



INTRODUCTION

During the first quarter of 2017, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and theEMPLOYEEapp® by APPrise Mobile conducted a survey of professionals in the communications industry to understand trends in their use of old and new technologies. In particular, the study explored the following categories of technology to determine how each is being used for both internal and external communications and their effectiveness for both: email, intranets, social media, mobile technology as well as messaging and social collaboration tools.

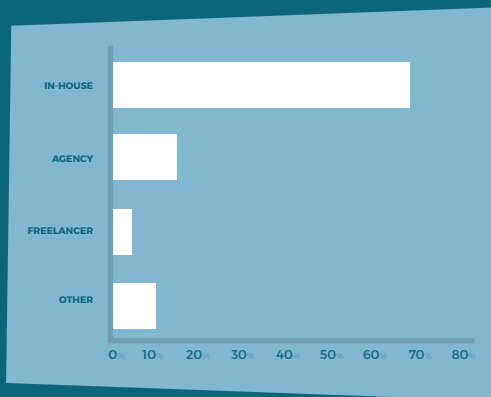
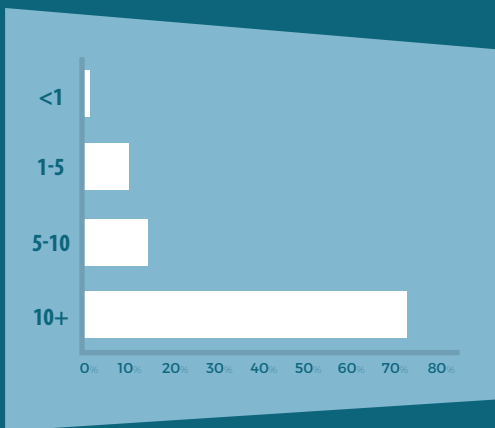
SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey data was collected via a SurveyMonkey poll largely comprised of PRSA members.

In total, 628 communications professionals responded to the questionnaire.

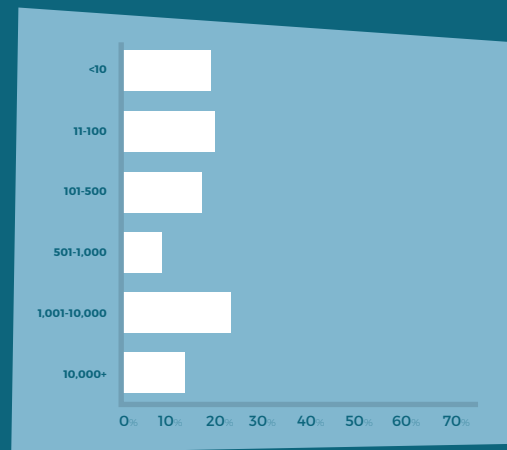
Following are the demographics of all respondents:

YEARS WORKING IN COMMUNICATIONS



THEIR ROLES AS COMMUNICATORS

AMOUNT OF PEOPLE IN THEIR COMPANIES



SURVEY SUMMARY

As communications professionals, the 21st Century and proliferation of new technologies, especially mobile, has forced us to rethink how we do our work. We live in an “always on” world, and as a result, **the importance of digital storytelling has never been more important.** However, based on organizations’ seemingly limited investment in newer technologies and reluctance to move away from email and intranets, **old-school communication tactics remain the dominant method of distributing information.**



The question therefore becomes: **How does our industry have to change to remain relevant in light of the fact that content is now being consumed primarily through the small screens of smartphones and tablets?** The research conducted addresses this question and shows where communicators are succeeding and where change is needed to ensure that the communications industry remains relevant and doesn't find itself rendered obsolete.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SURVEY ARE SUMMARIZED BELOW AND EXPLORED IN GREATER DETAIL THROUGHOUT THIS REPORT.



Email is not likely to go away anytime soon. However, when other factors are considered such as email overload, newer messaging technologies and greater consumption of content found on mobile devices, **communicators agree that it is not the most effective way to reach external audiences.**



Social media: Given the size and reach of social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, communicators have grown increasingly familiar with how to best to use these tools, **especially for external communications.**



Mobile technology: Companies recognize the importance of mobile as a workplace tool and necessary counterpart to desktop computers. **But most employees cannot access important company information through their Apple and Android devices.**



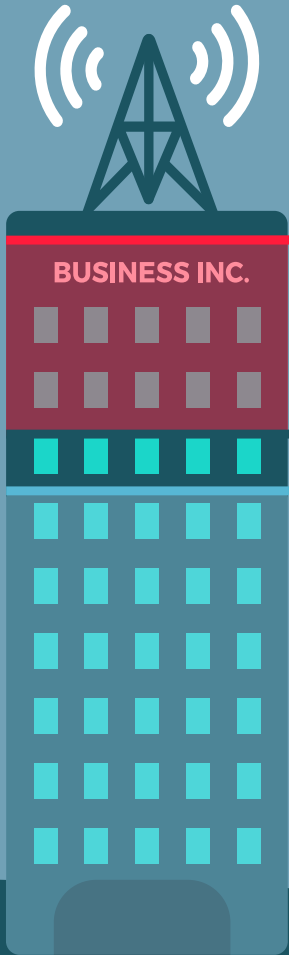
Messaging and social collaboration technologies: A lack of uniformity exists with the use of messaging and social collaboration technologies and it is unclear which solution is the best and/or most effective. Importantly, **messaging technologies are being implemented at a group level rather than institutionalized throughout an entire organization.**



