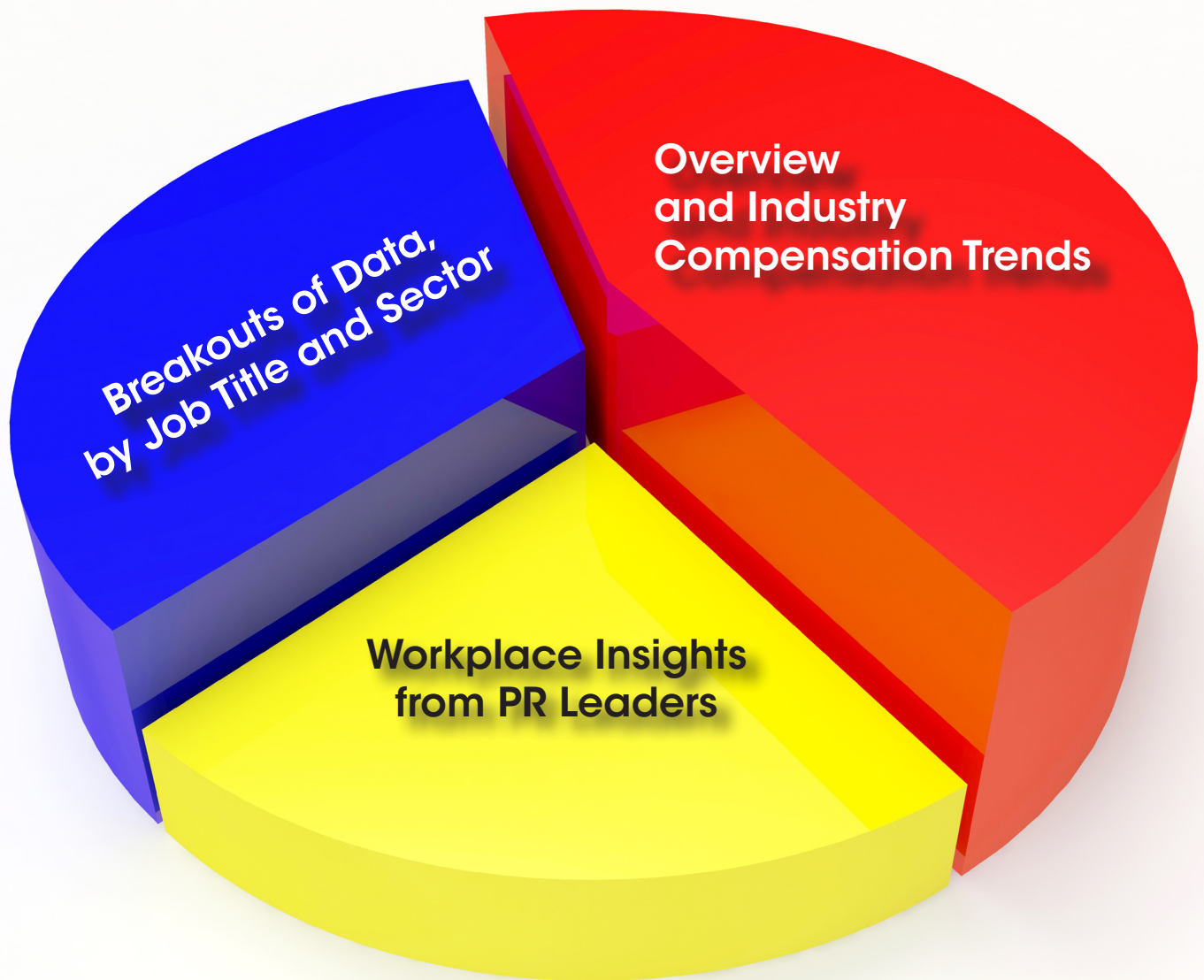


# Salary Survey

PR Compensation and Benefits Report



# EDITOR'S NOTE

## PRNews

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## Same Pay, Different Day: PR Needs to Measure Its Progress and Speak to the C-Suite

Many things change slowly, incrementally. That was the case in 2016 with base salaries and benefits for PR professionals and brand communicators, according to our PR News 2016 Salary Survey. When they were awarded, salary increases often were modest. A large percentage of those surveyed indicated that they received no increase or were not eligible for an increase.

As salaries and benefits changed little, there was something that's been altered radically in the PR space, namely the job responsibilities of PR pros.

Much of the traditional PR role was interacting with media. Today, being a PR pro encompasses having expertise in all forms of media, traditional and new.

While it's true that digital technology has made it easier for one PR pro to communicate with hundreds of media by depressing buttons on a mobile device, mastering digital PR remains elusive. With some exceptions, few in PR or elsewhere are mastering the uncharted territory of digital media. Still PR pros and communicators are expected to have all the answers now.

Add to that the demands on PR pros to contribute to the bottom line through sales and marketing. In addition, the communicator must engage a diverse employee base, provide crisis communication wisdom and offer the C-suite strategic direction. Oh, and you're expected to do all this with a flat or a declining budget.

Still, PR pros suffer in many quarters from the perception that they are in a "soft" profession. The job description in the paragraphs above is anything but soft. Perhaps a key to overcoming this perception is for the discipline to better communicate its prowess by establishing business goals and using business terminology to express itself. Yet when our survey asked PR pros to name skills valuable for professional advancement, the least important were measurement knowledge and financial acumen (please see page 6, Figure D).

In terms of what must change, that should be high on the list.

Sincerely,

Seth Arenstein  
Editor, PR News  
@skarenstein

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# Summary Overview and Key Findings

# PR Compensation Remains Steady as Responsibilities, Skills Increased

by Seth Arenstein

This year's survey tells a mixed story. Compared with previous years, compensation packages for PR professionals and communicators are little changed from our 2015 report. Overall, compensation is better in 2016 than it was in 2015, but not significantly so. And again, the largest bonuses are earned by men, despite PR being populated mostly by women. There are still a great many PR pros who are either not receiving pay increases or tell us that salary increases are not applicable to them. Despite this, the communicator's job responsibilities grow.

Job satisfaction also has remained similar to last year's findings, but this is good news. Despite balky salary rises, more than 80% of those we polled are very satisfied or moderately satisfied with their career choice (Figure F, page 7).

Perhaps it's not a surprise that almost 70% of respondents said they either are fully satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their compensation (Figure C, page 6).

What we thought might change, but hasn't, are the PR skills needed to advance. While we agree that written communications, media relations and content creation should continue to top the list, it's surprising that measurement knowledge and financial acumen were near the bottom when we asked about them in this year's survey (Figure D, page 6). This sparked Mike McDougall's essay (page 48) and was the impetus for the Editor's Note (page 2).

Another facet that failed to change from 2015 is the low ranking for social responsibility as a soft skill important to career advancement (Figure E, page 7). With the emphasis by millennials on social responsibility, this low ranking seems surprising.

---

**Compensation is better in 2016 than it was in 2015, but not significantly so. Men earned the largest bonuses, despite PR being populated mostly by women.**

---

## How the Survey Was Administered

This fifth annual survey was conducted online. Its respondents were PR News subscribers, the PR News community and visitors to the PR News website. The following were used to invite people to participate:

- PR News subscribers were sent e-mail messages inviting them to participate in the survey.
- Links to the survey were included in weekly editions of PR News.
- Visitors to [www.prnewsonline.com](http://www.prnewsonline.com) saw a link inviting them to take the survey. The frequency cap was one time per user.
- The PR News community was invited via social media channels.

The study was fielded for roughly six weeks, beginning December 1, 2015 and ending January 18, 2016. There were a total of 800 respondents, representing a wide variety of industries and PR disciplines.

For 2016, several new job titles were added. They are indicated in the text.

A word of thanks to my wonderful colleagues. Jessica Placencia handled data as well as numerous other duties with style and grace. A hearty thank you also to Yelena Shamis, who did her usual outstanding job designing the charts and pages of this survey.

# Key Survey Findings

## OVERALL

### Salary Increases

There is good and bad news in this survey. Compared with our 2015 study, more PR pros received higher salary increases. Yet the percentage of those surveyed receiving increases was nearly the same, about 68%. With a better economy, we expected that to rise.

Turning to the rate of increase in salaries, the news was slightly better. In 2015, nearly half the respondents (46%) garnered increases of 1%-3%; 3% of respondents received salary hikes in the 10%-12% range; and about 15% of respondents saw their salary rise 4%-6% in 2015.

As Figure A shows, nearly 16% saw a 4%-6% rise. The good, not great, news came from those getting larger increases. In 2016 5% received increases of 7%-9%, up from 1.8% in 2015. The percentage of those whose salaries rose 10%-12% (4.47%) and 13% (4.21%), respectively, also were larger than in 2015.

A trouble spot since 2014, the percentage of PR pros where salary increases did not apply, remained at 16%.

### Bonuses

The only bonus category with a jump vs. '15 was \$6K-\$10K, nearly 16%. It was 9% in '15.

Fig. A: Percentage Salary Increase in Latest Review or Promotion

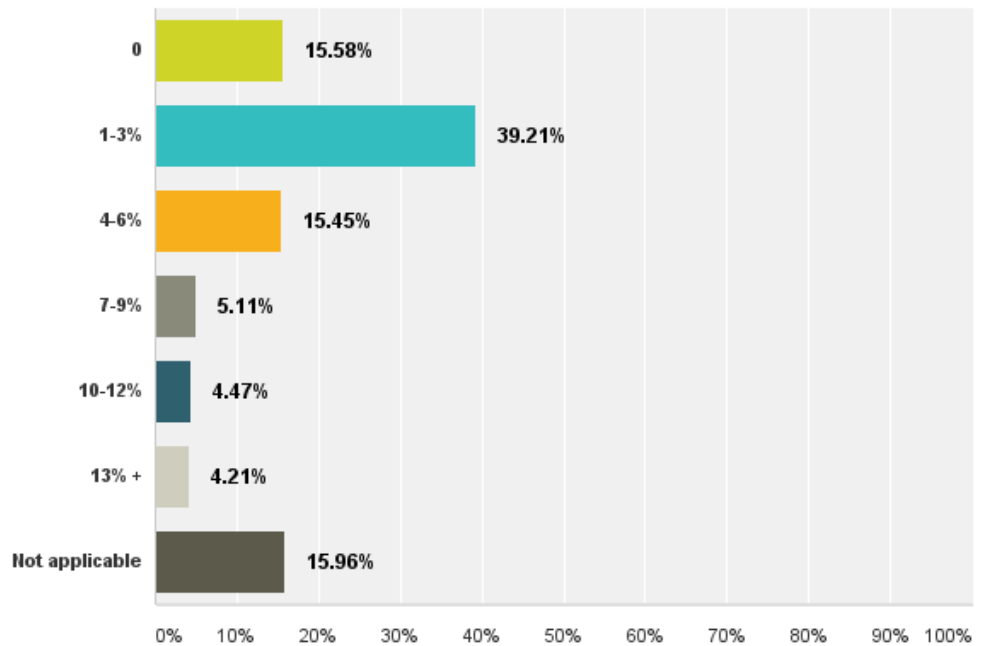
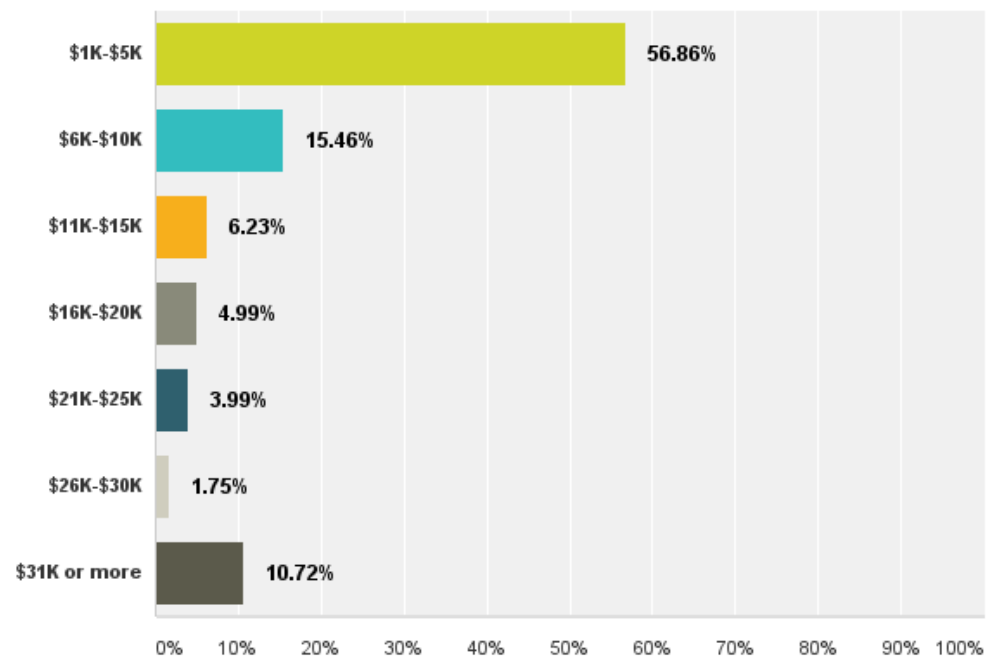


Fig. B: Bonus You Received



### Compensation Satisfaction

More PR pros were satisfied with their salaries (68%) vs the 2015 figure of 62% (Figure C). The split between being fully satisfied and somewhat satisfied was nearly the same in 2015 as in 2016.

### PR Skills Most Important for Advancement

Media relations (48%) was the top skill cited for advancement, followed by content creation (46%) (see Figure D). That measurement knowledge and financial acumen wallowed at the bottom perhaps addresses the lingering perception in the C-suite of PR as a soft profession.

Fig. C: How satisfied are you with your current compensation?

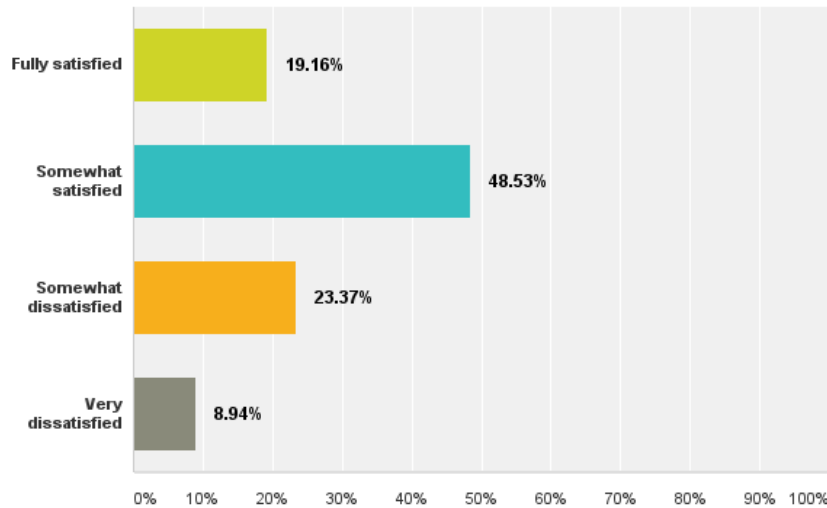
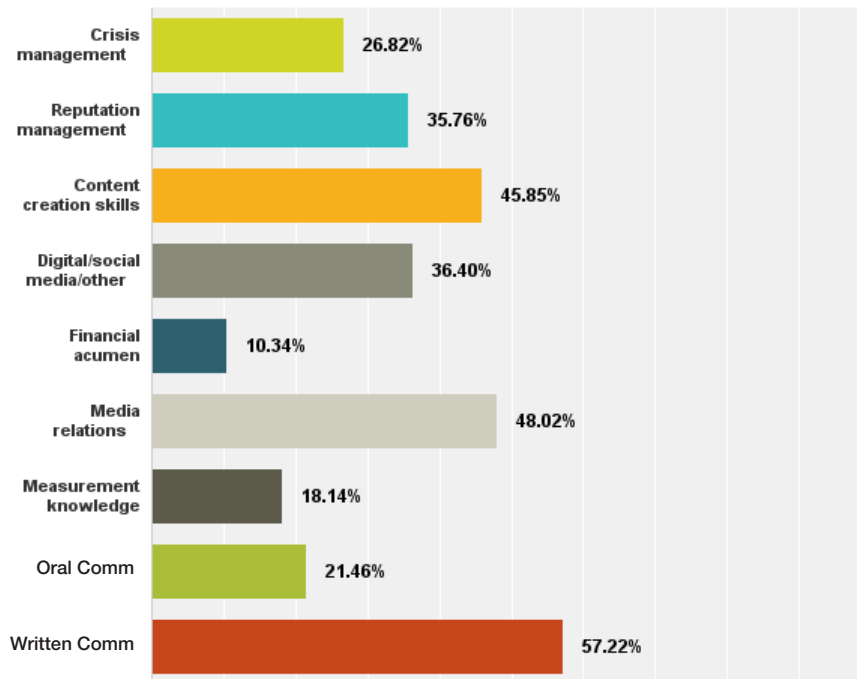


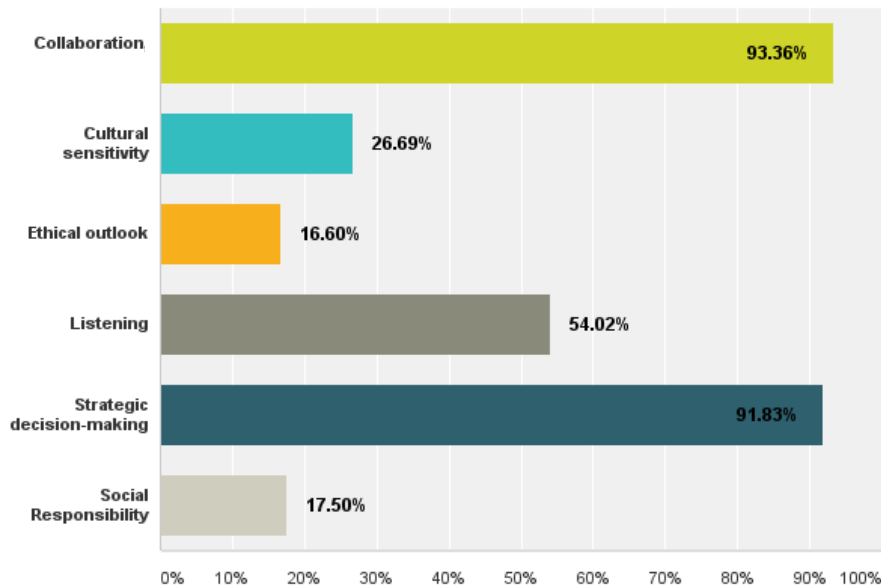
Fig. D: Which PR skills are most important for advancement within your organization?



## Key 'Soft' Communications Skills/Attributes

As we noted last year, social responsibility ranked last when respondents were asked about important soft skills. The change in percentages between 2015 and 2016 on soft skills/attributes was negligible.

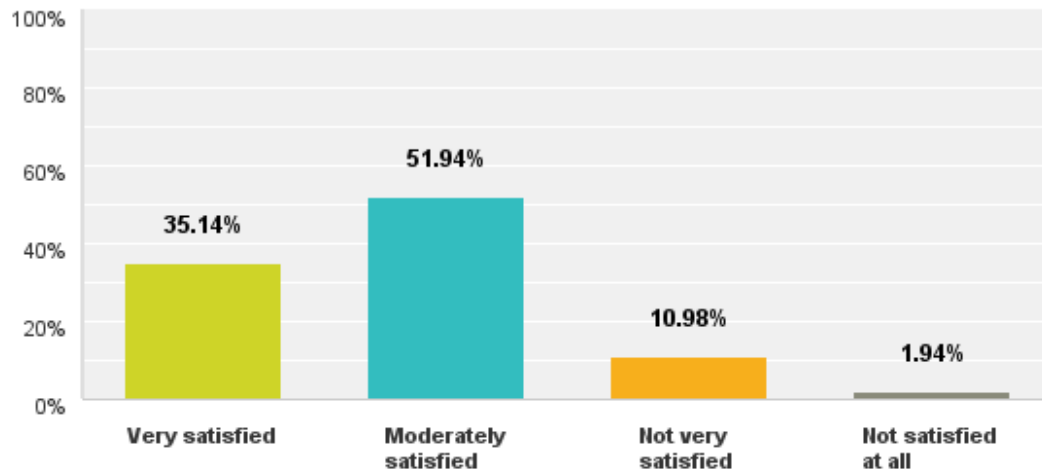
Fig. E: Which of the following 'soft' communications skills/attributes are most important for advancement within your organization?



## Job Satisfaction

Those who said they were “very satisfied” jumped 4% from 2015, while those who were “moderately satisfied” fell 4%. It’s an encouraging sign for PR that most practitioners are either very or moderately satisfied with their jobs.

Fig. F: Overall, how satisfied are you with your job?



