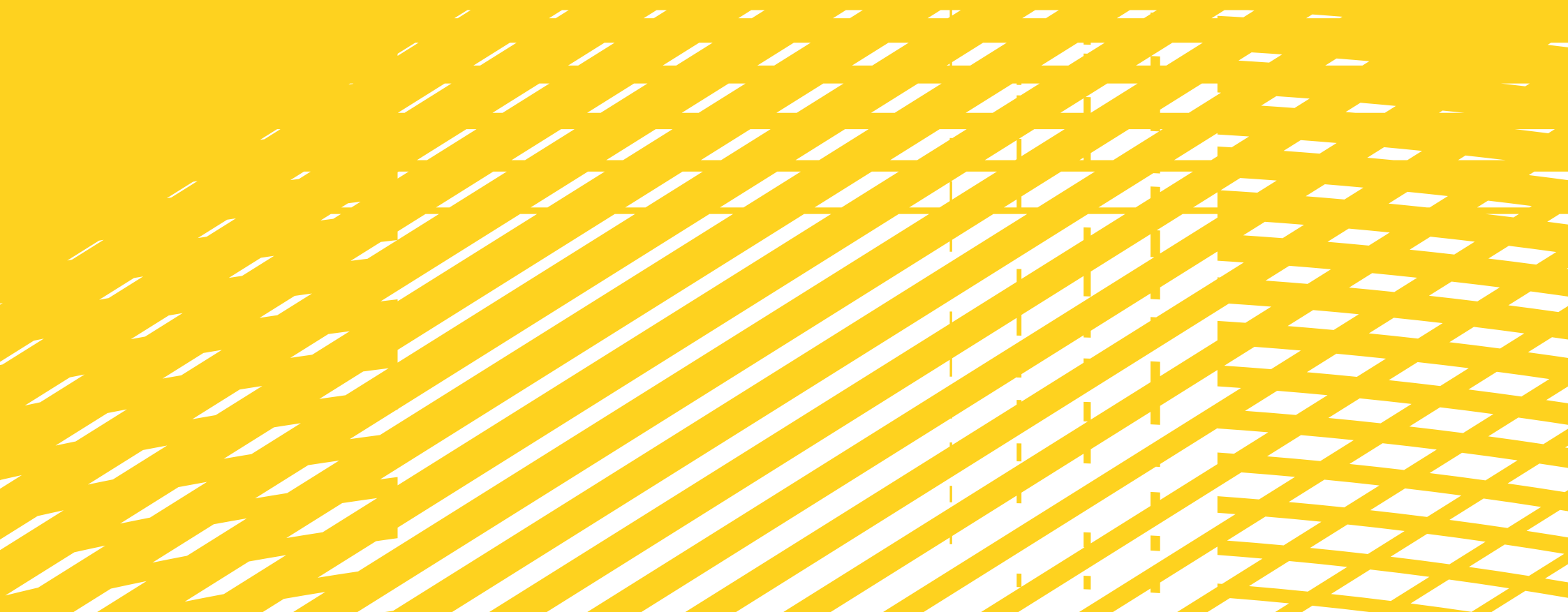




PRII

PUBLIC
RELATIONS
INSTITUTE
OF IRELAND

PRII CENSUS 2022



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
MESSAGE FROM THE PRII PRESIDENT	1
MESSAGE FROM THE PRII CEO	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
METHODOLOGY	4
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS	5
THE PEOPLE	6
DIVERSITY OF BACKGROUND	7
MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL BODY	8
REWARDS & BENEFITS	10
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND CPD	13
THE ORGANISATIONS	14
THE WORK	15
A DAY IN THE LIFE	17
MORE ON THE PRII	18

INTRODUCTION

MESSAGE FROM THE PRII PRESIDENT



Padraig McKeon, FPRII
Chart. PR (UK)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Padraig McKeon', written over a horizontal yellow line.

When the Public Relations Institute of Ireland (PRII) published the first ever census on the work of public relations and communications management in Ireland three years ago it was to establish a baseline in our knowledge and understanding of the footprint and the value of that work.

In the foreword to that publication, I noted the belief that *“this contribution goes well beyond economic calculation.”* Our experience in the interim very much supports that belief with communication emerging as a critical competence in the constrained society foisted upon us by the global pandemic.

Warm sentiment alone however is not a base from which to improve and grow the work that we do as communications professionals. Neither is it a basis on which to plan the work of the PRII in education, in the provision of services to members or as a facilitator of the public relations community. Instead, there needs to be a base of evidence which is why we are pleased to have been able to work again over recent months with the team in Amárach to renew and add to what we know about the professional practice of public relations and communications management in Ireland.

This second Census, as a follow up to the work in 2019, deepens our understanding of who works in communications, what they do, their career needs and their challenges.

Many of the findings in this work reaffirm the learning of 2019, which I believe is a good thing – that this is a career that those within it believe has prospects and is fulfilling, with exposure to interesting, challenging work across varying fields of society.

It is reassuring also to learn that standards of specialist education for communication practice remain high, that remuneration is progressive and that challenges to work life balance are improving.

However, it also highlights the key challenge for leadership in developing the profile of the 21st century communications sector – that of diversity. While the evidence of social mobility is very much to be welcomed, it is critical to the future health of communication as an effective function in organisations that it reflects the world around it, and the research tells us clearly that we don’t.

Being diverse in profile, with a commensurate understanding of society, is critical to enabling communications professionals help their employers and clients understand and navigate the sustained societal issues of our time – challenges to the environment, human rights and equity of access to resources world-wide. It is important therefore that we learn from this finding.

Ultimately, research of this nature is a key contribution by the Institute to the development of the profession and I commend the commitment of PRII CEO Dr. Martina Byrne to both devising the research project and to then funnelling the learning of that research into the development and planning work of the Institute.

I would like also to thank Gerard O’Neill, Chairman of Amárach Research, for his contribution to framing the research and for applying his curiosity to identify new angles that can contribute to its growing value. We look forward to this body of research informing the Institute’s work into the future.

INTRODUCTION

MESSAGE FROM THE PRII CEO



Dr. Martina Byrne

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martina Byrne". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below a horizontal yellow line.

Three years ago, in 2019, the PRII commissioned Amárach, the independent research company, to carry out the first-ever comprehensive research study of the sector. We were delighted to repeat, and expand, that study this year. For the second time, the response rate was very high and provides a representative picture of the profession in Ireland. We invite you to share this report with your colleagues and peers to promote greater understanding and recognition of your profession and your work.

