

A narrow Venetian canal with colorful buildings and gondolas. The water is calm, reflecting the surrounding architecture. Several gondolas are visible, some with passengers. The buildings are multi-storied with various window styles and colors like red, orange, and blue.

Berenschot

Quick Scan Strategic Communications

Brief report for the participants of the Club of Venice 2019
Based on the Berenschot stratcom model

Preface

How is the press and communication function managed? Which tools are used? What are the trends and developments? What will the communication department look like in the future? And how can you actually improve your communication function?

These and other issues are addressed by the Berenschot communications benchmark. We have ten years of experience with this benchmark in the Netherlands. Many organizations, mainly in the public sector, have participated over the years. This gives us an excellent insight in the latest strategic developments.

During the recent meeting of the club of Venice (December 5th and 6th), an informal network of communications managers from EU member states and institutions, we have asked the participants to interact on different themes. This brief report is a summary of this session.

All mentioned data are indicative based on a quick scan but provide interesting insights in the challenges communications managers are facing in the member states of the European Union. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions concerning the insights or our approach to benchmarking.

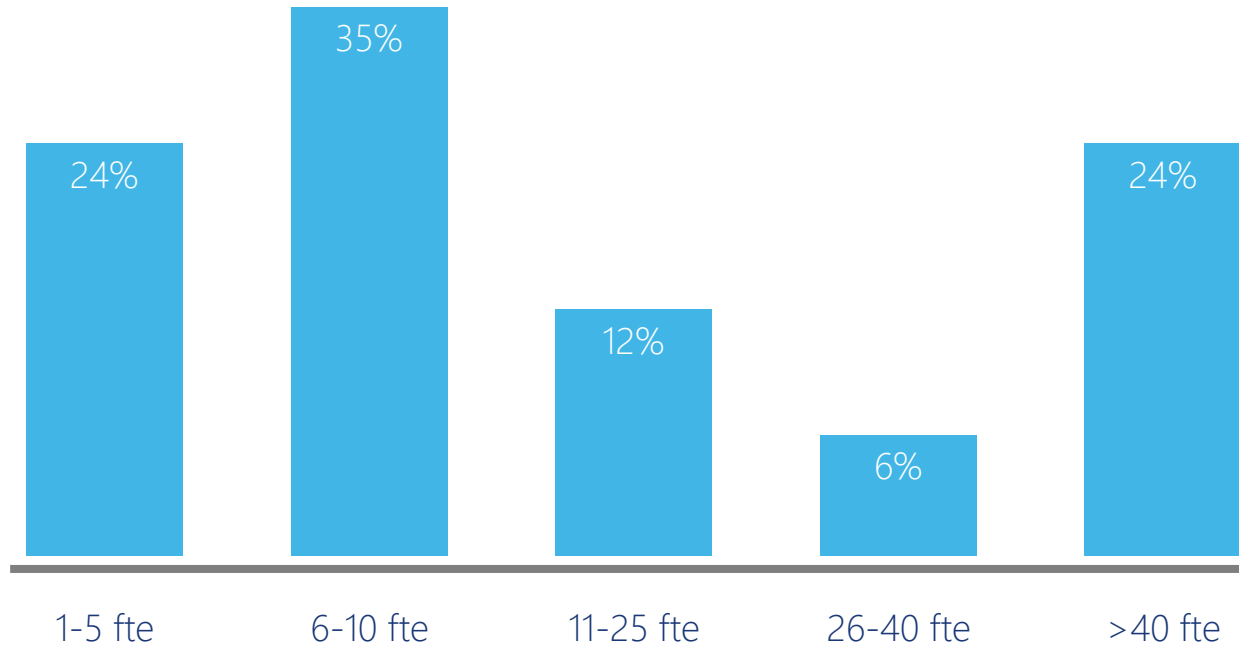
Our framework: a stratcom model based on the benchmark insights