## GENDER

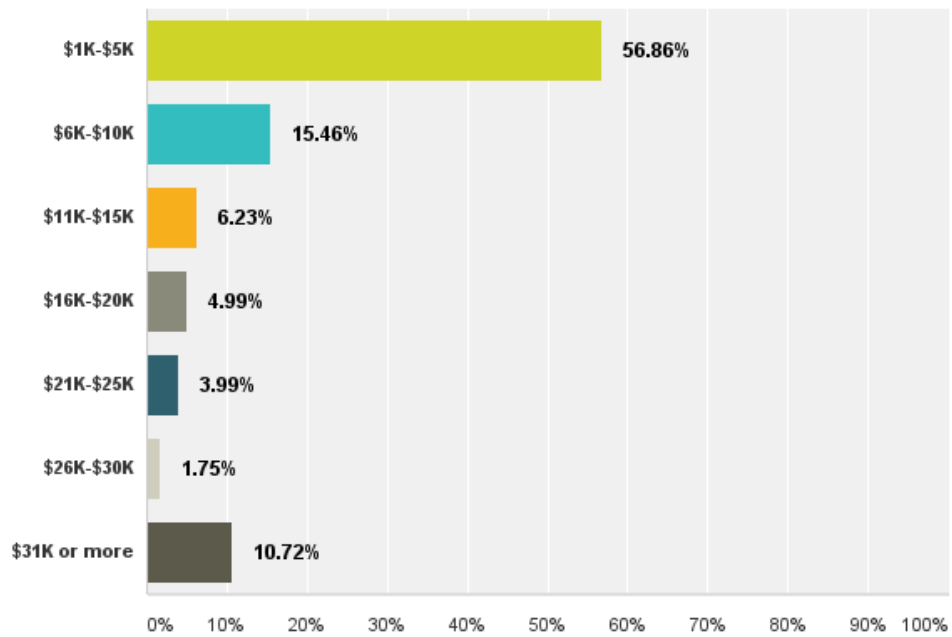
### Bonuses

Figure G is a new metric for this year's survey. Good news is that a high percentage of PR pros received bonuses. Unfortunately, much of that was concentrated in the \$1K-\$5K bracket.

in a profession largely populated by women (see Figure L, page 10), a significantly larger percentage of males received the largest bonuses. With males dominating the C-suites, it's little surprise that they are collecting the largest bonuses.

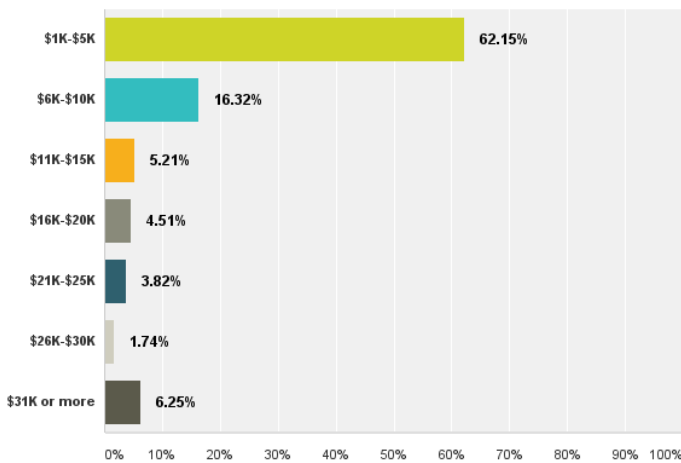
Figures H and I indicate the gender disparity in PR:

**Fig. G: If you received a bonus in 2015, what was the amount?**



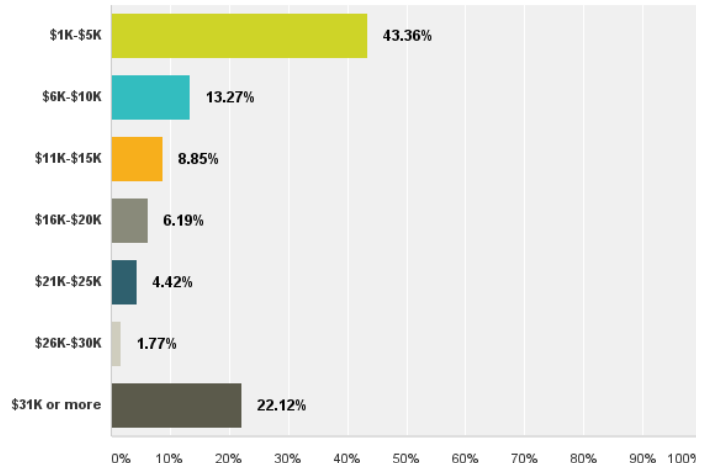
**Fig. H: Female**

Answered: 288 Skipped: 325



**Fig. I: Male**

Answered: 113 Skipped: 87





### Soft Benefits

A flexible work schedule and maternity leave were the top vote getters for soft benefits offered in 2015. It was the same in the 2016 survey. In this era of dual-career families, the flexible work schedule is critical as is maternity leave in the heavily female PR sector.

Interestingly, though, the benefit of having a flexible work schedule was down slightly this year (Figure J) from last year's 68%. Accordingly, childcare was up from 1.6% in 2015 to almost 8% this year. In a sign of the times, paternity leave was up slightly from 29% in 2015.

### Professional Development

It seems the trend has swung to internal training (up from 48% in 2015) and mentoring (up from 26%). The biggest losers, expectedly, were conferences/seminars (83% in 2015) and external courses, which fell to 59% (Figure K) from 71% in 2015.

Conferences/seminars remained the biggest element of professional development, despite the percentage drop from 2015. Last year we bemoaned the fact that internal training and mentoring were low priorities. They're still lowest priorities, but their gains vs 2015 were significant.

Fig. J: What 'soft' benefits does your organization offer?

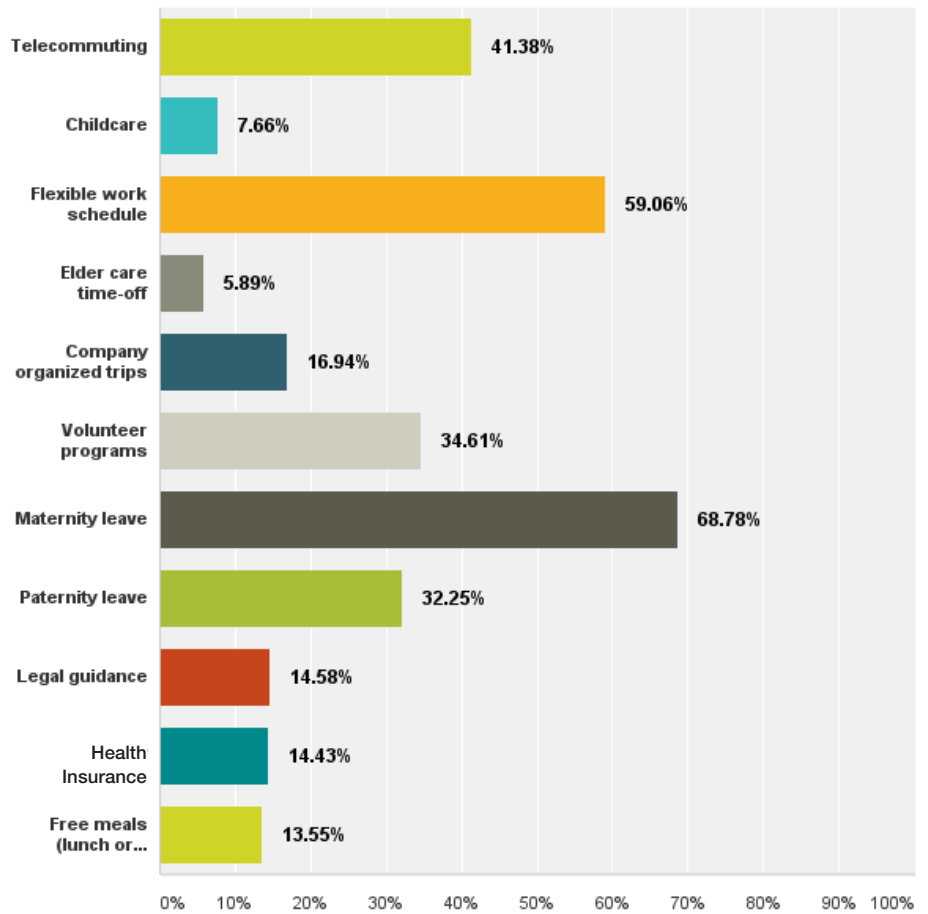
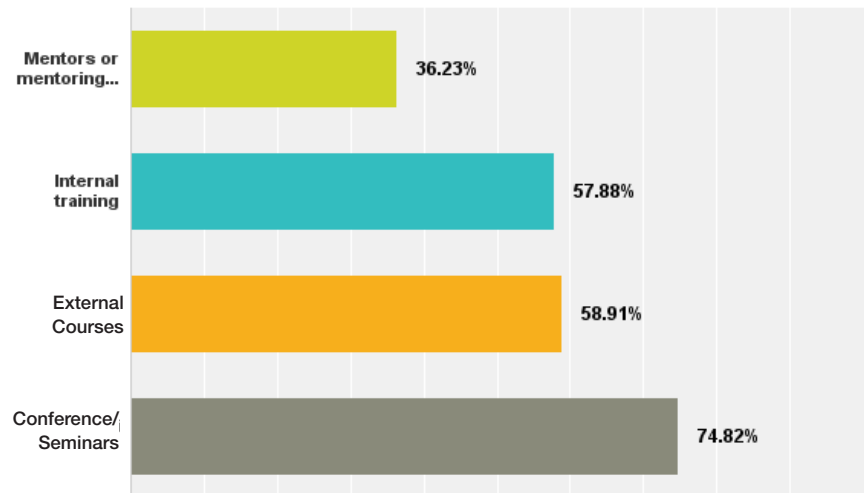


Fig. K: In terms of professional development, I have access to:

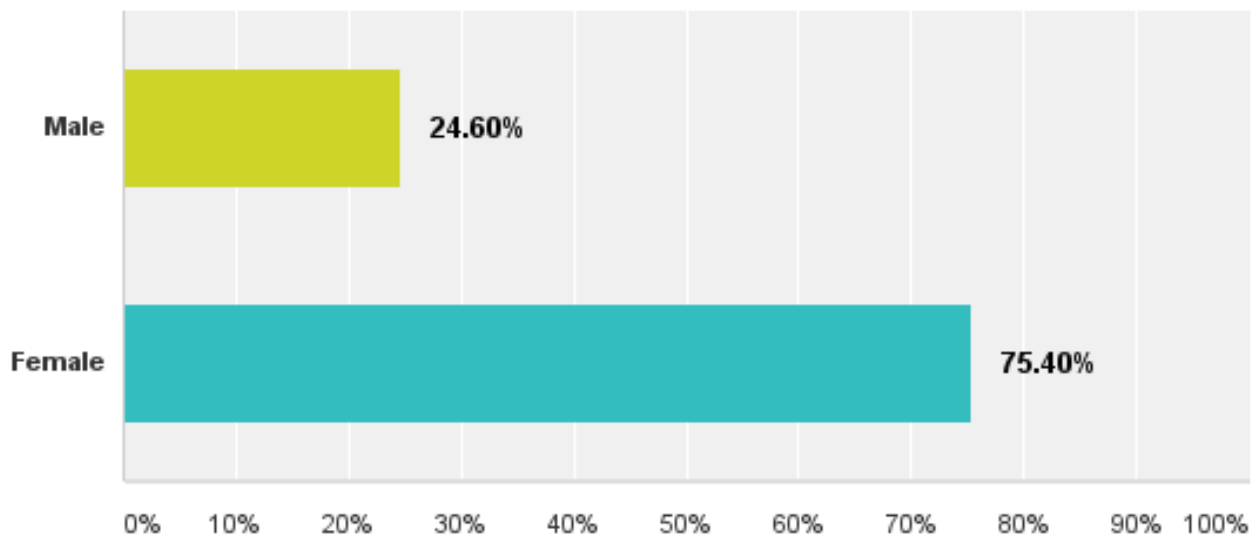


# Survey Demographics

## Gender

The gender makeup of our 2016 survey was nearly identical to that of our 2015 and 2014 surveys. In 2013, though, roughly 32% of respondents were male.

Fig. L: Respondents by Gender



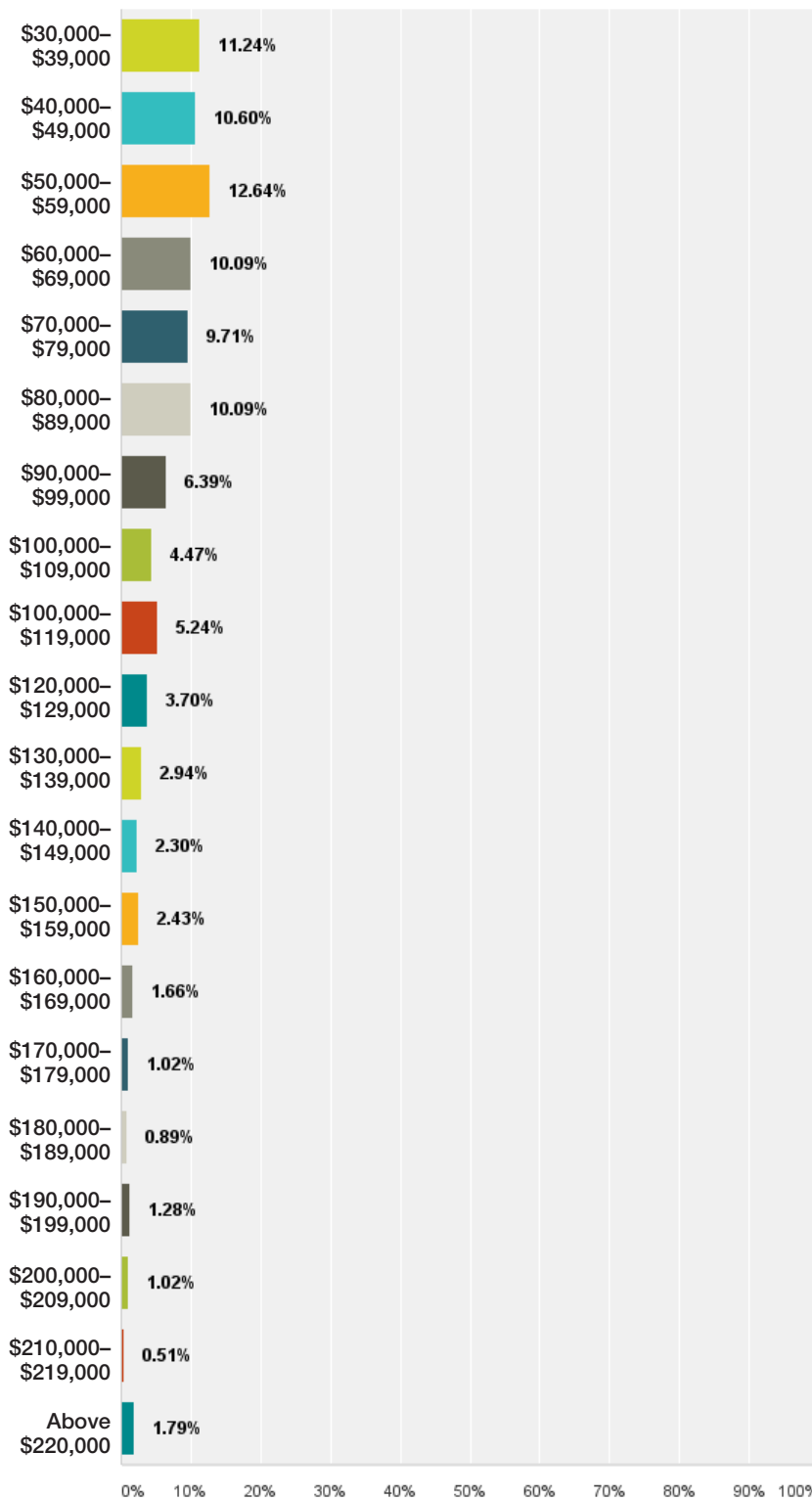
# Survey Demographics

## Base Salary

The large disparity in PR salaries that was evident in our 2015 survey remains a characteristic of the 2016 poll. In addition, the percentage of respondents earning between \$100K and \$139K remained stable year over year. About 75% of respondents earned salaries ranging from \$30K to \$109K.

It's tempting to compare the pay PR pros earn vs the money the journalists they pitch make. As you might expect, it's not close. In 2004, the Pew Research Center, using figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, said for every \$1 dollar a PR pro made, a journalist made 71 cents. In 2013 the average journalist made just 65 cents for every \$1 the PR pro earned. Clearly bragging rights are not up for debate. Still, we are hoping this information will improve your pitching.

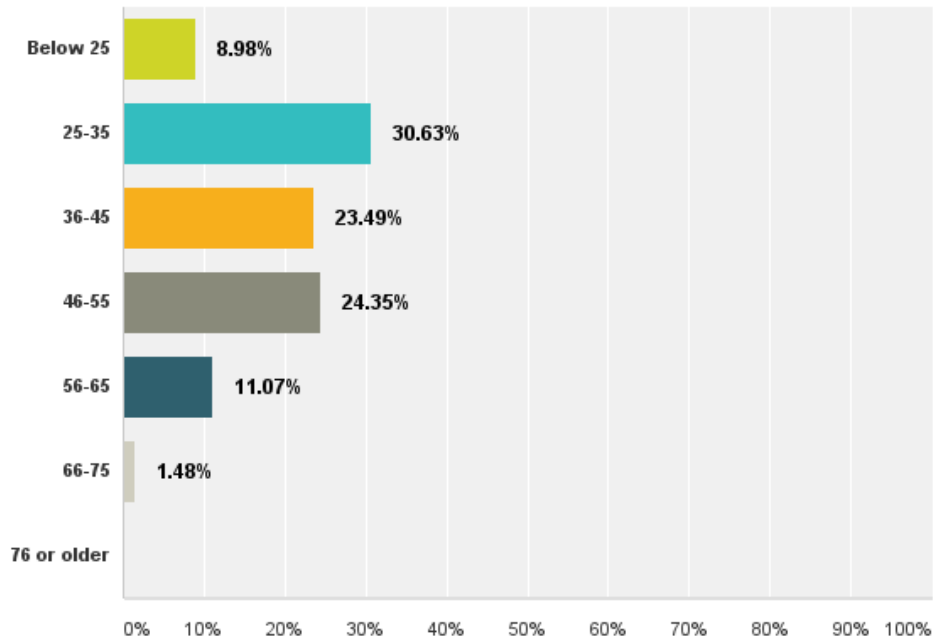
Fig. M: Respondents' Base Salary



## Age of Respondents

Our survey’s mix of ages is decidedly on the young side, with a substantial increase in 25-35s (up from 25% in 2015) and a decline in the 46-55s demo (32% in 2015).

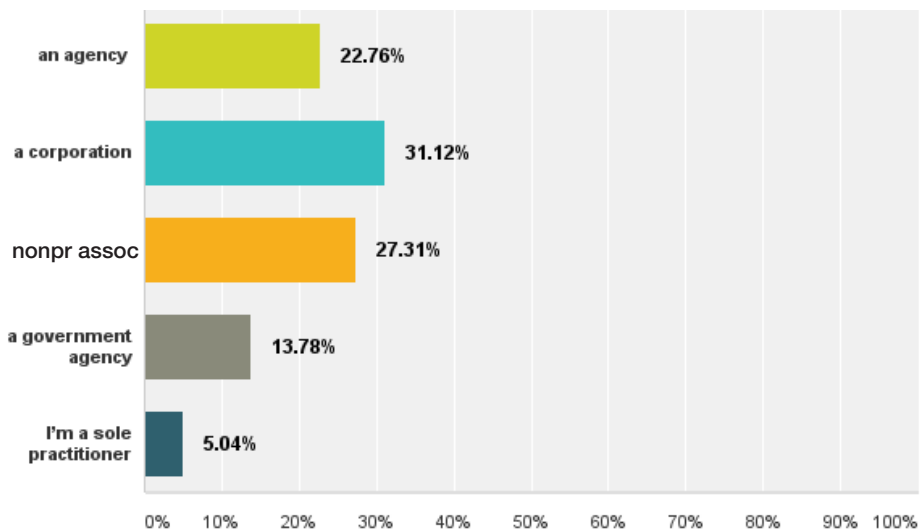
Fig. N: Respondents by Age



## Corporate, Nonprofit/NGO, Government and Agency Breakdown

As in previous years, the corporate sector was the most widely represented in the survey, followed by nonprofits.

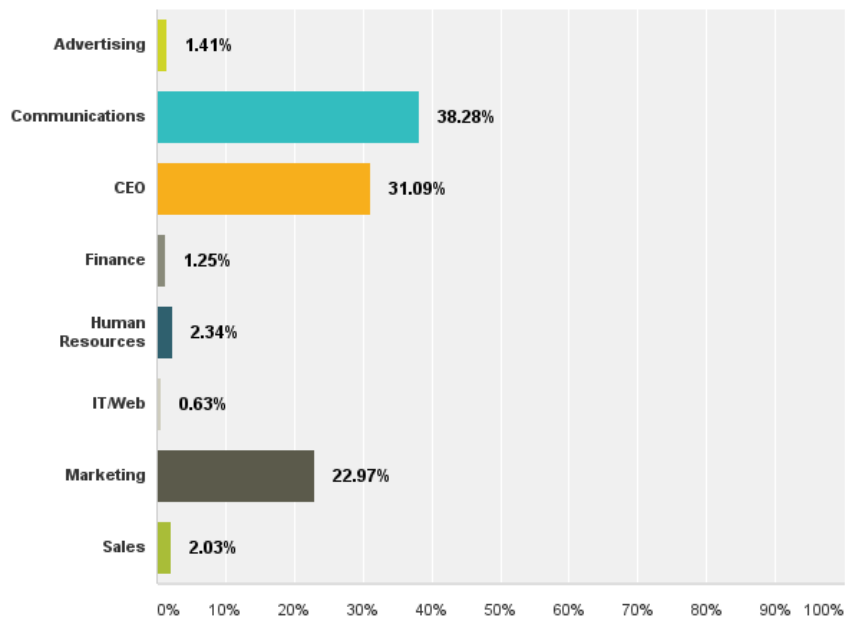
Fig. O: I Practice Communications For:



## To Which Department Do You Report?

Communications gained in the 2016 survey, up from 25% in 2015; marketing fell from 34%.

