speaks for itself. It ensures that we recognize, define, and communicate the value and significance of public relations.

Although many people believe that publicity is the sole purpose of PR, I hope this article will help you understand that publicity is a subfunction of the overall purpose of public relations and should not be confused with it.



PR AND COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATIONS IN AFRICA

10

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	African Public Relations Association	afpra.org	info@afpra.org ; apraordinator@afpra.org
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	MediAlgeria	medialgeria.com	contact@medialgeria.com
Angola	Africa Interscholastic Press Association (AIPA)	azaipa.org	azstudentpress@gmail.com
Cameroon	International Association of Women in Radio and Television (Cameroon) (IAWRT)	iawrt.org	iawrtcameroon@gmail.com awrtcameroon@gmail.com
Egypt	Egyptian Public Relations Association	epra.org.eg/	info@epra.org.eg
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	Women in PR Ghana	womeninprghana.org	info@womeninprghana.org

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	Association Of Practitioners In Advertising	apakenya.co.ke	awards@apakenya.co.ke gil.kemami@bbdomediaedge.com
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	Public Relations Society of Kenya	prsk.co.ke	info@mediacouncil.or.ke
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Mauritius	Institute of Marketing and Management, Mauritius	Institute of Marketing and Management, Mauritius (Facebook)	shyamseebun@intnet.mu
Morocco	The Moroccan Marketing and Communication Association	ammc.co	contact@ammc.co
Mozambique	Associaçã de Profissionais de Relaço es Pú blicas de Moçambique (APRPM)	Associaçã de Profissionais de Relaço es Pú blicas de Moçambique (APRPM) - LinkedIn Group	-
Namibia	Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa Namibia (PRISA Namibia)	Public Relations Namibia (PRN) - Facebook community	prisanamibia@gmail.com
	Advertising Regulatory Council Of Nigeria (ARCON)	apcon.gov.ng	infoabuja@apconng.com
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	Nigerian Press Council	new.presscouncil.gov.ng	info@presscouncil.gov.ng
	Nigerian Women in PR	ngwomeninpr.org	ngwomeninpr@gmail.com
	Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OOAN)	oan.org	oan@oan.org
	Public Relations Association of Nigeria (PRCAN)	prcan.ng	info@prcan.ng
	Nigerian Institute of Public Relations	nipr.org.ng	info@nipr.org.ng

Country	Association	Website/Contact	Emails
Rwanda	Eastern African Communication Association (EACA)	eastafrika-ca.org	info@eastafrika-ca.org
	Public Relations Association of Rwanda (PRAR)	Public Relations Association of Rwanda (PRAR) - LinkedIn Group	-
	Rwanda Communications Network	Community	-
Sierra Leone	The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ)	slaj.sl	slaj.salone@gmail.com info@slaj.sl
South Africa	Association for Communication and Advertising	acasa.co.za	ceo@acasa.co.za
	Institute of Marketing Management South Africa (IMM)	-	membership@imminstitute.co.za
	Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA)	prisa.co.za	info@prisa.co.za
	The South African Communications Association – SACOMM	sacomm.org.za	vermea@unisa.ac.za
Tanzania	Advertising Agencies Association of Tanzania (AAAT)	aaatanzania.co.tz	info@aaatanzania.co.tz
Tunisia	L'Association Tunisienne de Marketing	L'Association Tunisienne de Marketing - Facebook group	Phone Number: +216 97 229 130
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	Uganda Marketers Society	ums.co.ug	admin@ums.co.ug
Zambia	The Zambia Institute of Marketing	The Zambia Institute of Marketing - LinkedIn Group	info@zimmarketing.org.zm
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ABOUT

AFRICA PR AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The Africa PR and Communications Report (APCR) is the first global communications report from Africa, dedicated to highlighting key data in the African business and communications landscape. The research implements expert insights and data to strategically underscore Africa's position and influence within the global market.

APCR contains verified facts and statistics on the Public Relations and Communications industry; analysis that can guide governments and multinationals and; resources and recommendations that assist practitioners in building better careers and business models. It is designed to enhance and deliver value to all stakeholders.

There is an urgent need for professionals to be embedded in every area of policymaking, advisory, and management. It is important that the PR industry understands the colossal duty it has to the continent and the people. Data-driven reports like APCR which can easily be used for referencing details, instances and facts about the industry will be pivotal in its quest.

The 2022-2023 Africa PR and Communications report was compiled in partnership with 20 associations, companies and schools across two continents. Our partners include the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR), CIPR International, Association of Advertising Agencies Of Nigeria (AAAN), Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA), Africa Communications Week (ACW), International Communications Consultancy Organisation (ICCO), Women In PR Ghana (WIPRG), Magna Carta Reputation Management Consultants, Wadds Inc. African Public Relations Association (APRA), Associação de Profissionais de Relações Públicas de Moçambique (APRPM), Global Mind Consulting, Nigerian Women in PR, Uganda Marketers Society, Rwanda Communications Network, Uganda Advertising Association, Central University Ghana, BlackHouse Media (BHM) UK, ID Africa and Plaquad Inc., conclude the list of our partners for this edition.





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BHM Research & Intelligence (BR&I), an independent intelligence team working from Africa and Europe, serves to gather and analyse data for brands and organisations in public relations, advertising, ICT and media.

A division of BlackHouse Media (BHM), Africa's leading public relations and reputation management consultancy, BR&I has produced all the editions of the Nigeria PR Report since its inception; Concept of Virality, BHM's Guide to Public Relations, BHM's Look Into The Future, among other projects.

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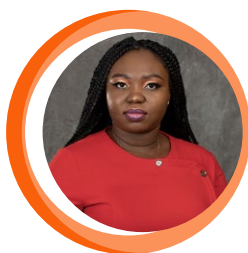


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