



MENA PR and Communications Census 2021

GET NOTICED.

Adidas ranked 1 in the **YouGov** Recommend Rankings 2021 in Saudi Arabia. 51% of UAE consumers are likely to hop on a suborbital flight if the price weren't a constraint. 41% of UAE residents think rating and review sites are somewhat trustful. Nearly two in five UAE consumers count **the** calories in their meals and snacks. FIFA Women's **World** Cup popularity in the UAE is the highest among 17 surveyed markets. Almarai has topped YouGov's FMCG/CPG Rankings 2021 UAE in the beverage, food pantry & dairy category.

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Foreword

FRANCIS INGHAM MPRCA
 Director-General, Public Relations
 and Communications Association

“Professional and ethical communication has never been more important to business and society, and I am proud of the work the PRCA does to support that.”

I am delighted to present the PRCA MENA PR and Communications Census. The PRCA's various Census reports are an important part of our mission to both understand and tackle the issues facing our members and the wider profession in every region in which we operate.

A lot has happened since the first MENA Census was published in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic has created substantial challenges both personally and professionally for PR and communications practitioners. I have been delighted to see our members across the globe respond to these challenges with resourcefulness and hard work. Professional and ethical communication has never been more important to business and society, and

I am proud of the work the PRCA does to support that.

Throughout the pandemic, our MENA team has continued to provide networking and training opportunities, and promote ethics and best practice, and membership in the region has continued to expand.

PRCA MENA celebrated its fifth birthday earlier this year. It was the first overseas venture created by the PRCA, and has inspired our more recent launches in Southeast Asia (now PRCA Asia Pacific) and Latin America (now PRCA Americas). As 2022 approaches, I am confident it will continue to grow stronger in the next five years, and beyond.

METHODOLOGY

This Census is based on a sample of 150 respondents from across the region, with data gathered between 8th April and 16th June 2021. The survey was generated by YouGov using

- sample sources from PRCA's own database:
- Targeted sample sent to PRCA members and other organisations
 - Public link on the PRCA website



HAYLEY CLEMENTS MPRCA
General Manager, PRCA MENA

Introduction

“I hope that new working models can ensure increased, creativity, productivity and wellbeing, and they should also make the PR and communications profession a more diverse and inclusive place.”

Welcome to the PRCA MENA PR and Communications Census.

It has been quite an extraordinary couple of years, both in this region and globally, thanks to COVID-19 and the political, social and economic challenges it has posed. The pandemic has affected us all in different ways, whether personal or professional, and I certainly hope that we have now seen the worst of those impacts.

The finding in this Census that nearly half (49%) of respondents had seen their employer making redundancies since March 2020 is sad, even if perhaps not hugely surprising. The fact that in a sizeable majority of those cases (68%) it was less than a tenth of the workforce affected does not necessarily provide comfort, but we can be hopeful that as economies recover, those jobs return sooner rather than later. We might also hope that the pandemic creates some positive change, too - the majority (59%) of respondents said they expect to go back to a mixture of office- and home-based working when the pandemic ends, with another 13% unsure of their plans. If done well,

these new working models will ensure increased creativity, productivity and wellbeing, and should also make the PR and communications profession a more diverse and inclusive place.

On the topic of diversity, the fact that 64% of women responding to this survey think their workplace has a ‘good’ or ‘very good’ approach to promoting women to leadership positions is positive - although I know many of us would like to see that figure increase in future years. Women make up the majority of the PR industry both globally and in MENA, but are often less likely to reach senior positions or be paid the same salaries as men, even for doing the same job. The gender pay gap is an issue the PRCA will continue to shout about globally - just as we will campaign for high standards, fairness and ethics across both the communications and campaigns created by the PR profession, and the way it treats its workforce.

I hope that this report’s findings, and the comments gathered from leading practitioners across the region, prove useful as you look ahead to 2022.

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State of the profession

PR agencies and other companies have had to respond to the physical and economic challenges of COVID-19 in many ways, including remote working and redundancies.