The picture that emerges is a very positive one. It is of a thriving, well-educated, well-paid profession with a broad skillset working across both the Public and Private sectors, in large and small teams and organisations, delivering a wide range of expertise to employing organisations and clients.

We see a career with opportunities for progression and with an increasingly better work-life balance. It is particularly gratifying to see that 80% think they have a good career ahead of them in public relations for as long as they wish. Traditionally known for the 'always on' nature of the job, our data shows increased working from home, more flexible arrangements, fewer calls and emails outside working hours.

Other positive findings include the fact that this is a profession where women can thrive and are rewarded at the highest levels, with more women than men in senior level roles. When we look at the social class of the parents of this year's respondents it is also a profession that provides social class mobility.

For an Institute that has driven education and professional standards since its foundation, it is gratifying to see how well-educated those working in the sector are today. In a fast-changing environment, it is no surprise to see a strong commitment to continuous professional development, particularly the sector-specific skills training provided by the PRII. For example, one in three of the respondents to this survey hold the PRII Diploma in Public Relations, that's up from one in four in 2019.

Of course, there are areas that need our attention: growth in recent years means there are more jobs than there are qualified people to undertake them; and we need to have more diversity in the lived experiences and identities of those working in this creative and problem-solving field. To ensure a better gender balance in the future, we need to encourage male entrants to the profession. These and other issues are already, and will continue to be, a focus of the Institute.

On behalf of the Institute, and its members, I thank all those who took the time to respond to our survey, and those who encouraged practitioners in their network, member and non-member alike, to respond. The 2022 data set builds on the benchmark from 2019 and will be a great resource in helping us to help you through every stage of your career.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Relations Institute of Ireland (PRII) commissioned Amárach in July 2022 to carry out the second large-scale study of the public relations and communication sector in Ireland.

The objective is to gather data on those who are working in the profession: who they are; how they work; and what they do for their employing organisations and clients. We also look at the gender, nationality, and age mix; salaries; educational credentials; scope of work undertaken; and job satisfaction. This year we have expanded the section on demographics to look at diversity within the profession including sexuality; social class mobility; and dis/abilities.

The resultant data builds on the available knowledge for future research by the PRII and others, including academics and students, and will inform service provision by the PRII for its members in the coming years.

Uniquely, and for the second time, the research captures data from beyond the PRII membership cohort, which currently stands at over 1,000. As explained in the methodology, the online survey was made available to all working in the sector, members and non-members alike. This makes it the most representative and comprehensive study of the profession in Ireland.

KEY FINDINGS

- **303 completed the survey**, an excellent response rate from public relations and communications practitioners by any metric.
- Covid-19 restrictions meant that the Central Statistics Office (CSO) Census which was to take place in 2020 was postponed to summer 2022. In advance of that

Census Day, PRII ran an information campaign to remind people to use the appropriate NACE Code (7021) to identify their occupation as Public Relations and Communication. We look forward to having an up-to-date figure of the numbers working in the sector when the CSO publishes its occupational data set next year.

Until then we will hold off on estimating the population because the 2016 CSO Census data is out of date and the 2022 data will capture the growth in employment in the sector. Growth which continued throughout Covid-19. With that population data, we will also be able to update the calculation of the contribution of the profession to the Irish economy which in 2019 we estimated was €1.2 billion based on a conservative estimate of a population of approximately **3,000 public relations and communication professionals in the Republic of Ireland.**

- **69%** are female, a 1% increase on 2019.
- **53%** of the profession work in-house, comprised of 31% in the public sector and 22% in the private sector.
- **35%** work in agencies and 10% are self-employed.
- There is a reasonable age distribution in the profession: **30%** are under 35 and **15%** are between 55 and 65+.
- It is particularly positive that **80%** say they have a good career ahead of them in PR (up from 75% in 2019.)
- In terms of diverse lived experiences however the profession is not representative of Irish society in terms of race, ethnicity, sexuality and dis/abilities. This may

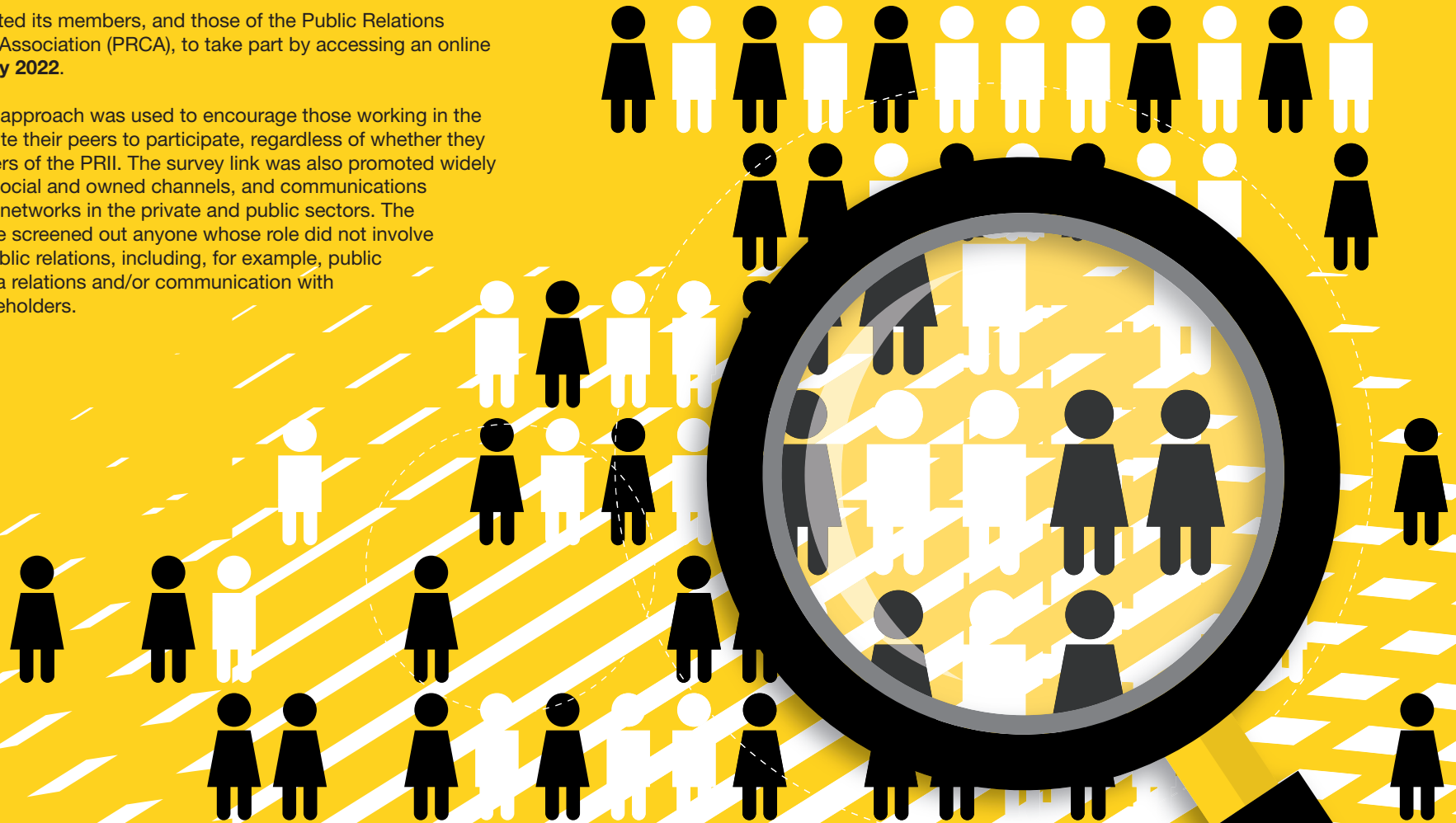
be due in part to the low profile of the profession among school leavers.

