



P R I S A

Public Relations &
Communication Management

ESTABLISHED 1957

The South African PR Measurement and Evaluation Landscape Report 2020

A SUMMARY OF CURRENT PR PRACTICE AND MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

COMPILED BY

DR TERSIA LANDSBERG | PHD

DR DALIEN RENE BENECKE | D LITT ET PHIL, CPRP, PRISA PRESIDENT

VICTOR SIBEKO | CPRP, FPRISA, AMB-AT-LARGE, M.NST. D

RESEARCH CONDUCTED AS PART
OF A NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
PHD STUDY



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dr Dalien Rene Benecke

The South African PR Landscape 2020 report gives a holistic overview of current PR practice in South Africa. The focus of this report is to highlight the current demographic profile of South African PR practitioners and practice, to show how they are currently implementing their PR practices, and how they are measuring and evaluating their PR efforts.

This report paints a vibrant picture of the South African PR landscape, creating a benchmark of context for, and understanding of the relationship between practice and measurement and evaluation. The research was conducted among over 100 PRISA-affiliated and other PR practitioners across South Africa. This research originally formed part of a PhD study to investigate the implementation of the Barcelona Principles in South African PR practice. The empirical research in this report mainly focused on determining how PR is currently being practiced in South Africa and how PR practitioners are measuring and evaluating their work, as well as how they are reporting to management on their efforts.

This research showed that strategic intent is an important aspect of our profession, and that the South African PR profession is highly educated and experienced. It also shows the importance of stakeholder relationships in our country's context, which is a cornerstone of our profession. **As you will see on page 18,** practitioners that focus on stakeholder relationships also tend to report on insights (not metrics or campaign performance) in a strategic capacity.

As the custodian of the PR industry across Southern Africa, we must now ask how we want this to change to move the PR profession forward in our country. This report highlighted many opportunities that must be seized – measurement maturity is still relatively low in South Africa, with many practitioners focusing on output metrics and a high use of Advertising Value Equivalence. Awareness and implementation of the Barcelona Principles for measurement and evaluation is very low among practitioners, which presents a major opportunity in our industry as it was found that implementation of the Barcelona Principles may open the door to many other opportunities for advancement in each professional's career path.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF PRACTITIONERS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT | 3 |
| Demographic Breakdown of Practitioners | 3 |
| Demographic Breakdown of Practice | 5 |
| PR AS A STRATEGIC FUNCTION | 9 |
| Strategic Access | 9 |
| Strategic Alignment | 10 |
| Stakeholder Relationships | 11 |
| Reporting to Management | 12 |
| MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION | 13 |
| The Barcelona Principles | 13 |
| Measurement and Evaluation Challenges | 13 |
| Evaluation Types | 14 |
| Measurement Maturity | 16 |
| Social Media Measurement | 17 |
| AVEs | 17 |
| HOW DOES PRACTICE INFLUENCE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION? | 18 |

METHODOLOGY: *This study from which this report was drawn, was conducted during 2019. This report contains the quantitative empirical data collected among 103 South African PR practitioners via electronic surveys (PRISA-affiliated and non-affiliated) as part of a PhD study from the North-West University entitled Standardised measurement and evaluation of public relations: normative guidelines for implementing the Barcelona Principles in South African practice by Dr Tersia Landsberg.*

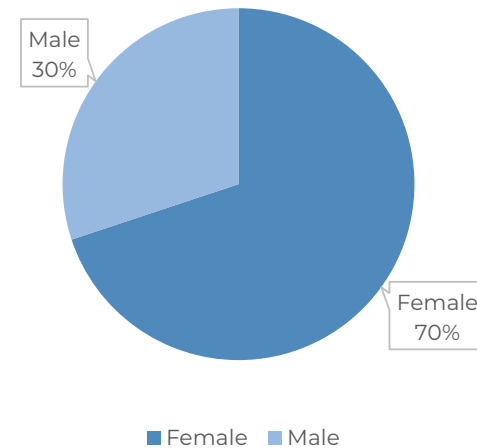
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF PRACTITIONERS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF PRACTITIONERS

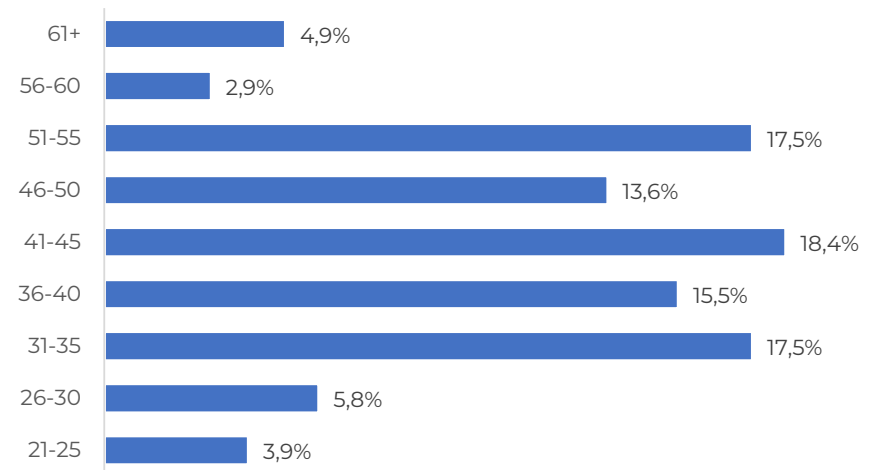
Where are South Africa's professionals now? This survey showed that the South African PR profession is mostly female-dominated, with many practitioners falling between the ages of 31 and 35, and many between the ages of 51 and 55. However, practitioners of every age group were represented with the smallest group aged 21 - 25. Furthermore, most practitioners have between 6 - 10 years' experience and more than 21 years' experience in PR.

It is especially noteworthy to confirm how highly qualified the South African PR practice currently is, with the largest groups holding a formal degree or post-graduate degree.