REMOTE WORKING

Most of the region's PR practitioners are working remotely at least some of the time. At the time the data was collected, 12% said they were working remotely full-time and 47% said they were working remotely some of the time, leaving 41% based permanently in the office.

Hybrid working was a popular choice when respondents were asked about future plans, with few saying they would be back in the office every day.



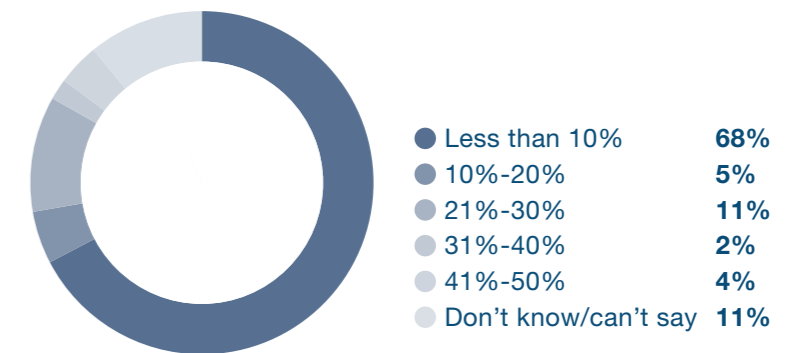
REDUNDANCIES

Half (49%) of respondents said their company had made people redundant during the COVID-19 crisis - although the real figure may be higher, with 16% saying they did not know whether this had happened.

In those companies making redundancies, the majority (68%) only let a small number go.



If your company made redundancies since March 2020, what proportion of staff were laid off?



UNPAID LEAVE

A small number (13%) of respondents said they had been asked to take unpaid leave at some point since March 2020.

Asked to take unpaid leave



“Hybrid working has been in place for several years, with the rise of the gig economy. Lots of us have now adapted to this new way of working and living, which provides balance and agility and can enable improved wellbeing and productivity. Hybrid is the way forward.”
Mandip Dulay, MPRCA MCIM, Co-Founder, COO Network and CEO, Impact.me Group

“There’s a question mark around whether people will get to retain flexible working arrangements going forward. My hope is that many employers will see the benefits of retaining these working arrangements, especially in government where we need good comms people.”
Alex Malouf MPRCA, Corporate Communications Director MEA, Schneider Electric

“The UAE was one of the fastest to recover from the impact of the pan-demic thanks to government initiatives and the willingness to welcome back visitors and international professionals. I am certain that most, if not all, who lost their jobs are back on their feet or are in the process of doing so.”
Ahmad Itani, Chairman, PRCA MENA; President, ICCO Middle East; and Founder & CEO, of Cicero & Bernay Communication Consultancy

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Diversity

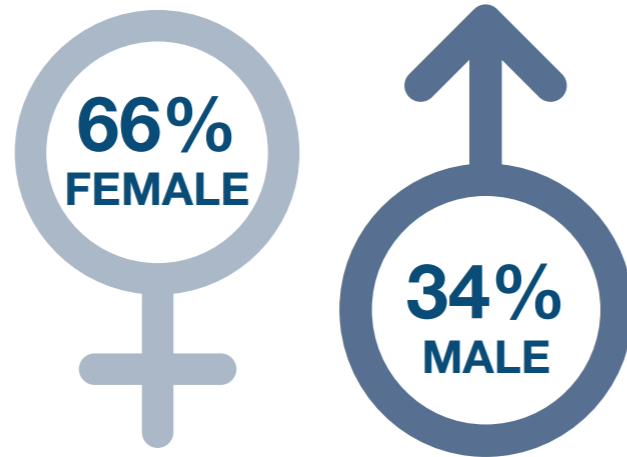
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“In many ways, the pandemic hammered home the importance of using the region’s diversity for communications. Countries like Oman launched PR campaigns in multiple languages, including Hindi, Urdu and Tagalog, to engage and educate on health guidelines. It’s essential that we build on these experiences and make more use of the amazing diversity of culture, languages, and experiences we have in the region.”

