USC Annenberg Center For Public Relations

A QUIET SHIFT

2026 GLOBAL COMMUNICATION REPORT

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International Association
of Business Communicators

USC Annenberg
Center for Public Relations

Meltwater

FOREWORD

IN THE 2025 GLOBAL COMMUNICATION REPORT, the USC Center for Public Relations examined four forces reshaping our profession: AI, hybrid work, evolving media, and polarization. Of the four, PR professionals said polarization is doing the most damage. But we rarely talk about its real impact because it's hard to measure.

You can count impressions and conversions. You can benchmark efficiency and quality. But polarization is often experienced more as a feeling than a formula: a constant fear that whatever you say or do will offend someone, ignite backlash, and damage the brand you're trying to protect. As communicators, we feel it in our work — and increasingly, in our lives.

In 2026, we set out to diagnose that feeling by asking how polarization impacts the structure, strategy and status of the communications function. We surveyed PR leaders in agencies and in-house teams around the world to understand how they're responding to this overheated environment, and how they're trying to lower its temperature. We asked some of the same questions to a sample of the U.S. general public. And to add a personal perspective, we conducted one-on-one interviews with Fortune 500 CCOs.

What emerges is a portrait of an industry adapting to cultural discord that no longer feels temporary. In many places, particularly the U.S., polarization has become a chronic condition, rather than a passing phase. That shift is forcing PR professionals to rethink some of the most fundamental assumptions of their work, especially the tradeoffs between engagement and restraint.

In many organizations, polarization has made the communications function seem more indispensable, not less. When motives are questioned and meanings contested, the need for clarity and context is paramount. Companies are approaching weighty issues with greater deliberation because they know one misstep can trigger immediate and lasting consequences.

This added caution does not signal a retreat from communication. What we are seeing is a quiet shift — from expansive purpose-driven dialogue to a more situational approach to corporate speech — shaped by the permanence of polarization. As companies reassess where and when to engage, some conversations have receded, while others have accelerated.

This shift raises two defining questions for the PR profession. Are we meant to be the trumpet — urging leaders to do the right thing and amplifying those actions when they do — or the shield, defending reputations in an increasingly hostile environment? And if we're asked to do both, can a profession built to shape positive narratives that move organizations forward become just as skilled at defending against negative attacks that force them into retreat?

We designed this study to explore those questions. The data that follows won't tell you what to believe. But it will show what communicators are experiencing — and how they're responding. We hope this report gives you the confidence to pursue what you should, the courage to defend what you must, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Fred Cook
Director, USC Center for Public Relations

THE CLIMATE

"In a polarized world where emotions are running high, it's harder for companies to speak out without putting their front-line employees at risk."

—from Chief Communications Officer interviews

BEFORE STEPPING OUTSIDE, it's advisable to check the weather, even if you live in Southern California. In today's communications environment, temperatures are high, and the exposure risk is real. But if you understand this overheated environment, you're less likely to get burned.

Following Joe Biden's election in November 2020, the USC Center for Public Relations began tracking polarization to see whether the tone of public discourse in the U.S. would moderate under new leadership. Despite the Biden Administration's efforts to tone down the national rhetoric, we found the overall level of polarization remained about the same. We also saw that the most controversial issues shifted monthly with the news cycle, but immigration was consistently a hot-button issue.

Today, the vast majority of PR professionals in our survey believe the temperature of our national debate has reached a record high and is likely to remain elevated for the foreseeable future. They also put immigration at the top of the list of reasons why. However, their views do not fully align with those of the general public.

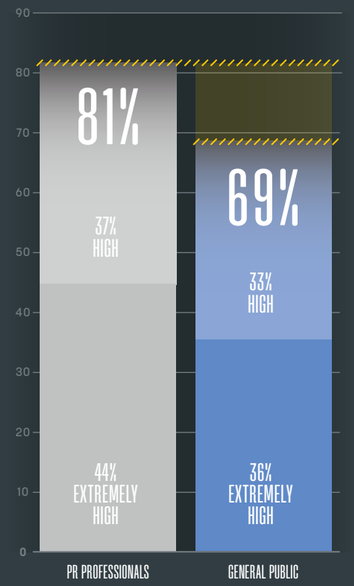
A PERCEPTION GAP

While there is broad agreement that political division and social polarization are high in the United States, public relations professionals are significantly more likely than the American public to perceive their intensity as extreme. Overall, 81% of PR professionals say polarization is extremely high or very high, compared with 69% of the public. This gap may explain why communicators often approach sensitive issues with more caution than their audiences might expect.

More striking than the overall level of polarization is the lack of agreement on what issues are driving it. While both the public and PR professionals cite immigration and crime as highly polarizing, their views diverge on most other topics. PR professionals are far more likely than the public to rate LGBTQ+ rights, abortion, and climate change as extremely or very polarizing. By contrast, the public places greater emphasis on inflation and affordable housing — issues rooted in day-to-day economic pressures — highlighting a difference in how polarization is experienced across audiences.

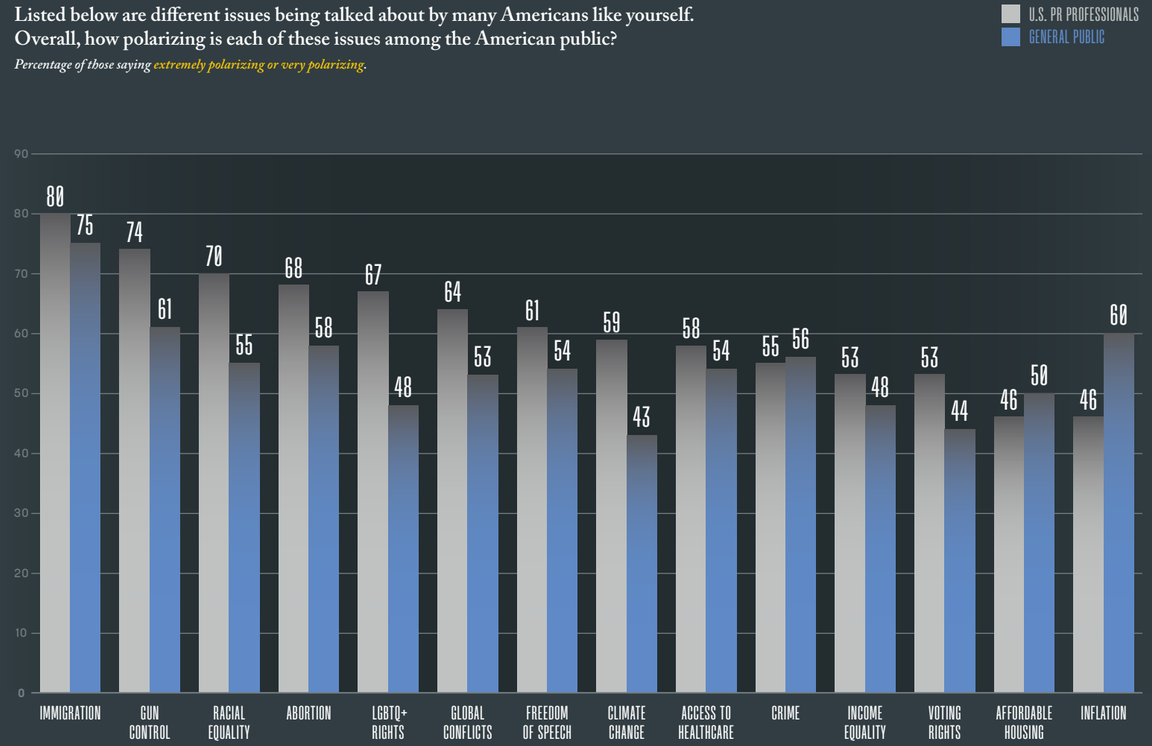
In your opinion, what is the current level of political and social polarization in the United States?

Those saying extremely high or high.



Listed below are different issues being talked about by many Americans like yourself. Overall, how polarizing is each of these issues among the American public?

Percentage of those saying extremely polarizing or very polarizing.



