

Press release

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Top challenges for communicators in 2012: Recognition within top management, ethical standards, increasing number of touchpoints with public

A staggering 85% of communication professionals have reported a “lack of understanding of the communication practice within top management” – so says the European Communication Monitor (ECM) for 2012 launched at the European Communication Summit in Brussels today. Herbert Heitmann, President of the European Association of Communication Directors (EACD) said “Since our association was formed in November 2006, we have been aiming to get greater recognition for the communications professional at the highest strategic level – this report shows that this clearly has to remain our aim”.

The survey, conducted across almost 2,200 communication professionals Europe-wide in March 2012, also highlighted strategic issues as well as ethical challenges and standards: six out of 10 report that they have encountered ethical challenges during the previous 12 months – situations that were legally acceptable but problematic from a moral point of view. These issues are indicated to be more prevalent today than five years ago. Challenges identified at the strategic level are “coping with the digital evolution” and “linking communication to business strategies”. Nearly 50% of respondents identified these as issues for the next three years.

The monitor also reveals that, over the last five years, organisations have an increasing number of touchpoints with their respective audiences. “Messages are now being formed for different stakeholders with customised perceptions – a marked shift from shaping a consistent image for all stakeholders”, explained Professor Ansgar Zerfass, head researcher for the survey.

“The EACD has cooperated with EUPRERA on the European Communication Monitor since 2009 and the report is now proving to be an invaluable tool for communication professionals throughout our membership and for shaping the agenda of our association. We will continue to work towards strengthening our profession and getting the communicator’s role recognised as fundamental to the success of any organisation” added Mr Heitmann.

Background

The European Communication Monitor survey on the status quo and trends of communication management across Europe is jointly organised by the European Public Relations Education and Research Association (EUPRERA) and the European Association of Communication Directors (EACD). The international survey, sponsored by Ketchum Pleon, a leading European public relations agency, is

based on replies from almost 2,200 communication professionals in 42 countries. A research group of professors from 11 renowned universities, led by Professor Ansgar Zerfass, has conducted the research for the sixth time in a row. It is widely recognised as the largest study in the field of strategic communication worldwide.

A free PDF report with full results as well as a YouTube video with the most important highlights is available at www.communicationmonitor.eu

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