**Alex Malouf MPRCA, Corporate Communications Director MEA,
Schneider Electric**

GENDER

The PR and communications profession industry globally is predominantly female, with respondents to PRCA Census reports for other regions often being around two-thirds female. That is the same for this year's MENA Census - as is the fact that men are more likely to be in more senior positions, and more likely to be paid more than women for doing the same job.



AGE

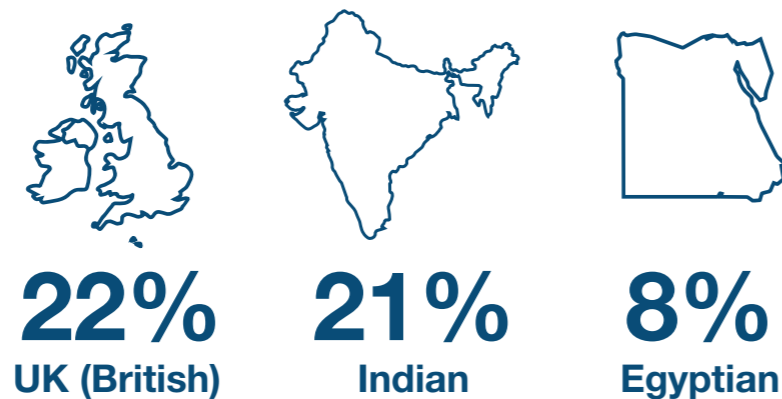
Overall, 48% of practitioners responding to this survey are aged between 25 and 34. The next most common age range is 35-44 year olds (33%). The remaining fifth of respondents are equally divided between those aged under 25, and those aged 45 and over. The median age is 34 years old.



NATIONALITY

The most common nationality of the practitioners in the survey is UK (British), held by 22% of respondents. The other major nationalities represented are: India (21%), Egyptian (8%), Lebanese (6%), Syrian (6%) and Palestinian (6%).

Reflecting the cosmopolitan nature of the MENA PR profession, another 23 nationalities are listed by respondents. These span the entire globe, from the Americas and Europe to Asia and Oceania, as well as several Middle Eastern and African nationalities.



LANGUAGE

We asked respondents if they spoke one or more languages, other than English, well another to conduct a business conversation.

A third (35%) speak Arabic, 15% speak Hindi, 9% speak French and 4% speak Urdu - and 17% of respondents also say they speak another language apart from those.

Only a minority (33%) do not have any language other than English.



DISABILITY

Only 1% of the respondents answered 'yes' when asked if they consider themselves to have a disability. In the 2019 Census, this figure was 2%.

While definitions and data vary significantly, it is estimated that more than 10% of people globally have a disability. It is likely that more needs to be done in many areas of the profession to ensure it is an inclusive place for people with a disability.



1%

Of respondents answered 'yes' when asked if they consider themselves to have a physical disability

“Diversity is at the heart of every business or line of work in Dubai. It is the reason why the world constantly has its eyes on the emirate, with more than 200 nationalities calling it their home. What other city from this part of the world can boast this impressive number?”