Five roles for organising the modern communications department



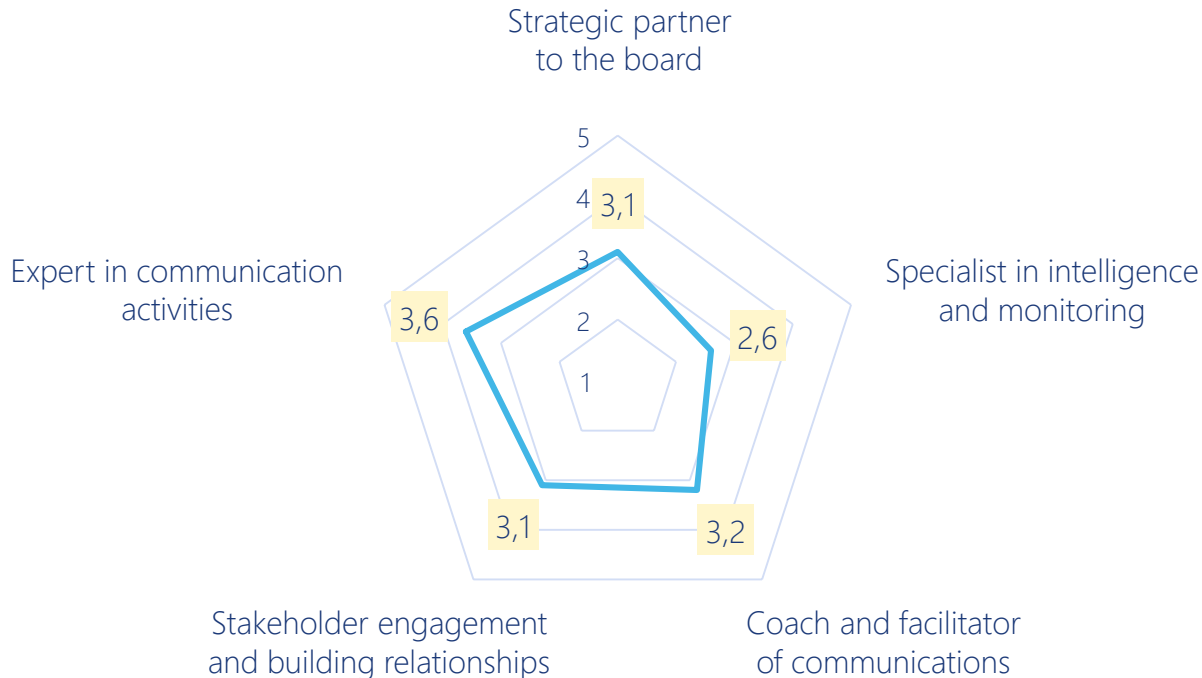
The quickscan shows big differences in the size of communications departments over the EU

Question: please indicate the number of FTEs working for your communications department.



Results indicate that the expert role is most established amongst participants

*Question: Please give a self-assessment on each of the five roles of a modern communications department.
How would you classify the current performance of your Communications department as ...*



Scale:
1 = Not applicable
2 = Minimal
3 = Basic
4 = Proficient
5 = Excellent

Organisations expect a contribution on multiple levels: from delivering excellent day-to-day activities to building and maintaining trust

Question: What contribution does your organisation expect from the communications department?

20%

Delivering day-to-day communication activities that support all functions of the organization

18%

Dealing with the press: answering press questions, writing press releases and spokesperson