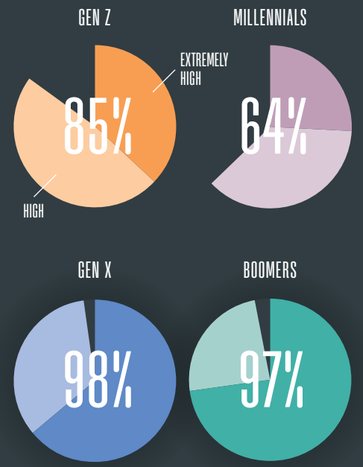
> "The government today has proven itself very capable and interested in retribution. So, if you're a business leader, proceed cautiously."
>
> *—from Chief Communications Officer interviews*

DIVERGING ATTITUDES

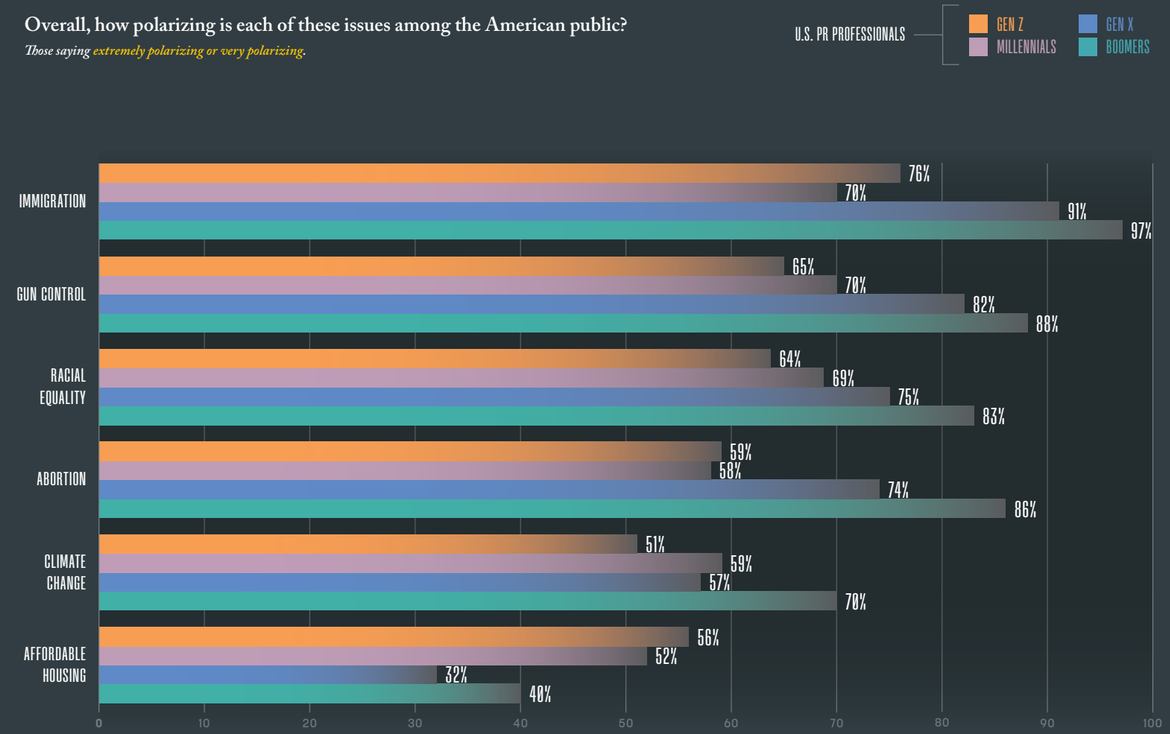
Many of the attitudes among PR professionals about the level and causes of political division and social polarization in the United States are influenced by age.

Gen X and Baby Boomer PR professionals are significantly more likely to view current levels of polarization as severe. By contrast, Gen Z and Millennials, who have come of age in a polarized environment, tend to view today's conditions as less exceptional – more closely mirroring the general public.

In your opinion, what is the current level of political and social polarization in the United States?
Those saying extremely high or high.



Overall, how polarizing is each of these issues among the American public?
Those saying extremely polarizing or very polarizing.



THE IMPACT

> "In moments of extreme swings in opinion, those responsible for helping brands find their voice have an outsized role to play more than ever. I would also argue they have an outsized responsibility."
>
> *— from Chief Communications Officer interviews*

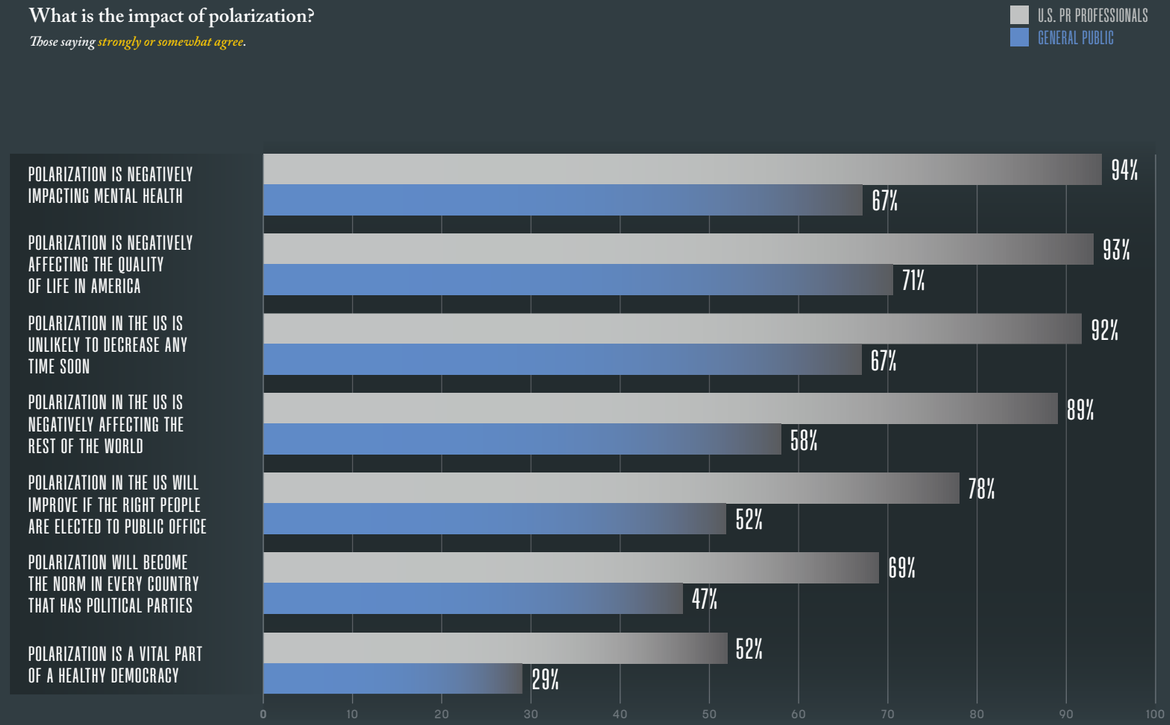
PR LEADERS SEE THE SOCIETAL IMPACT of polarization with striking clarity. Almost all PR professionals agree that polarization is negatively affecting the quality of life and impacting mental health. They also believe polarization isn't likely to end any time soon.

But the impact on the industry is a little blurry. While roughly half say polarization has had a negative impact on their companies and clients, nearly all agree it has increased the importance of PR within their organizations.

While polarization is a net negative for society, it is having the opposite effect on the PR industry. In an era of uncertainty, communications expertise is at a premium — even if the final decision is to say nothing at all. Whether that heightened importance will be maintained as companies become more selective in what they communicate is a question this research continues to explore.

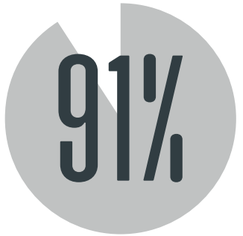
What is the impact of polarization?

Those saying strongly or somewhat agree.



"We are being called upon to do more than we've ever done before. So being great communications professionals just doesn't cut it anymore. You need to be a student of the industry that you work in, because we're being called upon to be counselors, not tacticians."

—from Chief Communications Officer interviews



OF U.S. PR PROFESSIONALS AGREE THAT POLARIZATION INCREASES THE IMPORTANCE OF PR WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

IMPACT OF POLARIZATION

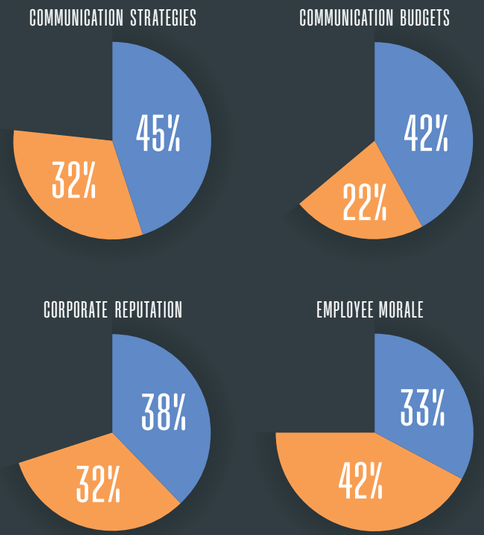
In our survey, the American public agreed with our PR respondents that polarization is having a negative impact, but their responses were not as extreme. This might indicate that communicators are oversensitized to the issue, which could contribute to their abundance of caution.