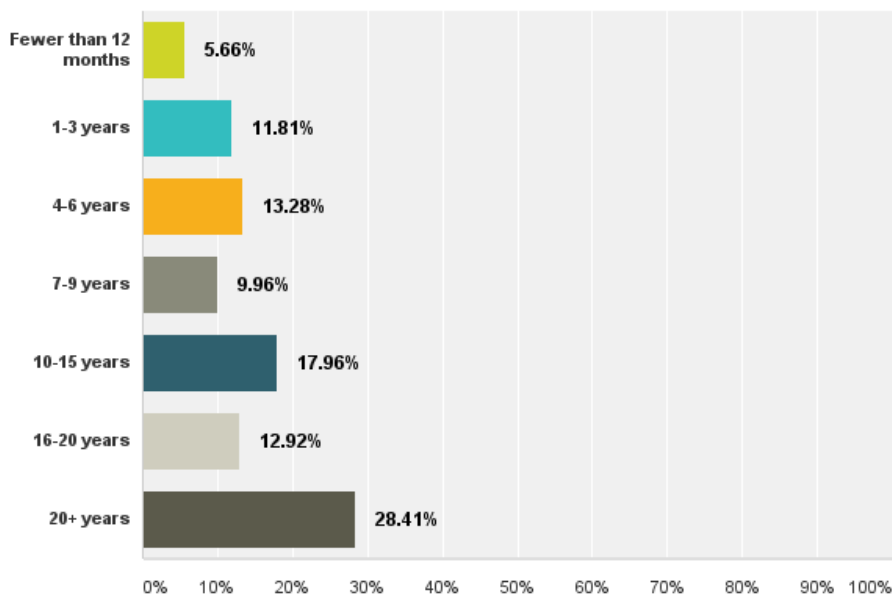
Fig. P: To Which Department Do You Report?



## Communications Experience

Nearly 60% of respondents have worked in PR for 10-20+ years.

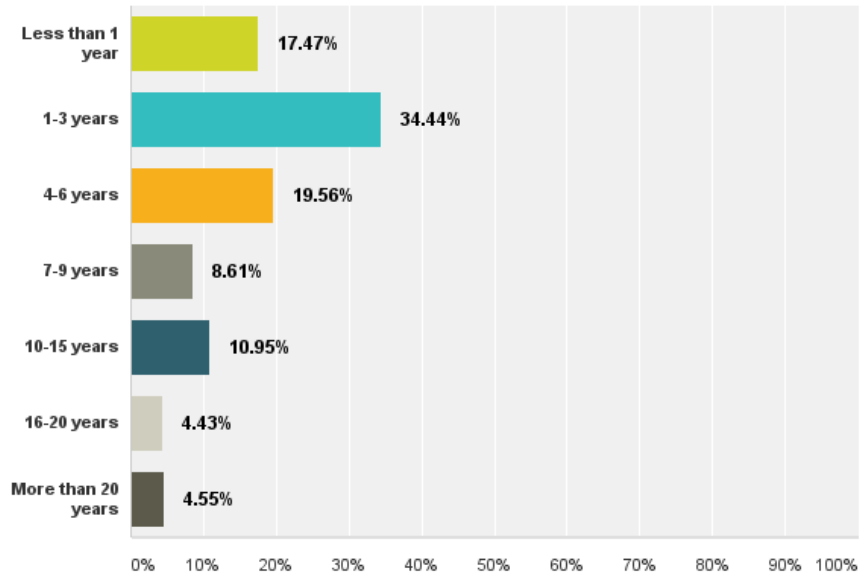
Fig. Q: Years Full-Time in Communications



## Tenure at Current Organization

Nearly 20% of the respondents have been with their organization between 10 and 20+ years.

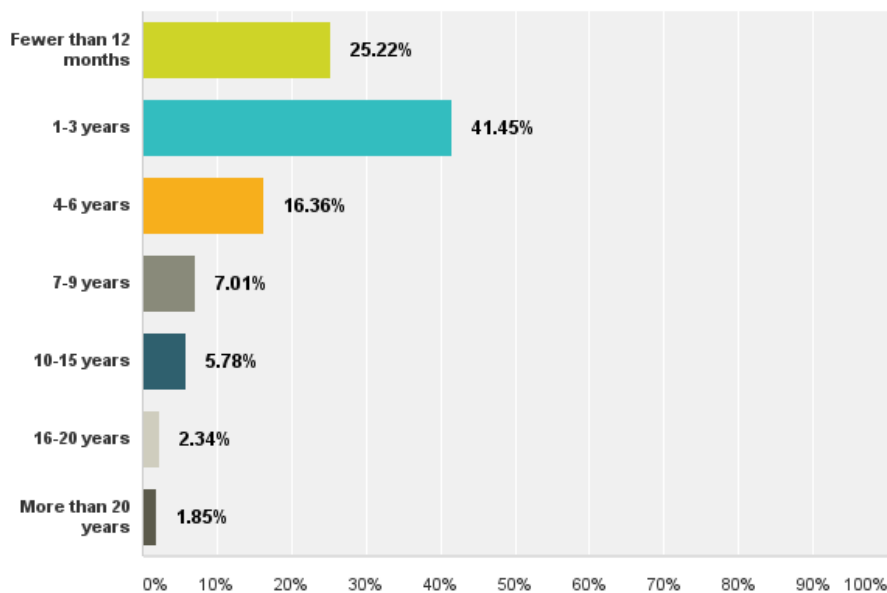
Fig. R: Length of Tenure at Current Organization



## Tenure at Current Position

Nearly 70% of the respondents have held their current position for 1 to 15 years.

Fig. S: Tenure at Current Position





# Survey Results

# Findings by Position: Corporate

## Chief Communications Officer

Reporting corporate CCO salaries is a new metric for the 2016 survey.

Just a bit more than 30% of CCOs surveyed reported a base salary of better than \$210K. About half that number reported salaries in the \$60K-\$79K range.

Total compensation (Figure 2) is similar to the data in Figure 1, with nearly 40% of CCOs reporting packages of \$220K and better. Another 30% reported packages of \$200K-\$209K and \$110K-\$119K.

The majority of CCOs received modest increases, but 23% received no increase and 8% said raises were not applicable to them (Figure 3).

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Chief Communications Officer

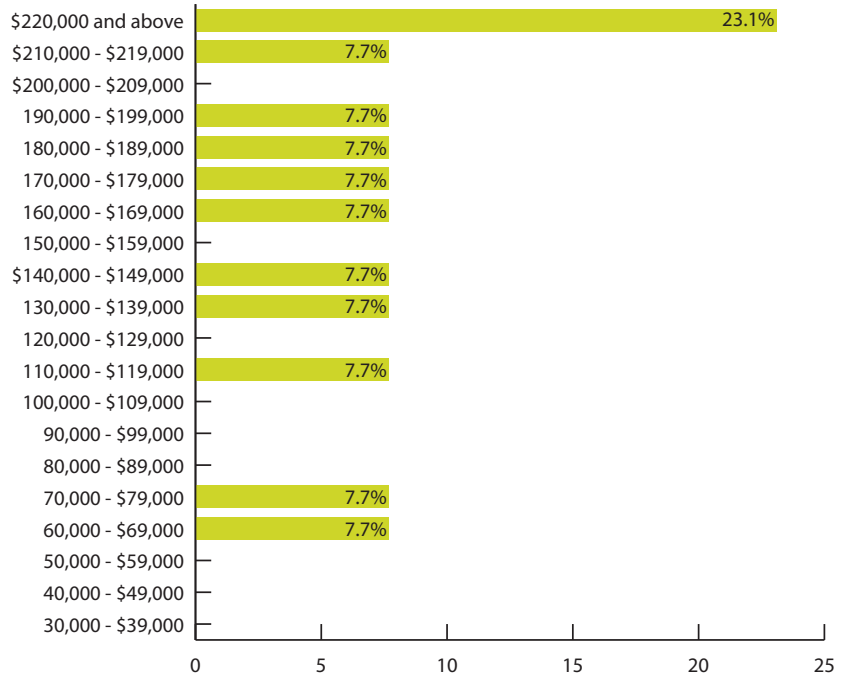


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Chief Communications Officer

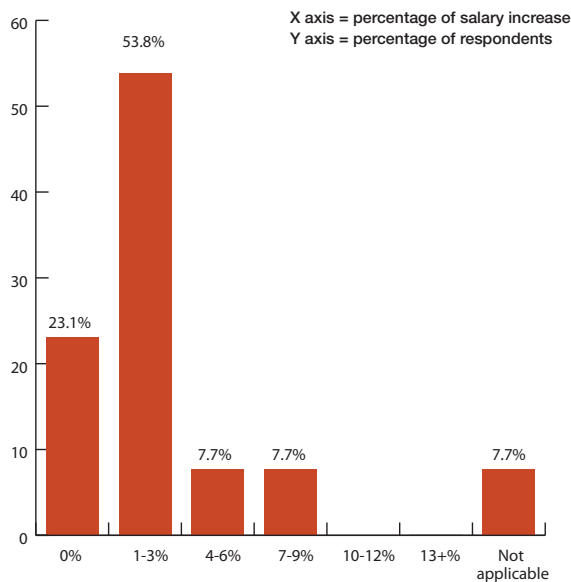
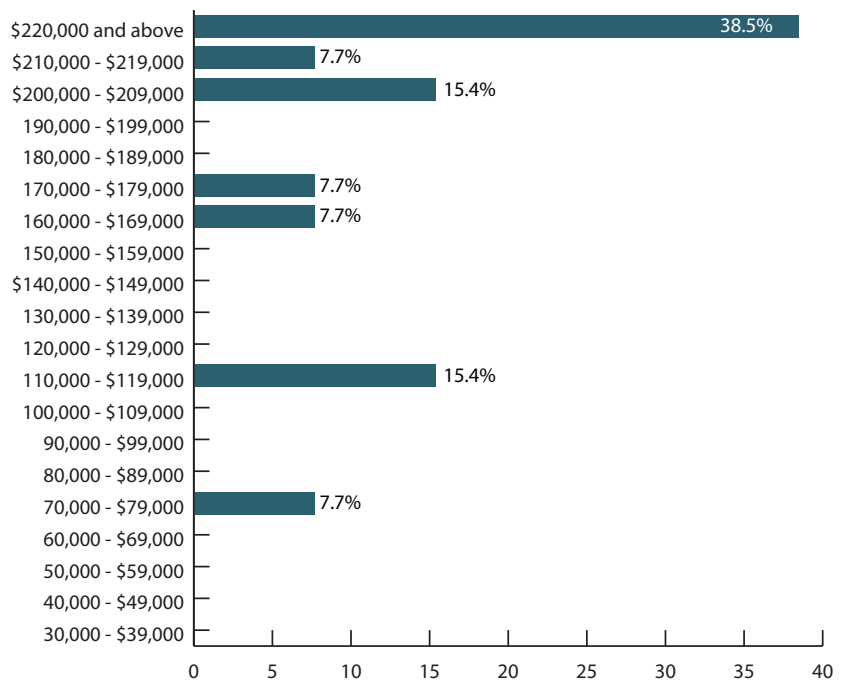


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Chief Communications Officer





Corporate

Director of Communications

The base salary breakdown for communications directors in this survey (Figure 1) was similar to that in 2015. The difference this year was a rise in base salary, with 19% reporting a base of \$120K-\$129K. The largest groups in 2015 were 14% at \$80K-\$89K and 14% at \$90K-\$99K.

The upward trend continued in total compensation (Figure 2), with nearly 13% reporting packages better than \$220K; it was just 5.6% in the 2015 survey. The 34% clumping of packages between \$120K and \$169K in the 2016 survey was far superior to the 2015 figures, where a similar percentage of respondents reported packages of \$70K-\$109K.

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Director of Communications

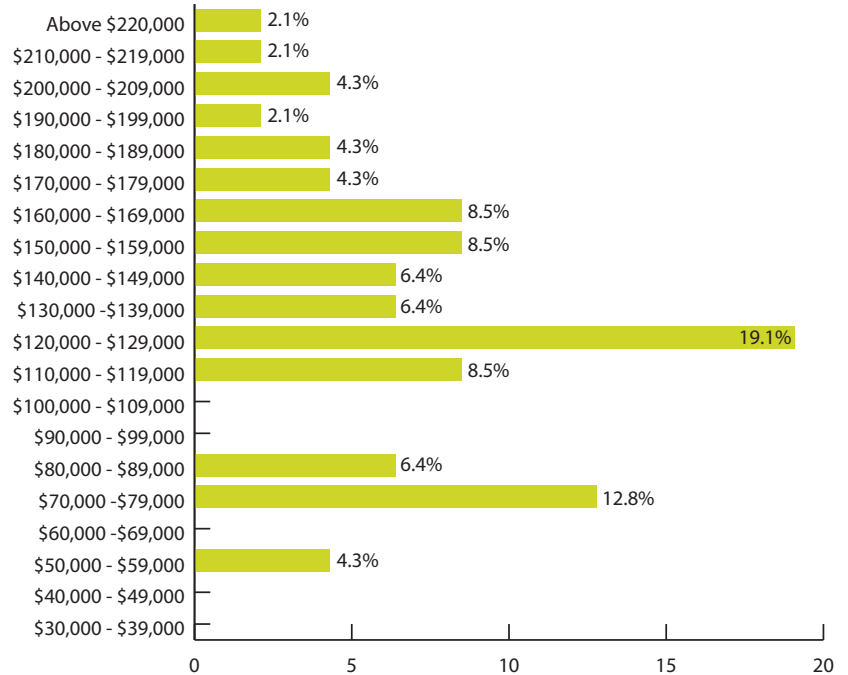


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Director of Communications

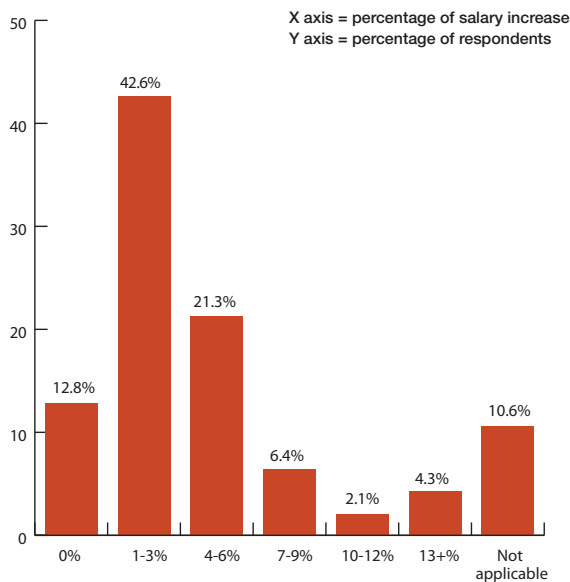
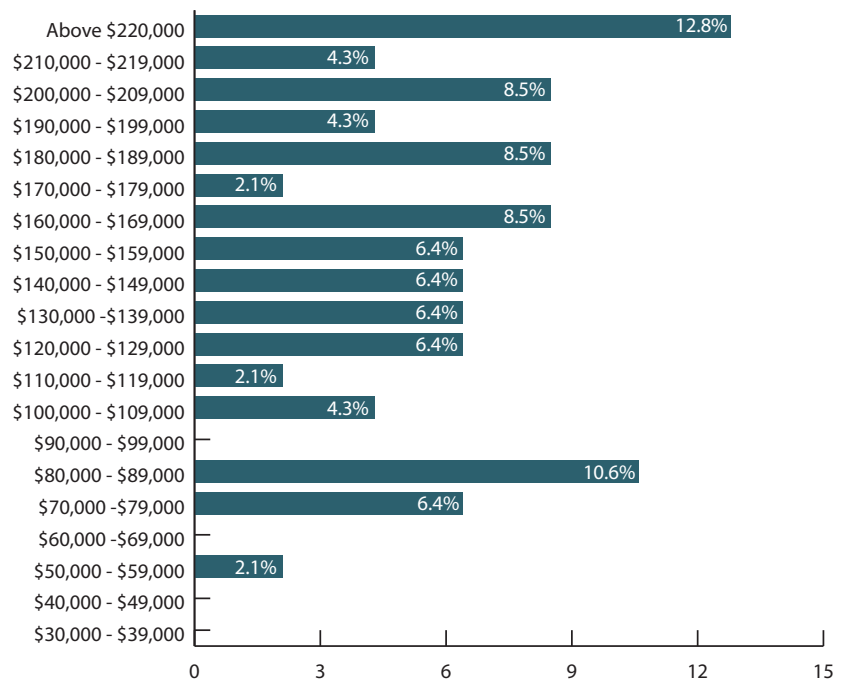


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Director of Communications



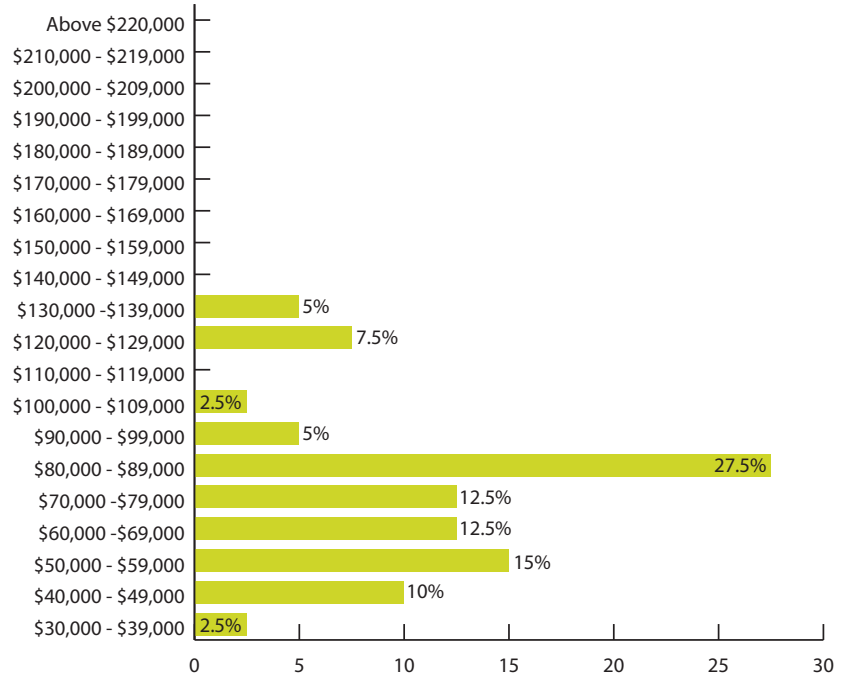
Corporate

**Communications Manager**

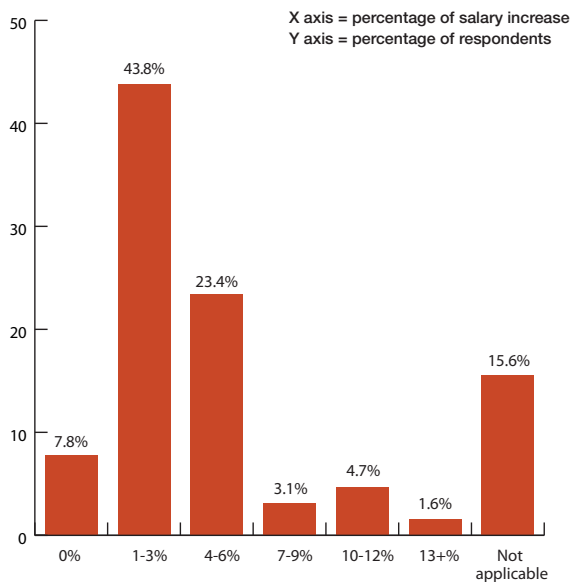
The base salary for most communications managers on the corporate side capped at \$139,000, with the largest single group earning a base of \$80K-\$89K (Figure 1).

It was a mixed bag on salary increases. While increases were modest, most were 1%-6%, they were awarded to the vast majority of communications managers (Figure 3).

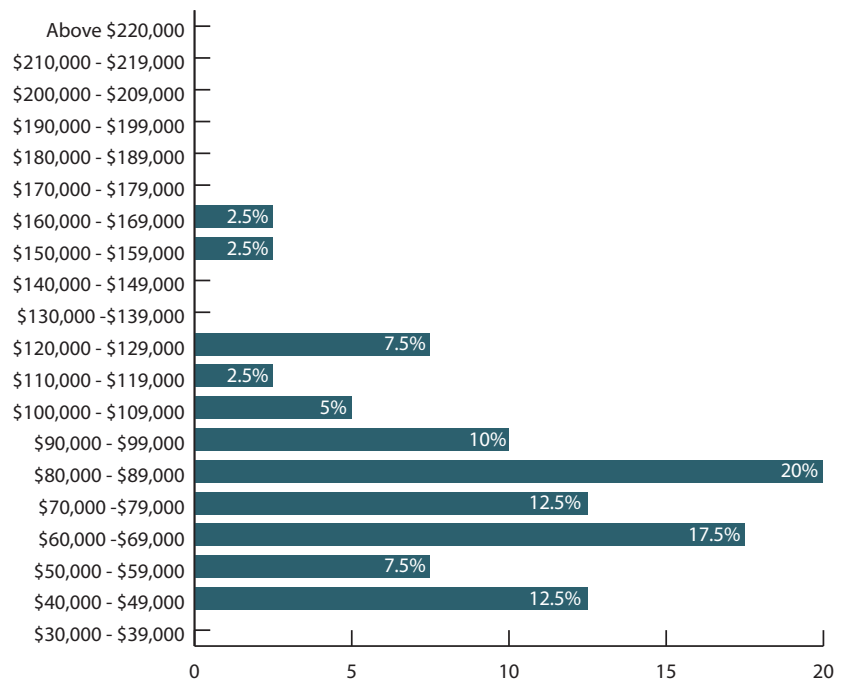
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — Communications Manager**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Communications Manager**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Communications Manager**



Corporate

Communications Specialist

The base salary for communications specialists in 2016 was similar compared with 2015, with the majority reporting base salaries of \$30K to \$79K (Figure 1). The good news was 19% reported base salaries of \$110K to \$209K. In 2015, just 2% could do so.