- The profession shows a good level of social class mobility based on the social class of parents.
- The profession is well paid. **41%** of respondents earn between €45,000 and €80,000. **12%** earn between €30,000 and €45,000.
- **71%** of respondents received pay rises in the past year. This figure was 66% in 2019. Of the **29%** who did not receive increases, most are self-employed.
- Education levels are high. **89%** have a professional qualification related to their work (up 7% on 2019). Nearly **40%** hold a Masters or equivalent. **60%** of respondents spent time on training/continuous professional development in the past year.
- Developing communication strategies; media relations; reputation and issues management; along with online communication are the main tasks. As one would expect, for in-house teams, internal communication and publishing (e.g., internal content) are most important. For both agency and in-house practitioners, in terms of time allocated to tasks, media relations work continues to dominate.
- **76%** claim a healthy work-life balance (up from 66% in 2019) while one-third report dealing with work-related calls/emails outside office hours every day (the latter figure is down significantly on 2019 and is particularly the case for those working in international agencies and in-house public sector roles).

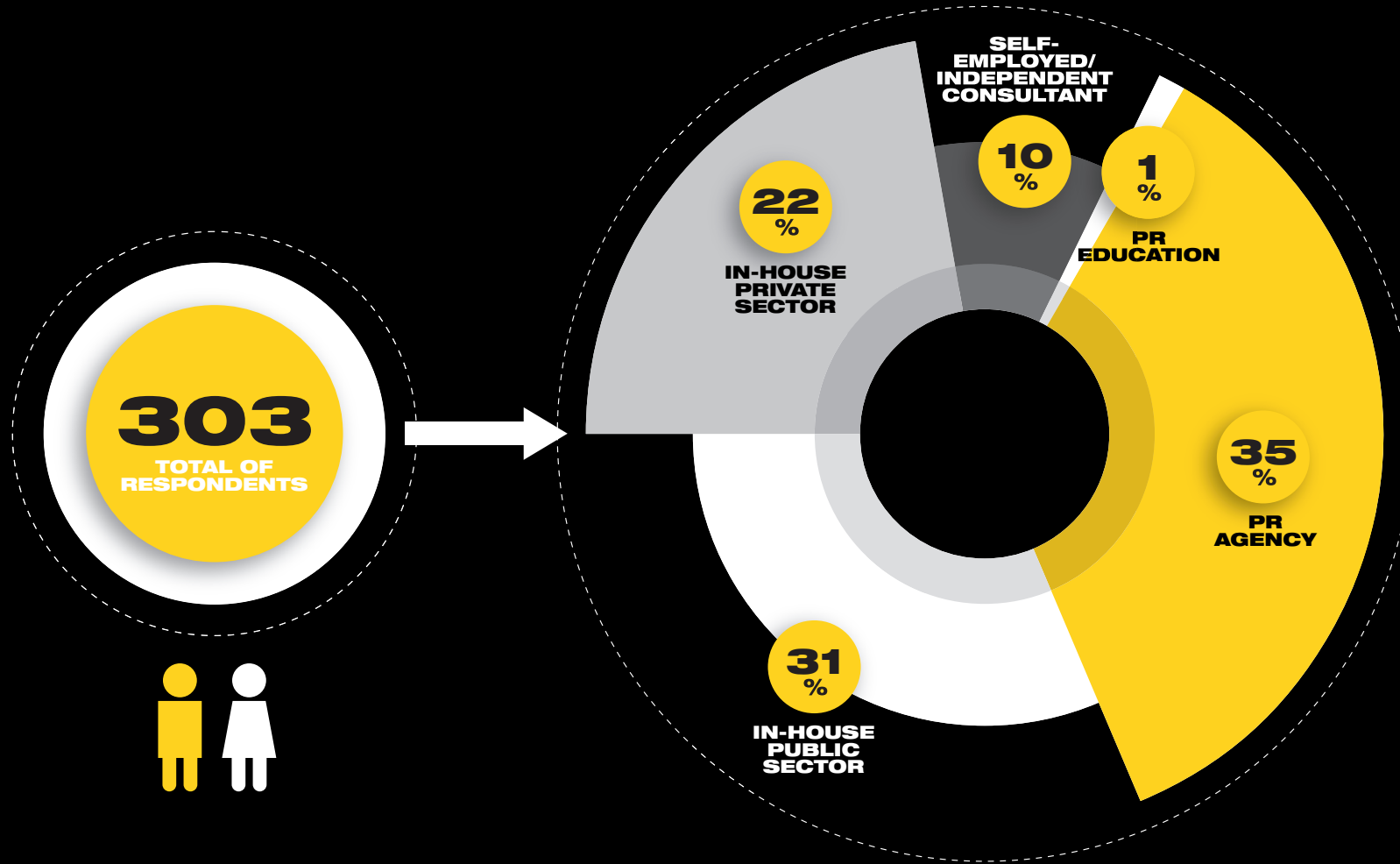
METHODOLOGY

The PRII invited its members, and those of the Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA), to take part by accessing an online survey in **July 2022**.