EMAIL

When asked about the primary methods used for communicating internally with employees, respondents almost unanimously agreed that email is the most popular channel for employee communications. However, concerns do exist as a result of email overload, newer messaging technologies and the importance of mobile devices to individuals in their lives.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS



Email is used by **95%** of communicators for internal employee communications.

69% say email is the most effective way to reach employees.

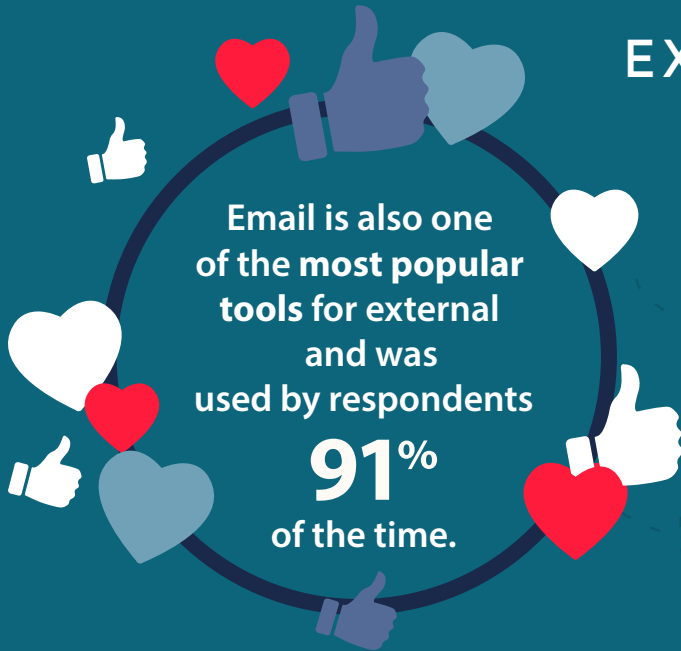
62% of respondents agree that other technologies will become just as, if not more, important than email in the future.



Email isn't going away soon ...

85% believe email will always be used with internal audiences.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS



Communicators seem to agree that there is no one “silver bullet” for communicating with a company’s external audiences. There are and will be different types of technologies that should be used together and synergistically.



But only **27%** believe that email is the most effective method of reaching an external audience.



63% believe that email will always be a mainstay in external communication.



Even with the growing popularity of instant messaging apps, texting and social channels, we seem content to use email as our go-to method for business communication. Perhaps it's the slightly slower pace than that of instant messaging and social, or simply the fact that we've become numb to email chaos over the years, but clearly there's more love than hate in the relationship with our inboxes.

BECKY GRAEBE

PRSA Employee Communications Section Chair
Director of Communications, SAS





SOCIALMEDIA

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

While the survey found that social media is used primarily for external communications, **26%** of respondents said that their company utilizes social media internally, ranking third behind email and corporate intranets.

However, more and more companies and organizations are establishing policies for addressing the use of social media.

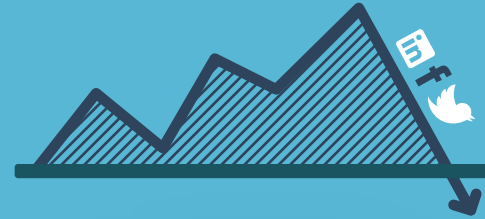
77%

of communicators said their company has a policy around social media.



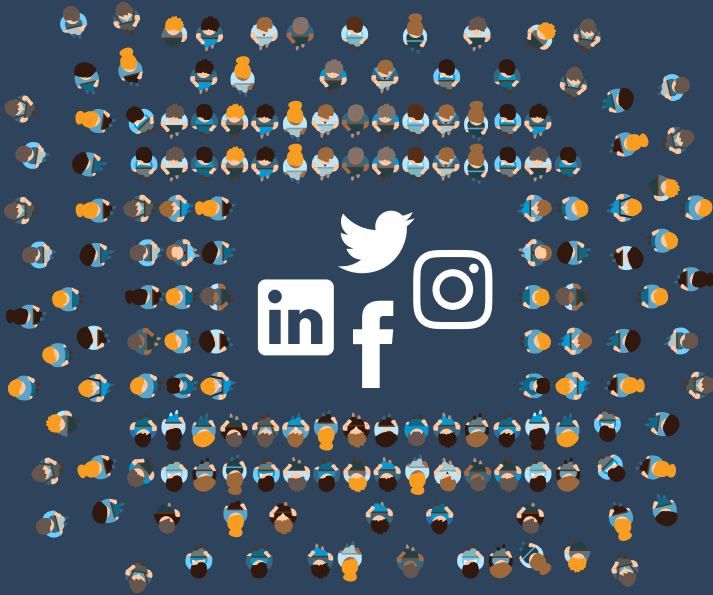
55% said their company has a formal policy.