Salary increases for communications specialists were modest, as they were in 2015. The 2016 survey showed increases of 1% to 6% for nearly 60% of communications specialists (Figure 3). In 2015, those increases went to 71% of respondents.

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Communications Specialist

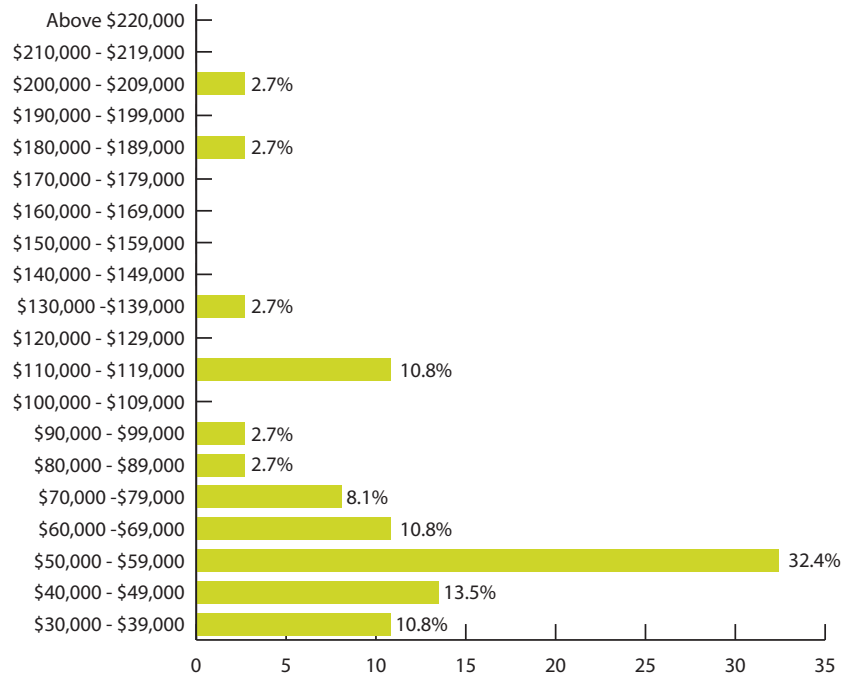


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Communications Specialist

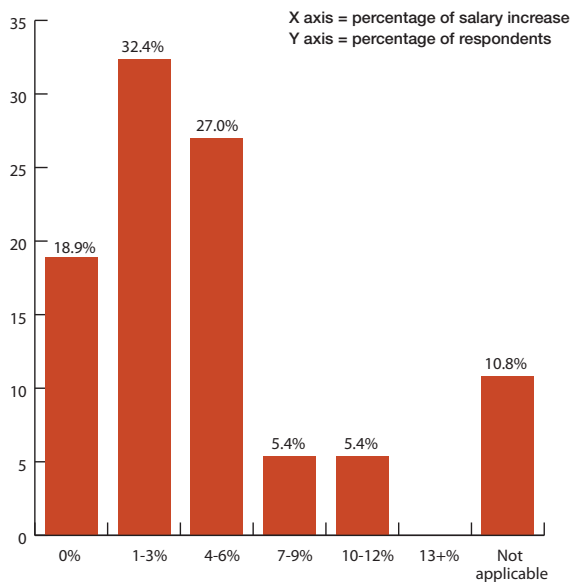
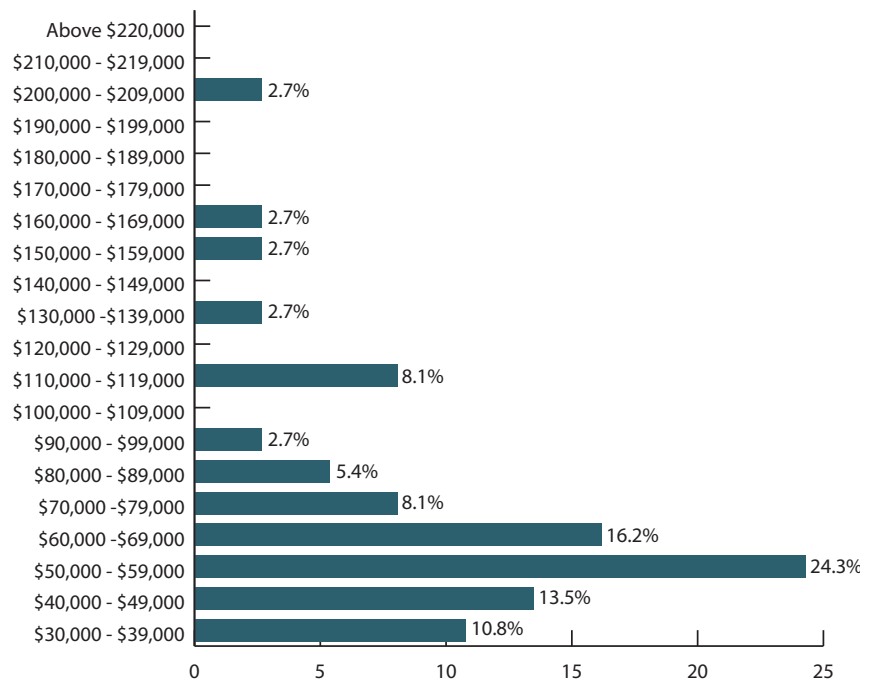


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Communications Specialist



Corporate

Senior Communications Manager

The 2016 findings were a mixed bag for senior communications managers vs 2015. While the number of highest paid remained flat, a small number of those on the lower end of the pay scale moved up in 2016. In both years' surveys, the largest group received a base salary of \$80K to \$89K (Figure 1). In 2015, 9% of senior communications managers reported base salaries of \$50K-\$69K, the lowest base reported in 2016 was \$70K-\$79K.

Total compensation and salary increases told a similar story in 2016. Almost 31% received comp packages of \$90K-\$99K in 2016 (Figure 2). In 2015 the package of the largest single group (18%) was \$80K-\$89K. Salary increase numbers were similar for 2015 and 2016 (Figure 3).

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Senior Communications Manager

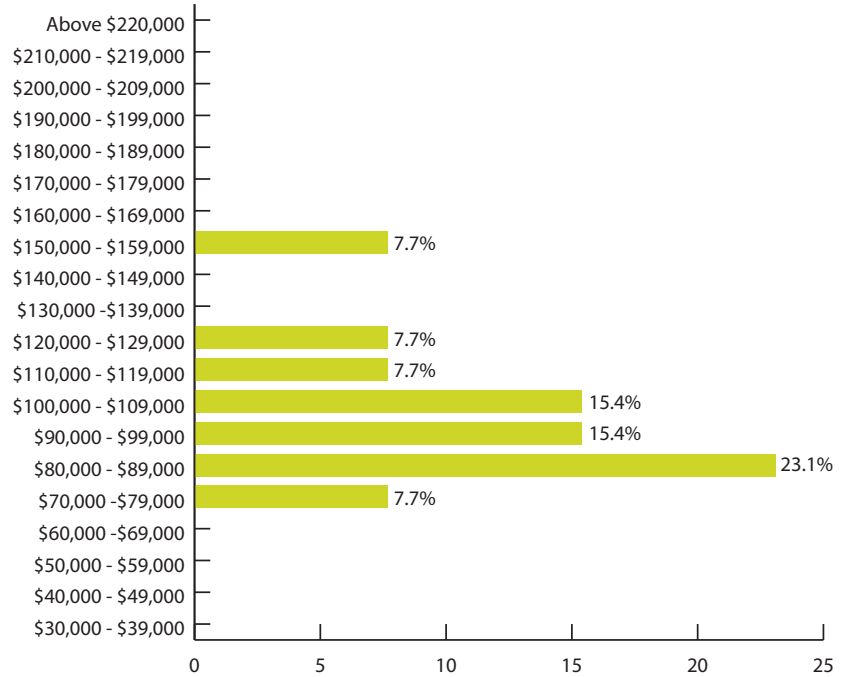


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Senior Communications Manager

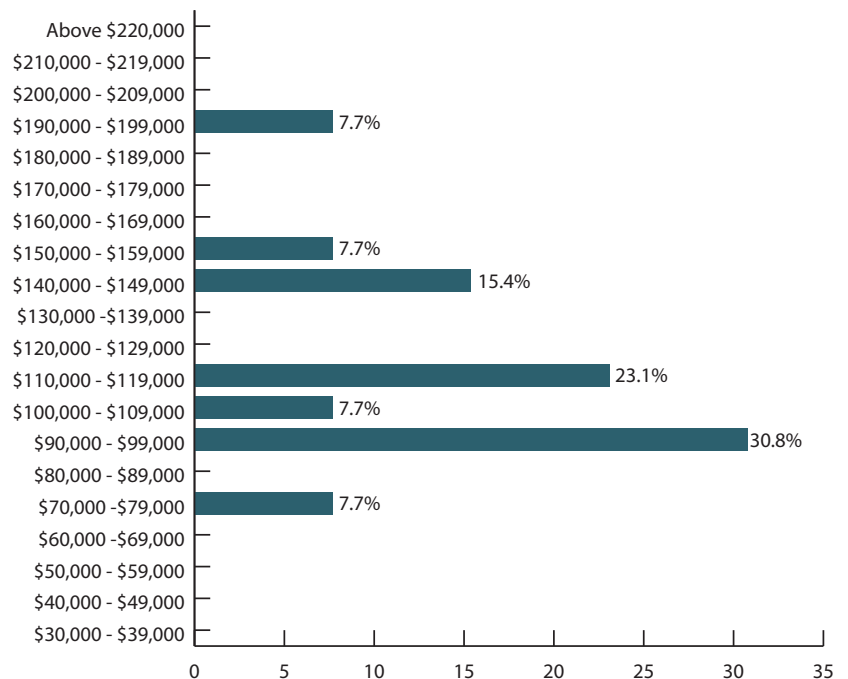
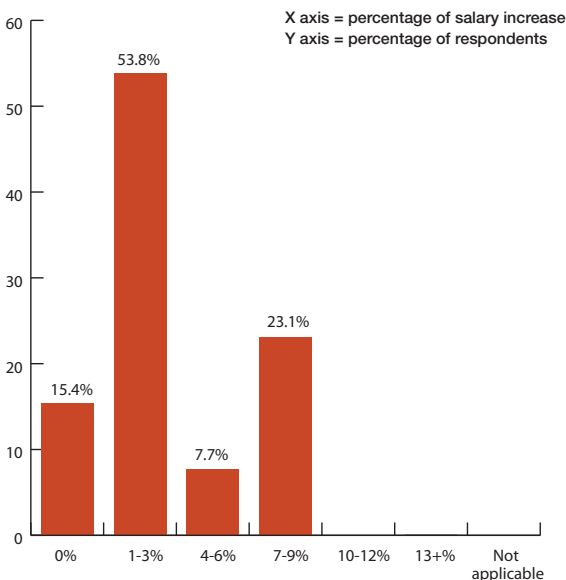


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Senior Communications Manager



Corporate

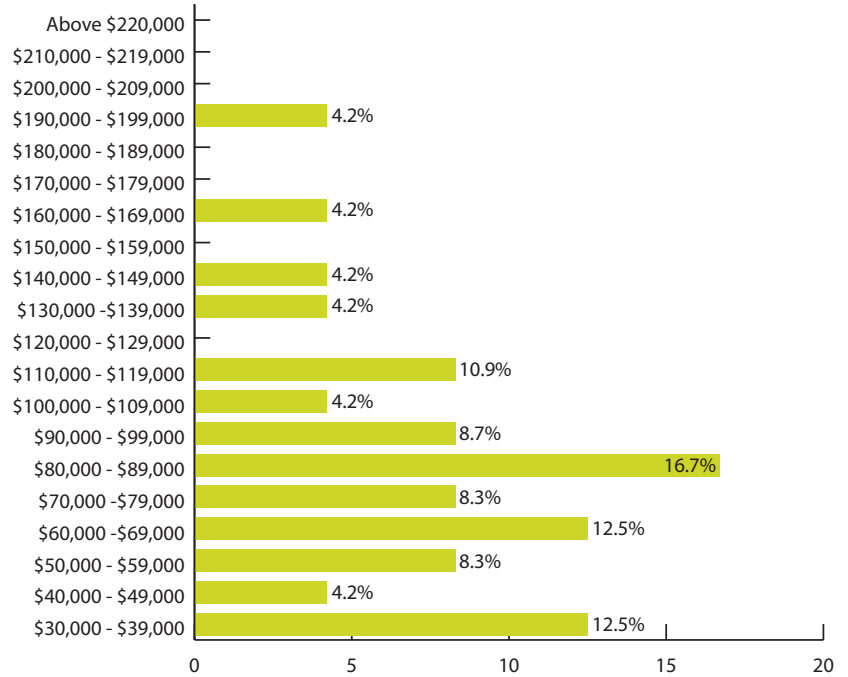
**Marketing Communications Director**

The outlook for base salary improved for marketing communications directors in 2016 (Figure 1). Some 56% reported a base salary of \$80K-\$199K, with the largest single group at \$80K-\$89K. In the 2015 survey just 43% reported base salaries in that range. The largest base salary groups were \$70K-\$79K, \$60K-\$69K and \$30K-\$39K.

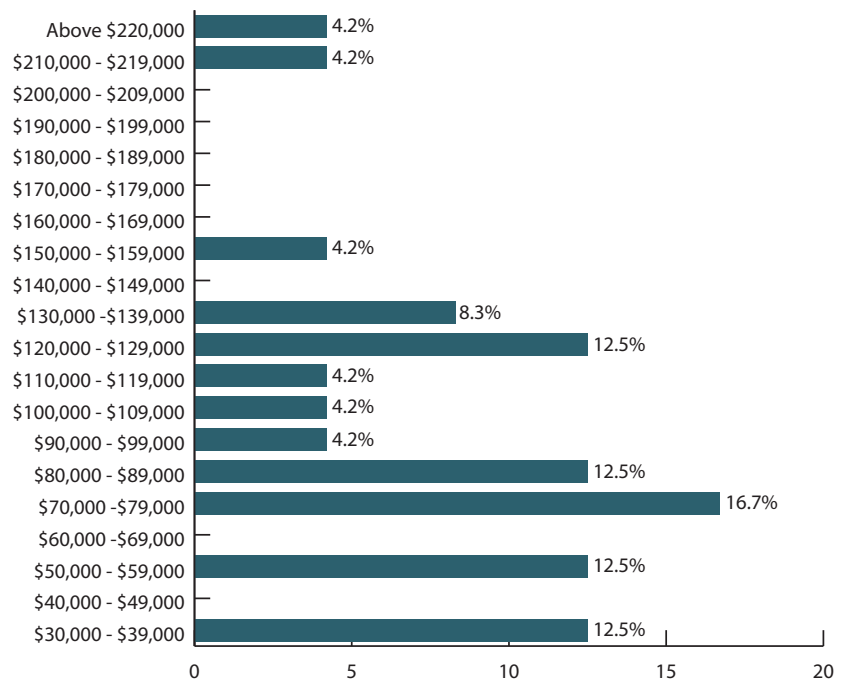
Total compensation (Figure 2) also improved in 2016, with more receiving a heavier package than in 2015.

Salary increases (Figure 3) showed the most improvement, however, with 8.3% of marketing communications managers reporting no salary increase, vs 20% in 2015.

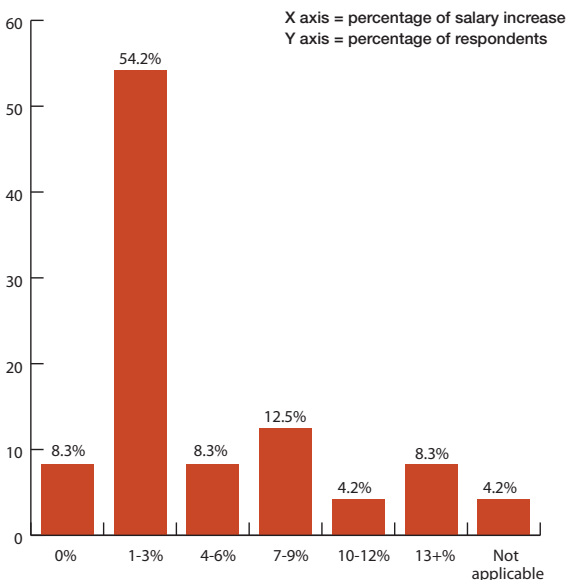
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — Marketing Communications Director**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Marketing Communications Director**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Marketing Communications Director**



Corporate

VP Communications

Base salary was slightly up in the 2016 survey, with significant gains at the top, but more modest boosts on the lower end (Figure 1). Those earning a base salary of more than \$220K jumped to 11% from 3% in 2015. Almost 17% earned \$190K-\$199K in 2016, which was a base salary none of the 2015 respondents reported earning. Still, gains in base salary were modest.

It was a far better picture in salary increases (Figure 3), where 11% received no uptick; the figure in 2015 was 21%. Moreover, there were meaty salary increases in 2016, with 40% taking home increases of 7% and 13+%. In 2015 that was just 17% of respondents. Total compensation was similarly upbeat, with 44% earning \$220K+ (Figure 2).

Fig. 1: Base Salary — VP Communications

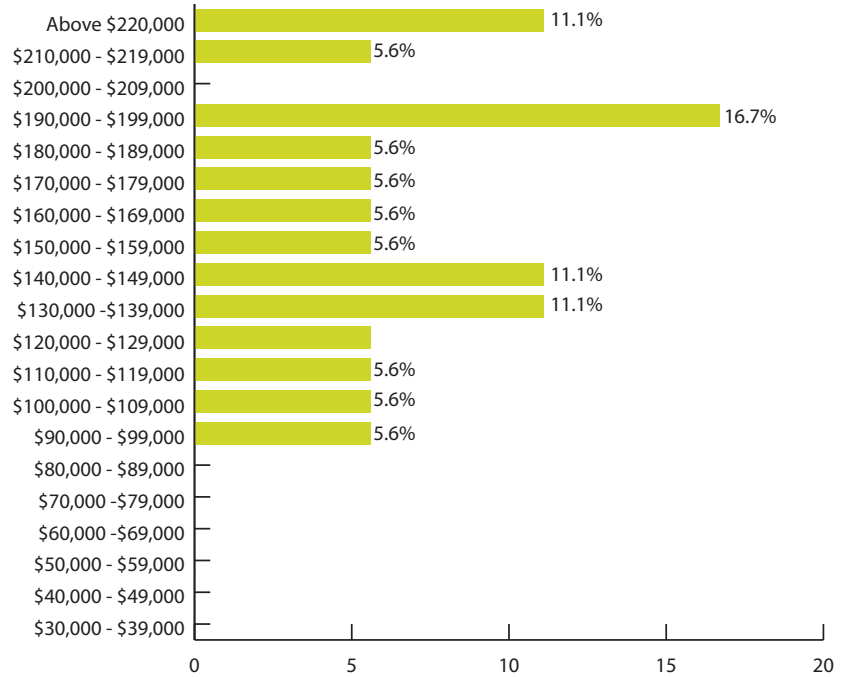


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — VP Communications

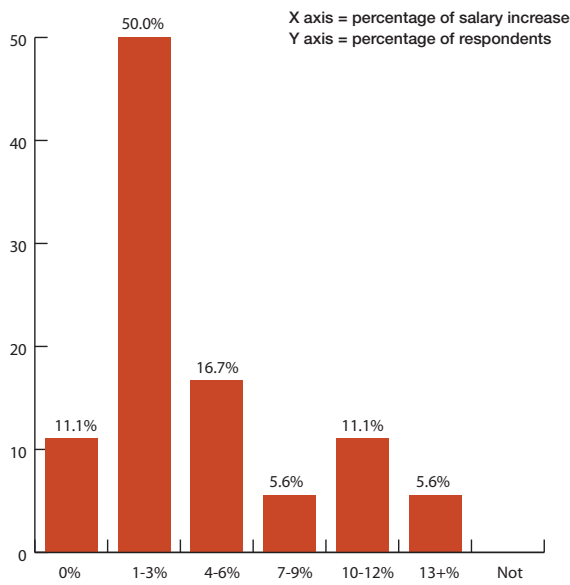
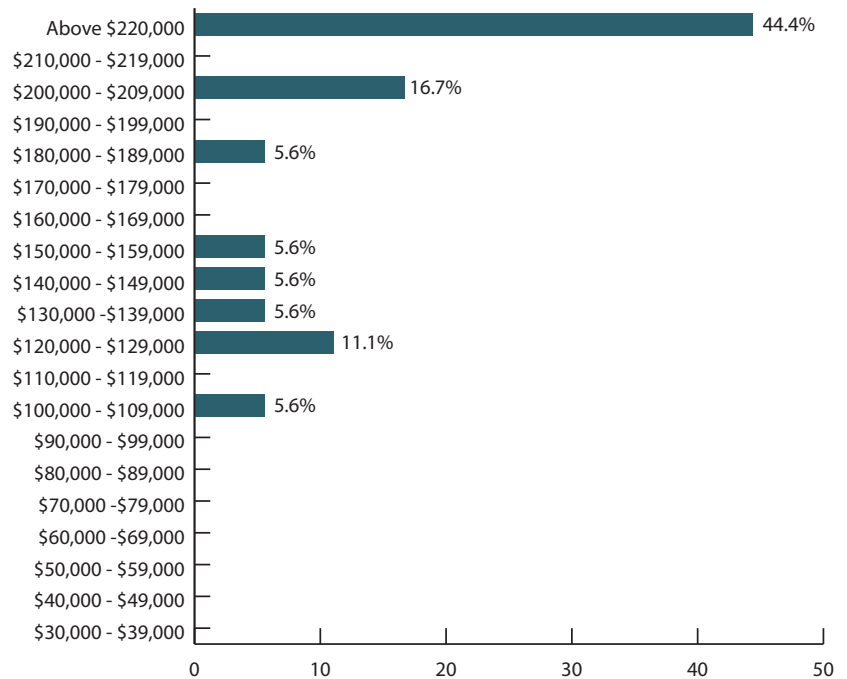