A 'snowball' approach was used to encourage those working in the sector to invite their peers to participate, regardless of whether they were members of the PRII. The survey link was also promoted widely via earned, social and owned channels, and communications professional networks in the private and public sectors. The questionnaire screened out anyone whose role did not involve remits for public relations, including, for example, public affairs, media relations and/or communication with internal stakeholders.

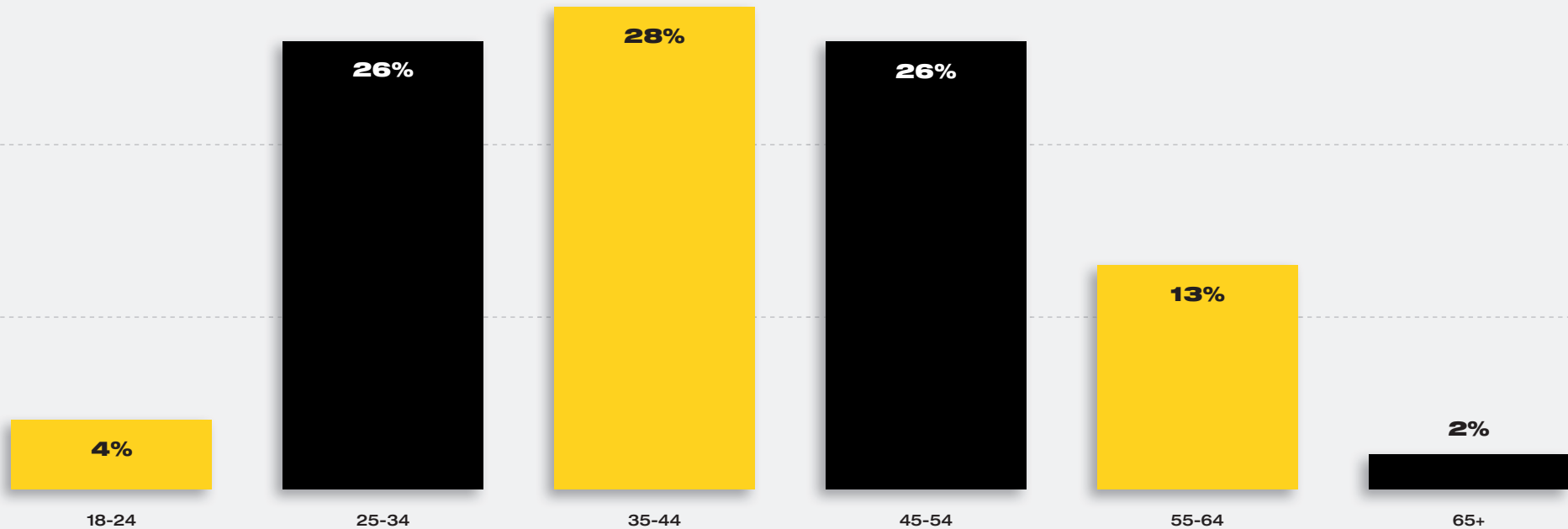


PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS



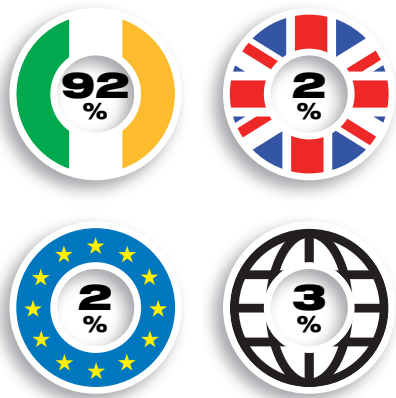
THE PEOPLE

AGE PROFILE OF PR SECTOR



There is a reasonable age distribution in the profession: **30% are under 35** and **15% are between 55 and 65+**.

DIVERSITY OF BACKGROUND



DIVERSITY

In terms of nationality, **92% are Irish, 2% are British, 2% are from another EU country, and 3% are from outside the EU** (up 2% on 2019). The most common language apart from English is French, with **14%** being able to conduct a business-related conversation. **11%** speak Irish well enough to conduct a business-related conversation.

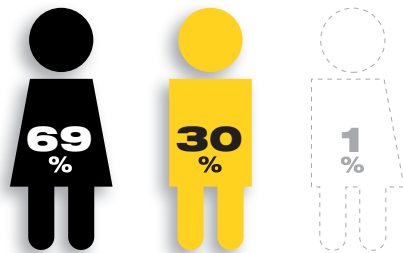
The **8%** of public relations professionals who are non-Irish compares with **18.5%**¹ of the total workforce in Ireland who are non-Irish.

1% identify as Black or Black Irish, **1%** as mixed race, and **96%** identify as White Irish or another White background.

GENDER & SEXUALITY

69% of those working in the public relations and communication profession are female. This is up 1% on 2019. In the UK, this figure is **67%**². **30%** are male. **1%** chose not to say.

5% identify as gay or lesbian, **86%** as heterosexual, **3%** as bi-sexual and **1%** as queer.

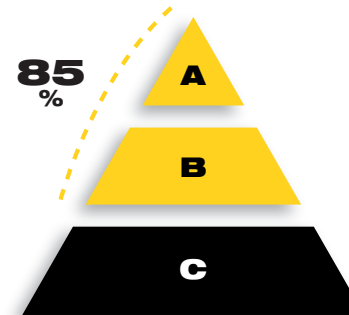


DISABILITY



4% reported having a disability of which **38%** said it was physical and **38%** said it was cognitive. **23%** preferred not to say. Of those (**4%**) with disabilities: **50%** reported their employer has accommodated their needs; **33%** said they had not been accommodated; and **17%** preferred not to say. Of the 4%, almost half said their disability created barriers to work.

SOCIAL CLASS & SOCIAL MOBILITY



While **85%** identify as belonging to social class A or B, just **53%** said their parents would have identified as being in those social classes which suggests a good level of social mobility into the profession.