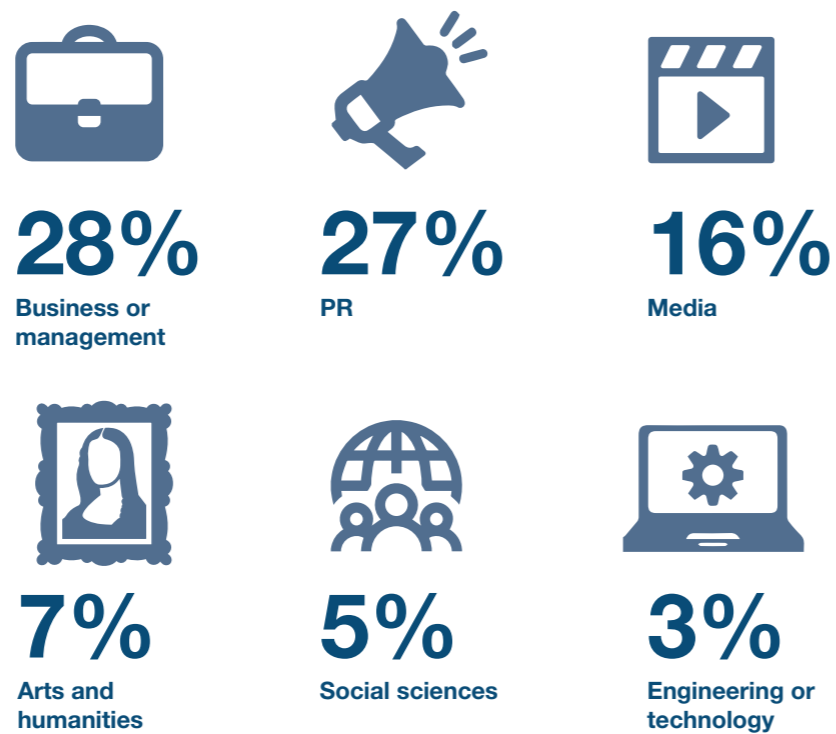
Ahmad Itani, Chairman, PRCA MENA; President, ICCO Middle East; and Founder & CEO, of Cicero & Bernay Communication Consultancy

EDUCATION

The vast majority of respondents have attended university or higher education. Just 6% of practitioners said secondary school was the highest level of education they had completed, with 3% saying they had a vocational college education.

Two in three (64%) have a university first degree (eg a Bachelor's), while another quarter (26%) have a higher degree such as a Master's, MBA or Doctorate, and 1% have a professional higher education such as a legal or accountancy qualification.

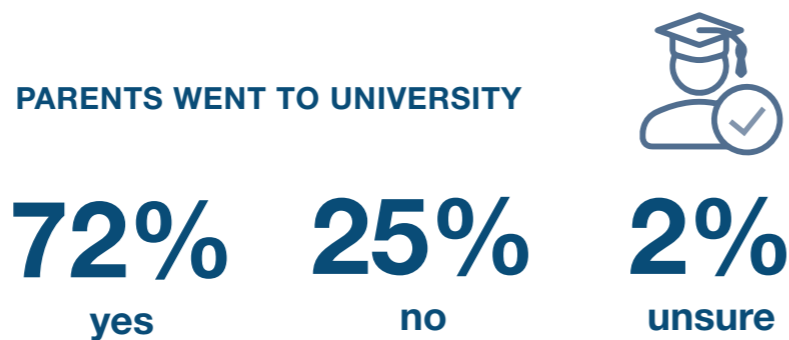
Respondents were asked the subject of their most recent degree course. The most common answers were business & management, and public relations. Others are shown in the graphic to the right.



SOCIAL MOBILITY

To build a picture of social mobility across the industry, we asked practitioners about their parents' education.

The majority (72%) said that their parents had a university degree - a figure that is higher among younger respondents - while 25% said they did not and the rest were unsure.



“At this pivotal moment, we need to cast our eye beyond the dated ‘box ticking’ approach to hiring. In addition to setting targets and meeting gender quotas, we must take a closer look at how we can succeed by bringing different perspectives and attributes to the table.

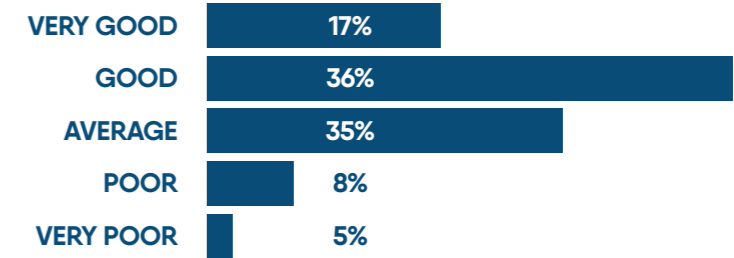
Amel Osman MPRCA, Associate Partner, Instinctif Partners MENA