That heightened concern is also reflected in how communicators see polarization affecting their work: 91% of PR professionals say it has increased the importance of public relations within their organizations.

What impact has political and social polarization had on your company or clients in the following areas?

PR PROFESSIONALS — POSITIVE / NEGATIVE

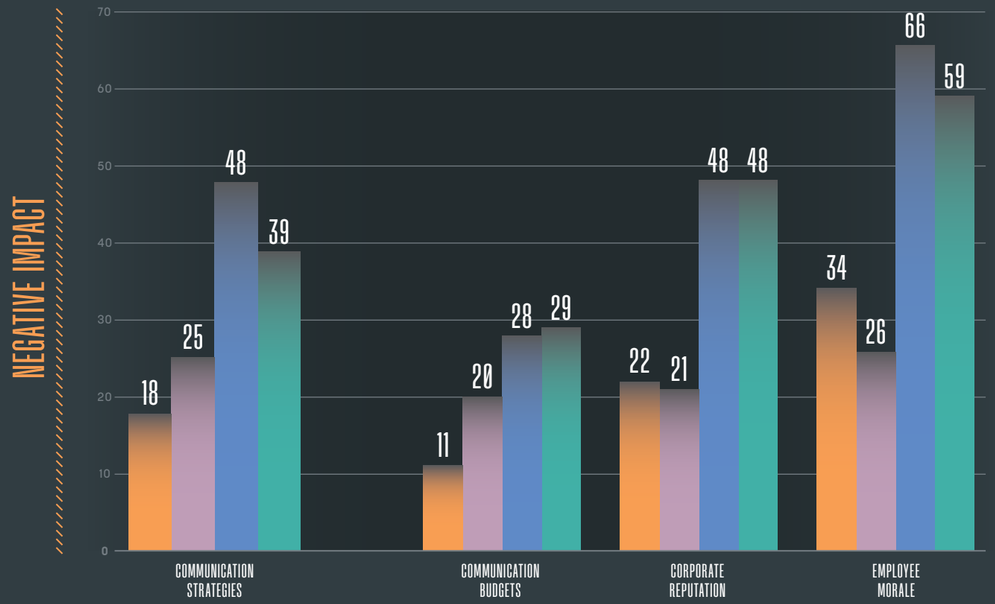
PR professionals are more likely than not to believe political and social polarization will have a positive impact on their communication strategies, communication budgets and corporate reputation, all of which elevate their status. The notable exception is the impact on employee morale, where the concern outweighs optimism.



PR PROFESSIONALS — GEN Z / MILLENNIALS / GEN X / BOOMERS

NEGATIVE IMPACT BY GENERATION

Numbers shown are percentages.



Gen X and Boomers are much more attuned to the downside of polarization, particularly in its effects on employee morale and cultural cohesion. The question is whether age makes one more perceptive or pessimistic.

WHAT THIS DATA SHOWS

PR thrives in turbulence. When the ride gets bumpy, communicators are often moved into the copilot's seat, helping the captain navigate toward calmer air. As this study shows, PR professionals widely recognize the dangers of polarization, and most believe these challenges increase the importance of their role within organizations.

Polarization introduces a different dilemma. When the turbulence is driven not by actions but by the opinions of opposing groups, the traditional playbook no longer applies. In that moment, the communicator must choose between speech and silence.

"I don't think anyone wants upheaval happening on their watch."

— from Chief Communications Officer interviews

THE CHOICE

> "It is our choices… that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."
>
> *— Albus Dumbledore, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

IF DUMBLEDORE WERE TEACHING Harry Potter today, he might add, "Making the right choice has never been more important or more difficult." In an unstable world, good decision-making must weigh both value and values, even when they are in opposition. These choices define the character of a company — and the leaders who make them.

Since 2020, we have asked PR professionals the same question: "Should companies engage in social issues even if those issues are not directly related to their business?" The percentage who answered yes has dropped dramatically because when every word is scrutinized, choosing what to say and when to say it is risky business.

Despite the drop in numbers, more than half of the profession still believes that business has a social responsibility. Although they aren't always the final decision makers, PR professionals play a critical role in weighing management priorities against stakeholder expectations, and their voices matter. This high-wire balancing act requires both competence and courage.

"Reputation is what they care about when their reputation is at risk, but revenue is what they care about all the time — and revenue is what's going to win the day. And controversy doesn't lead to revenue."

— from Chief Communications Officer interviews

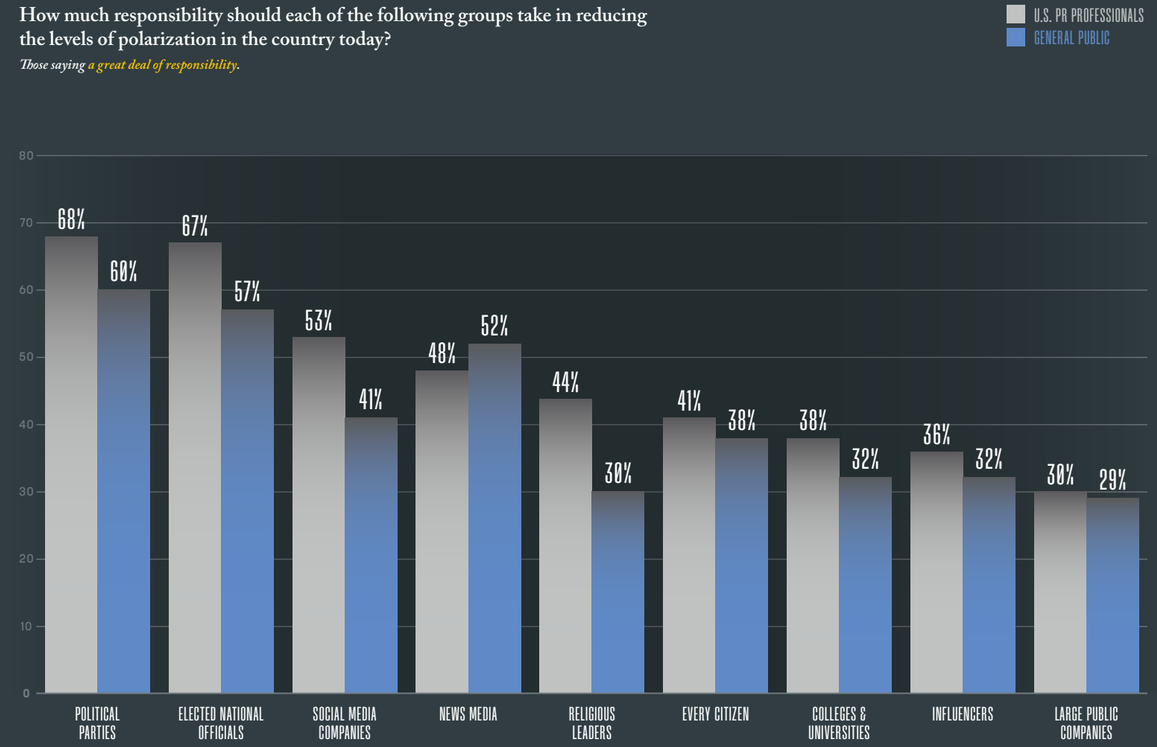
LIMITED ROLE OF BUSINESS

The American public and PR professionals agree about the level of responsibility large public companies have in reducing polarization, with only three in ten saying these organizations have a "great deal of responsibility" to help solve this problem.

Most see the political system as having the bulk of the responsibility, with social media and traditional news media also playing a vital role. Those working in agencies are particularly likely to put the responsibility on the political system compared to those working on the corporate side. They also place greater emphasis on social media's role in reducing polarization.

How much responsibility should each of the following groups take in reducing the levels of polarization in the country today?

Those saying a great deal of responsibility.