¹ <https://emn.ie/migrants-in-the-labour-force-in-2022/> Accessed 1/09/22

² CIPR (UK) State of the Profession 2022

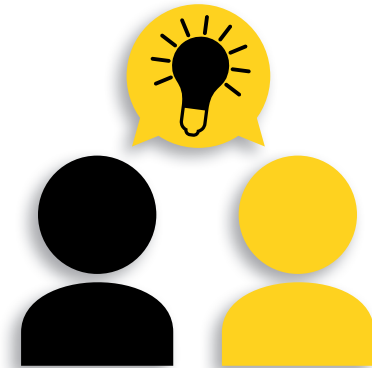
MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL BODY



69% of respondents were members of the PRII (an increase from the 55% in 2019)



50% of respondents have Professional Body membership fees paid for by their employer (up from 39% in 2019)



13% of respondents are members of a marketing organisation while **6% are members** of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ)

THERE ARE MORE WOMEN THAN MEN IN SENIOR PUBLIC RELATIONS ROLES BOTH IN AGENCY AND IN-HOUSE. HERE IS A SNAPSHOT OF OUR RESPONDENTS.



AGENCY ROLE	MALE	FEMALE
	Chief Executive/Managing Director	8
Board Director/Partner	7	7
Associate Director/Divisional Director	4	6

IN-HOUSE ROLE	MALE	FEMALE
	Director	9
Head of Unit	12	29
Senior Manager	7	34

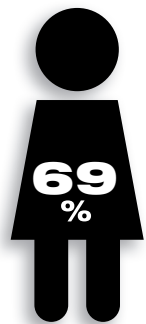
REWARDS & BENEFITS

WHILE THERE ARE MORE WOMEN THAN MEN IN SENIOR PUBLIC RELATIONS ROLES, A HIGHER PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION OF MEN IN THE PROFESSION ARE FOUND IN SENIOR ROLES. REFLECTING THIS, A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF MALE PROFESSIONALS ARE IN THE HIGHER SALARY BANDS.

The average annual salary for someone working in public relations is **€74,000** (up on €69,000 in 2019).



This rises to an average of approximately **€83,000** for men, compared to an average of approximately **€70,000** for women. The salary figures do not include bonuses and other benefits, nor do they adjust for full-time vs part-time working hours.



Note also that while there are less males than females in PR, males are more likely to be in the senior roles and this affects the average salary for men calculation.



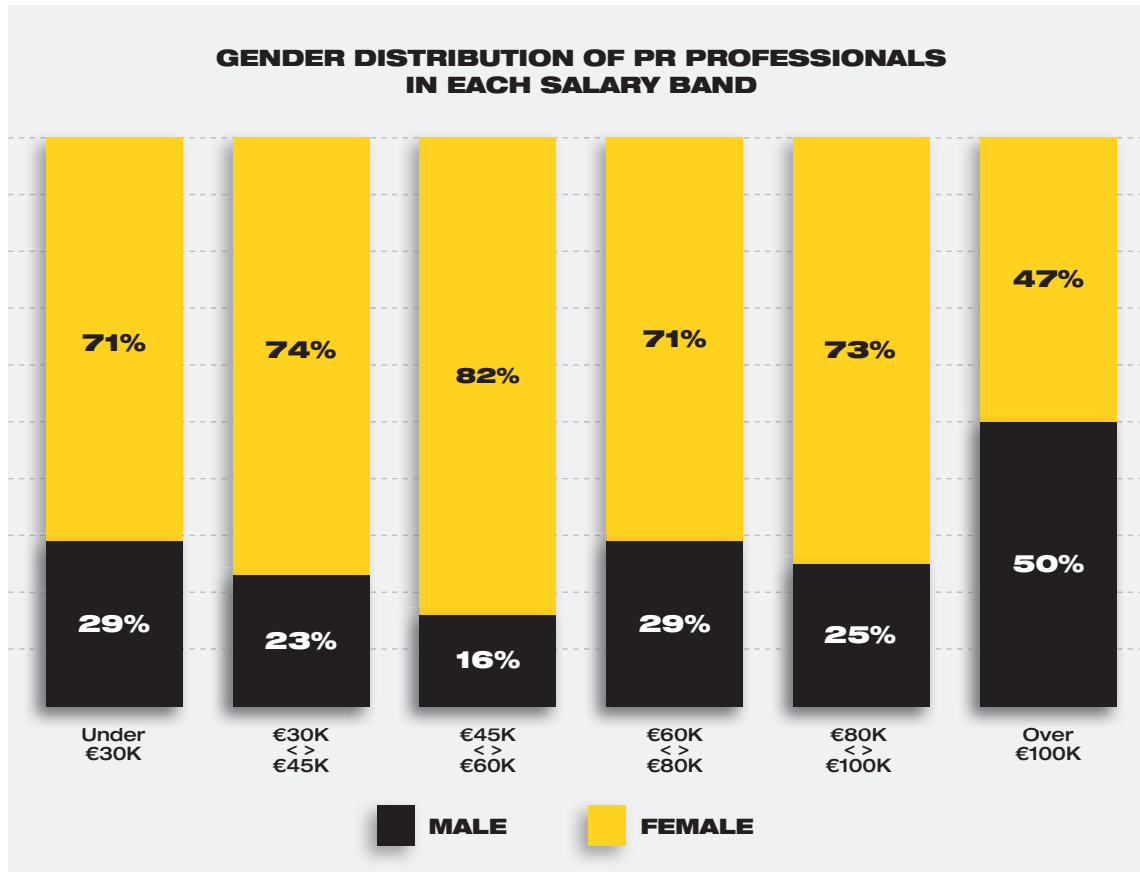
... OF THOSE WORKING IN THE SECTOR ARE FEMALE

Note the 2019 comparison is shown in brackets.

AGENCY ROLE	 		
	ALL AGENCY	% OF ALL MALE	% OF ALL FEMALE
Chief Executive/ Managing Director	21% (14%)	24% (19%)	19% (12%)
Board Director/Partner	13% (9%)	21% (13%)	10% (8%)

IN-HOUSE ROLE	 		
	ALL IN-HOUSE	% OF ALL MALE	% OF ALL FEMALE
Director	14% (12%)	23% (24%)	10% (7%)
Head of Unit	26% (28%)	31% (30%)	25% (27%)

WOMEN OUTNUMBER MEN IN ALMOST EVERY SALARY BAND IN THE SURVEY, INCLUDING THE TOP SALARY LEVELS.



ANNUAL SALARY BANDS, BEFORE TAX, NOT INCLUDING ANY BONUS OR OTHER BENEFITS

	All PR
Under €30,000	7% (9%)
Between €30,000 & €45,000	12% (14%)
Between €45,000 & €60,000	22% (21%)
Between €60,000 & €80,000	19% (24%)
Between €80,000 & €100,000	17% (14%)
Over €100,000	21% (14%)
Prefer not to say	2% (5%)

Note the 2019 comparison is shown in brackets.

AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY BEFORE TAX BUT NOT INCLUDING ANY BONUS/BENEFITS

	ALL PR	PR AGENCIES	IN-HOUSE PUBLIC	IN-HOUSE PRIVATE
Under €30,000	7% (9%)	11% (14%)	3% (4%)	1% (6%)
Between €30,000 & €45,000	12% (14%)	14% (20%)	14% (15%)	7% (7%)
Between €45,000 & €60,000	22% (21%)	20% (14%)	27% (29%)	16% (24%)
Between €60,000 & €80,000	19% (24%)	18% (21%)	22% (25%)	21% (27%)
Between €80,000 & €100,000	17% (14%)	9% (8%)	20% (16%)	26% (18%)
Over €100,000	21% (14%)	27% (19%)	12% (8%)	28% (15%)

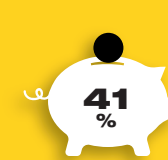
41% earn between €45,000 and €80,000.

71% of respondents received pay rises in the past year. This figure was 66% in 2019. Of the **29%** who did not receive increases, most are self-employed.

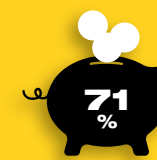
Those working in-house in the private sector are most likely to have received a pay rise in the past year. For those who received them, higher level pay rises occurred in agencies.

41% of respondents received a bonus payment in the past financial year. Those working in an agency are more likely to have received one (64%) than those working in-house, with just over half (53%) of those working in-house in the private sector having received one while only **17%** of those in-house in the public sector did.

65% of respondents work in organisations that ‘top-up’ maternity leave payments from social welfare (that is up on 2019). **45%** can avail of paid paternity leave (35% in 2019). Both these benefits are more common among respondents working in-house and in international agencies.



... EARN BETWEEN €45,000 AND €80,000
(45% in 2019)



... RECEIVED PAY RISES IN THE PAST YEAR
(66% in 2019)



... RECEIVED ‘TOP UP’ MATERNITY LEAVE
(59% in 2019)

Note the 2019 comparison is shown in brackets.

EDUCATION, TRAINING & CPD

The profession has never been more highly educated: **89%** have an educational qualification related to their work in communications (compared to 82% in 2019). Over one-third hold a Masters or equivalent.

1 in 3 hold the PRII Diploma in Public Relations, up on 1 in 4 in 2019.

55% worked in a non-public relations / communication role before their current communications role, which is down 10% on 2019.



89% HAVE A RELEVANT EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION
(82% in 2019)

60% spent time on training/continuous professional development in the past year. 81% of these undertook that training with PRII.

For over **70%**, the employer paid for this training. In other cases, employers contributed towards part of the cost.

Those working in-house in the private sector are most likely to have attended training; international agencies are least likely.



71% OF THE EMPLOYERS PAY FOR THEIR STAFF TRAINING
(79% in 2019)

The need for career-long learning is well established with over two-thirds saying they would like to do more training.

Time pressure was the most commonly identified barrier, with cost identified as a barrier by **18%** of respondents.

Measurement and evaluation, research skills, and strategic thinking skills were highlighted as gap areas in skills, as well as management skills.



ONE IN THREE HOLD A PRII DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC RELATIONS
(1 in 4 in 2019)

THE ORGANISATIONS

20% of those respondents working in agencies work in internationally owned agencies, and 80% are employed by independently owned agencies. The numbers working for international owned agencies is down slightly on 2019, due at least in part to a number of management buy-outs in recent years.

Of those respondents who work in-house in the public sector, 61% are in the Public Service, 18% are in semi-states and 20% in the civil service.

28% of those working in in-house communications in the private sector work in charities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs); 25% in technology; 12% in pharmaceuticals; and 10% in agri-food businesses.

Internationally affiliated agencies tend to have higher turnovers i.e., between €2.5 million and over €10 million.

Just under a fifth of independent agencies have an annual turnover between €0.5 million and €1 million.

A quarter of independent agencies have an annual turnover between €1 million and €2.5 million and just under a fifth have a turnover of €2.5 and €5 million.

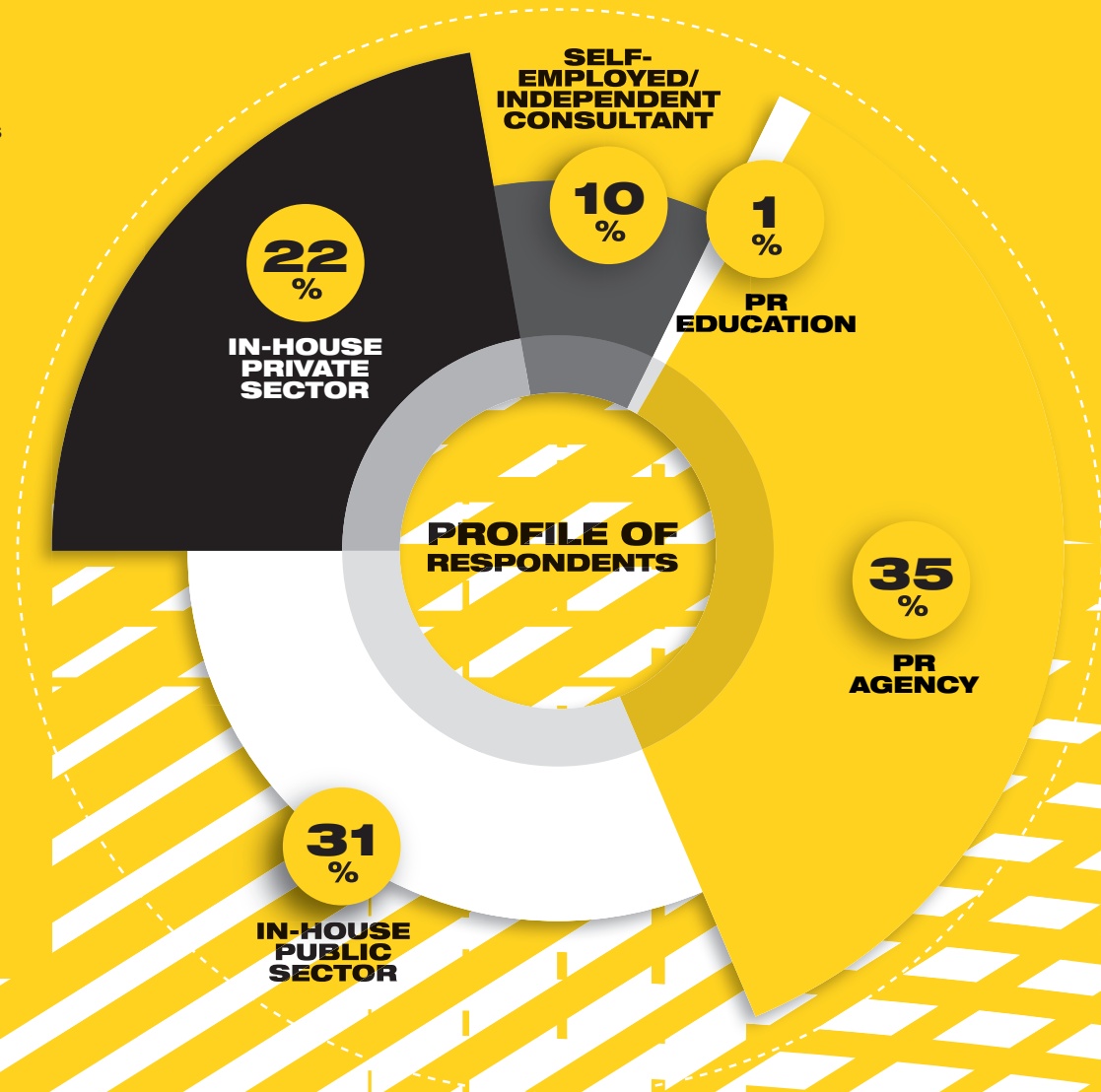
The majority of agencies (56%) employ between 6 and 25 people.