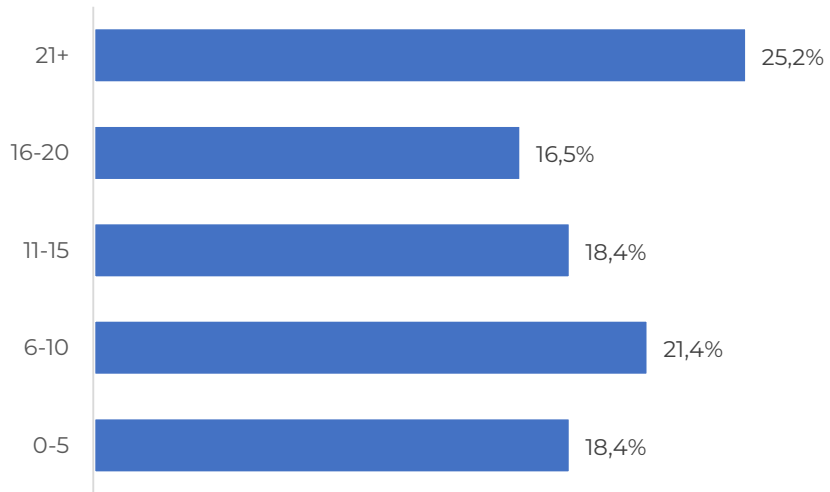
GENDER



AGE GROUPS

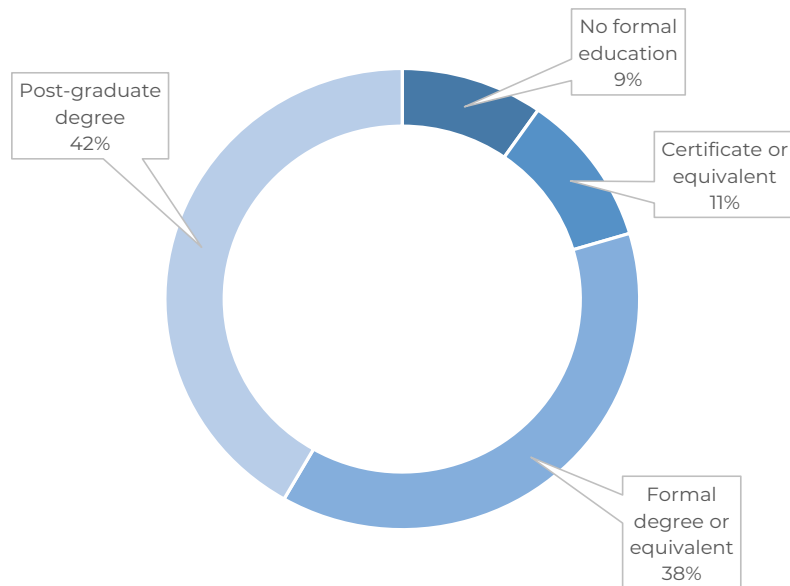


YEARS EXPERIENCE



South Africa's PR landscape is largely female-dominated with a wide age distribution and highly educated practitioners, with 42% of respondents holding post-graduate degrees.

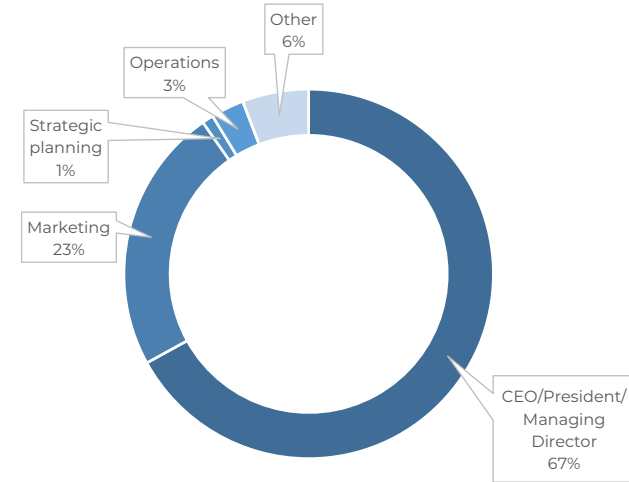
EDUCATION



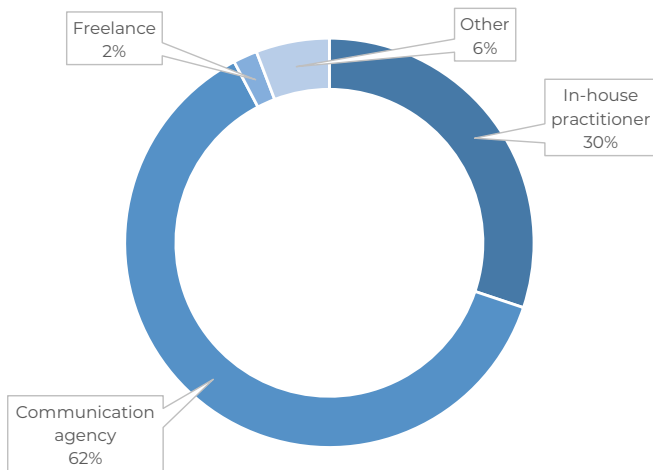
DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF PRACTICE

By far the most PR practitioners represented in this study work in small PR teams of 1 - 5 people, and mostly in PR agencies. In practice, 67% of practitioners are reporting directly to the top management of organisations (the CEO, President, or Managing Director), followed by Marketing.

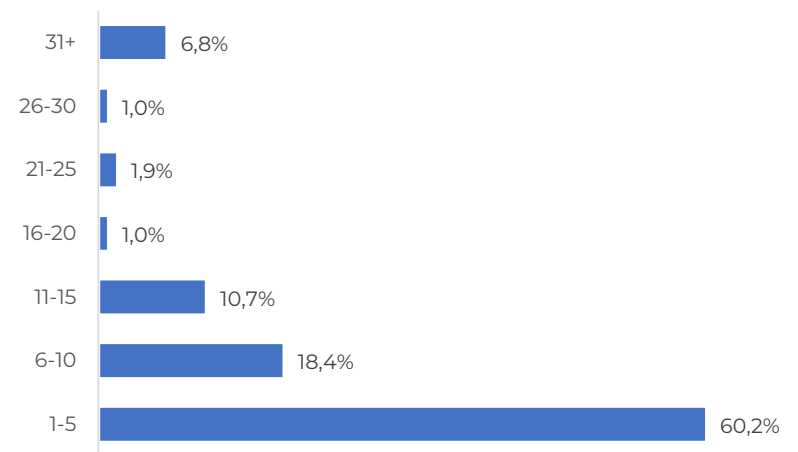
REPORTING LINE



TYPE OF WORK



NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN TEAM/ORGANISATION



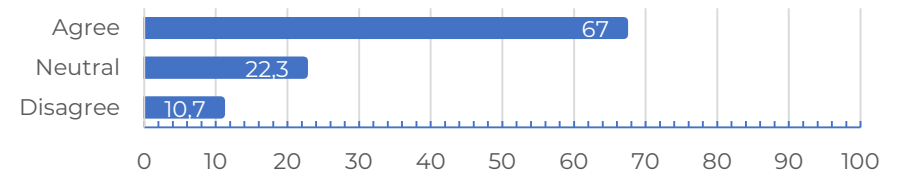
ORGANISATIONAL **WORLDVIEW**

Organisational worldviews determine the underlying motivation and beliefs about the world, guiding the decisions and actions of organisations. In 2020, most practitioners believe their organisations or those of their clients to be particularly symmetric in their worldview, valuing dialogue with stakeholders and innovation.