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

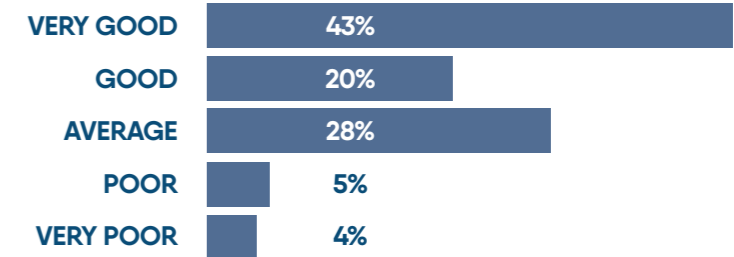
Respondents were asked to rate the PR and communications industry's approach to promoting women to leadership positions. More than half (52%) said it was 'good' or 'very good' - but this figure drops to 49% among women.

Overall, respondents are more positive about their own organisation's approach, with 63% rating it as 'good' or 'very good' - and women (64%) are marginally more positive than men (61%).

Across the industry



In my organisation



“I currently have female senior managers both at my government office and in the agency. Both organisations also have positive policies to ensure greater female participation in all parts of their company, notably at the top levels. The critical factor is talent, of course; it's so important to ensure that companies do not think that “their work is done” if they include a woman in a Board position for the first time, or more People of Determination in their workforce.”

Stephen Harrison, Director (Financial + Professional Services), Hill+Knowlton Strategies UAE

MENTAL HEALTH

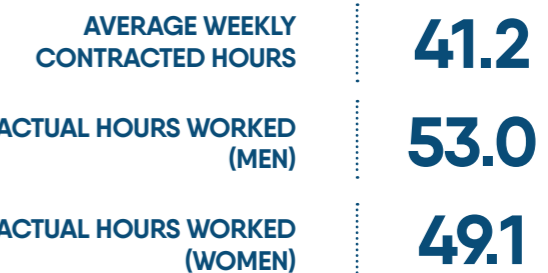
Respondents were asked whether they had ever suffered from or been diagnosed with a mental health illness.

In total, 23% of respondents had - a figure rising to 30% among women and dropping to 9% among men. This is much higher than the 10% of respondents who said they had suffered from a mental health illness in the recent [PRCA MENA Mental Health Report 2021](#) - although the questions were different in each survey.

It is clear that mental wellbeing should be a concern for employers of PR professionals. One particular Census finding demonstrates the pressures faced by PR professionals - on average, respondents are contracted to work 41.2 hours per week, or eight and a quarter hours per five-day week. In reality, respondents actually work an average of 50.4 hours per week - more than 10 hours per day.



AVERAGE WEEKLY CONTRACTED HOURS



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Pay and perks

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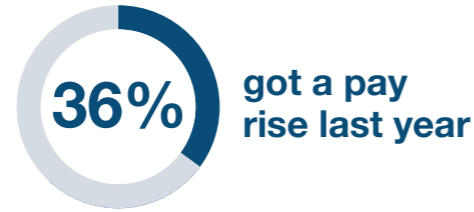
“When considering perks, it is rarely a one size fits all approach. To ensure that all employees are treated fairly and equally, it is imperative we understand what benefits are pertinent to individuals, not only the majority. We are still in a process of transition, learning what adds value, drives talent retention, and can be implemented effectively without compromising efficiency.”

Amel Osman MPRCA, Associate Partner, Instinctif Partners MENA

PAY AND BONUSES

Only around a third (36%) MENA PR professionals said they got a pay rise in the last year, while a quarter (24%) received a bonus.

Bonuses were more commonly received by older respondents, while younger respondents were more likely to have received a salary increase.