18% employ between 2 and 5.

25% of agencies have more than 25 employees.

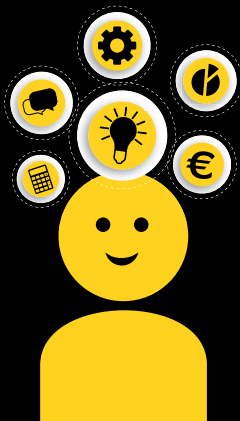
In-house private sector communication functions are most likely to be carried out by teams of 2 to 5 people.

26% of those in in-house private sector roles work alone, which is down from 31% in 2019, suggesting growth in in-house public relations employment.



THE WORK

Public Relations is demanding work that calls on a wide range of skills and competencies. There is, however, a clear consistency in the main functions carried out day-to-day across agencies and in-house teams.

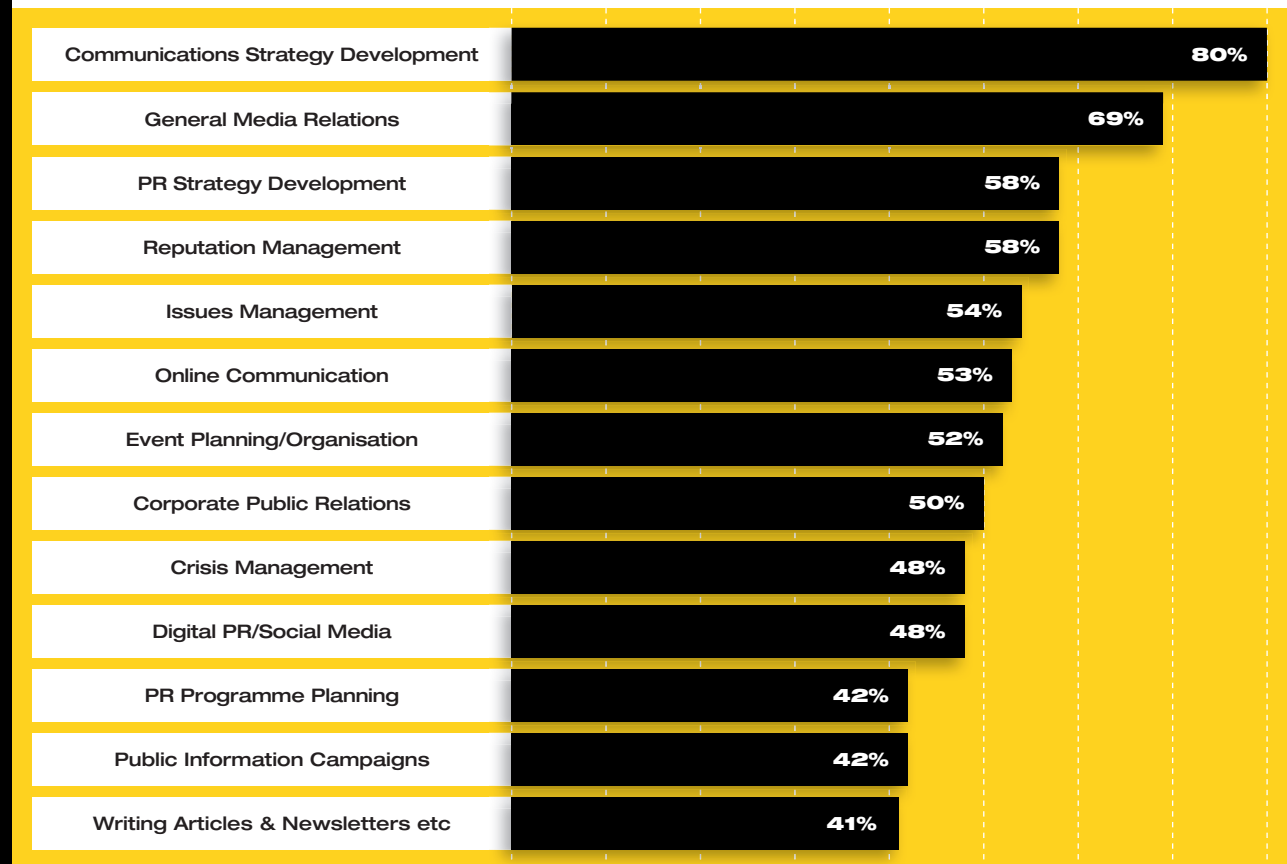


Developing communication and PR strategies; media relations; reputation and issues management; along with online communication are the main day-to-day tasks. For in-house teams, internal communication and publishing are important tasks.