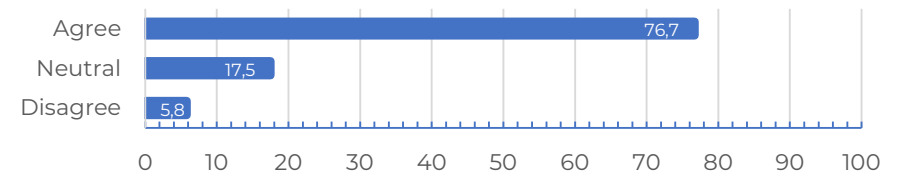
From these results it seems that South African organisations are actively engaging with stakeholders in open and transparent ways, where 67% of practitioners agreed that their organisations and clients engage with stakeholders to gain their opinions on relevant matters and 77% said that their organisations or clients communicate openly and transparently.

Only 53% agreed that their organisations or clients regularly bring teams together to share information that leads to innovation. This presents an opportunity for PR practitioners to purposefully bring teams together going forward and to become a driving force for innovation in their organisations and for their clients.

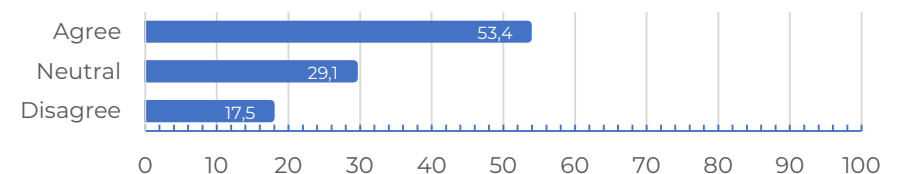
MY ORGANISATION/CLIENTS OFTEN ENGAGE WITH THEIR STAKEHOLDERS TO GAIN THEIR OPINIONS ON MATTERS RELEVANT TO THEIR STAKEHOLDERS.



MY ORGANISATION/CLIENTS COMMUNICATE IN AN OPEN AND TRANSPARENT WAY WITH THEIR STAKEHOLDERS.



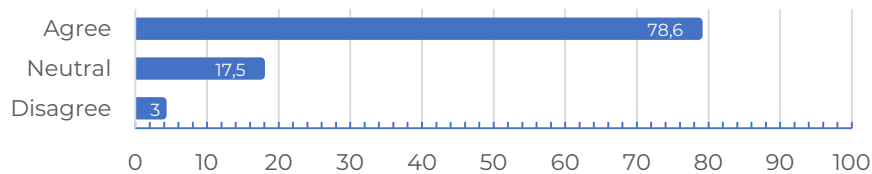
MY ORGANISATION/CLIENTS REGULARLY BRING TEAMS TOGETHER TO SHARE INFORMATION THAT LEADS TO INNOVATION.



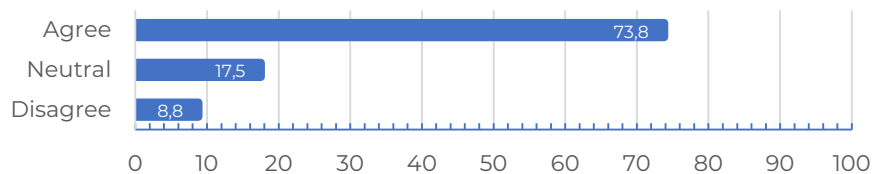
PRACTITIONER RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE

South African PR practitioners rated their own knowledge and confidence in applying qualitative and quantitative research very highly. Considering the highly qualified groups represented, it makes sense that practitioners holding formal and post-graduate qualifications will be trained in understanding and applying a variety of research skills.

I HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENT RESEARCH METHODS (SUCH AS SURVEYS, FOCUS GROUPS, CONTENT ANALYSES, AND INTERVIEWS).



I AM CONFIDENT TO APPLY DIFFERENT RESEARCH METHODS (SUCH AS SURVEYS, FOCUS GROUPS, CONTENT ANALYSES, AND INTERVIEWS).



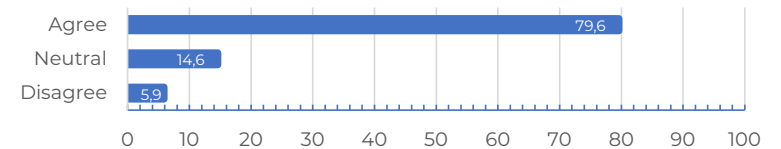
PR practitioners across South Africa are largely confident in their own research skills, with nearly 80% indicating that they have a good understanding of research methods and over 70% agreeing that they are confident to apply these research methods.

PRACTITIONER ROLES

In terms of the roles of practitioners, it appears that South African PR practitioners fulfill a range of tasks. These range from very functional implementation to highly strategic coordination as part of their job description. This could be attributed the general trend of working in small teams, but it also allows for very little role specialisation. A strong indication of the strategic role could be attributed to the highly qualified and experienced group represented, but this does not take away from the nearly 80% that agreed to also fulfilling technical and managerial roles.

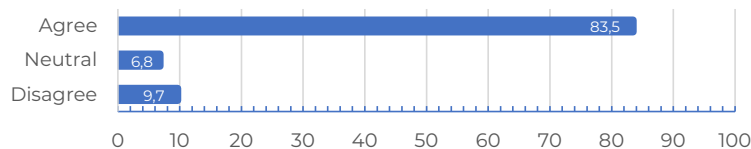
MANAGER ROLE

MY JOB ENTAILS MANAGERIAL TASKS SUCH AS DETERMINING THE STAKEHOLDERS FOR AND PLATFORMS TO USE IN CAMPAIGNS, DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION PLANS AND CAMPAIGNS, OVERSEEING THE EXECUTION OF CAMPAIGNS, COMPILING REPORTS ON COMMUNICATION PLANS OR CAMPAIGNS, FIELDING MEDIA QUESTIONS, OR HOSTING PRESS CONFERENCES.



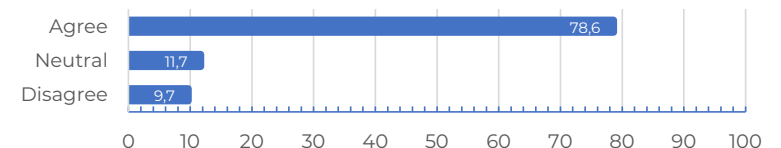
STRATEGIST ROLE

MY JOB ENTAILS STRATEGIC TASKS SUCH AS DETERMINING AND PREEMPTING ANY ISSUES THAT MAY AFFECT MY ORGANISATION OR CLIENT, DECIDING THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS, TRANSLATING THE IMPACT OF STAKEHOLDERS TO MANAGEMENT, AND REPORTING ON COMMUNICATION SUCCESS TO TOP MANAGEMENT.



TECHNICIAN ROLE

MY JOB ENTAILS TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION TASKS SUCH AS DRAFTING/DESIGNING COMMUNICATION MATERIAL, CRAFTING CONTENT FOR DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION PLATFORMS (SOCIAL MEDIA, DIGITAL CONTENT PUBLICATION, PRESS RELEASES, EDITORIALS, ETC.), AND DISTRIBUTING MESSAGES TO STAKEHOLDERS VIA DIFFERENT CHANNELS.



