

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PROFILE 2002: A Survey of IABC Membership

*The latest research on job satisfaction, salaries and opinions about the profession*

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### THE GOOD NEWS?

- Communicators' overall job satisfaction has remained positive since the last survey was conducted in 2000.
- Most communicators surveyed have consistent and frequent access to senior management.
- The advent of technology continues to change the profession in two important ways. 1) It is relied on more and more as a way of disseminating information and communicating with important audiences. 2) At the same time, it is driving an increased desire for more personal, face-to-face interaction.
- The profession affords women strong career opportunities and the possibility of advancement into senior positions.
- More and more, organizations realize the need to formally measure the effectiveness of their communication efforts.

### THE NOT SO GOOD NEWS?

- The average salary for IABC communicators increased only 3 percent annually during the past two years, which is less than half the 7 percent annual increase that took place from 1996 to 1999.
- Compared to 2000, it is twice as likely that the communication department's revenue or budget has decreased in the past year.
- Relatively few in the profession feel that their jobs afford them greater job security compared to other lines of work.

## **YOUR WORK AND FUTURE**

In general, communicators are satisfied with their positions and with many of the specific elements of their jobs.

Overall satisfaction with current position is 7.0 (mean average; 10 = extremely satisfied, 1 = not at all satisfied). This is consistent with the rating given in the prior survey (7.1).

*High* satisfaction with specific elements of the work place or job (mean average; 10 = extremely satisfied, 1 = not at all satisfied):

- Access to technology (7.6)
- Types of benefits received (7.5)
- Flexible work hours (7.3)

*Low* satisfaction with specific elements of the work place or jobs (mean average; 10 = extremely satisfied, 1 = not at all satisfied):

- Potential for promotion (5.5)
- Mentoring received from colleagues (5.5)
- Ability to work from home (6.2)
- Where they will be working in one or two years:
  - In their present organization (59 percent)
  - Working somewhere else (28 percent)

## **REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AND MANAGEMENT ACCESS**

Senior management tends to have influence over the communication function and is involved in the communication process.

The most senior person communicators report to:

- President or CEO (35 percent)
- Vice president (18 percent)
- Director (18 percent)

Access to senior management is:

- Unlimited or at least once a week (88 percent)

Interaction with senior management most often involves:

- Communication planning (81 percent)
- Developing key messages (78 percent)
- Developing copy for print (75 percent)

In most cases, the same department manages internal and external communication.

Manage internal and external communication out of:

- The same department (72 percent)
- Different departments (28 percent)

When managed out of different departments, the reporting relationship between them is described as very or somewhat effective by nearly three out of four (70 percent).

## **THE COMMUNICATION PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

Essentially, no major changes have occurred in staff levels within the departments surveyed, with nearly equal proportions seeing an increase and a decrease in staff. However, compared to previous years, the expenditures they represent have gone down.

In the previous year, the staff size in the communication department has:

- Increased (37 percent)
- Remained the same (32 percent)

- Decreased (31 percent)

In the previous year, the revenue or budget for the communication function:

- Increased (41 percent)
- Remained the same (24 percent)
- Decreased (35 percent) -- this is twice as many as in 2000 (18 percent)

Communication programs tend to work with a set of objectives in mind, and, typically, these are closely related to the organization's business objectives. Increasingly, communicators and their companies are formally measuring achievements against objectives.

Two out of three say the communication program has documented objectives (66 percent). Of those that do have documented objectives:

- They are measurable in some fashion (72 percent).
- They are tied to the organization's business objectives (87 percent).
- Performance is measured against the objectives (78 percent).

The most likely developments experienced in the past two years:

- Increased usage of computer presentations (65 percent)
- Increased measurement of communication effectiveness (47 percent)
- Increased support of face-to-face communication (45 percent)
- Reorganization or re-engineering of their organization (45 percent)

Reliance on technology continues to rise for both internal and external communication. Internal communication tools used (2002 vs. 2000):

- Internal e-newsletters (82 percent vs. 56 percent)
- Intranet (81 percent vs. 67 percent)
- Web page (89 percent vs. 87 percent)
- E-mail (98 percent vs. 96 percent)

External communication tools used (2002 vs. 2000):

- External e-newsletters (45 percent vs. 29 percent)
- Web page (94 percent vs. 92 percent)
- E-mail (88 percent vs. 79 percent)

## **OPINIONS ABOUT THE PROFESSION**

Management's commitment to communication and the use of technology are seen as having the greatest impact on the profession.