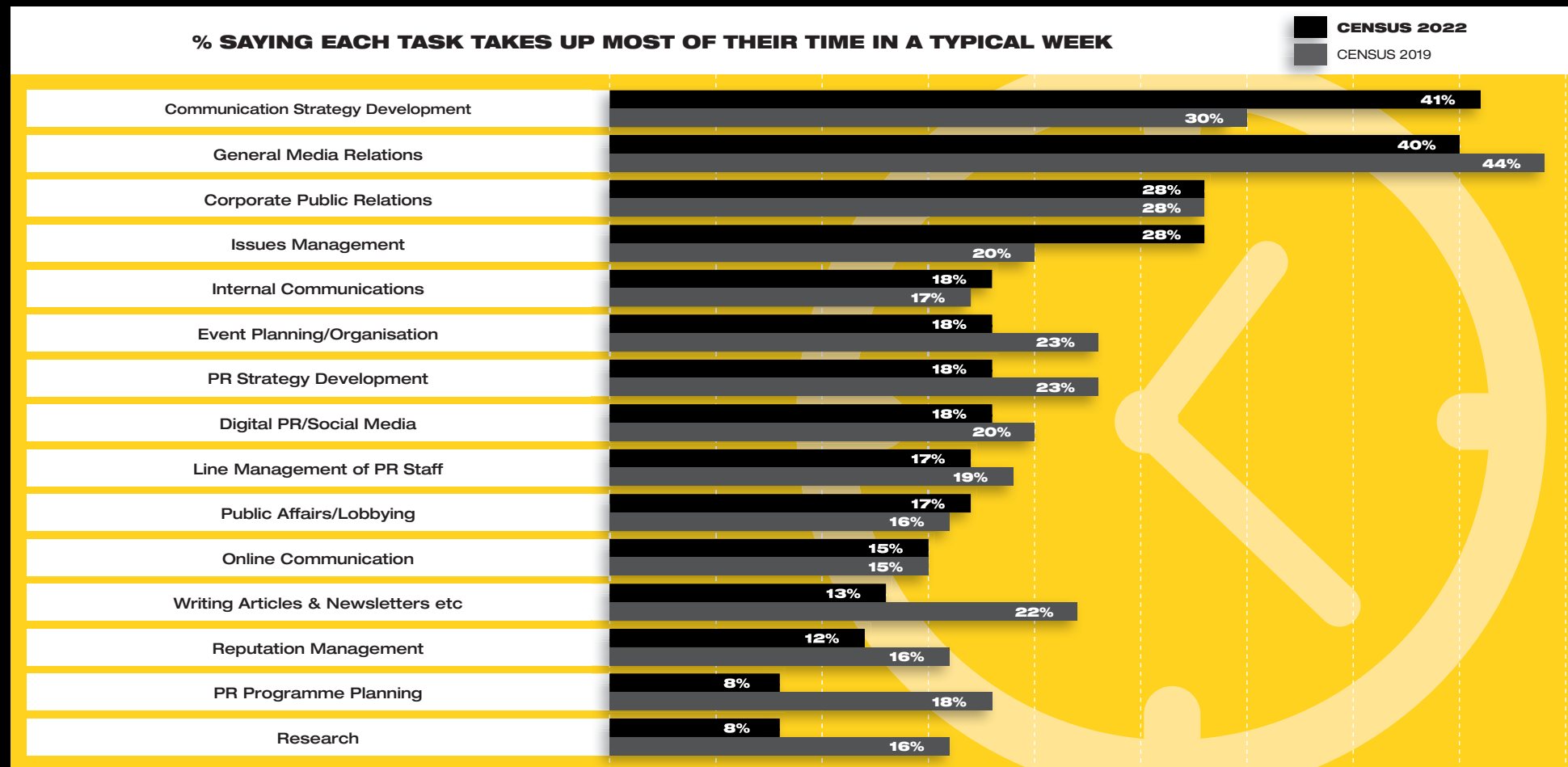
For both agency and in-house practitioners, in terms of time allocated to tasks, communication strategy development and media relations dominate.

Overleaf see decline in Event Management, most likely due to Covid19 impact.

% SAYING EACH TASK IS A MAIN FUNCTION OF THEIR PR ROLE



IN TERMS OF TIME ALLOCATED TO TASKS, MEDIA RELATIONS DOMINATE BOTH AGENCY AND IN-HOUSE TEAMS.



A DAY IN THE LIFE

18% of public relations professionals work outside of normal office hours every day. This is down significantly from 42% in 2019.

34% make work-related calls/attend to emails outside of office hours every day, again this is trending down from 46% in 2019. Those in international agencies and in-house public sector roles are more likely to communicate outside office hours.

One in five of all public relations professionals get time off in lieu of overtime pay. **38% of all PR people** have flexible working hours. This is up slightly on 31% in 2019.

14% work from home all the time, up from 4% in 2019. **63% are working 2 or 3 days** from home per week.

Those working in-house in the private sector are more likely than others to be able to work from home at least one day a week.

76% of respondents say they personally have a healthy work life balance most of the time (up from 66%). Those working in international agencies are least likely to say they have a healthy work-life balance.

80% say they have a good career ahead of them in public relations and communication (up from 75%).

49% say they intend to stay in public relations for the rest of their career. **This is up 7% since 2019.**



**63% WORK
FROM HOME
2 OR 3 DAYS
A WEEK**



**76% OF
RESPONDENTS SAY
THEY HAVE A HEALTHY
WORK LIFE BALANCE**
(up from 66%)



**80% SAY
THEY HAVE A
GOOD CAREER
AHEAD**
(up from 75%)



PRII

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MORE ON THE PRII

The PRII is the professional representative body for public relations and communications practitioners in Ireland. In 2023, the Public Relations Institute of Ireland (PRII) celebrates its 70th anniversary. **Established in 1953**, the Institute is dedicated to promoting the highest professional and ethical practice of public relations in Ireland and to serving the best interests of people working in the profession.

There are currently over **one thousand members** of the Institute working across all sectors: in-house in private and public companies; in national and local government; in semi-state bodies; in voluntary and charitable organisations; and in agencies. Educational credentials in communications, practical experience, and adherence to Codes of Ethics are the differentiating factors between members of the PRII and non-members.

The Institute works towards:

**Wider
recognition
of the role
of public
relations in
organisations.**

**Higher
standards of
professionalism.**

**Better
qualifications
for public
relations and
communications
practitioners.**

**To be an
effective forum
for members to
share common
interests and
experiences.**

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The PRII Census Research
was carried out by

amárach
research