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — VP Communications



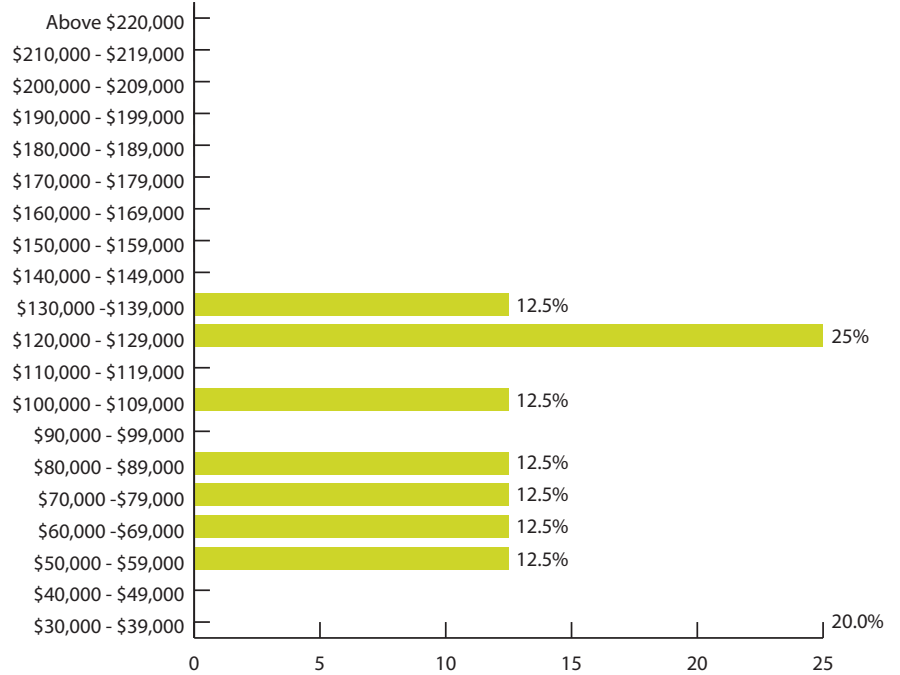
Corporate

**Public Affairs Manager/Director**

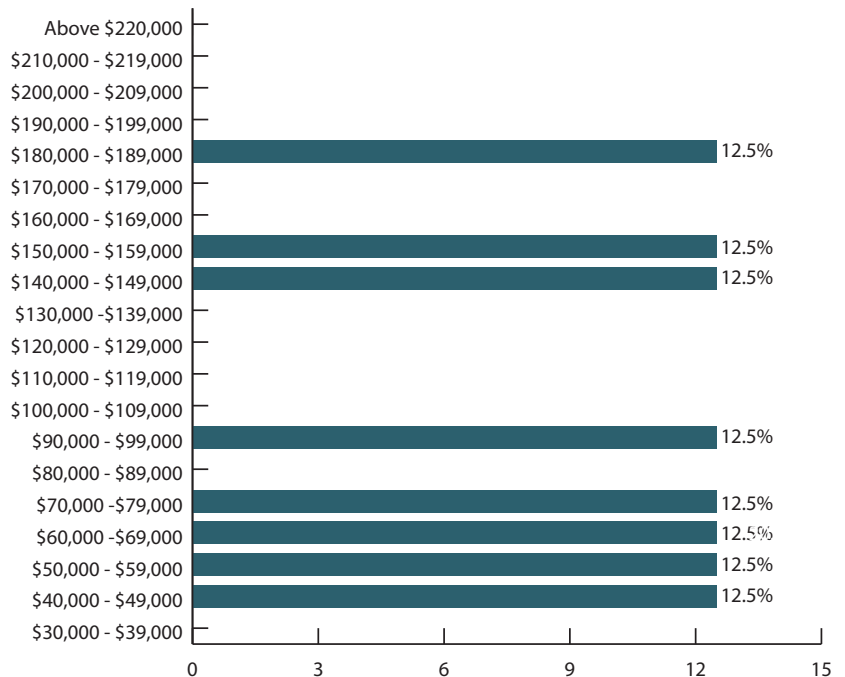
Base salaries for public affairs managers and directors was similar to many other job titles in this survey. While bases for the group were up, there was some downside. 2015's survey showed 20% of those polled in this category eclipsing \$170K-\$179K; the 2016 survey showed nobody north of \$130K-\$139K (Figure 1). Yet 2015's survey featured 30% of respondents earning a base of \$30K-\$49K, while 2016 showed nobody earning a base of less than \$50K. The 2016 survey also found 50% of public affairs managers and directors earning \$50K-\$89K.

On salary increases, 2016 had 25% of public affairs managers and directors saying they were not applicable, a jump from 10% in 2015 (Figure 3).

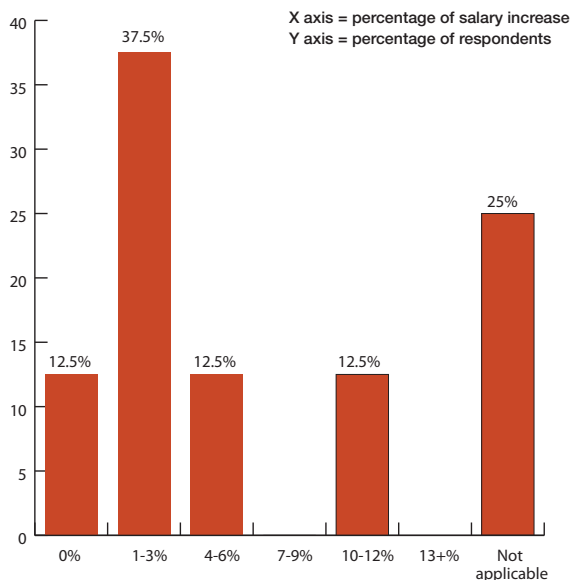
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — Public Affairs Manager/Director**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Public Affairs Manager/Director**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Public Affairs Manager/Director**



Corporate

Associate

With the increase in responsibility of PR and communications, we decided to add several job descriptions to our 2016 survey. The associate category is included for the first time. In fact, the next three categories after associate are also new to the 2016 survey.

Nearly 30% of associates earn \$30K-\$39K (Figure 1). Since most associates are ineligible for bonuses, their total compensation (Figure 2) is similar to their base salary.

A positive note is that nearly 80% received salary increases, although most were granted a modest 1%-3% (Figure 3).

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Associate

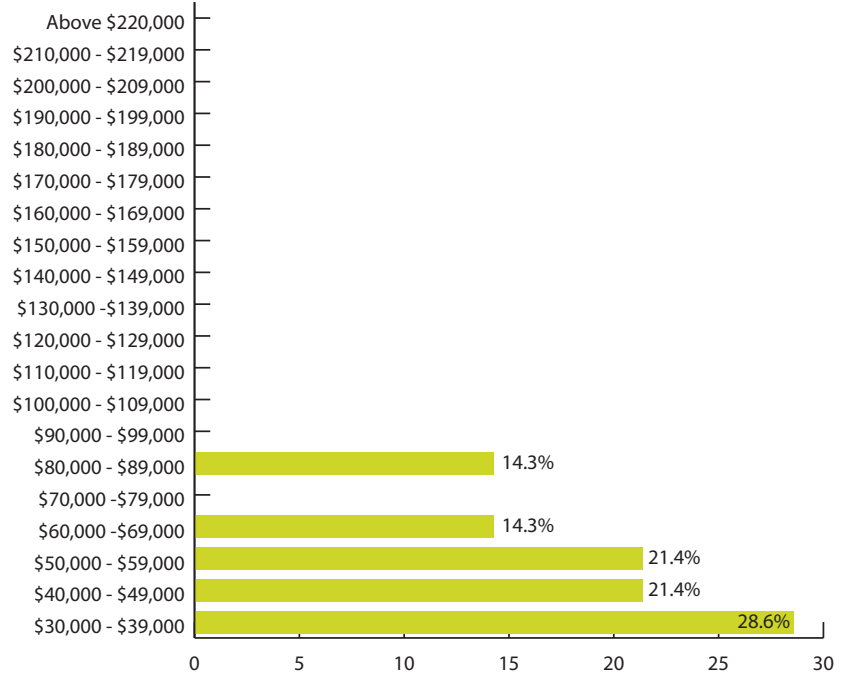


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Associate

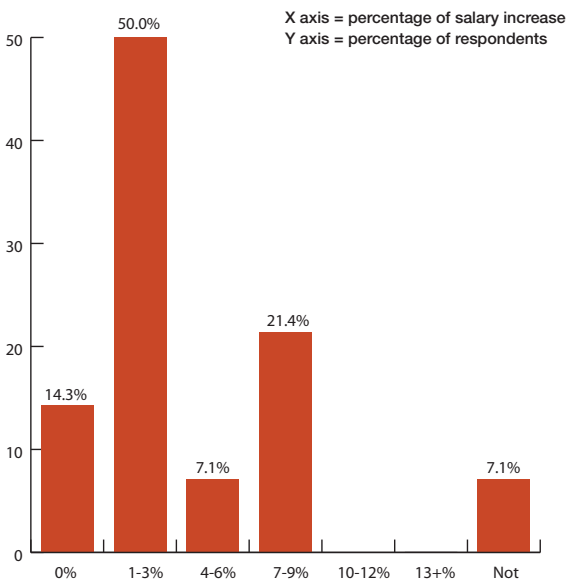
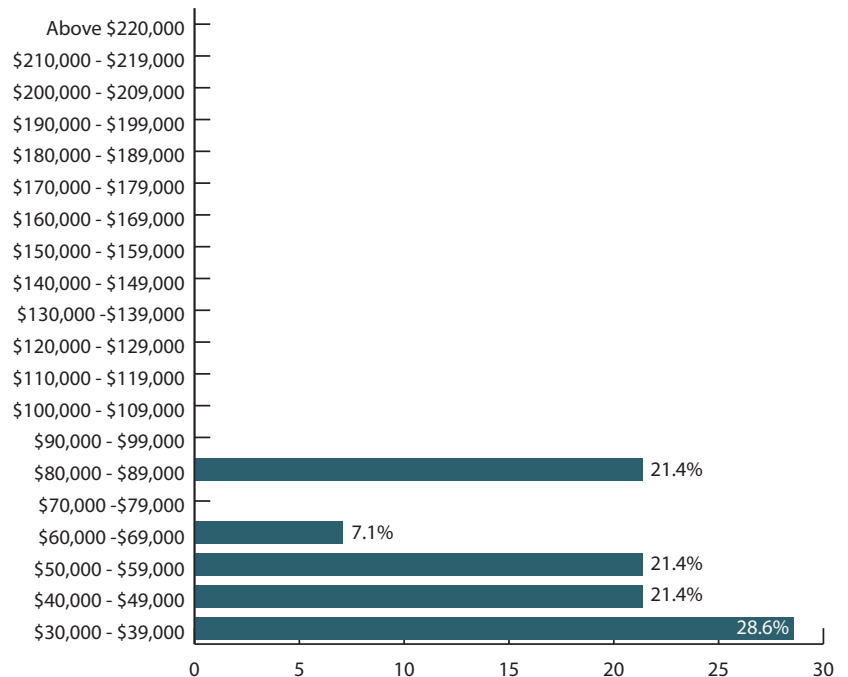


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Associate





Corporate

Social Media Manager

With the rise in social media, we've added the category of social media manager to our survey. While not every social media manager is part of the PR or communications team, enough are to be included here. The base salary of the social media manager (Figure 1) is similar to that of the PR associate (see page 24, Figure 1). The same is true of the two job titles regarding total compensation (Figure 2 and Figure 2, page 24). Differences between the two titles are found chiefly in salary increase percentages (Figure 3 and Figure 3, page 24). Some 23% of social media managers reported salary increases are not applicable to them, while the figure was just 7% for associates.

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Social Media Manager

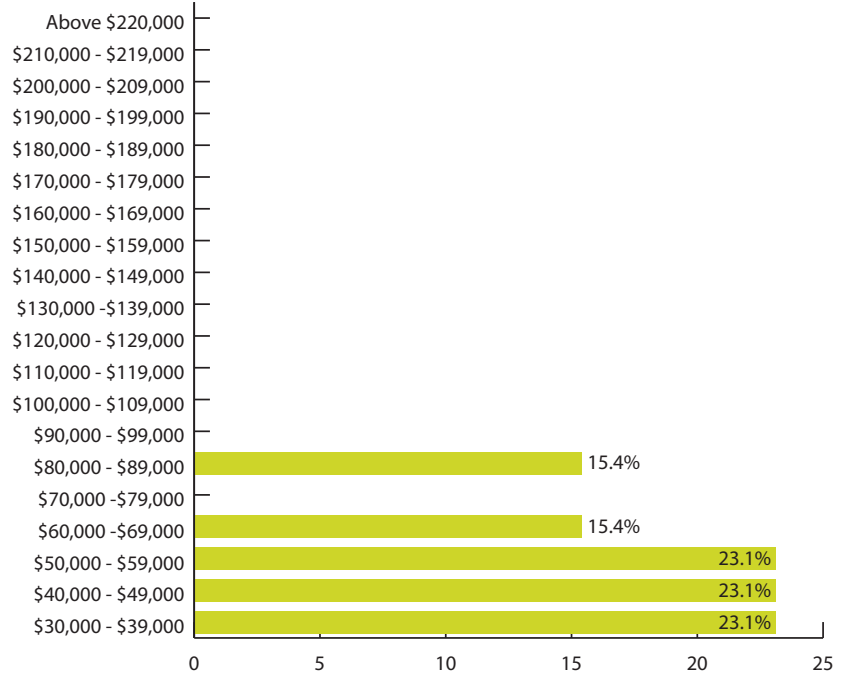


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Social Media Manager

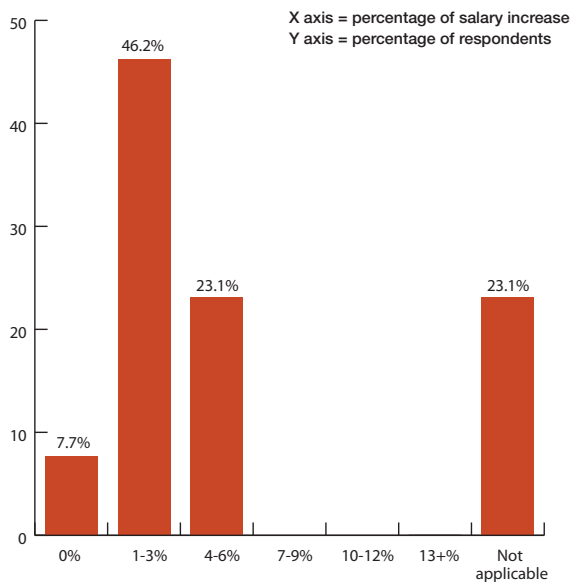
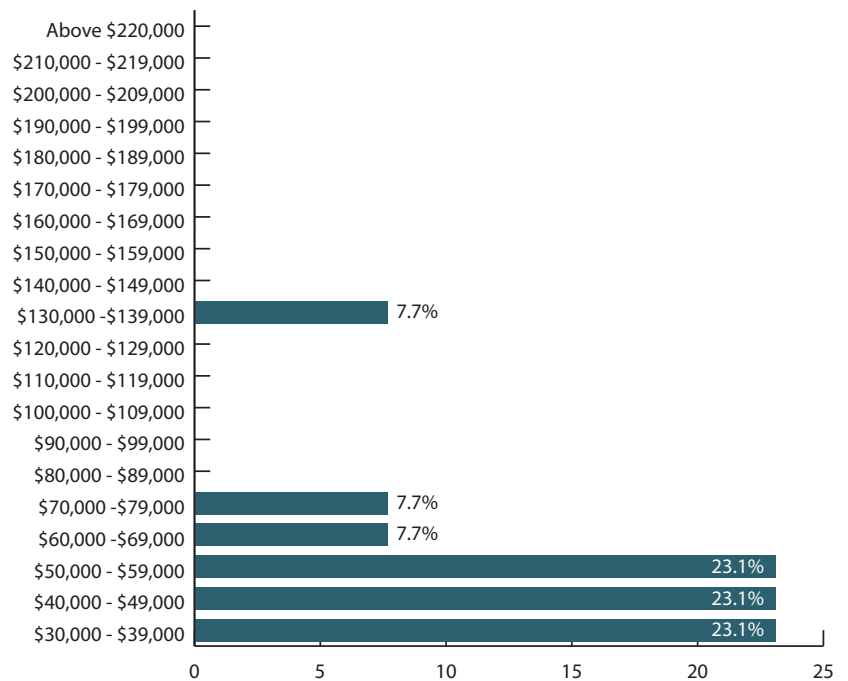


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Social Media Manager



# Findings by Position: Nonprofit/Association/NGO

## Chief Communications Officer

In general, CCOs on the nonprofit side had base compensation that was worse than their CCO colleagues who answered our survey in 2015. Percentage-wise there were more CCOs earning \$140K or better in 2016 than in 2015, when just 18% did (Figure 1). In 2015, there was a wide range of bases for CCOs, yet in 2016 75% received a base of \$89K or less.

More promising were salary increases, where 50% of those surveyed took home increases of 4% to 13%+ (Figure 2).

2015's comp package was more diverse than the 2016 survey (Figure 3). Still, 25% of CCOs received a total package of better than \$140K; it was about 18% in '15.

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Chief Communications Officer

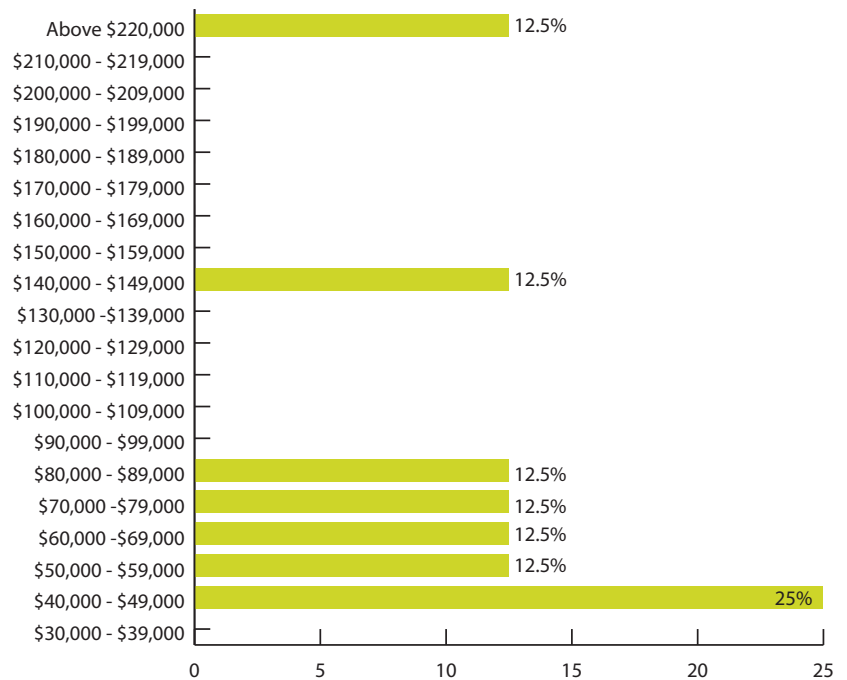


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Chief Communications Officer

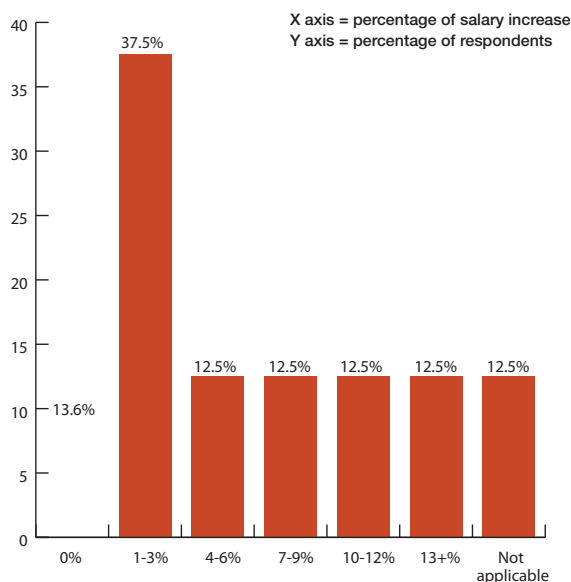
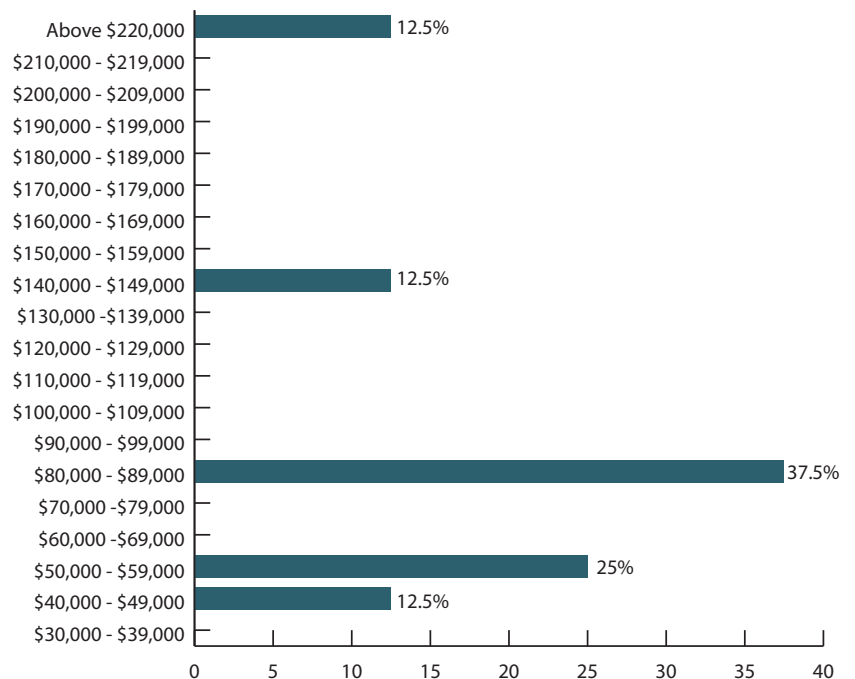


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Chief Communications Officer



**Nonprofit/Association/NGO**

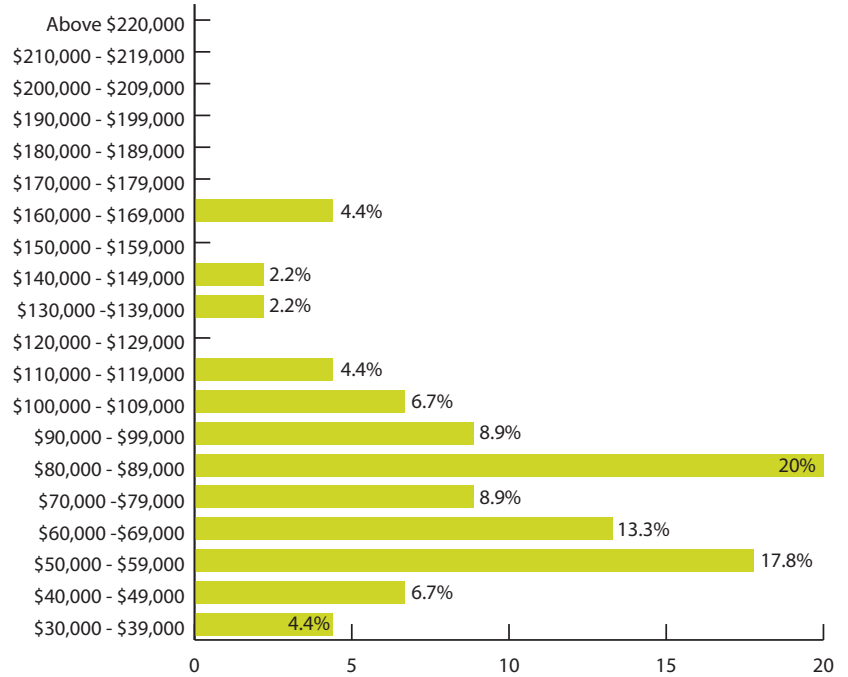
**Marketing Communications Director**

In the 2015 study nearly half of the marketing communications directors surveyed earned a base of \$50K to \$79K. As Figure 1 shows, the floor for this position is up nicely in the 2016 survey.