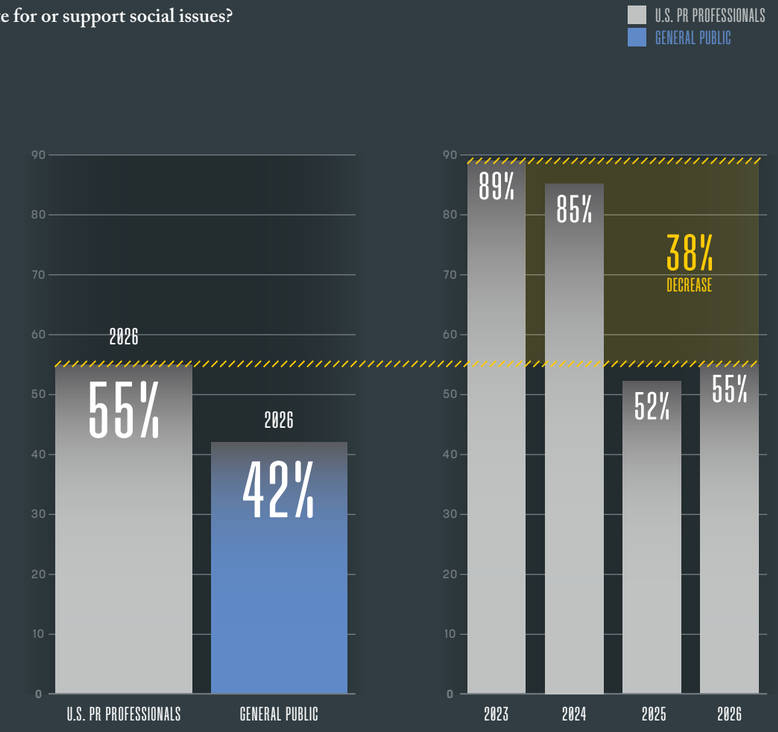


Do companies have responsibility to advocate for or support social issues?

Those saying yes.

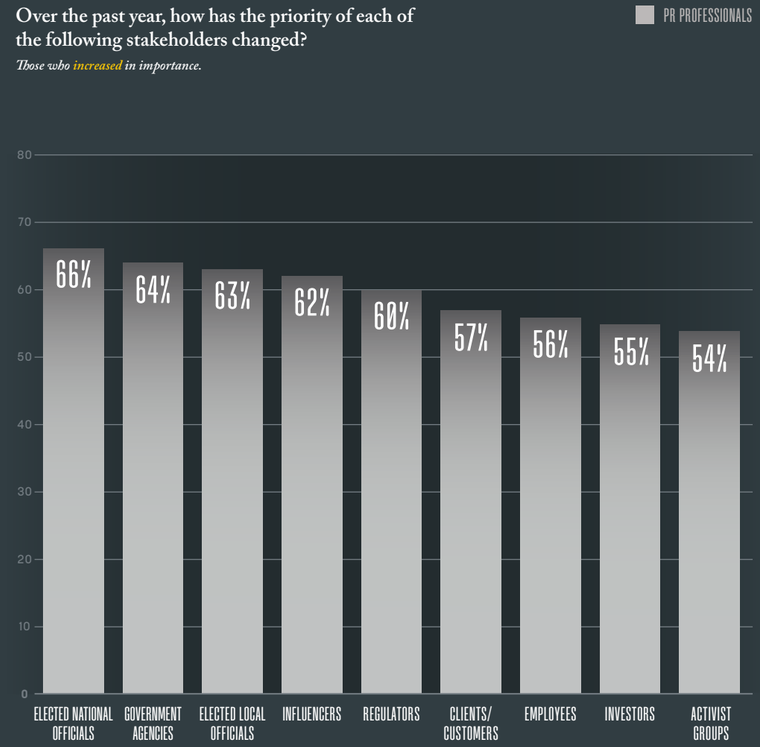
Fifty-five percent of those working in public relations believe companies have a responsibility to advocate for or support social issues even if these issues are not directly relevant to their business. The proportion of those who hold this belief has dropped precipitously since we first started asking this question. In 2023 and 2024, almost nine in ten said companies have this responsibility. The proportion dropped to just over half in 2025 and remains equally low this year. By comparison, only 42 percent of the American public shares this belief. Over a longer time frame, we will learn whether the pendulum swung too far in both directions.

The belief that companies have a responsibility to address social issues is most strongly held by younger PR professionals: six in ten Gen Z and seven in ten Millennials say companies have this responsibility. Maybe they will cause the pendulum to swing back.



Over the past year, how has the priority of each of the following stakeholders changed?

Those who increased in importance.



WHAT THIS DATA SHOWS

This decline in those who believe companies have a responsibility to engage with social issues coincides with increased scrutiny of many companies and other institutions by the U.S. government. This strongly suggests that companies are increasingly taking defensive measures by minimizing their public exposure to issues that are not core to their operations, rather than risk-taking stands that could jeopardize their business' share price or subject them to unwanted scrutiny. To avoid these risks, communicators also are increasingly monitoring the words and actions of elected officials and government agencies.

THE SHIFT

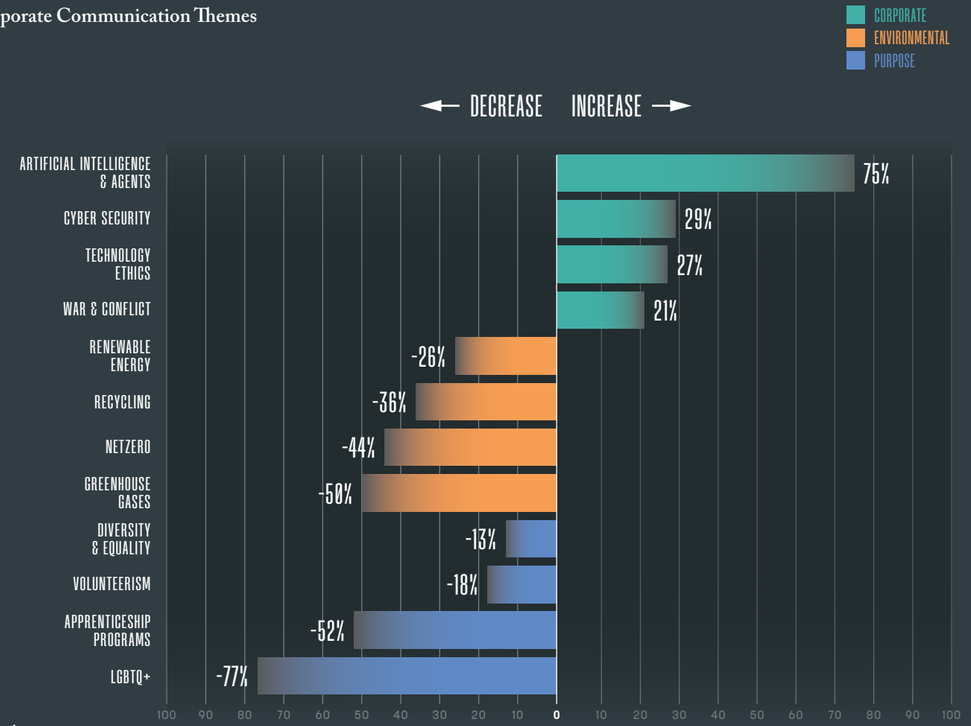
> "It got to the point in Minneapolis where the silence was deafening… so they ultimately concluded there's more risk of being silent, we better do something. So they did something — and it was kind of soft."
>
> *— from Chief Communications Officer interviews*

THE CORPORATE RESPONSE to the killings of George Floyd, Renee Good and Alex Pretti in the same city — 5½ years apart — illustrates how dramatically polarization has changed the way companies communicate. In 2020, a Harvard Law School study estimated that two-thirds of Fortune 500 companies issued statements condemning George Floyd's murder and pledging to support racial equality. In 2026, the day after Pretti's killing and three weeks after Good's, 16 Minnesota Fortune 500 companies signed a joint statement calling for greater cooperation — yet did not mention either victim by name.

But even that muted corporate response seemed to have a calming effect on the confrontation, suggesting that big business has the power to change the conversation, even if it doesn't have the responsibility to do so.