STRATEGIC FUNCTION

Global trends are arguing for more strategic inputs from PR professionals in aiding their organisations to navigate complex social landscapes. In South Africa, this is an especially important function in a complex cultural and socio-economic landscape.

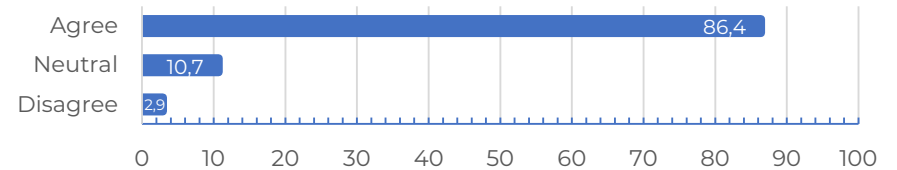
It's seen here that South African PR practitioners across the board have strategic access and influence, with over 80% agreeing to have access to strategic information and over 60% likely to be included in strategic discussions. However, to be truly influential the scope of this strategic access and inputs should expand beyond media or technical expertise. The question is whether PR practitioners are using this strategic access to provide value at C-suite level.

Furthermore, the South African practice shows exceptionally large agreement to primary alignment where the PR strategy is aligned with the overall organisational strategy, and secondary alignment where the PR activities are aligned with the PR strategy. Lastly, stakeholder relationships appear to play a large role in the local PR landscape and PR practitioners agree that stakeholder relationships are an important KPI of their jobs.

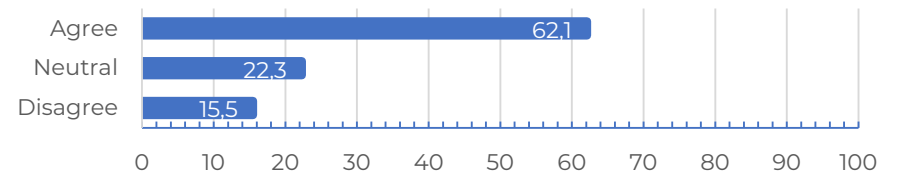
STRATEGIC ACCESS

Regardless of practitioner roles, it appears that South African PR professionals are functioning in very strategic positions in their organisations, especially as it pertains to accessing strategic information and influencing strategic decision-making. The distinguishing factor for this topic would be the scope of strategic access, and how practitioners are leveraging this access and using their influence to help organisations better engage with stakeholders and be sensitive to environmental factors.

I HAVE ACCESS TO THE ORGANISATION/CLIENT'S STRATEGIC INFORMATION (SUCH AS BUSINESS GOALS, STRATEGIC DIRECTION, PRODUCT/SERVICE DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS PERFORMANCE, ETC.).



MY PR TEAM IS LIKELY TO BE INCLUDED IN MEETINGS OR DISCUSSIONS WHERE THE ORGANISATION/CLIENT'S STRATEGIC BUSINESS DECISIONS ARE BEING MADE.

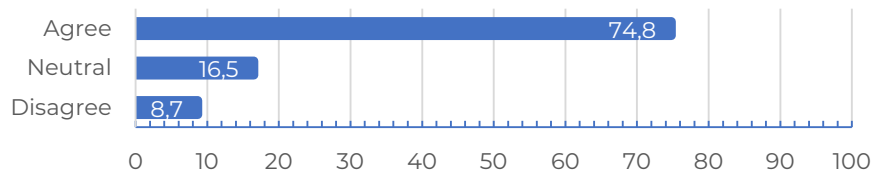


STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

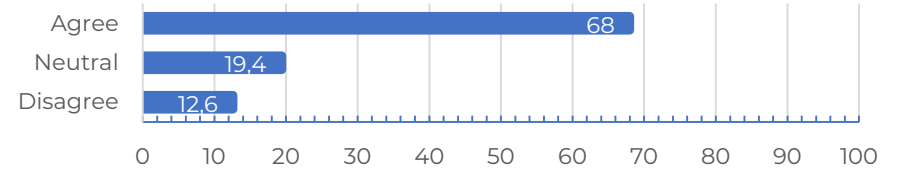
Strategic alignment builds on strategic access and pertains to the ways in which PR practitioners are building strategic functions through measurable goal-setting, but also how they are aligning the PR strategy with the organisational strategy and how they are aligning their own activities with their own strategy. These results are inspiring as it indicates again a very strategic approach to PR in South Africa.

Most PR practitioners are setting SMART goals in their implementation of campaigns, and over 90% reported that they align their PR goals with the business goals of the organisation. 81% also reported to critically evaluate each activity for their campaigns to ensure it will help reach campaign goals.

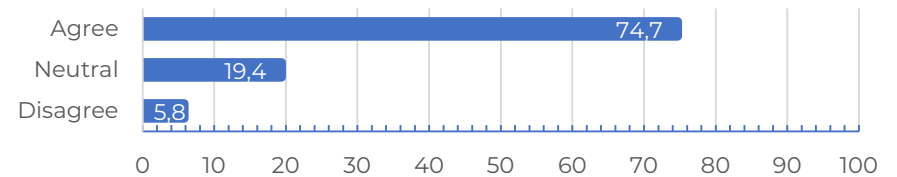
MY PR TEAM SETS SMART (SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ATTAINABLE, REALISTIC, TIME-BOUND) GOALS WHEN PLANNING PR CAMPAIGNS.



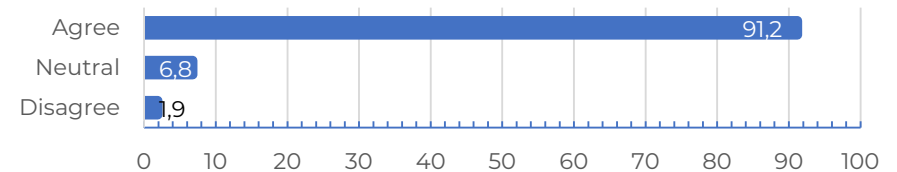
MY PR TEAM USES BENCHMARK DATA FROM PREVIOUS CAMPAIGNS (IF IT IS AVAILABLE) TO INFORM OUR GOAL-SETTING WHEN PLANNING PR CAMPAIGNS.



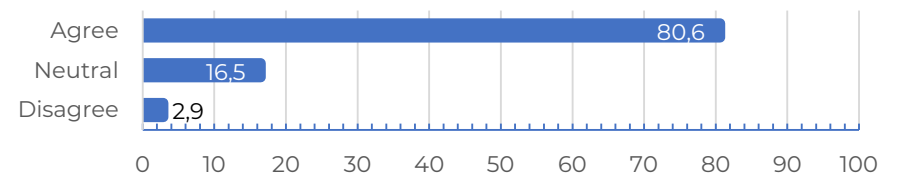
WHEN DECIDING ON PR CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES, MY PR TEAM USES RESEARCH AND PREVIOUS DATA TO SELECT ACTIVITIES THAT OFFER THE BEST CHANCE OF REACHING THE CAMPAIGN GOALS.