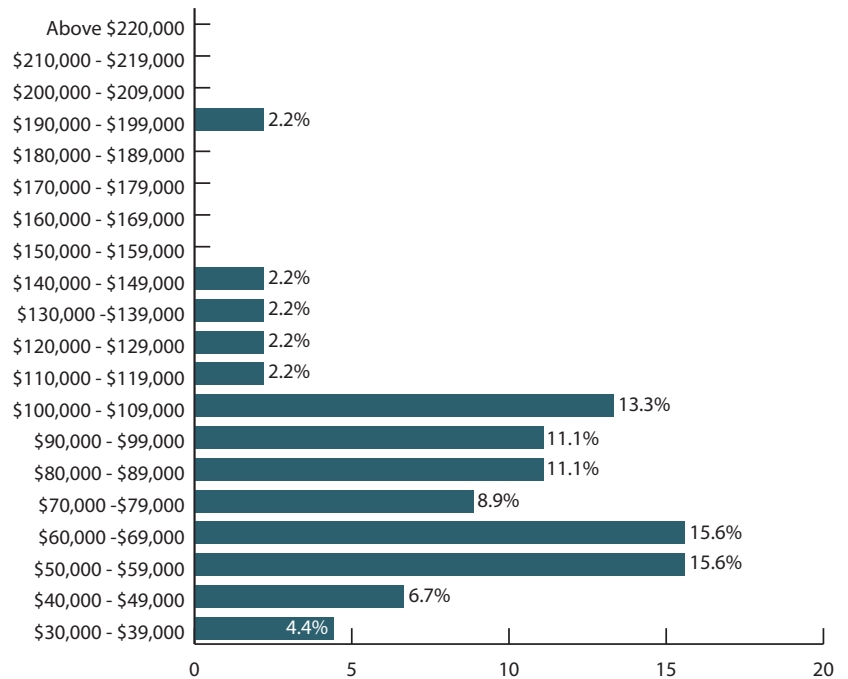
Total comp is up, too, in 2016, but only slightly (Figure 2).

Salary increases (Figure 3) tracked closely with 2015 levels.

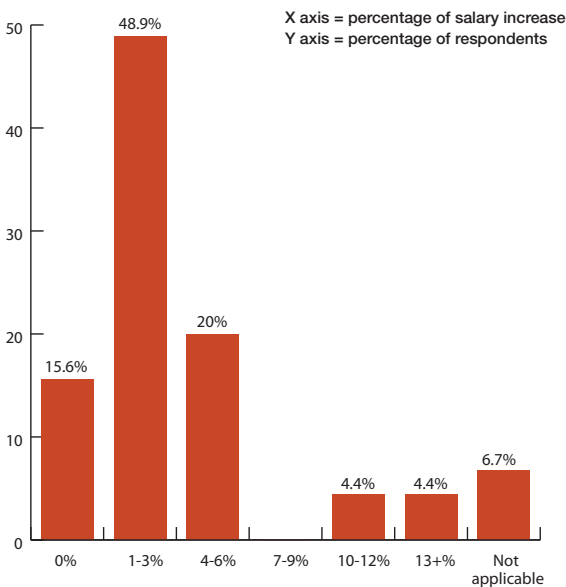
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — Marketing Communications Director**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Marketing Communications Director**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Marketing Communications Director**



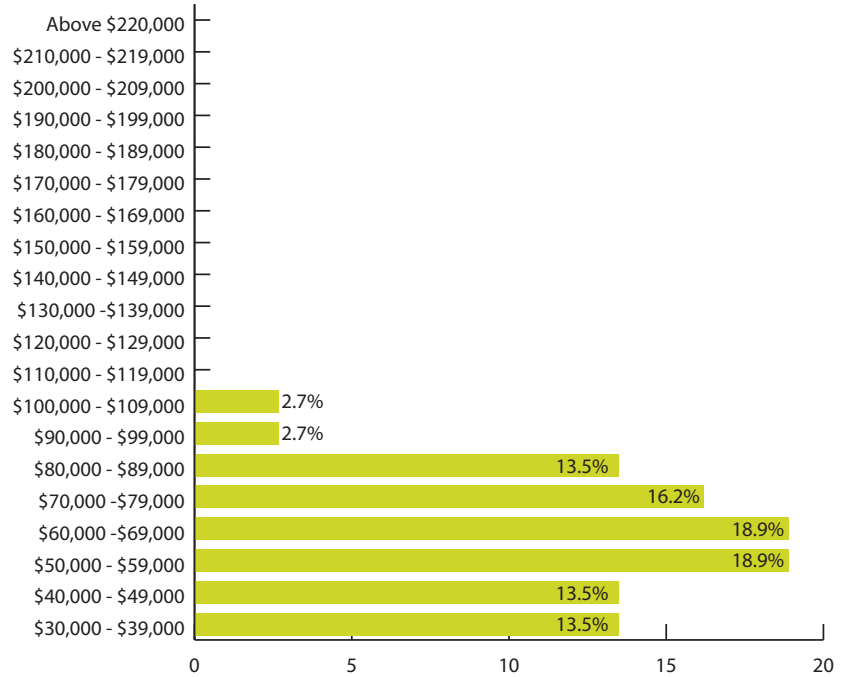
**Nonprofit/Association/NGO**

**Communications Manager**

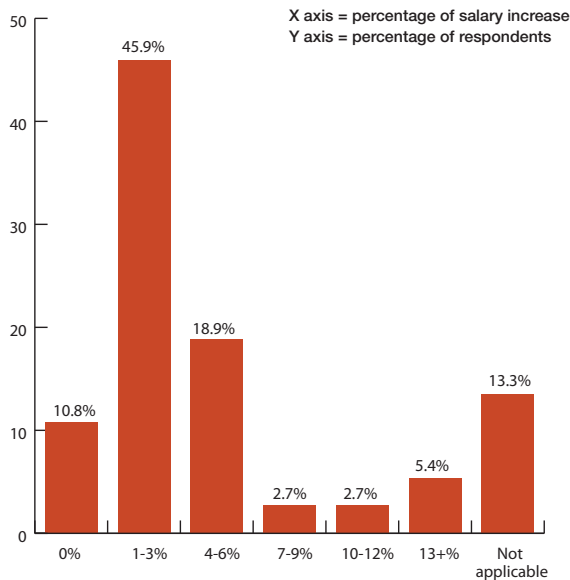
The base salary in 2016 was better for communications managers in the nonprofit sector, which continued a trend from 2015, when nearly 30% in this job title earned a base of \$60K to \$69K. This year 30% earned a base of \$70K to \$79K (Figure 1). In addition, 50% earned a base of \$80K to \$129K, far in excess of the 2015 cohort's base.

In terms of salary increases (Figure 3), findings were similar to 2015. As you might expect, total compensation (Figure 2) was slightly better in 2016.

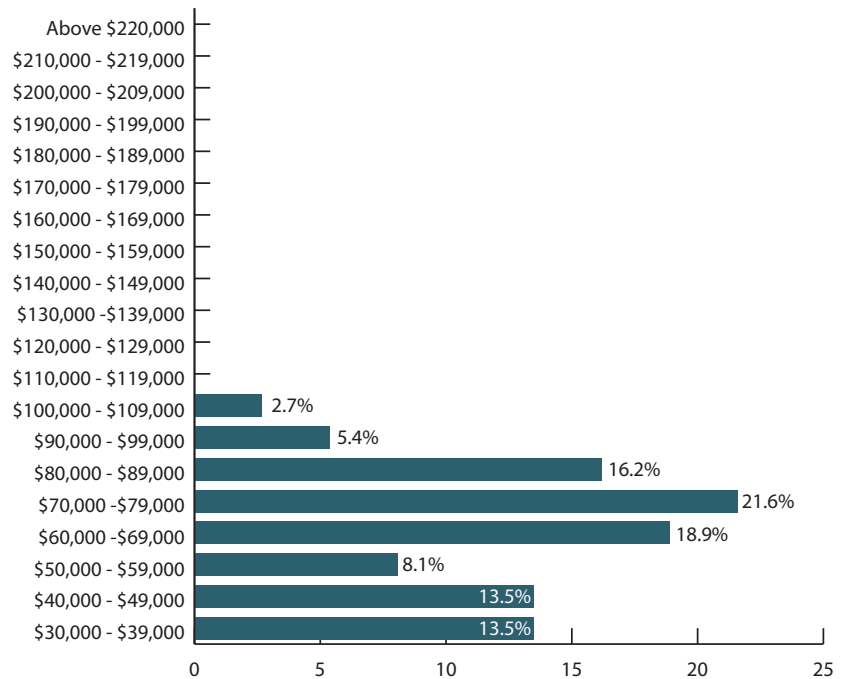
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — Communications Manager**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Communications Manager**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Communications Manager**



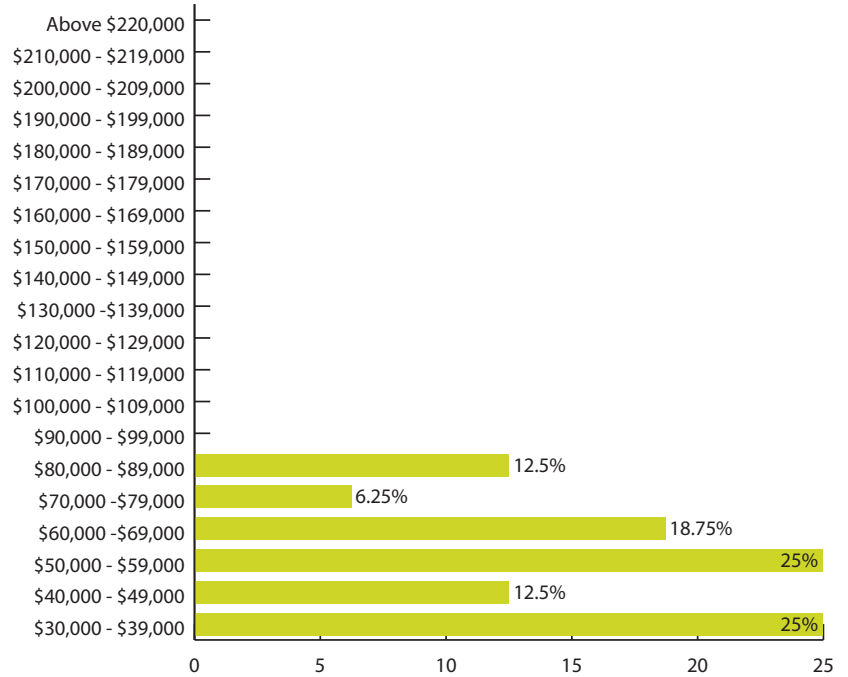
**Nonprofit/Association/NGO**

**Communications Specialist**

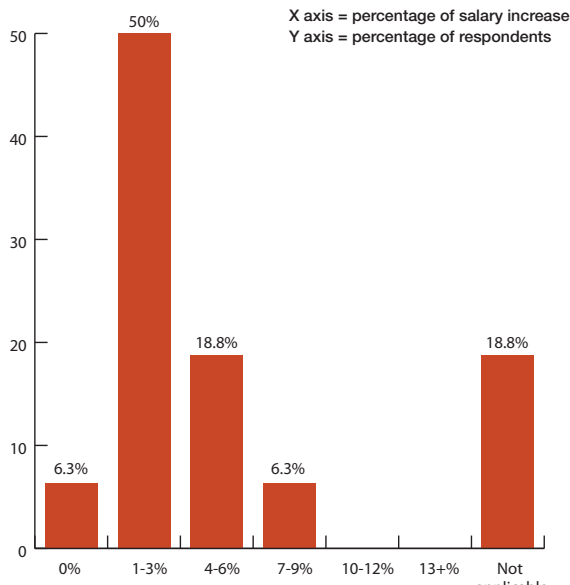
Similar to the previous job title, communications manager, the story on base salary for communications specialist improved in the 2016 survey. In 2015 the bulk (78%) of this job category was taking home a base salary between \$30K and \$69K. As Figure 1 shows, the bar has risen, with 80% receiving a base salary between \$60K and \$99K.

As expected, salary increases were hefty in terms of the percentage receiving them (Figure 3). Yet they were modest (Figure 2).

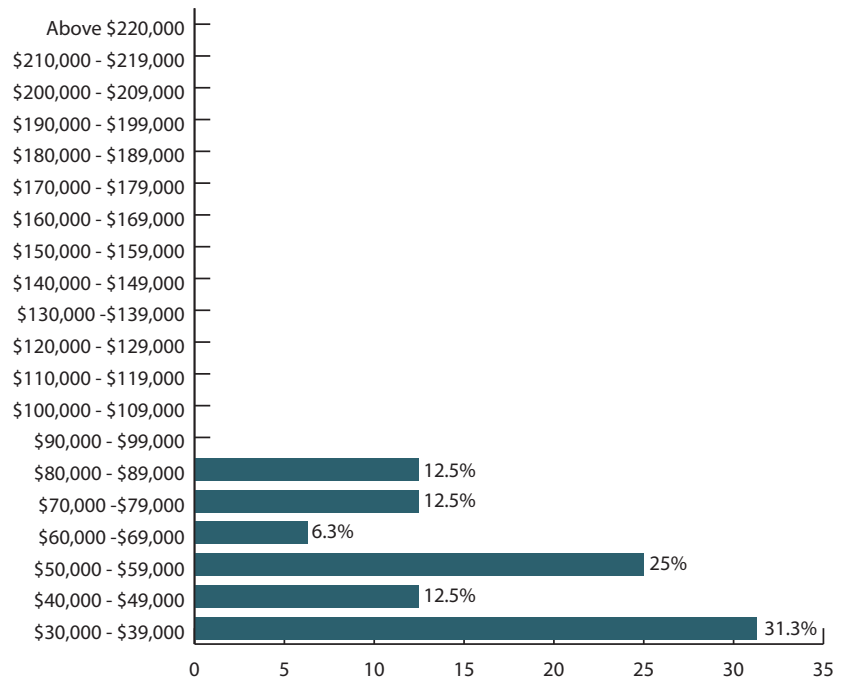
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — Communications Specialist**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Communications Specialist**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Communications Specialist**



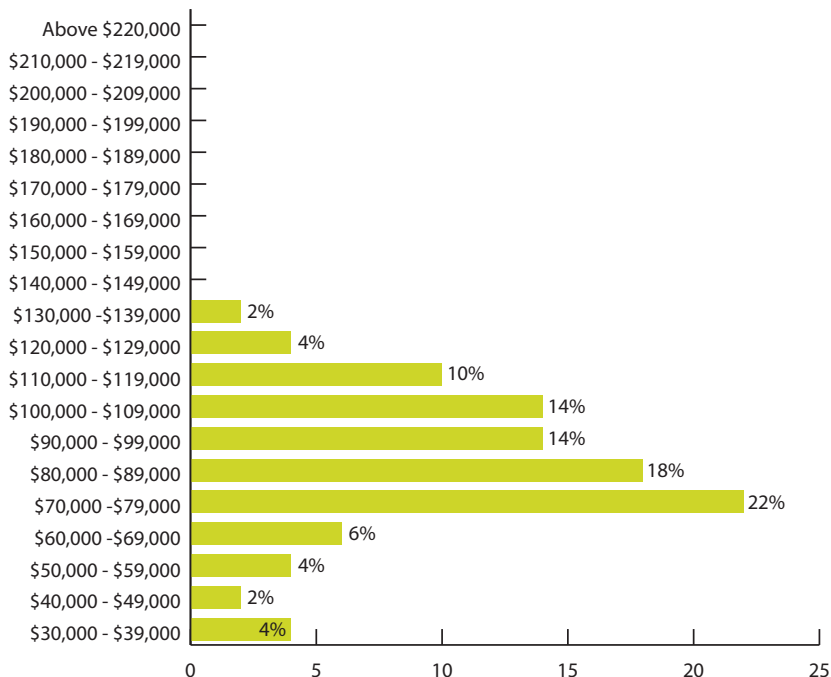
**Nonprofit/Association/NGO**

**Director of Communications or Digital Media**

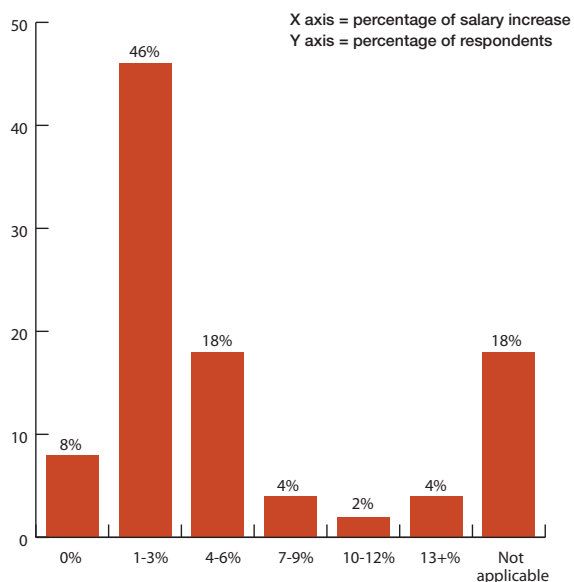
This is yet another new category that appears in our survey for the first time. As Figure 1 shows, nearly 80% of directors of communications or digital media on the nonprofit/NGO side earn base salaries from \$70K to \$119K.

As we've observed with other positions, it appears many employees in this category did not receive much in terms of additional monetary benefits beyond base salaries (Figure 2). That more than 25% either received no salary increase or said salary increases did not apply to them signals that many in this segment are newly hired.