Relative Shifts in Corporate Communication Themes 2024-2025

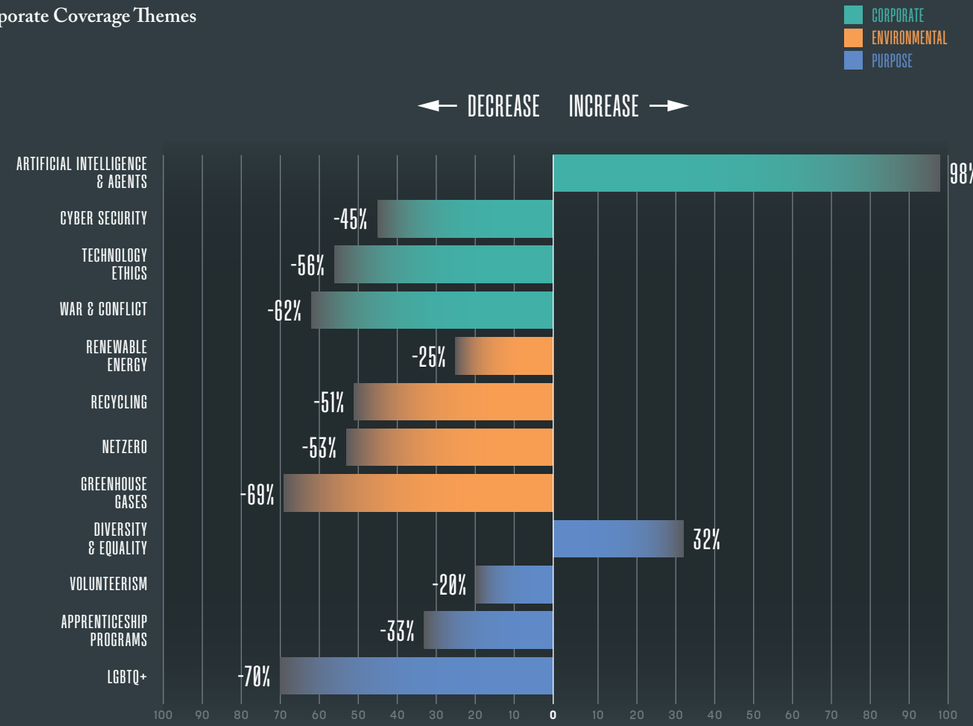
Examining the shift from a different angle, this exclusive analysis from Cometrics.io tells the same story. They analyzed social media posts — including LinkedIn posts — from 6,317 C-level executives at Fortune 500 companies and coded them into three strategic pillars — Purpose, Environmental, and Corporate — over a six-month window before and after the November 2024 election. This chart highlights how the prominence of each theme dramatically shifted in the two half-years, revealing where executive attention surged or declined. The amount of communication didn't change, but the content certainly did.



Data courtesy of Cometrics.io

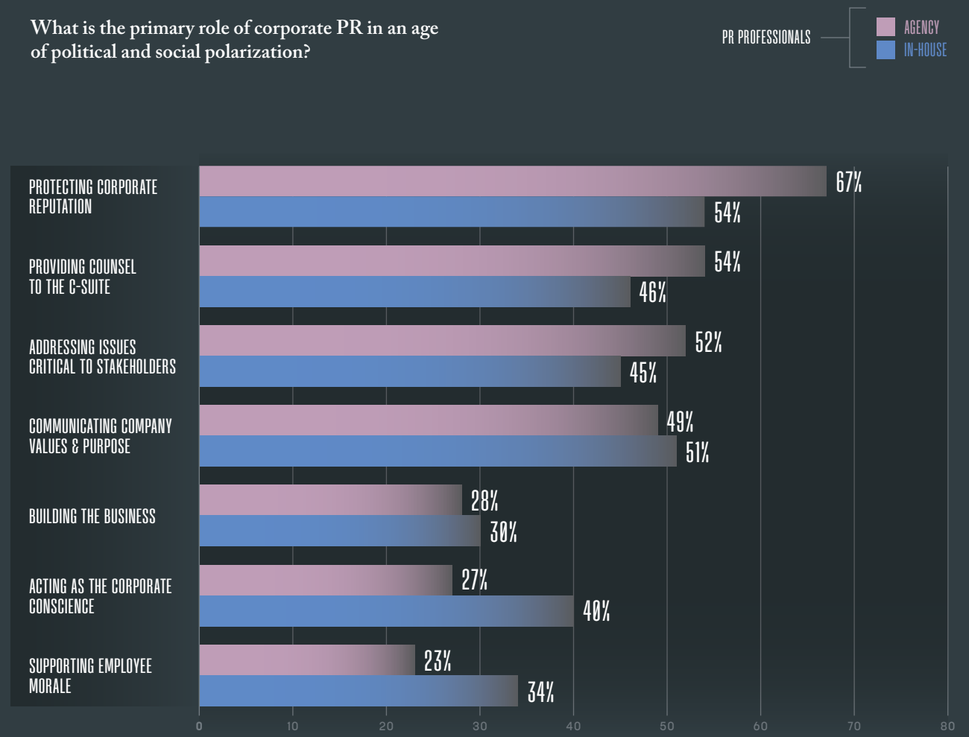
Relative Shifts in Corporate Coverage Themes 2023-2025

The second analysis, conducted by Meltwater, examined coverage of U.S. Fortune 50 companies in top-tier national outlets. The findings show a clear shift in thematic emphasis between 2023 and 2025. Artificial intelligence became the dominant corporate theme post-election, while coverage of other corporate topics, environmental themes and purpose-led issues declined — with the notable exception of DEI. According to a 2025 study by ABC News, coverage of DEI has shifted toward backlash, rollback and litigation stories over the past year as well as the broader politicization of these initiatives.



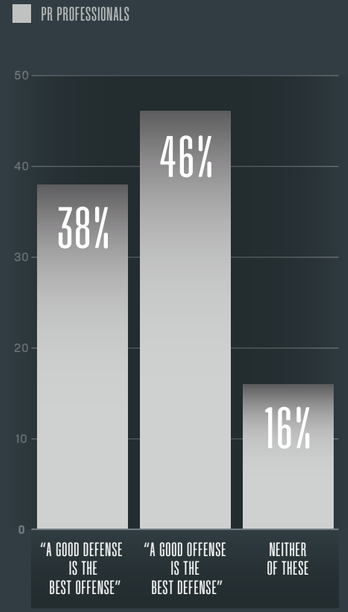
Data courtesy of Meltwater

What is the primary role of corporate PR in an age of political and social polarization?



When asked which was the best strategy, nearly half of all PR professionals surveyed favor the view that "a good offense is the best defense," while a sizable minority believe a defensive posture remains the better approach. Based on this data, we can expect that a handful of companies will take a more aggressive approach to communication this year. It will be interesting to see who leads and who follows.

Which sports analogy best describes your belief about adopting a reactive or more proactive communication approach in an age of political and social polarization?



"I'd have a pretty good defense lined up first before I worried about going on the offense."

— from Chief Communications Officer interviews

OFFENSE VS. DEFENSE

While corporate communications overall is adopting a more defensive posture in response to polarization, PR professionals' opinions are divided on whether a proactive or reactive strategy is better suited to the current environment.

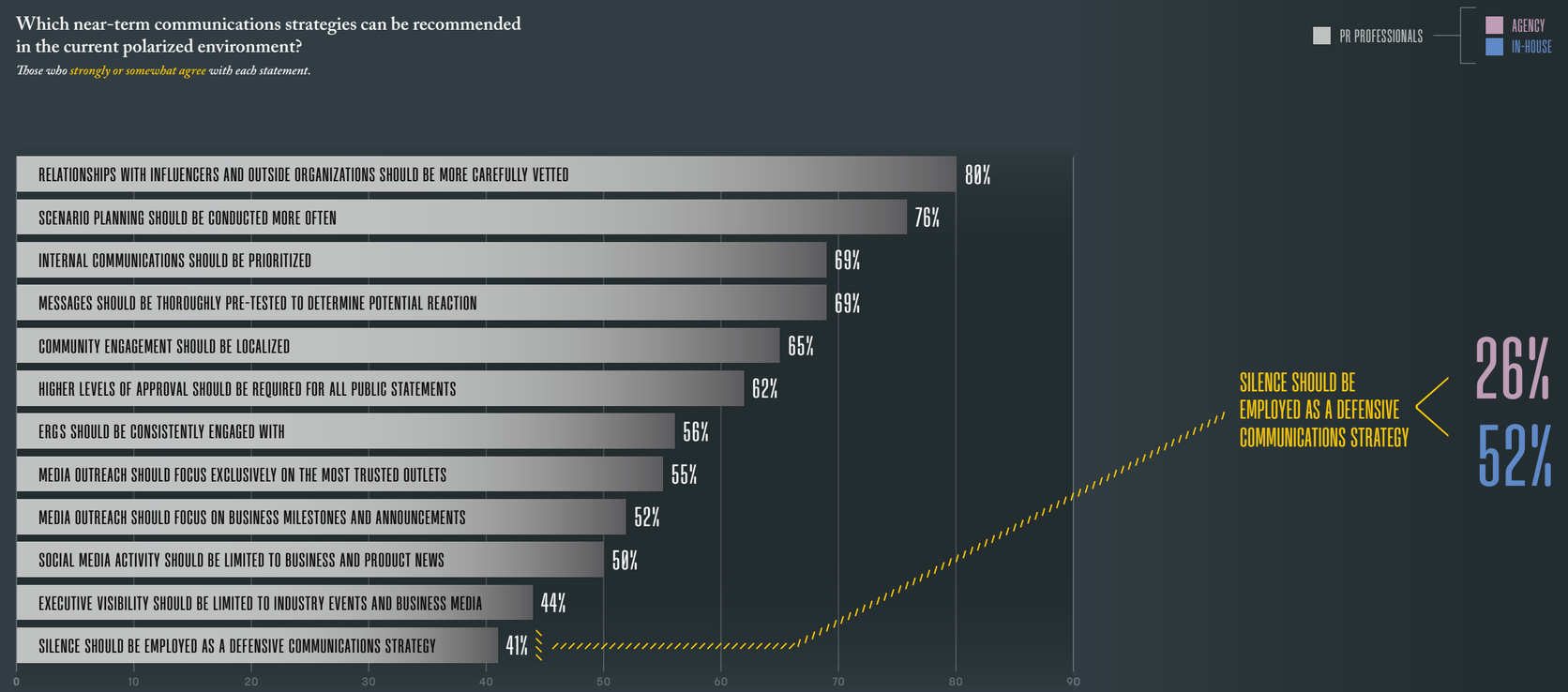
Differences emerge by employment setting. Agency professionals, who are involved with a variety of clients, are more inclined to support a proactive communication strategy — 53% suggest playing offense vs. 28% choosing defense. Those working in-house tend to favor a more defensive posture: 44% said "defense is the best offense."