MY PR TEAM ALIGNS PR GOALS WITH THE BUSINESS GOALS OF THE ORGANISATION.



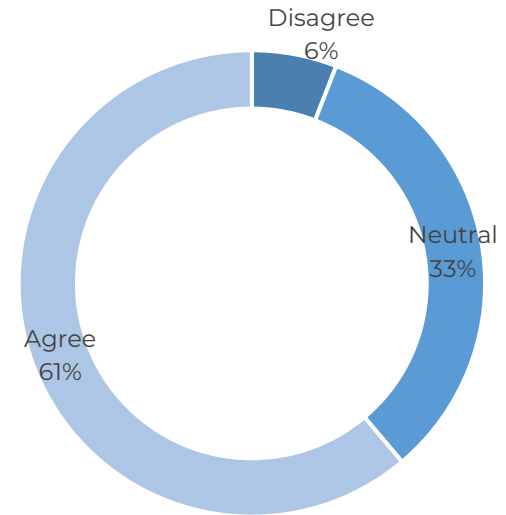
WHEN DECIDING ON PR CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES, MY PR TEAM CRITICALLY EVALUATES EACH ACTIVITY TO ENSURE IT WILL HELP REACH THE CAMPAIGN GOALS.



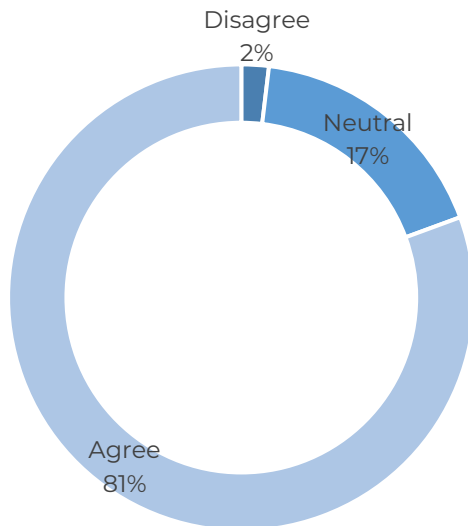
STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

In South Africa and many other developing countries with complex cultural structures, stakeholder relationships are often a core component of the PR function. The PR function is often seen to enable and foster understanding between an organisation and its stakeholders, to the benefit of executing the organisational strategy but also for fostering communities and creating societal value for organisations. If PR is contributing this value to an organisation, the way in which the practitioner is communicating this value when reporting on PR's success is especially important. It appears that the South African PR landscape is very much aware and focused on their role in establishing and reporting on stakeholder relationships.

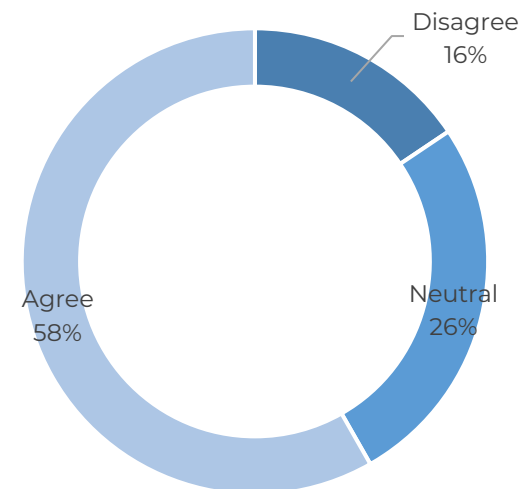
MY PR TEAM REPORTS ON STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS TO INDICATE THE SUCCESS OF OUR PR ACTIVITIES.



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS IS A KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR OF MY CURRENT JOB.



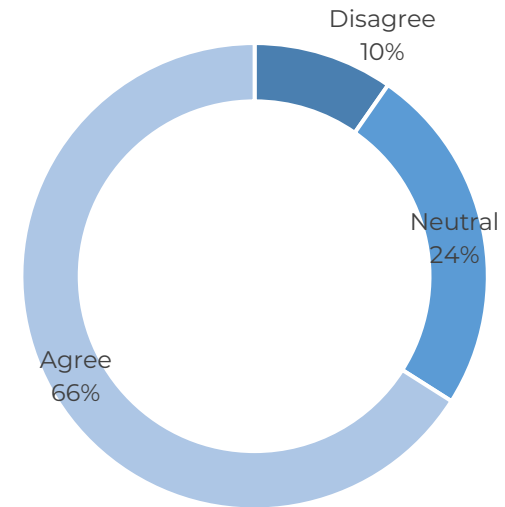
MY PR TEAM REPORTS ON HOW STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS INFLUENCE THE BUSINESS GOALS OF THE ORGANISATION.



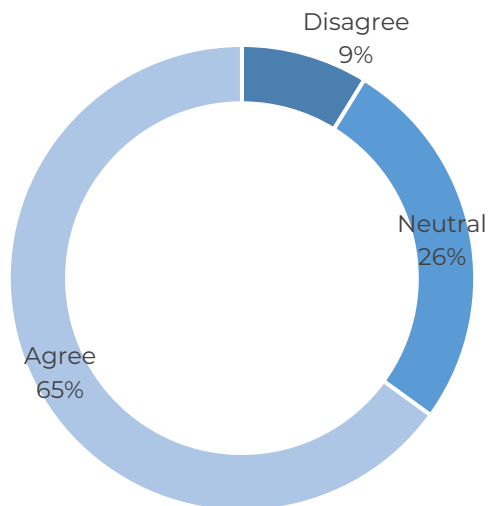
REPORTING TO **MANAGEMENT**

If the PR function is fostering stakeholder relationships and has strong strategic influence, it is a natural assumption that practitioners will report to management on the outcomes of PR in ways that are insightful and can aid the organisation in making better strategic decisions. It appears that South African PR practitioners are generally prone to reporting on insights generated by their evaluation, not mere metrics. It also seems that practitioners are using their reporting to translate the impact of PR activities for management and to generate suggestions for strategic decisions. This approach to reporting is again indicative of a very strategic PR function.

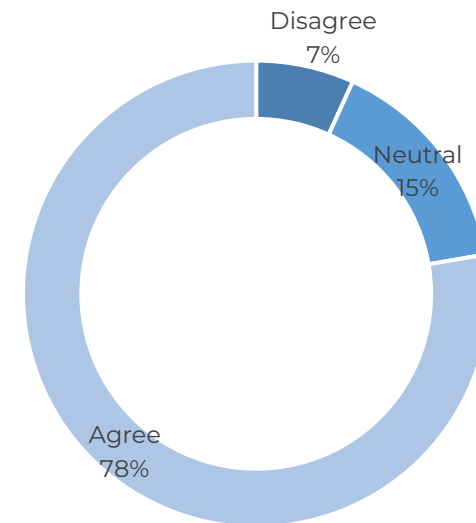
THE INFORMATION MY PR TEAM PROVIDES IS USED TO HELP THE ORGANISATION/CLIENT'S LEADERS MAKE BETTER DECISIONS.