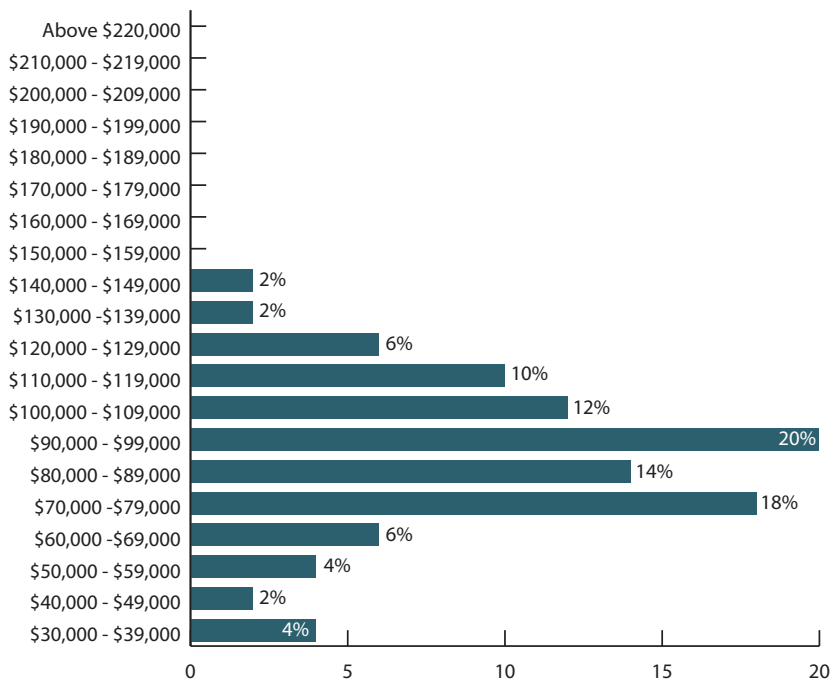
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — Director of Communications or Digital Media**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Director of Communications or Digital Media**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Director of Communications or Digital Media**



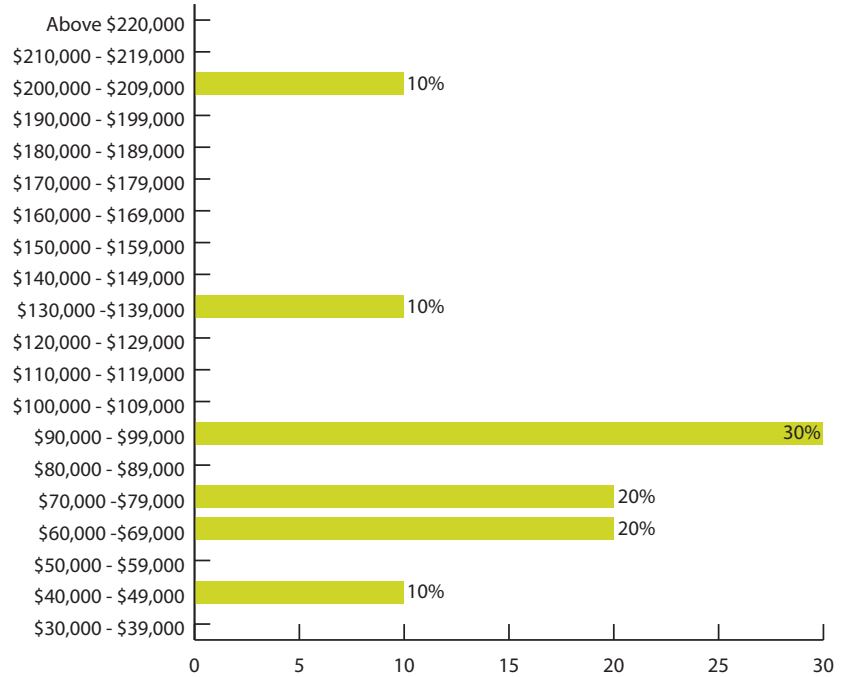
**Nonprofit/Association/NGO**

**Public Affairs Director or Manager**

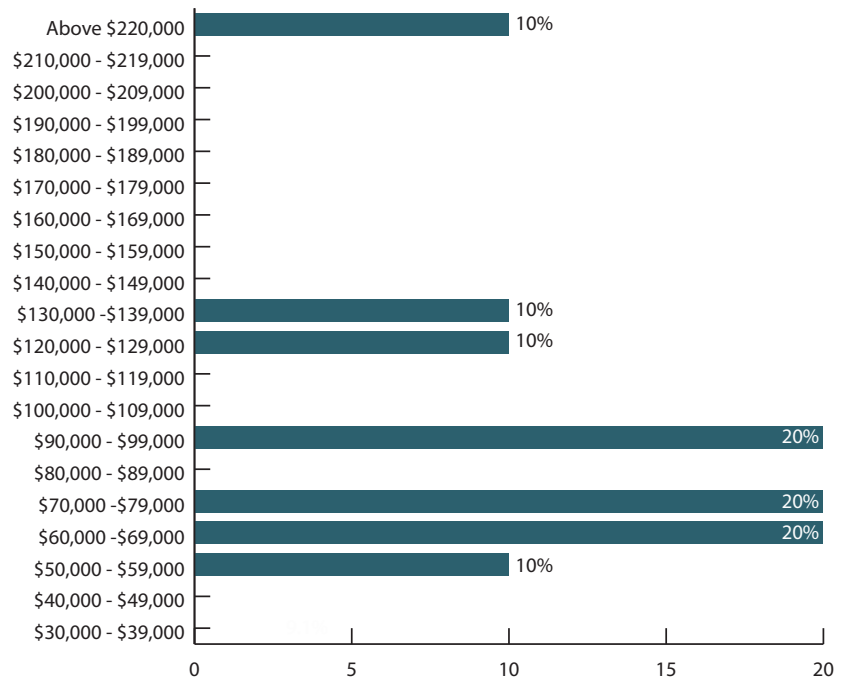
New to the survey this year, public affairs director or manager on the nonprofit/NGO side had one of the wider ranges of compensation packages, although base salaries were relatively close together; 80% in this category earned a base in the \$60K to \$99K range (Figure 1).

Total compensation (Figure 2) and salary increases (Figure 3) fell into expected patterns.

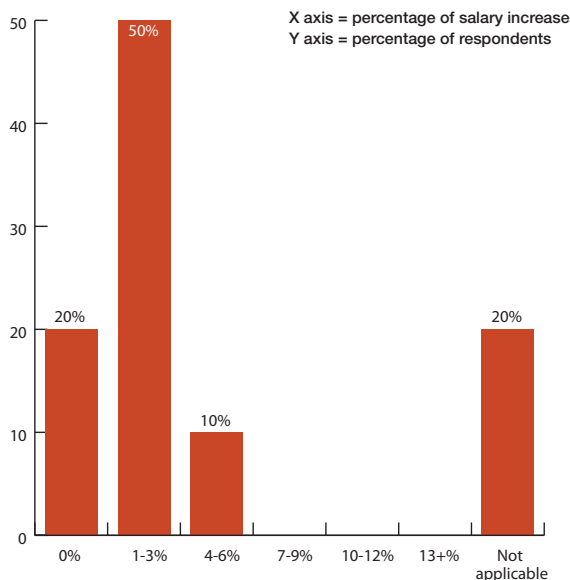
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — Public Affairs Director or Manager**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Public Affairs Director or Manager**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Public Affairs Director or Manager**



**Nonprofit/Association/NGO**

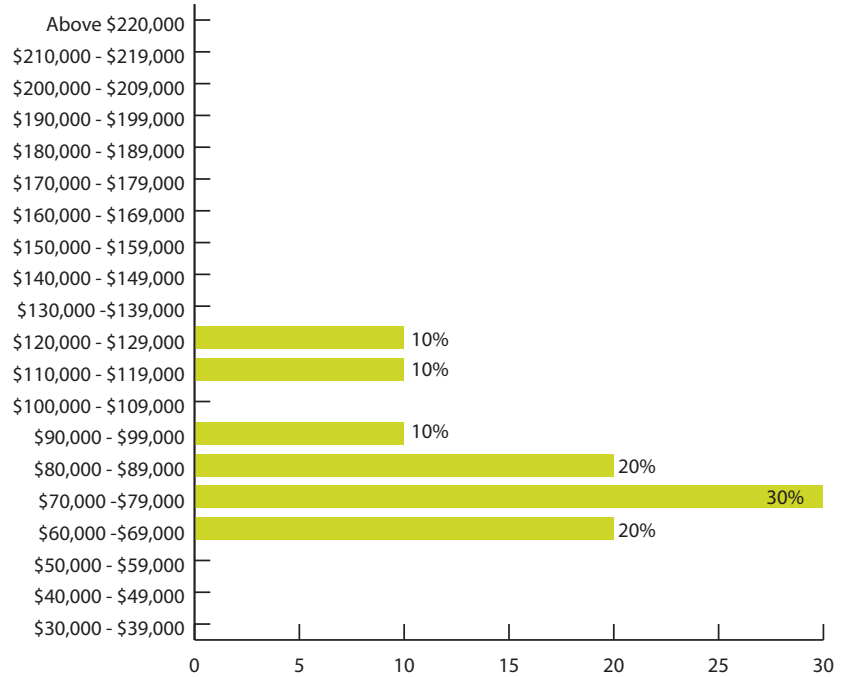
**Senior Communications Manager**

Like the categories above it, this job title, new to the 2016 survey, shows base salaries spaced tightly together, with 80% of respondents earning base salaries from \$60K to \$99K (Figure 1).

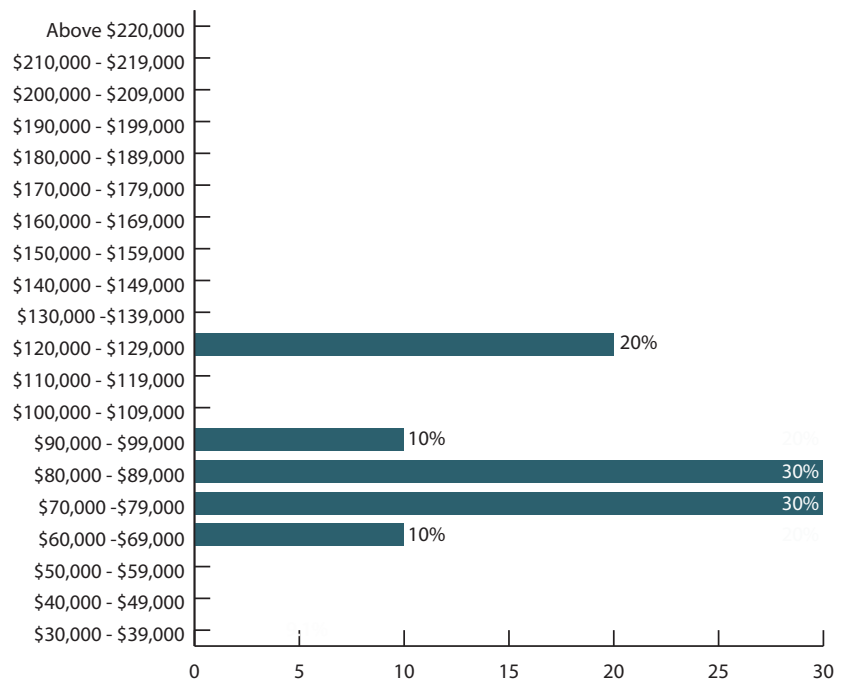
Total compensation (Figure 2) amounts indicate this senior position receives slightly-better-than-modest bonuses, particularly at the upper level.

Salary increases were on the low end, with just 20% taking home an additional 13+% and 10% not receiving a bonus (Figure 3).

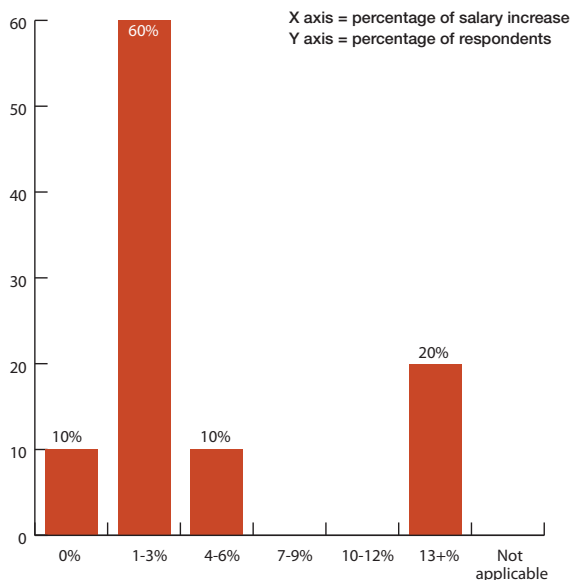
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — Senior Communications Manager**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Senior Communications Manager**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Senior Communications Manager**





**Nonprofit/Association/NGO**

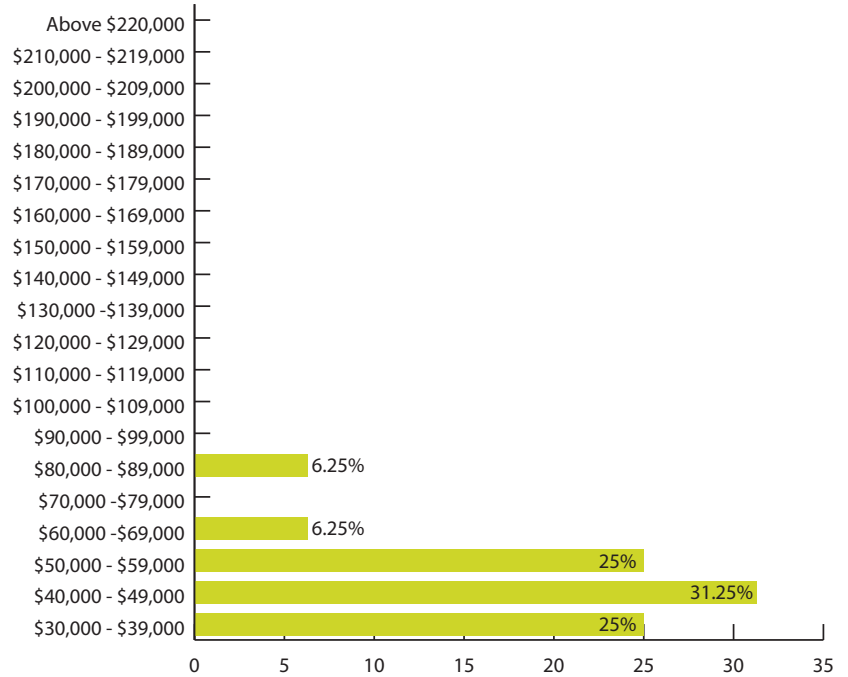
**Social Media Manager**

This job title, new to our survey, also features base salaries grouped tightly, with 80% of respondents earning base payment of \$60K-\$99K (Figure 1).

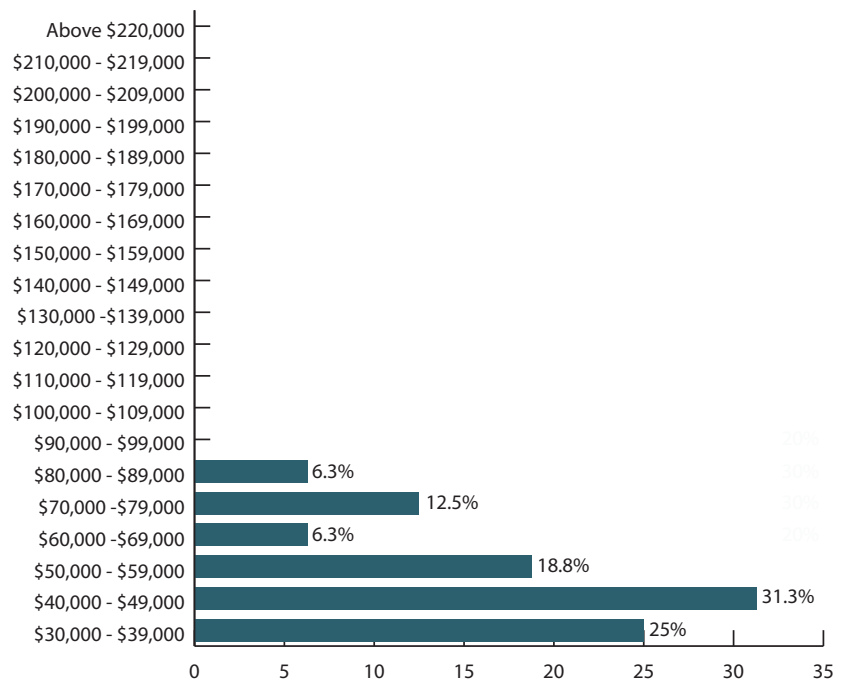
Salary increases (Figure 3) for social media managers were troubling in that nearly 38% told us that increases were either 0% or not applicable. On the up side, 12.5% took home heavy increases of 10-12%.

As figure 2 indicates, total packages were only modestly increased.

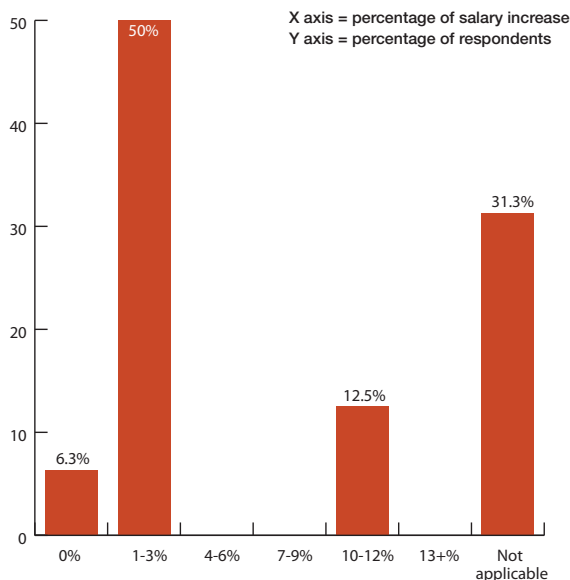
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — Social Media Manager**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Social Media Manager**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Social Media Manager**



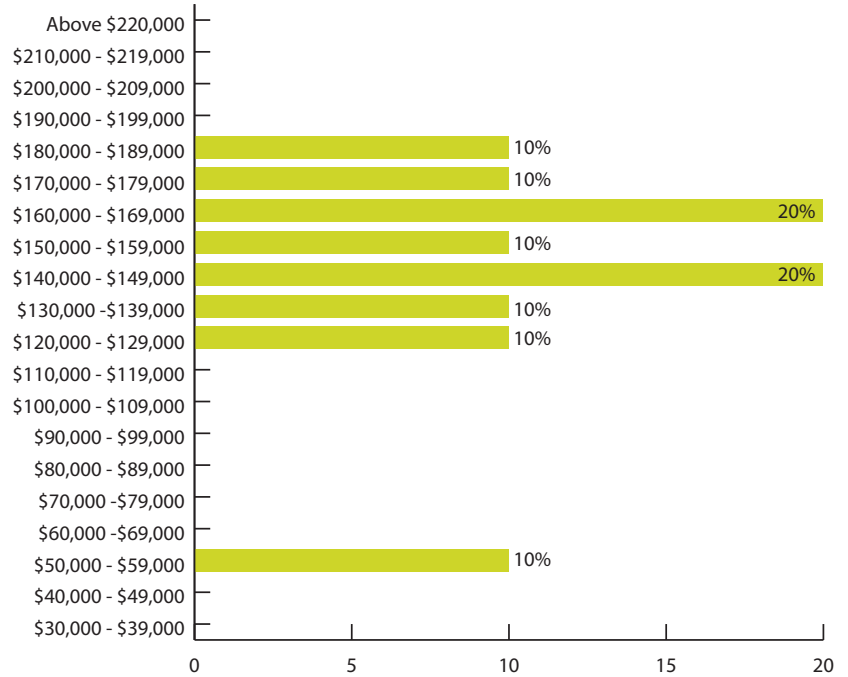
**Nonprofit/Association/NGO**

**VP of Communications**

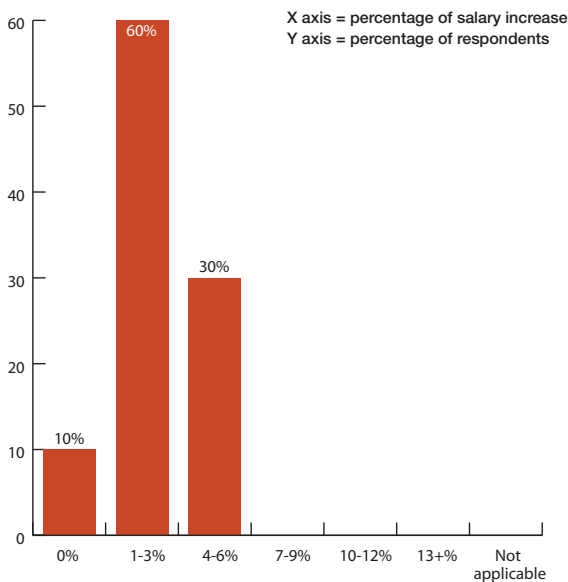
Another new job category to our 2016 survey. As Figure 1 shows, base salaries for 90% of the respondents were tightly packed, ranging from \$120K to \$189K.

Figure 2 shows modest increases in total packages. With salary increases (figure 3), the glass is either half full or half empty. Nearly all respondents in this category took home salary increases, but 60% of them were just 1%-3% and nobody received better than 6%.

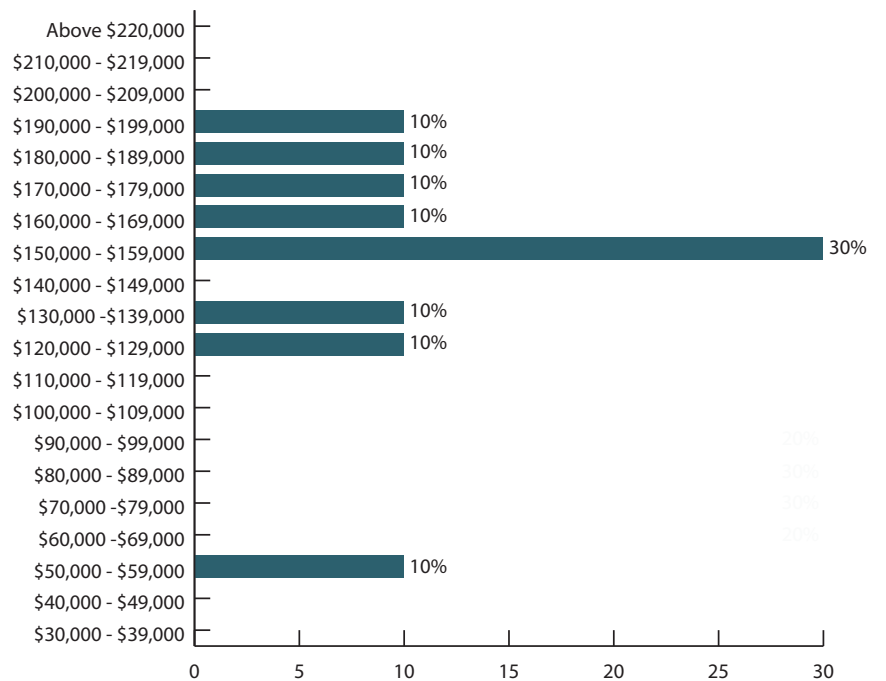
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — VP of Communications**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — VP of Communications**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — VP of Communications**



# Findings by Position: Government

## Chief Communications Officer

Base salaries for CCOs on the government side varied widely (Figure 1), although the bulk resided in the \$90K to \$139K range.