Issues affecting the profession most (mean average; 10 = very much, 1 = not at all):

- Management's valuation of communication's contribution to bottom line (8.4)
- Technological advances (8.1)
- Customer satisfaction or service (8.0)

Issues affecting the profession least (mean average; 10 = very much, 1 = not at all):

- Equal opportunity, diversity or affirmative action issues (5.7)
- Social or environmental responsibilities (6.4)
- International development and growth (6.6)

Most communication professionals are happy with their career choices, and the majority agrees that the profession affords opportunities for women.

Things that most communicators agree about the profession (percentage strongly or somewhat agree):

- If I had to do it over again, I would choose a career in public relations/corporate communication (76 percent).

- There are just as many opportunities for advancement for women working in public relations/corporate communication as there are for men (74 percent).
- Women are gaining more top job positions (73 percent).

Things that few agree with about the profession (percentage strongly or somewhat agree):

- Public relations/corporate communication is perceived by top management to be more prestigious than most other professions (16 percent).
- "I feel there is more job security in public relations/corporate communication than in most other professions today (17 percent)."

## **INTERPRETING THE SURVEY**

PROFILE 2002 is based on earlier surveys conducted by IABC and PRSA in 1999/2000 and 1996/1997. For the current survey, some new questions were added, some that were in the prior surveys were dropped and others were modified to enhance the quality of the information obtained. Therefore, not all questions in the current survey can be compared to previous years' results. However, where comparisons can be made from year to year, any meaningful changes are noted.

It should be noted that salary comparisons between the 2002 and the 1999/2000 Profile surveys include only IABC members who participated in the 2000 research. All other comparisons between the 2002 and the 2000 surveys also include PRSA members who participated in the 2000 survey.

## **THE METHODOLOGY**

The survey was conducted in April and May, 2002.

- E-mail invitations to participate in the survey were sent to all IABC members. The e-mail included a link to a web-based survey.
- A total of 1,349 members completed the survey online. This is the first IABC survey featuring a web-based site for responses.

## **RESEARCH APPROACH**

The survey consisted of closed-end questions as well as two open-ends. Topics included:

- Satisfaction with current work environment and opinions about future work status
- Type of reporting relationships and access to senior management
- Communication program structure including external and internal communication
- Opinions about the profession
- Demographics.

The total sample (1,349 cases) yields statistical precision of +/- 3 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval. Simply stated, if 50 percent answered a question a certain way in the survey, and that same question was asked of a random sample of IABC members 100 times, we would expect the results to be between 47.5 percent and 52.5 percent 95 out of 100 times.

Interpretation of the results focused on the following tasks:

- Comparing the current findings to the 1999/2000 survey for those questions that remained the same in both surveys.
- Comparing the findings between total U.S., total Canada, and total non-North America in the 2002 results.

## **RESPONDENT PROFILE**

**Annual salary:** The average IABC salary is US\$66,800, which represents only a modest increase from the prior survey (US\$63,150).

**Gender:** Three out of four are female (76 percent).

**Age:** About a third are younger than 35 (38 percent) and a third are 35 to 44 (35 percent).

**Education level:** Two out of three have a college or university degree (66 percent), while one in four have a master's degree (28 percent).

**Experience level:** A third has been in the profession fewer than 10 years (36 percent), and close to two out of five have been in it 10 to 20 years (39 percent).

**Type of organization working in or for:** Most are corporate (63 percent) followed by association/nonprofit (15 percent), consulting firm (10 percent), self-employed (5 percent) or some other type of organization (7 percent).

**Professional accreditation:** Fewer than one in five are accredited (17 percent).

**Type of communication handled:** More than half are involved in both internal and external communication (57 percent).

**Supervisory responsibility:** More than half do not supervise people (54 percent), while a third supervise between one and four (33 percent).

**Geographic location:** Most are in North America, with 71 percent in the U.S., 22 percent in Canada and 7 percent from outside the U.S. and Canada.

If you are an IABC member, click to view PROFILE 2002 in its entirety.  
[http://www.iabc.com/private/leaders/images/profile\\_2002.pdf](http://www.iabc.com/private/leaders/images/profile_2002.pdf)

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