MY PR TEAM USES DATA FROM PR CAMPAIGNS' EVALUATION TO MAKE ACTIONABLE BUSINESS SUGGESTIONS WHEN REPORTING ON PR EFFORTS.



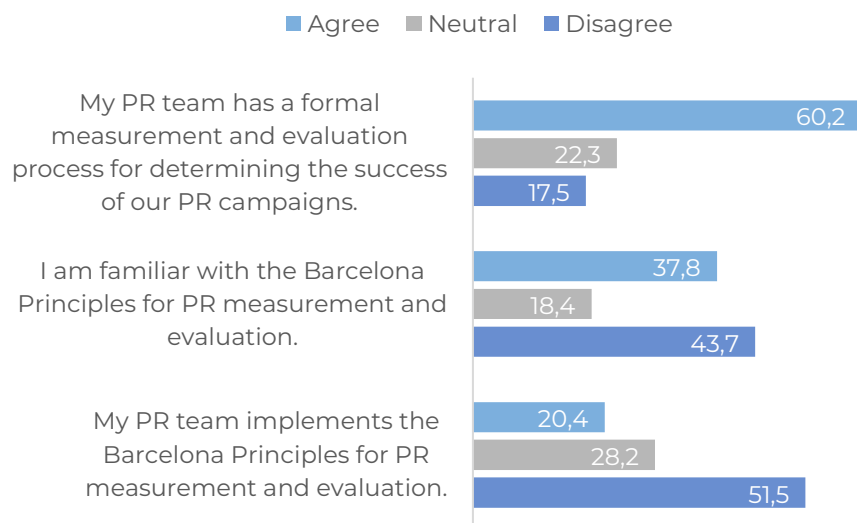
MY PR TEAM EXPLAINS TO THE ORGANISATION/CLIENT HOW EXTERNAL FACTORS OR ISSUES MAY AFFECT THE ORGANISATION.



PRACTITIONERS' MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION

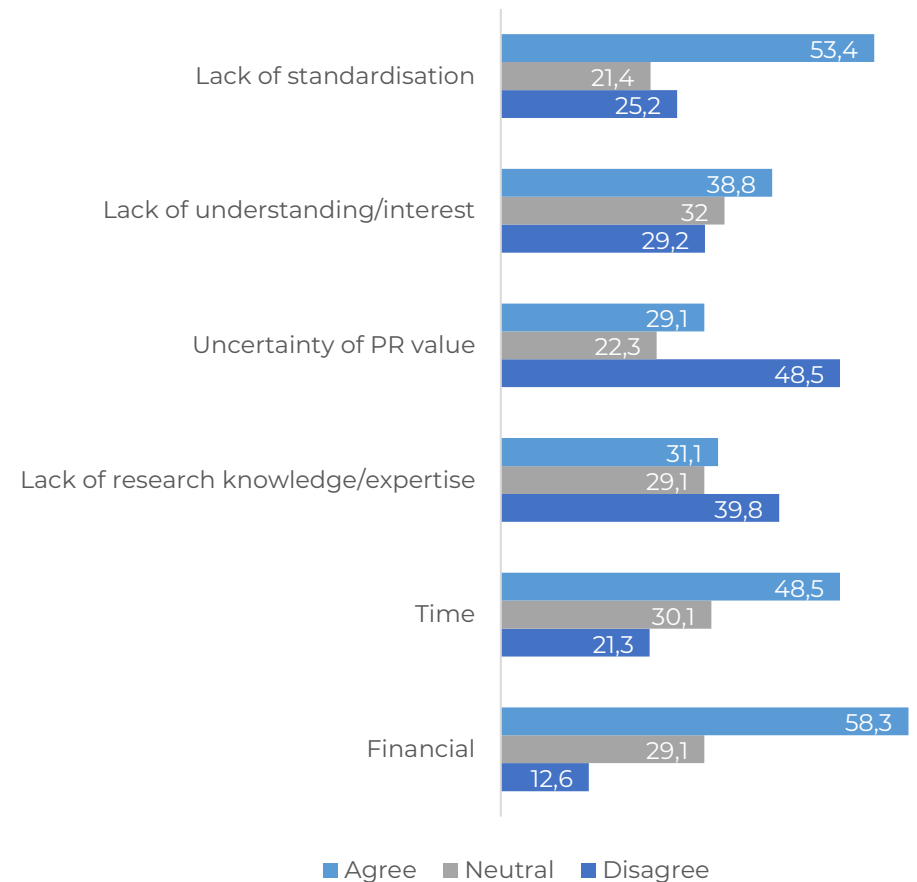
How are South African PR professionals measuring and evaluating their PR efforts? As global pressure mounts for standardised PR measurement and evaluation, this section inquired into what challenges South African PR practitioners are facing in measuring and evaluating their PR efforts, as well as types of evaluation currently conducted and at what level measurements are taking place.

THE BARCELONA PRINCIPLES



MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION CHALLENGES

WHAT CHALLENGES ARE PRACTITIONERS FACING IN THE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION OF THEIR PR EFFORTS?

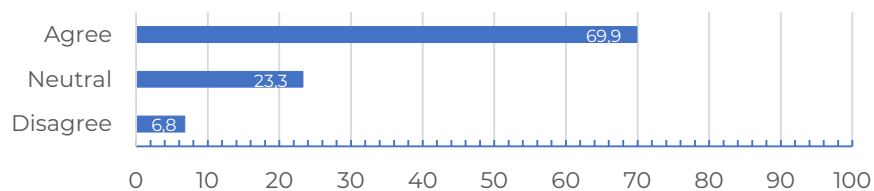


EVALUATION TYPES

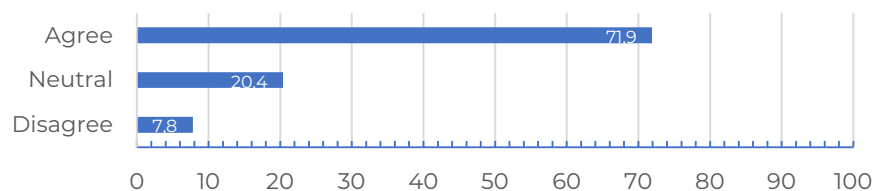
It appears that PR practitioners are using more quantitative than qualitative research to measure and evaluate their work and that most evaluation is conducted at the end of the PR campaign or project. However, much evaluation is conducted at the start of PR planning and many practitioners reported ongoing process evaluation. Considering the high reporting of research skills as a demographic characteristic of practitioners, it is notable that less than 50% of practitioners are using quantitative and qualitative research methods to measure their success.

FORMATIVE EVALUATION

MY PR TEAM USES DATA FROM PR CAMPAIGNS' EVALUATION TO MAKE ACTIONABLE BUSINESS SUGGESTIONS WHEN REPORTING ON PR EFFORTS.

