



PR Tactics and The Strategist Online

Top management believes public relations contributes to advancing the reputation of their organization: PRSA and Bacon's Information release State of the PR Profession opinion survey

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When asked if top management believes public relations contributes to moving the organization forward, respondents to a new survey from PRSA and Bacon's Information Inc. indicated that most felt their top management or CEO believes that PR contributes to moving their organization's reputation forward.

PRSA and Bacon's Information conducted the 2006 State of the PR Profession Opinion Survey to gain a better understanding of the opinions of its members and those interested in public relations.

The research conducted by Delahaye, a division of Bacon's Information, explored several areas of interest to PRSA members and nonmembers interested in the field of public relations. Specifically, areas analyzed in the research included:

- Demographic information, including type and size of organization, authority level, salary, number of public relations department employees, reporting order for public relations within the organization.
 - Respondents' beliefs on how top management views the contributions of public relations.
- Typical budget for PR-related purchases and if PR spending in their organization experienced an increase or decrease in 2006.
 - How respondents spend their work time, as well as how their PR budget is allocated across various services.
 - Perceptions on the single greatest issue facing the PR profession.
- Identifying which organization has the strongest voice against PR and PR issues, and perceptions as to how PRSA should be involved in advocating for such issues.
 - The importance of various attributes when selecting a PR service company.

"PRSA is pleased to partner with Bacon's to conduct relevant research that will help today's public relations professional better understand the industry trends that will be driving forces in the future," said William M. Murray, PRSA's president and COO in a release announcing the survey. "Partnerships such as this further PRSA's strategic mission of advancing the public relations professional and the profession."

The results of the 2006 State of the PR Profession Opinion Survey were the focus of a Webinar held earlier today. The Webinar, moderated by John Elsasser, editor in chief of PRSA's *PR Tactics*, *The Strategist* and *Tactics and The Strategist Online*, addressed

the challenges, issues, common perceptions and misperceptions among PR professionals and what can be done to create a more productive and effective environment. Panelists included: Constantin Basturea, Converseon's director of new media strategies and the author of "PR meets the WWW" blog; Gail Rymer, director of communications, Lockheed Martin; Patricia T. Whalen, Ph.D., APR, assistant professor of public relations & advertising, DePaul University; and Mark Weiner, president, Delahaye.

"PRSA provides relevant research and professional development programs for the public relations profession," said Bacon's CEO Steve Newman. "While PRSA educates and informs communications professionals on these important industry trends, Bacon's helps that same audience maximize results with its media intelligence and research solutions."

When asked if their top management or CEO believes that public relations moves the organization forward in terms of reputation of the organization, market share and financial success/sales, of these three, agreement was strongest concerning reputation of the organization which received an average agreement score of 4.51 on a five-point scale. Although positive, average agreement levels were lower concerning respondents' perceptions that management sees PR as moving the organization forward in terms of financial success/sales (3.94) and market share (3.90), overall.

On the question of how important specific issues were to the industry and their practice of public relations, respondents rated Ethical issues: individual privacy, organizational integrity, etc. the highest in importance (4.60). This was followed by Government regulation: HIPPA, Sarbanes Oxley, Reg FD, VNR regulations, etc. at 4.12. First amendment issues: FCC, media ownership, etc. were also rated as important (4.01). The remaining issue examined (procurement issues) was rated essentially as not important (3.48).

Proliferation of new communications channels, including text messaging and MySpace was rated highest by respondents when asked what trends are important to the industry and the practice of public relations. Of the six trends examined, text messaging and MySpace received a 4.51 on a five-point scale. Respondents at smaller organizations (50 or fewer employees) rated this trend significantly higher in importance than their counterparts at larger organizations. Likewise, respondents with executive management level authority rated this trend significantly higher than did respondents with lower levels of authority in their organization. Overall, respondents rated three of the six trends strongly in terms of importance: IMC – Integrated Marketing Communications was rated at 4.24 in importance, followed by globalization of PR at 4.14.

PRSA and Delahaye jointly developed the custom research instrument. The questionnaire consisted primarily of closed-ended questions with an opportunity to explain some "Other" responses. The contact sample, consisting of approximately 15,000 professionals related to the PR field, many of whom are members of PRSA, was provided by PRSA and Bacon's Information.

Contacts were solicited to participate in the study via e-mail. Returns were collected in September and October of 2006. After elimination of duplicate responses, 1,493 individuals responded to the less than 10-minute questionnaire. The large number of respondents constitutes a statistically representative sample size of this universe. Percentages reported are based on those who provided a response for each question. Statistical analysis consisted of frequencies and a complete set of statistical cross-tabulations. Statistical testing based on a 95 percent confidence interval was implemented to analyze any differences in respondent sub-populations.

To download a copy of the 2006 State of the PR Industry Opinion Survey, click [here](#).

An expanded overview of the webinar will be posted here next week. The webinar is also archived [here](#).