Protecting corporate reputation has become a primary responsibility for communicators in an age of political and social polarization with corporate public relations focused on communicating company values, addressing issues critical to stakeholders and providing counsel to the C-suite.

By contrast, internal communication and acting as the conscience of the organization are less likely to be viewed as top priorities across the profession overall. Even more telling, only a minority of PR professionals see building the business as a primary responsibility of the communications function.

Which near-term communications strategies can be recommended in the current polarized environment?

Those who strongly or somewhat agree with each statement.



"Some of the wisest counsel anyone can offer a CEO is to say nothing. Sometimes not talking is a very smart strategy."

—from Chief Communications Officer interviews

IS SILENCE GOLDEN?

Regardless of their views, the majority of public relations professionals are more deliberate and more restrained in how they manage communication in a polarized environment.

Most agree that relationships with influencers require more careful vetting and that scenario planning and message testing have become essential. Many also cite the need for higher levels of approval before making public statements and for greater reliance on trusted media outlets.

Notably, a substantial share of PR professionals now favor limiting executive visibility to industry and business media. More than four in ten believe that intentional silence can be the best communication strategy in certain circumstances.

The use of silence as a strategy is also significantly higher among those working in-house, with over half agreeing with this position. This compares to about one-third of those working in agencies who share this belief. In-house professionals are also much more likely than their agency counterparts to want media outreach to only focus on business milestones and announcements, thus avoiding potentially controversial issues.

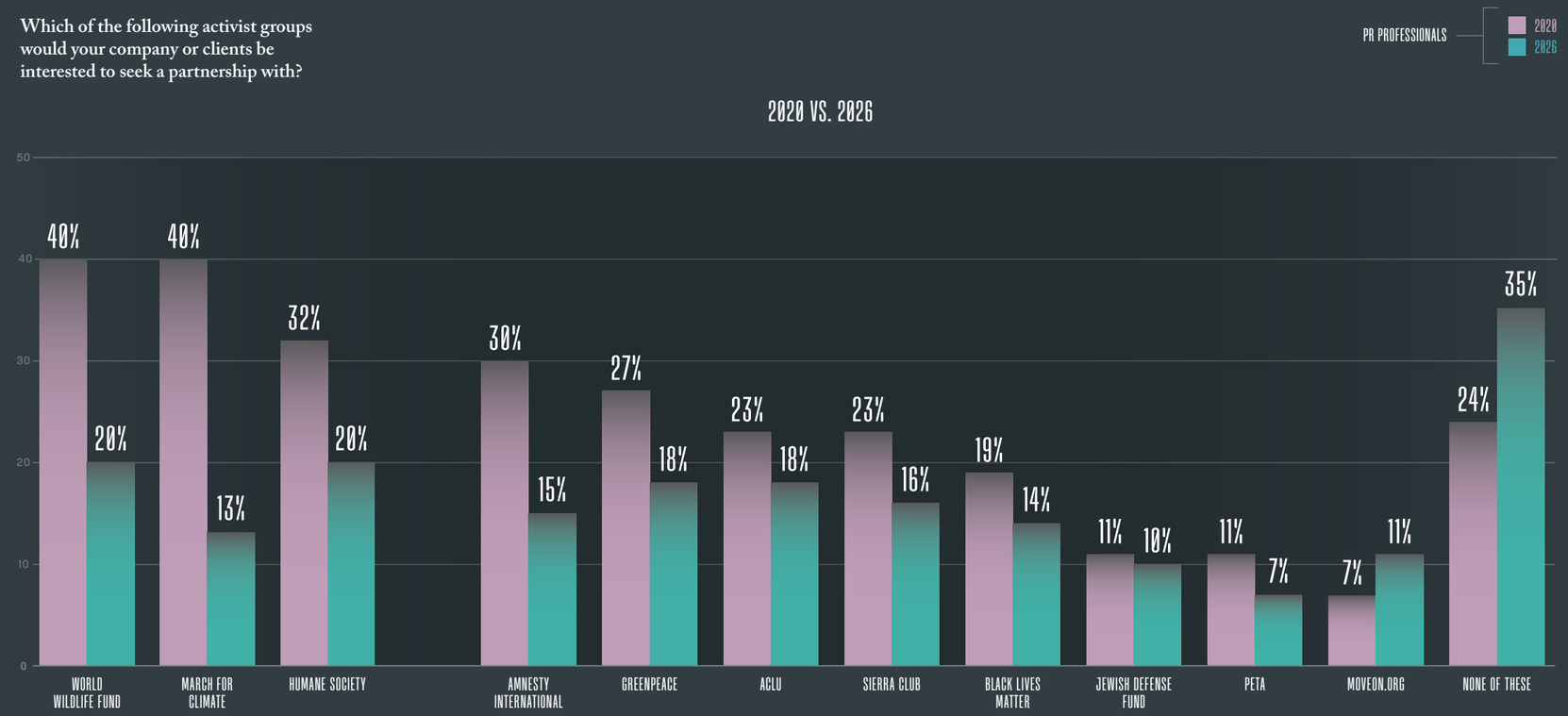
THE NARROWING SCOPE OF ENGAGEMENT

Over the past six years, willingness to partner publicly with advocacy and activist organizations has declined sharply across the profession. Even among groups that once attracted broad support, interest in partnership has dropped by half or more. At the same time, the share of PR agency professionals who say their companies or clients would NOT support any of the organizations listed in this survey has nearly doubled.

Against this backdrop, the causes companies are willing to support tend to be those perceived as lowest risk. Animal welfare and preservation organizations receive significantly more support than groups focused on human and social issues, which are more likely to be viewed as politically charged.

Notably, more than one-third of respondents say their companies or clients would not support any of the organizations listed. This suggests that for a growing number of businesses minimizing exposure outweighs the perceived benefits of public alignment with social causes — which will likely impact the funding of non-profit organizations, who rely on corporate support.

Which of the following activist groups would your company or clients be interested to seek a partnership with?