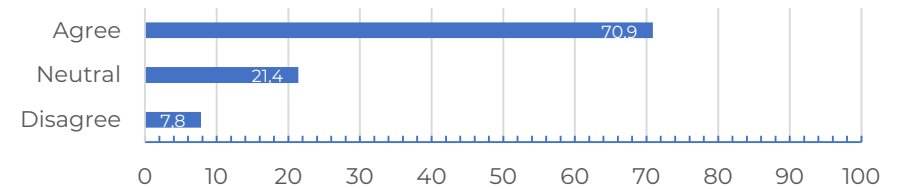


MY PR TEAM USES INFORMATION AND DATA FROM PREVIOUS CAMPAIGNS' PERFORMANCE WHEN PLANNING NEW CAMPAIGNS.

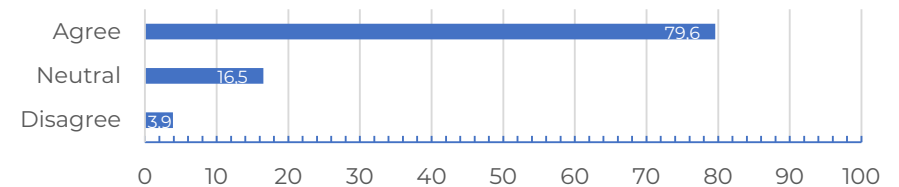


PROCESS EVALUATION

MY PR TEAM TRACKS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PR ACTIVITIES WHILE THE CAMPAIGNS ARE RUNNING, TO IDENTIFY PROBLEMS IMMEDIATELY.



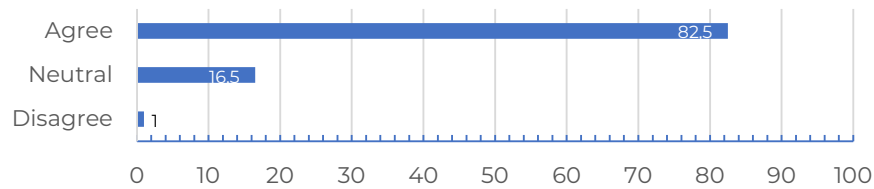
MY PR TEAM ADJUSTS OUR STRATEGY DURING THE COURSE OF A CAMPAIGN WHEN WE DETECT ANY PROBLEMS.



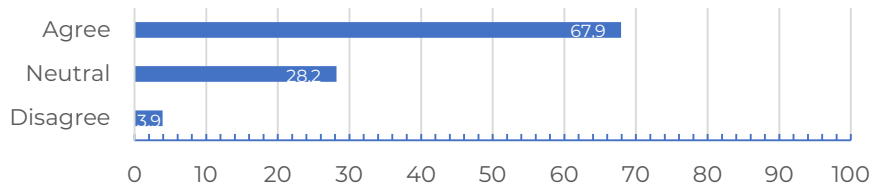
About 70% of practitioners are using data from previous campaigns to inform future campaigns in the planning phase and to make actionable business suggestions.

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

MY PR TEAM EVALUATES THE SUCCESS OF OUR PR CAMPAIGNS AT ITS END TO DETERMINE WHETHER WE HAVE REACHED OUR GOALS.

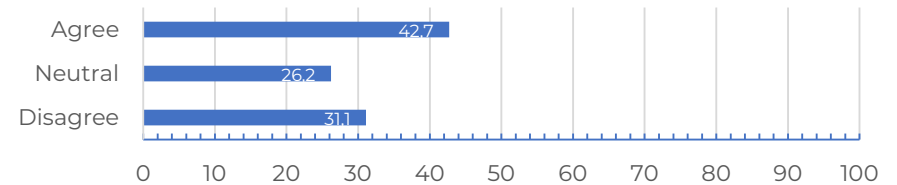


MY PR TEAM USES OUR CAMPAIGN EVALUATION TO DETERMINE HOW THE ORGANISATION/CLIENT HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY PR ACTIVITIES.

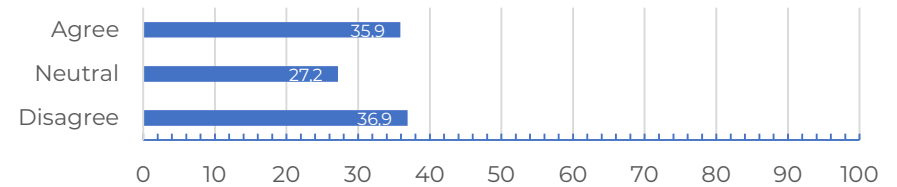


RESEARCH METHODS

MY PR TEAM USES QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION (SUCH AS SURVEYS WITH HARD DATA AND STATISTICS) TO DETERMINE OUR SUCCESS.



MY PR TEAM USES QUALITATIVE EVALUATION (SUCH AS FOCUS GROUPS, CONTENT ANALYSES, OR INTERVIEWS) TO DETERMINE OUR SUCCESS.



PR practitioners are using process evaluation to keep their finger on the pulse of a campaign - nearly 80% of practitioners reported that they adjust their strategy during the campaign's lifespan when they notice any problems in campaign performance.

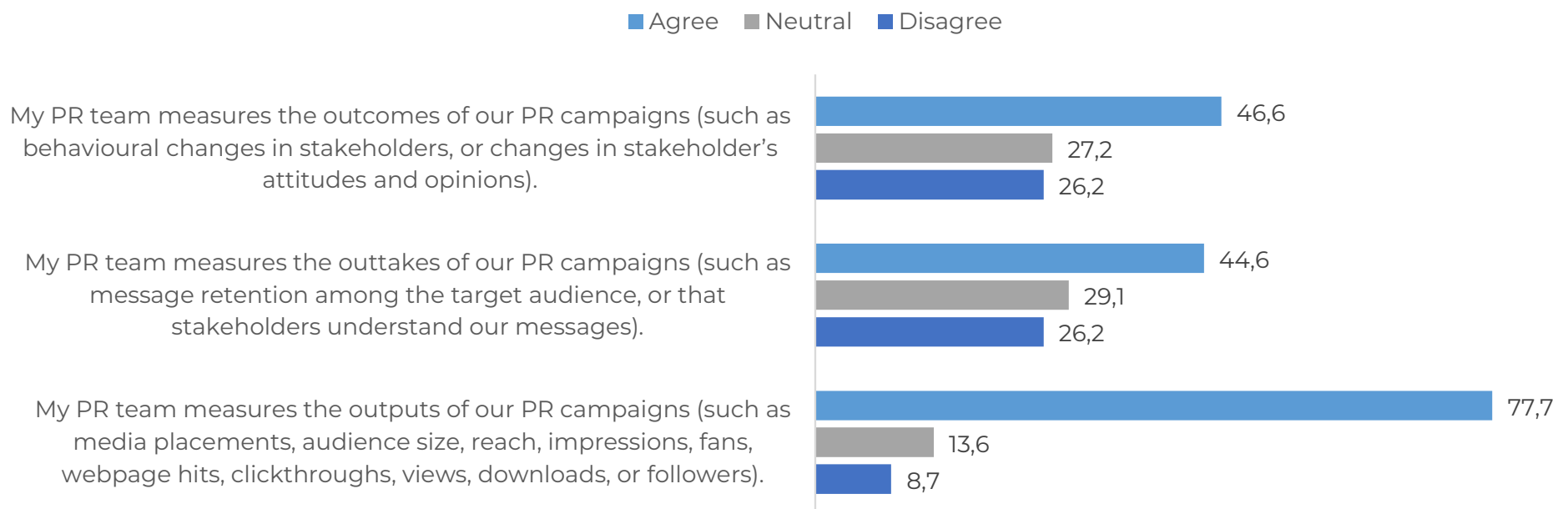
Despite reporting high knowledge of research skills, less than 50% of practitioners are using qualitative or quantitative methods to determine their success.