17%

Building and maintaining trust in the organization amongst key stakeholders

16%

Consulting and advising the board and top management of the organization

16%

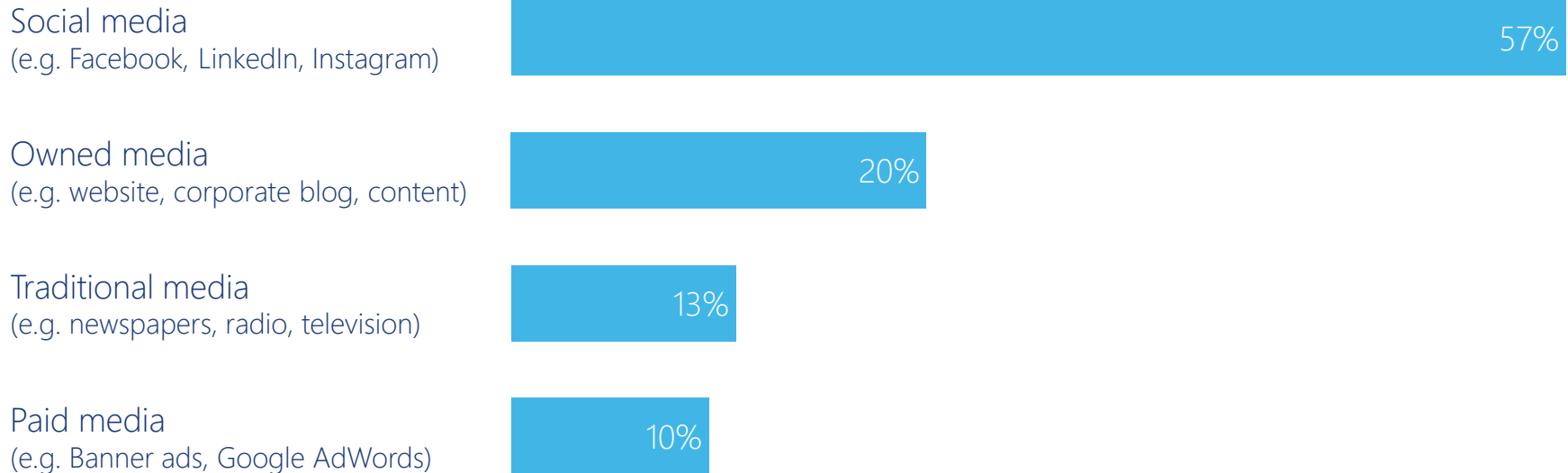
Communicating the corporate strategy to stakeholders and interested publics

12%

Coaching all members of the organization and enabling them to communicate professionally

Participants foresee social media to become most important

Question: Which media type do you foresee to become most important in the years until 2022 in your communication activities with stakeholders?



Communication departments face various challenges in 2020

Question: What do you foresee to be the most important challenge for your department in 2020?



Recommendations based on the insights and the group discussion

Strategic communications and participative government are important for member states and institutions:

1. Strategic communications is at the top of European Commission's agenda. To achieve results such as Green Deal, public consent and stakeholder engagement are considered to be key topics
2. Member States are faced with the challenge to build and maintain commitment for the EU amongst their citizens. This requires communication efforts and a participative government
3. In turn, these challenges require capacity building – an investment in the size (number of communications professionals) and quality (professional level and scope) of communication departments:
 - Strengthening the strategic position of the communication department
 - Adapting technological tools and tapping into the potential of data
 - Investing in participation and stakeholder alliances

Forecast: we will initiate a full EU benchmark study in 2020



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The study provides a great overview of trends and developments.



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Benchmarking enables us to increase the impact of our communication department.



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The insights help us to further define our strategic contribution to the organisation.

About Berenschot consultancy

Berenschot is an independent management consultancy firm with 350 employees worldwide. For over 80 years, we have impressed our clients in the public and business sectors with smart, new insights.

We acquire these new insights and turn them into something practicable. We do this by combining innovation and creativity. Clients prefer Berenschot because our advice gives them a head start.

Berenschot is experienced in raising the standard of communications within government organizations, institutions and companies. We help our clients to increase their impact by improving the strategic position of the communications department.

If you wish more information, please visit our website ([link](#)) or contact Robert Wester([e-mail](#)).

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Berenschot

Robert Wester

Managing Director Berenschot EU
Berenschot EU Aarlenstraat 20 1050 Brussel
r.wester@berenschot.nl