As far as the effectiveness of social media communicating with employees is concerned, communicators ranked it least effective at 3%.



44% said their company has an informal policy that relies on employee judgment.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS



NOTIFICATIONS

CLEAR ALL



Given the size and reach of social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, **94%** of communicators use social media for external communications.



Associate social media advocacy is the clearest opportunity for high return on company messaging. Our experience indicates real, authentic, human-centered brand journalism — not recycled news or copy/paste press release links — results in exponential return when appropriately promoted to associates, emphasis on “appropriate.” We haven’t cracked this code and are learning daily along with our communications peers, but we know there’s gold in those hills.

Doug Busk

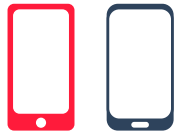
Global Group Director
Digital Communications & Social Media



Respondents 2017

38% consider social media the most effective tool to communicate externally.





MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Nearly eight out of 10 Americans now own a smartphone. This is up from 3.5 out of 10 Americans at the end of 2011. Given that mobile is no longer a “nice to have”, and is becoming (or already is) a “need to have”, organizations are wisely incorporating mobile strategies into their communications initiatives.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS



80% said their company provides devices only to senior employees.



Most companies don't provide mobile devices to employees.



48% of communicators said their organization has a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy.

As companies begin to recognize the importance of mobile as a workplace tool and necessary counterpart to desktop computers, the survey found that outside of email, employees have a difficult time accessing important company information through their mobile device.



62% of communications professionals either don't access or have a very difficult time accessing their company's intranet through their mobile device.

Our workforce is the lifeline of our company. However, unlike employees in other industries, most are not deskbound as they are busy with patient care. Because of this, they don't have easy access to the information that's important to them.

How do we communicate with thousands of people, simultaneously and instantaneously? We know we can't rely on any single channel. But since pretty much all of our employees have a mobile device, mobile technology allows us to accomplish our goal of making information easily accessible 24/7.

MATT FELDER
Communications Manager
Lake Charles Memorial Health System

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Only **31%** of respondents said that their company has an app for communicating externally.

Technology is a channel for engagement not the end game. Communicators need to be well versed in how employees, customers, shareholders and influencers want to connect be it word, visual and audio.

PERRI RICHMAN

Vice President, Communications
Ingersoll Rand Business Units





MESSAGING+SOCIAL COLLABORATION TECHNOLOGY

“Messaging” is the buzzword of the technological day and definitely one of the darlings in Silicon Valley. From Facebook and Microsoft to Salesforce and Slack, many of the technology behemoths are joining the peer-to-peer and social collaboration bandwagon. But is there room for so many, and who ultimately will prevail?

When communicators were asked about their use of messaging and social collaboration technology, **three trends became clear:**



1 Lack of uniformity exists and multiple tools are used within the same organization, often to the detriment of organizations through increased costs and use of duplicate systems.

2 No one messaging or social collaboration solution is the best and/or most effective.

Only **13%** of organizations use messaging and social collaboration to communicate with employees within their entire organization.

3

Messaging technologies are not currently being embraced enterprise-wide but are only being used among groups within an organization.



31%

of respondents say that different groups within their company utilize different messaging technologies.

In an enterprise organization the size of IBM, the amount of emails received daily can be quite inundating. I view Slack as a beneficial tool to get in touch with anyone across the company in real time – or after the fact – and always be in the know. Slack helps me be more efficient throughout the workday because I can directly connect with the people I need to around the world without inundating their email inboxes, and quickly reference entire conversations in one centralized place.

SARAH STORELLI
External Relations Lead
IBM

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The Public Relations Society of America

PRSA is the nation's largest professional organization serving the communications community. The organization's mission is to make communications professionals smarter, better prepared and more connected through all stages of their career. PRSA achieves this by offering its members thought leadership and innovative lifelong learning opportunities to help them develop new skills, enhance their credibility and connect with a strong network of professionals. The organization sets the standards of professional excellence and ethical conduct for the public relations industry. PRSA collectively represents more than 30,000 members comprised of communications professionals spanning every industry sector nationwide and college and university students who encompass the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA).



theEMPLOYEEapp® by APPrise Mobile

theEMPLOYEEapp® by APPrise Mobile is an internal communications and employee engagement mobile solution that allows any organization to have its own native app on Apple and Android mobile devices (as well as a web app for any other device that has a web browser). It securely integrates with a company's employee database and allows for the instantaneous push of messages and distribution of content (documents, multimedia, web links, calendar appointments and live events) directly to an employee's mobile device. For more information, visit www.theEMPLOYEEapp.com. To learn more about other mobile communications products by APPrise Mobile, visit www.APPrise-mobile.com.