MEASUREMENT MATURITY

Measurement maturity relates to the level at which measurement is taking place to show change or success at output level (physical activities and implementation), at outtake level (how messages are received or stakeholders are influenced) and outcome-level (how behaviour has changed). While outtake-level measurements are the most popular to be applied in practice, nearly 50% of practitioners are measuring outtakes and outcomes as well.



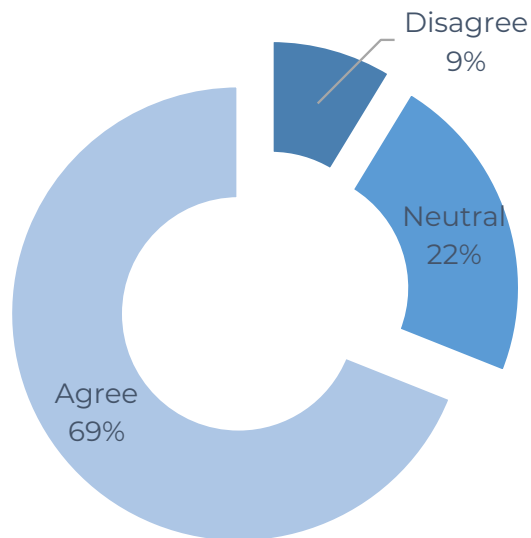
While PR practitioners report high strategic influence, reporting on insights to senior management, and extensive evaluation at different points of campaign lifecycles, measurement maturity is mostly reported at outtake level.



SOCIAL MEDIA MEASUREMENT

ARE PRACTITIONERS MEASURING SOCIAL MEDIA AS PART OF THEIR HOLISTIC STRATEGY?

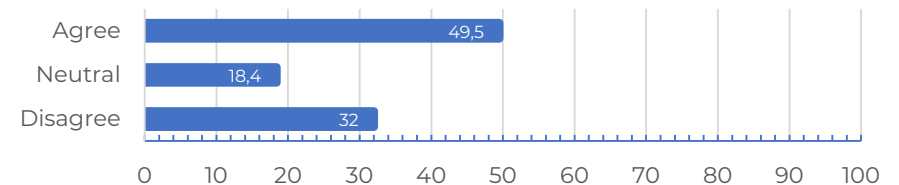
The Barcelona Principles state that social media should be measured consistently with all other media measurements. This appears to be the norm among South African PR practitioners, which is a positive indication of a move toward standardised measurement and evaluation.



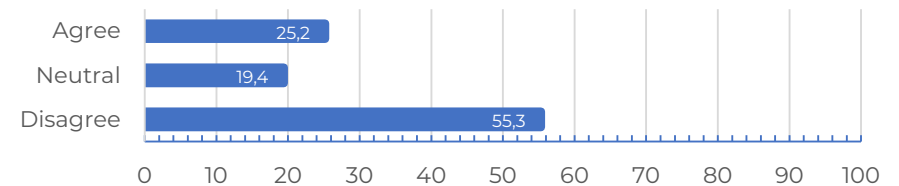
ADVERTISING VALUE EQUIVALENCE

The use of Advertising Value Equivalence (AVEs) in global practice is increasingly banished. However, it appears that nearly 50% of South African practitioners are still using AVEs in reporting on PR's success. However, the use of multipliers are much less prevalent in local practice, with 55% rejecting its use in their practice.

MY PR TEAM USES ADVERTISING VALUE EQUIVALENCE (AVES) WHEN MEASURING AND REPORTING ON PR CAMPAIGNS.



MY PR TEAM USE MULTIPLIERS TO ENHANCE THE VALUE OF ADVERTISING VALUE EQUIVALENCE (AVES) WHEN REPORTING ON THIS VALUE.



HOW IS PRACTICE INFLUENCING MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION?

THE FOLLOWING 10 INSIGHTS WERE LEARNED FROM STATISTICAL ANALYSES OF THE REPRESENTED DATA OF THIS REPORT, SHOWING THE ACTUAL WAY IN WHICH PR IS PRACTICED IS AFFECTING ITS MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION:

1. Practitioners that function as **strategists are the most likely to report on insights to management** – more so than those who reported that they fulfil a more managerial or technical role.
2. Practitioners that conduct **formative evaluation are the most likely to report on insights to management** – more so than those who reported that they conduct more summative and process evaluation.
3. Practitioners that conduct **formative evaluation** are also **more likely to set measurable goals for their campaigns**.
4. A negative correlation was found among practitioners' level of education and the practitioner role of technician - **the more qualified the practitioner, the less likely they are to fulfil a technical role**.
5. Practitioners that fulfil managerial and strategic roles are less likely to find a lack of knowledge, uncertainty over what constitutes the value of PR, and a lack of understanding from management/clients to be challenges to PR measurement and evaluation. **However, they still experience financial restraints, time, and lack of standardised practices to be challenges in measuring and evaluating their PR efforts**.
6. Within organisations that have a strong symmetric worldview, PR practitioners are **more likely to fulfil a strategic role**.
7. Practitioners that report strongly on stakeholder relationships are the most likely to also report on insights to management. This could be an indication that **stakeholder relationships provide a strong opportunity for generating insightful guidance** to help inform strategic decision-making.
8. In terms of practitioners' research knowledge, it appeared that **higher practitioner research knowledge correlated with higher use of qualitative evaluation**, but not with the use of quantitative evaluation.
9. Practitioners that practice **strategic alignment are the most likely to implement the Barcelona Principles**. This gives an indication that where strategic alignment is present in practice, the Barcelona Principles are more feasible.
10. **Where the Barcelona Principles are prevalent in practice**, it is also more likely that those practitioners would report on insights to management.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR OF THIS STUDY OR CONTACT PRISA:

AUTHOR:

DR TERSIA LANDSBERG | PHD
TERSIA.PHD@GMAIL.COM

PRISA

MR VICTOR SIBEKO | PRISA CEO
VICTOR@PRISA.CO.ZA

DR DALIEN RENE BENECKE | PRISA PRESIDENT
RBENECKE@UJ.AC.ZA