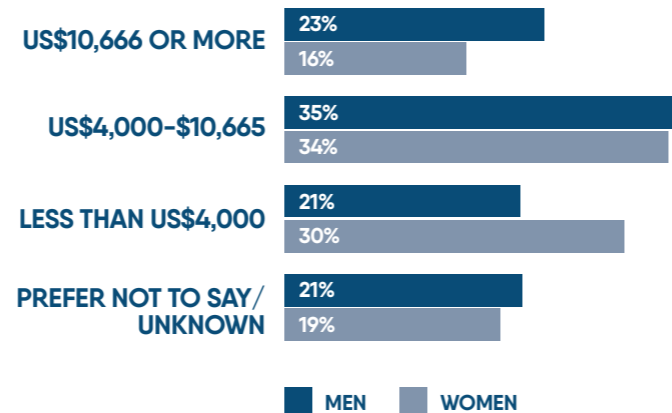


“Given the increase in demand and upward trajectory of global growth I do expect reward and recognition to increase, specifically as the war for talent is a real challenge.”
Mandip Dulay, MPRCA MCIM, Co-Founder, COO Network and CEO, Impact.me Group

GLOBAL GENDER PAY GAP

Numerous surveys have pointed to the fact that men are generally paid more than women for doing the same job.

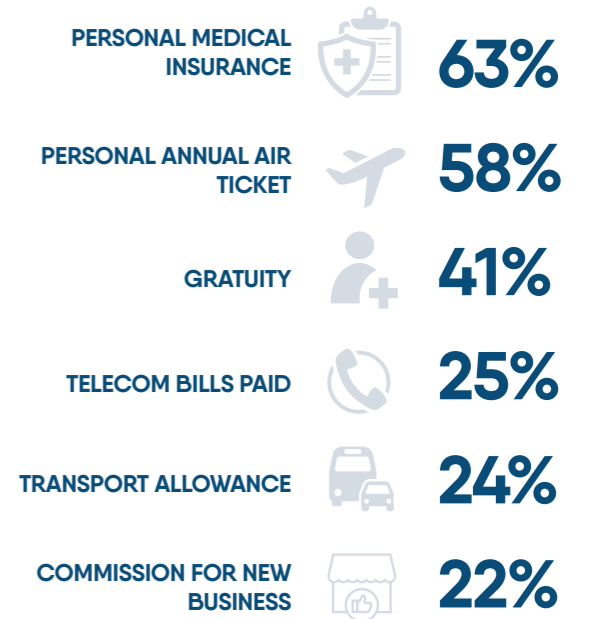
This is true of data collected in this survey - when we asked respondents for their monthly net income in USD, we saw that men are more likely to occupy the top salary brackets than women, and less likely to occupy the lower brackets. However, due to the way data was collected, and the differences in average salaries across the region, it is not possible to calculate a specific pay gap percentage.



BENEFITS

Alongside pay and bonuses, practitioners receive a wide range of financial and non-financial benefits. In total, 91% of respondents said they receive at least one of the benefits listed in our survey.

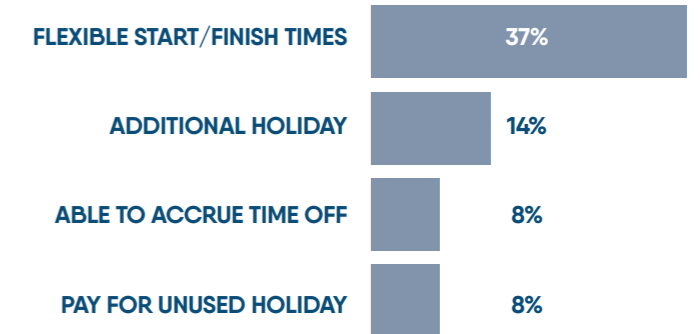
The most common are personal medical insurance, a personal annual air ticket and a gratuity (for length of service) - as shown in the graphic on the right.



FLEXIBLE HOURS

Nearly half of respondents (48%) have used one or more flexible working arrangement - this is more common among male respondents (62%) than female respondents (42%).

The most common requested is control over their start and finish time, followed by home working for at least one day a week. It will be interesting to see how these figures change as the post-pandemic reality emerges.



“Those pay figures don’t surprise me. People have been keener to hang onto their jobs at a time of huge global flux – not only in our industry – so pushing for extra pay and recognition may not have been uppermost in many people’s minds.”
Stephen Harrison, Director (Financial + Professional Services), Hill+Knowlton Strategies UAE

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