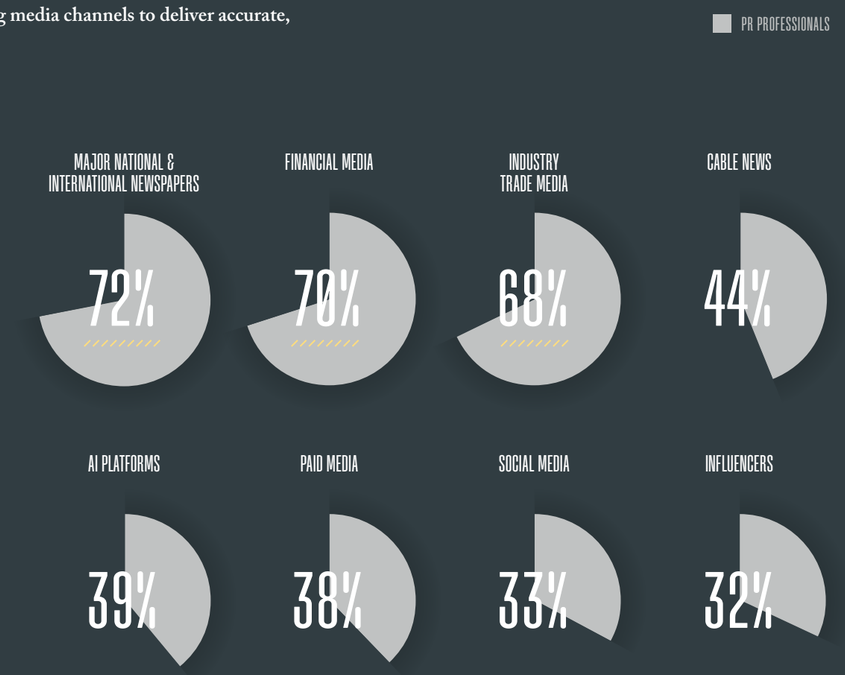


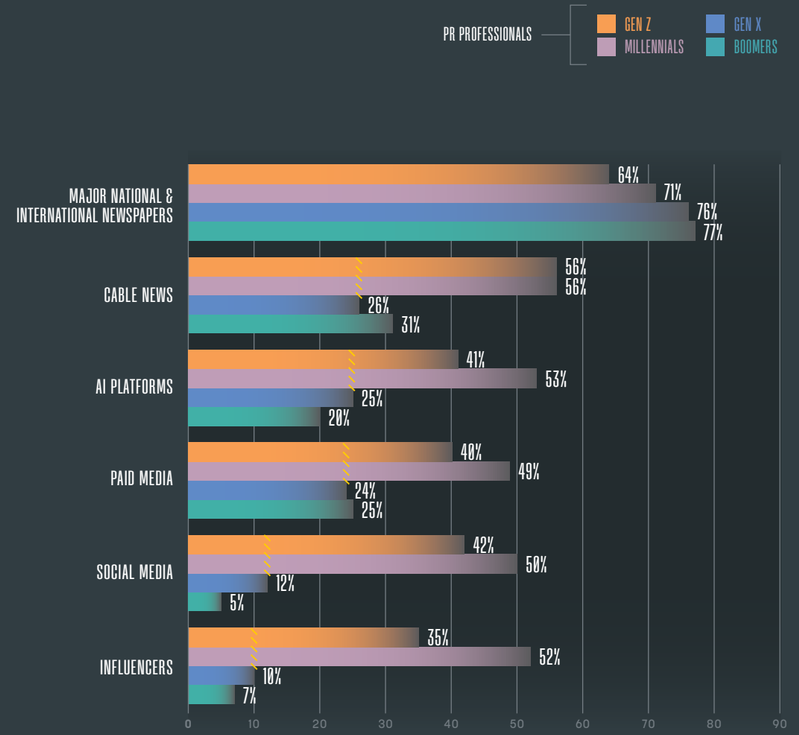
How much do you trust the following media channels to deliver accurate, unbiased messages to stakeholders?

Those saying trust a great deal or trust somewhat.

In a polarized environment, traditional media commands the highest levels of trust among PR professionals. Major national and international newspapers, financial media, and industry trade publications are deemed most likely to be balanced. Trust declines significantly for cable news, AI platforms, paid media, and social media — and is lowest for influencers.

Trust levels vary notably across generations. While confidence in newspaper brands is relatively consistent, Gen Z and Millennial professionals express significantly higher levels of trust that AI platforms, social media, and influencers will deliver accurate, unbiased information than their Gen X and Baby Boomer counterparts.





WHAT THIS DATA SHOWS

While proactive storytelling and external engagement may remain the preferred approach to communication, risk mitigation has replaced risk-taking. PR professionals will choose organizations and media they work with more carefully and control their messages more tightly.

"The biggest thing I spend my life worrying about is how do I reach the audiences I want to reach with the right content?"

— from Chief Communications Officer interviews

THE FUTURE

> "If you're not building the business, that's pretty short-sighted. But there is no business to build without a foundation of trust."
>
> *—from Chief Communications Officer interviews*

PREDICTING THE FUTURE in a polarized environment is at best tricky. When you have no idea what will happen tomorrow, it's hard to envision the next few years.

However, the data that follows offers insight into how these dynamic forces are reshaping the priorities of the public relations industry and the expectations of the professionals working in it.

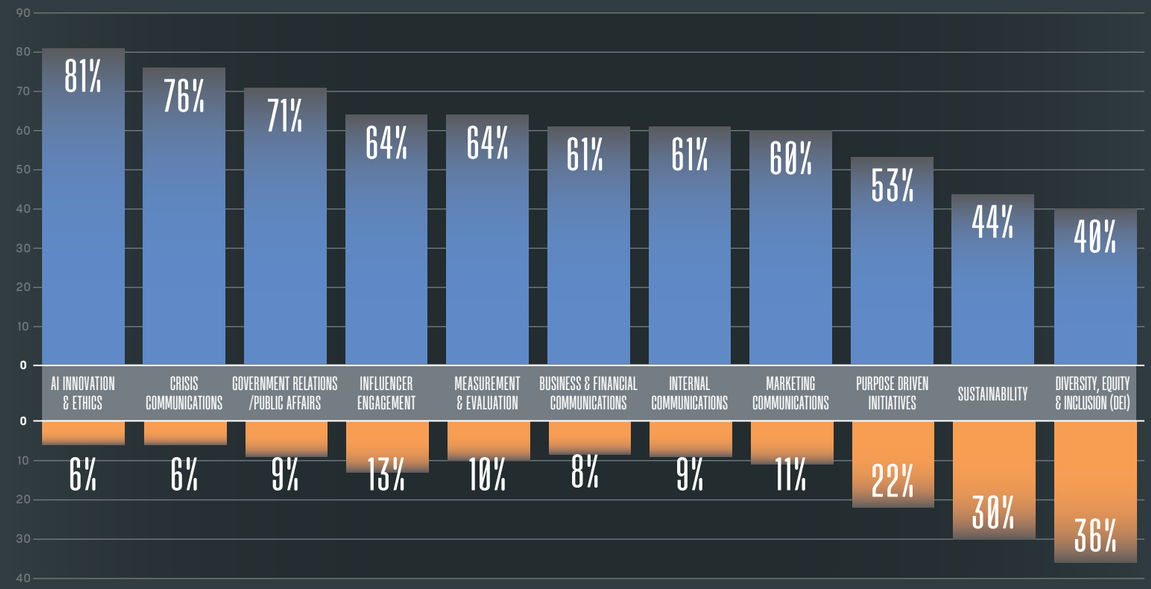
> "We are always in a state of change. We will continue to add and augment with artificial intelligence tools. That is a natural progression, and we'll incorporate these into workflows in different ways."
>
> *— from Chief Communications Officer interviews*

CHANGING PRIORITIES

PR professionals expect a reallocation of communication resources over the next five years. Investments in DEI, sustainability and purpose-driven initiatives are likely to continue their decline. Those resources are shifting to crisis communications and government relations, which are more closely tied to organizational resilience. Investor and employee communications are also high on the list because both of these audiences are critical to business continuity. AI ranks as the top investment priority, underlining the conviction that its short-term impact — on both business and communications — will be profound.

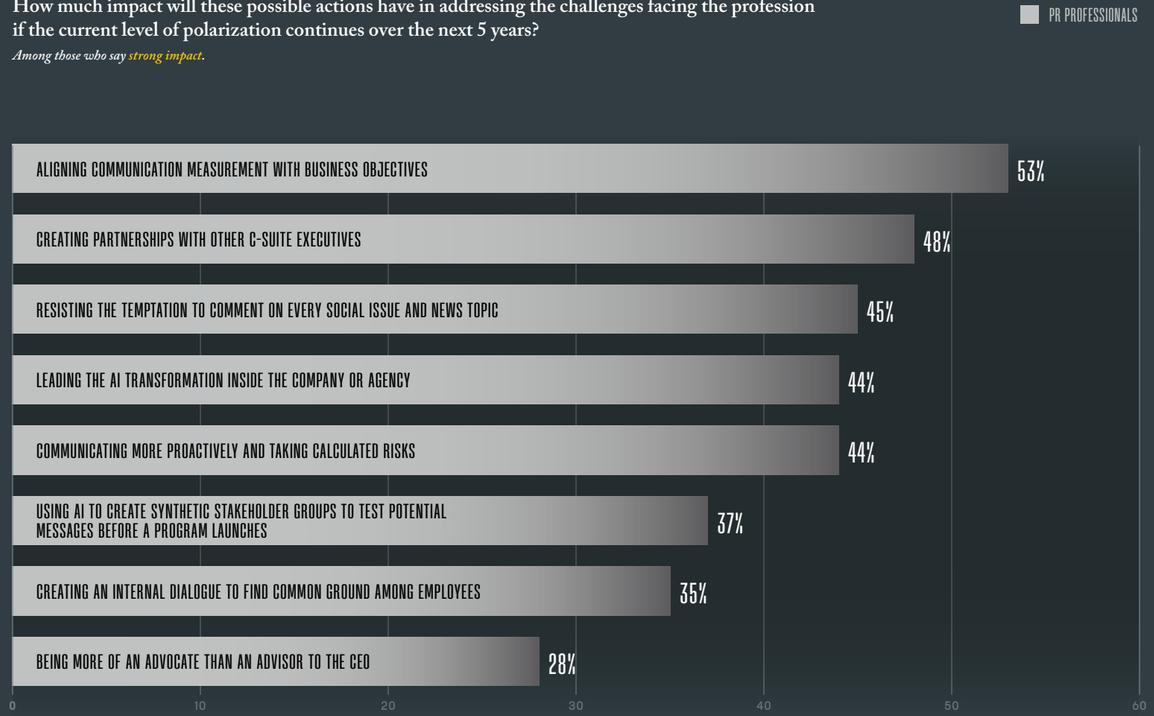
How will communication resources dedicated to these areas change over the next 5 years?

PR PROFESSIONALS — INCREASE / DECREASE

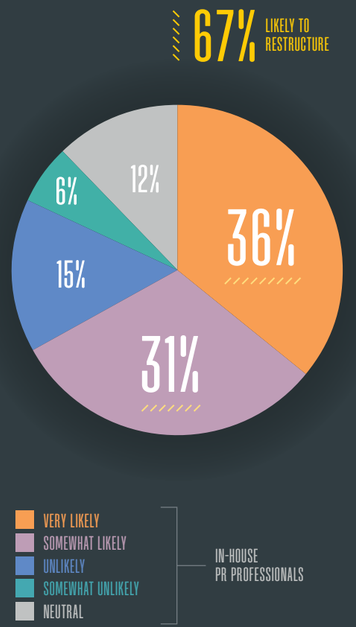


How much impact will these possible actions have in addressing the challenges facing the profession if the current level of polarization continues over the next 5 years?

Among those who say strong impact.



Will your organization restructure its communication function in the near future?



STRUCTURAL CHANGE

If pressure around corporate purpose continues, the PR profession will demonstrate its value by aligning communication objectives more tightly with core business goals. That shift will place greater emphasis on measurable outcomes and tangible ROI than the profession has traditionally delivered.

PR professionals also see the need to strengthen partnerships with other members of the C-suite — an acknowledgment that influence increasingly comes from integration across the business rather than visibility alone.

Leading the AI transformation represents another opportunity for communicators to demonstrate value inside their organizations. But the window will not stay open long. Ownership of this capability will belong to those who invest now — building fluency and training on existing tools while actively experimenting with the emerging ones.

Structural change within communications organizations is also likely. More than two-thirds of in-house communicators surveyed believe their organizations are likely to restructure the communications function in the near future — evidence that PR's role inside companies is still evolving.

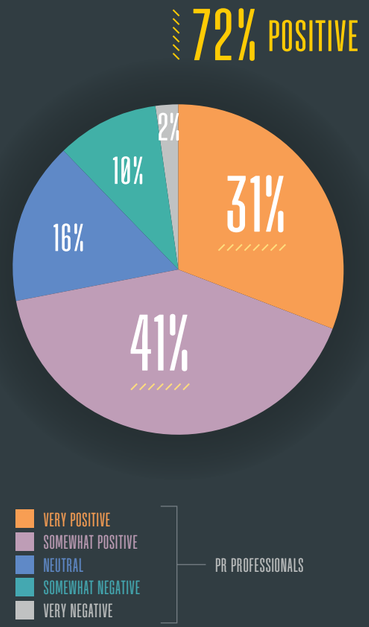
How leaders manage these transitions will ultimately shape how the communications function is perceived, empowered, and resourced in the years ahead.

How personally satisfied are you with the following?

Those saying very or somewhat satisfied.



What is your outlook for future growth of the public relations profession?



SATISFACTION & OUTLOOK

Despite uncertainty and disruption, PR professionals report high levels of personal satisfaction. Seven in ten say they are satisfied with their role in shaping communication strategy, their opportunity to tell stories that reflect their organizations' values and purpose, and the overall direction of their companies.

Two in three also express satisfaction with their future at their organizations, the level of communication they receive about important issues, and their ability to voice their perspectives internally. Notably, less than half of our U.S. respondents say they are satisfied with the direction of their country.

Optimism about the profession remains strong. More than seven in ten PR professionals believe the outlook for future growth is positive — a view unchanged from the prior year. This confidence reflects a belief that public relations becomes more valuable in times of disruption, when organizations most need communication counsel.

A PROFESSION IN TRANSITION

Leaders will change, but polarization may not. Divisiveness has become a marketing strategy to attract audiences, raise money and garner votes — hardening two deeply held belief systems into opposing forces that instinctively repel each other. Companies will communicate cautiously, adopting a new vocabulary to describe their actions and avoid controversy.

Purpose will fade, but not disappear. Corporations will no longer be expected to solve society's problems, and in some cases, they will be criticized for trying. For some leaders, this quiet shift will be a welcome relief from a responsibility they never wanted. A brave few will take a stand on an issue that is closely aligned with their values. They are the ones to watch and, perhaps, follow.

Public relations will be essential. As volatility becomes the norm, communication will play a critical role in helping companies and clients navigate risk. Some communicators will leverage this opportunity to become more of an advocate than a counselor to their leadership.

Stakeholder priorities will collide. Government officials and regulators will command greater attention and power. Customers and employees will remain important, but their expectations will be tempered by a more pragmatic response to their economic and social demands.

Media will multiply the divide. The general public will self-select the information sources that reinforce their own beliefs and biases. Most journalists, influencers and podcasters have already taken sides in this debate. Few will travel the middle of the road for fear of being run over. Communicators will become more precise in the messages they craft, and more reliant on channels they control.

The PR profession will adapt. Public relations will become more concerned with brand protection than promotion, more engaged with numbers than with narratives, and more focused on technology than creativity. The people attracted to the industry will be more pragmatic than idealistic. Alongside traditional communication skills, new entrants into the profession will be expected to be conversant in finance, public policy, and artificial intelligence.

This future may sound daunting until you put it in perspective. In its short history, public relations has adapted to many profound changes in technology, media and culture. Change drives our growth. Change makes us indispensable. The choices we make in this moment of change will shape the future of our profession.

METHODOLOGY

The data for the 2026 Global Communication Report was collected as part of a three-part study:

- An online survey of public relations professionals fielded by the USC Annenberg Center for Public Relations
- An online survey of the U.S. general public
- In-depth qualitative interviews with chief communications officers (CCO)

Survey of Public Relations Professionals

The survey among PR professionals asked questions regarding political and social polarization and its impacts on the public relations profession. 704 respondents took part in the study. The survey was conducted from December 2, 2025, through January 12, 2026.

The study used non-probability sampling methods, where participants volunteered for participation in the study. The sample for the study was derived from databases of public relations professionals including from the Center for Public Relations at USC Annenberg. Leading trade and professional associations specializing in public relations and corporate communication also distributed an email invitation to participate that included a link to the online questionnaire. The Center for PR board of advisors and their companies and agencies also distributed the survey.

Respondents to the survey were screened for employment in public relations or related functions and included those working at public relations or communications agencies (28%), public companies (17%), private companies (25%), government (5%), non-profits (4%) and higher education (9%). 82% respondents were from organizations operating in the United States. One-fourth of the respondents (28%) were from organizations with fewer than 100 employees, and an equal proportion (25%) were from organizations with 2,500 employees or more. Three in four (76%) were in senior level positions.

Seventeen percent of respondents identified as Gen Z, 44% as Millennials, 25% as Gen X and 14% as Baby Boomers.Women comprised 42% of the sample and men 55%. The remaining respondents said they were non-gender conforming or preferred not to identify.

Survey of the U.S. General Public

The survey of the U.S. general public asked a parallel set of select questions on the overall state of political and social polarization in the United States. 1,011 respondents participated in that survey. The survey was conducted among a demographically representative sample of adults 18 years of age and older from January 9 to January 11, 2026.

Completed interviews are weighted by five variables: age, sex, geographic region, race and education to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. population of working adults, 18 years of age and older. Interviewing and tabulation of data was conducted by Big Village (Formerly Opinion Research Corporation) using their Caravan platform.

Qualitative Research

The qualitative interviews were conducted to clarify the findings and to provide additional insights on the impact of political and social polarization on communications. Six CCOs participated in the individual interviews and 8 participated in the focus group.

Interviews and the focus group were based on discussion guides and were conducted by David Michaelson, PhD, Research Fellow at the USC Center for Public Relations. The individual interviews were conducted from January 22 to February 20, 2026 and the focus group of senior communications professionals was conducted on October 22, 2025. Quotes from these interviews and discussions are included anonymously in the report and have been edited for clarity.

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