The percentage of modest salary increases of 1% to 3% held almost constant from 2015, with nearly 60% of the respondents receiving this modest increase in the 2016 survey (Figure 3).

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Chief Communications Officer

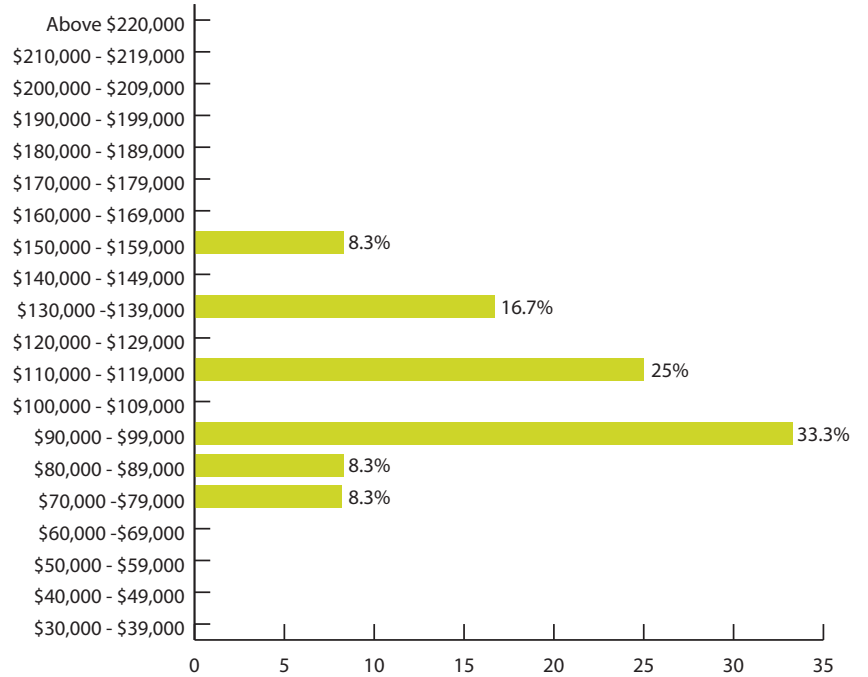


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Chief Communications Officer

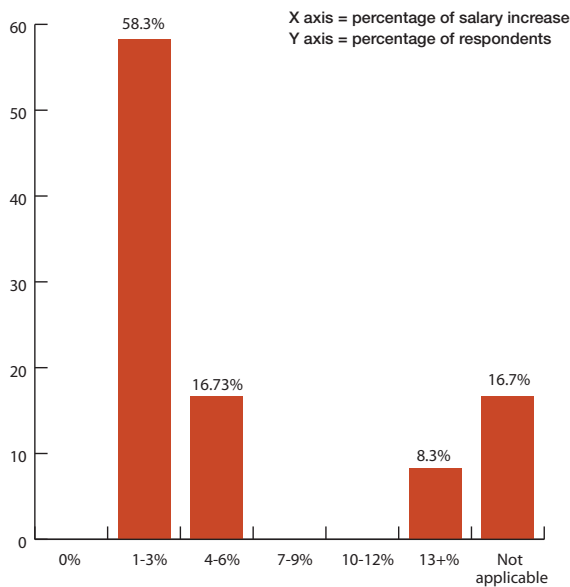
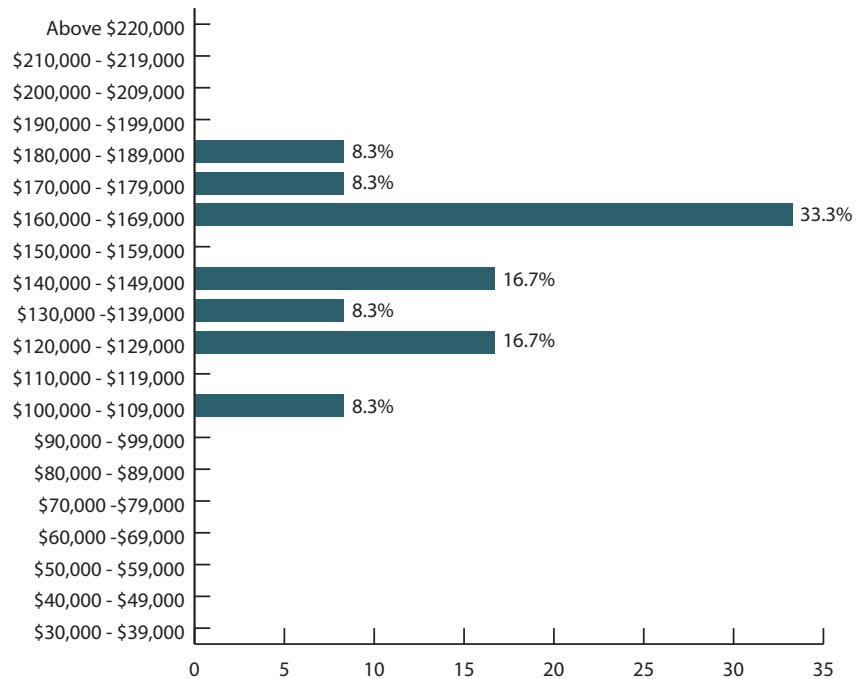


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Chief Communications Officer



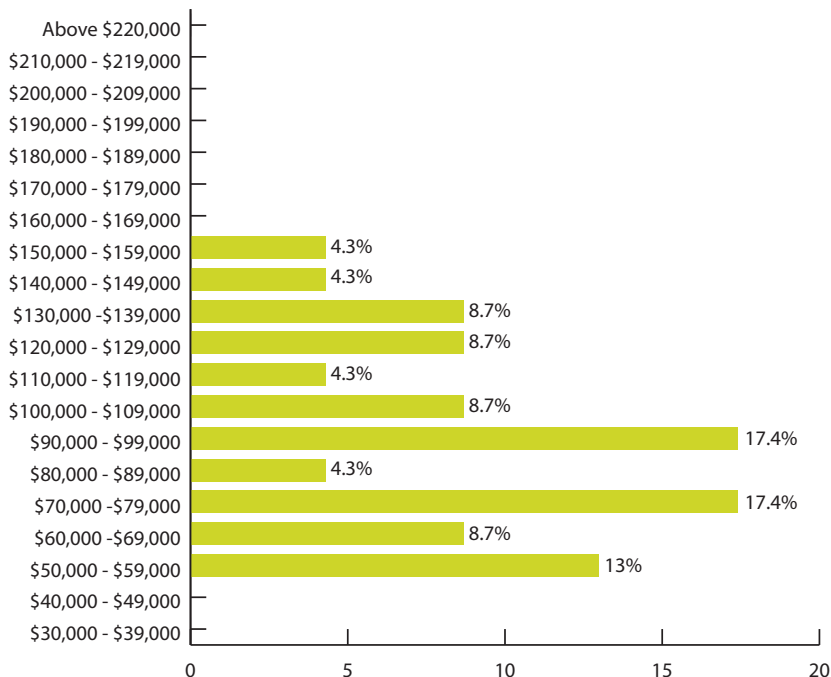
**Government**

**Communications Director**

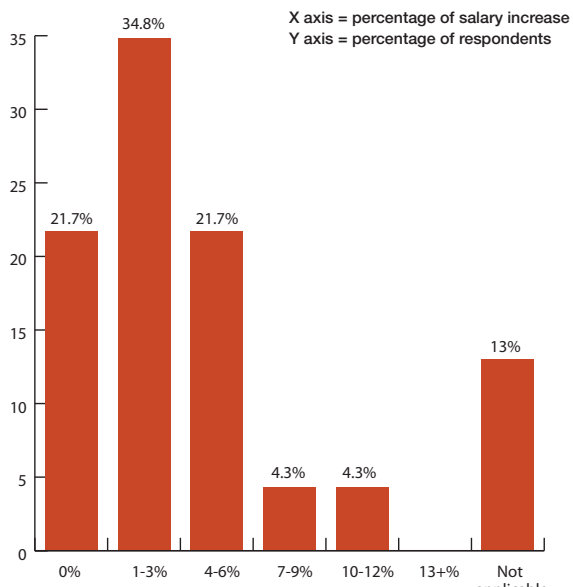
The 2016 survey shows a wide range of base salaries for communications directors employed in government (Figure 1). This was the case in the 2015 survey, too, although the base salary was higher in that survey.

On the other hand, salary increases (Figure 2) were more substantial in the 2016 survey, with 30% receiving increases of 4% to 12%. In 2015, 67% received 1%-3% increases. The nearly 22% who received no increases reflects either new appointees or a delay in government salary increases.

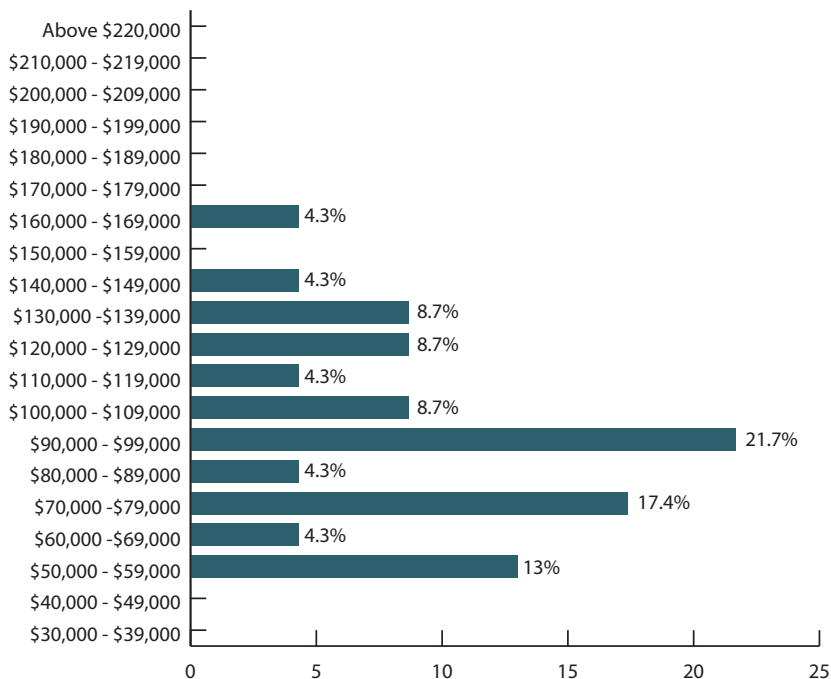
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — Communications Director**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Communications Director**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Communications Director**



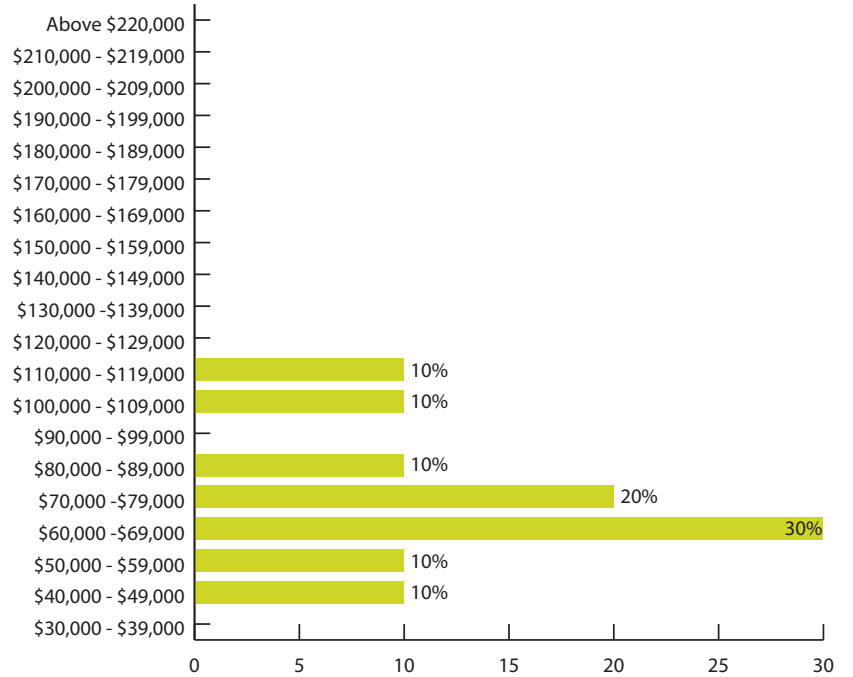
**Government**

**Marketing Communications Director**

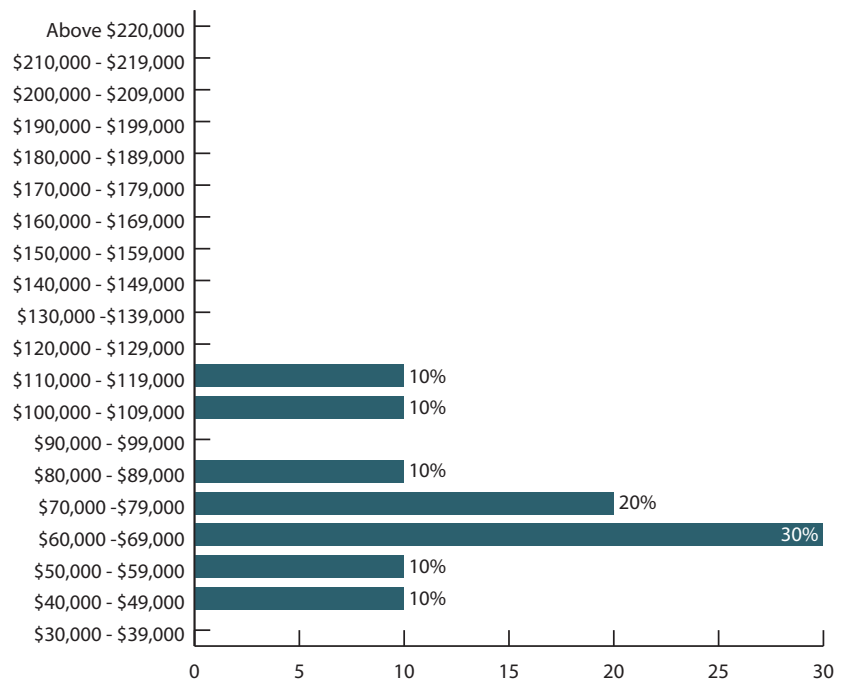
Unlike base salaries for communications directors on the government side, bases for marketing communications directors were tightly packed in 2015 and again in this year's survey (Figure 1). Nearly all in this category (80%) earned base salaries ranging from \$40K to \$89K.

Figure 2 shows a similarly tight grouping of compensation packages. It is significant that 50% of respondents either earned no salary increases or said increases did not apply to them (Figure 3).

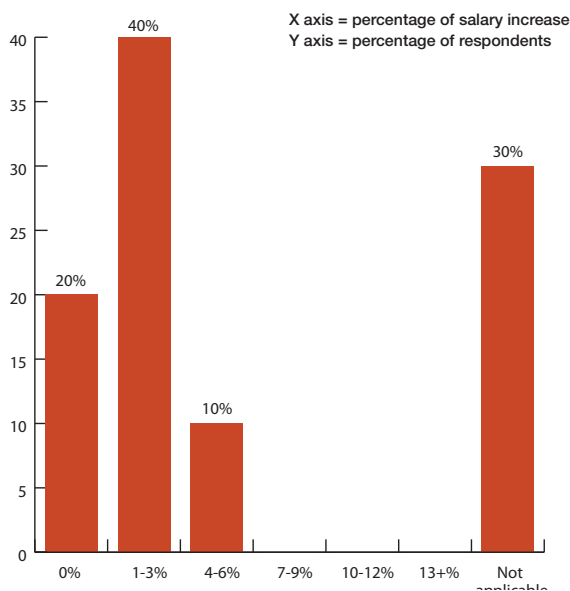
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — Marketing Communications Director**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Marketing Communications Director**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Marketing Communications Director**



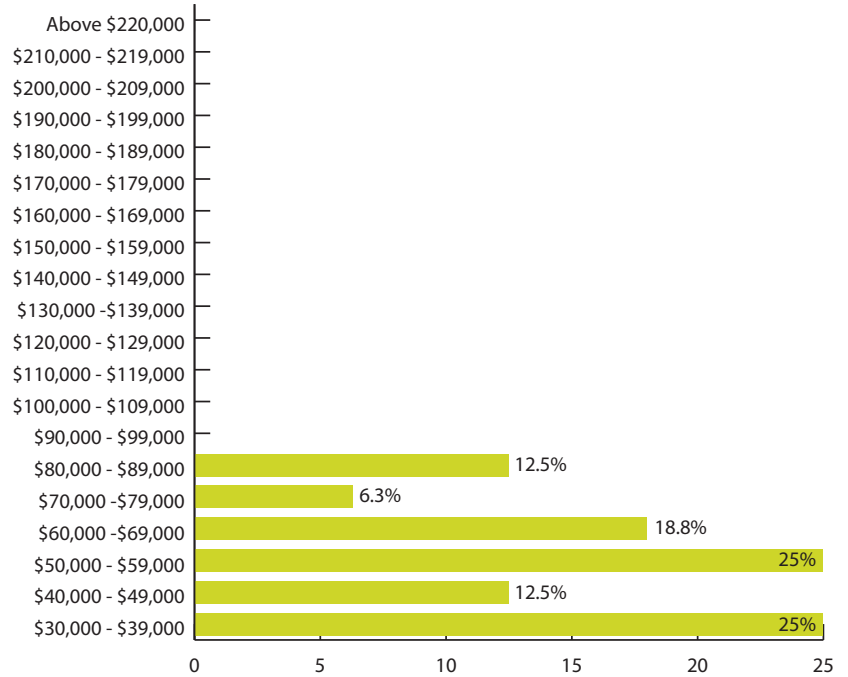
**Government**

**Communications Specialist**

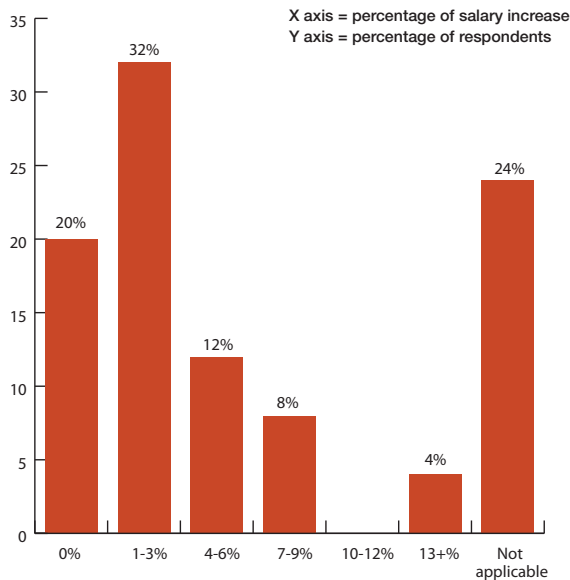
Things haven't changed too much from 2015 in terms of base salary (Figure 1) and total compensation (Figure 2) for communications specialists working in government.

Troubling in 2015 and again in this survey is the large percentage who said salary increases were non-existent or did not apply (Figure 3). For those who received increases, their take-home increased just 1%-3%.

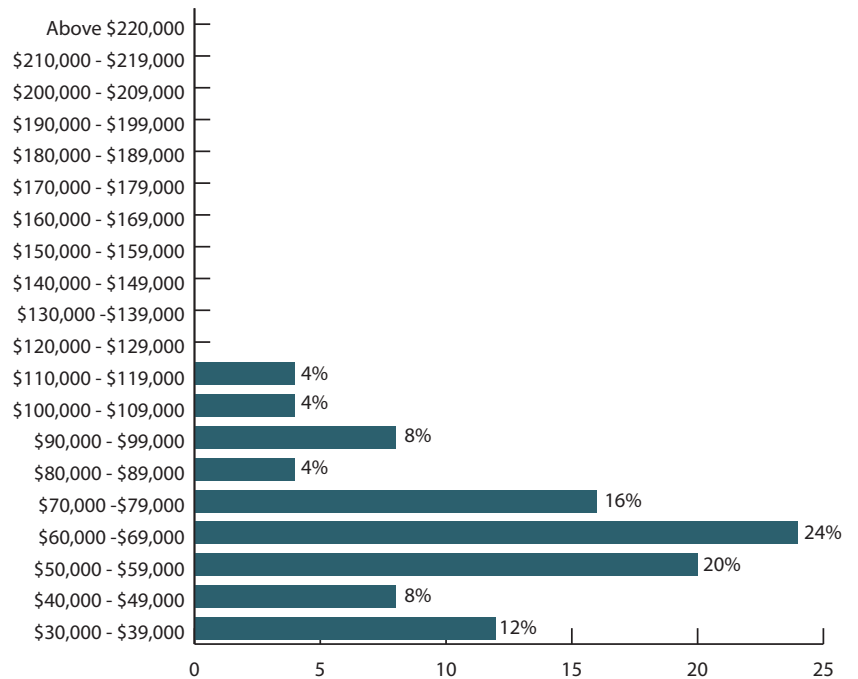
**Fig. 1: Base Salary — Communications Specialist**



**Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Communications Specialist**



**Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Communications Specialist**



# Findings by Position: Agency

## President/CEO

As in 2015, base salaries were diffuse, with 5% at \$220K and better and 15% at \$30K-\$49K (Figure 1).

In terms of salary increases, the story from 2015 was relatively similar to 2016's findings in that nearly 75% of respondents received no increases (Figure 3). Again, as in 2015, presidents and CEOs on the agency side took home a more substantial amount of money via bonuses and other incentives as opposed to salary increases (Figure 2).

Fig. 1: Base Salary — President/CEO

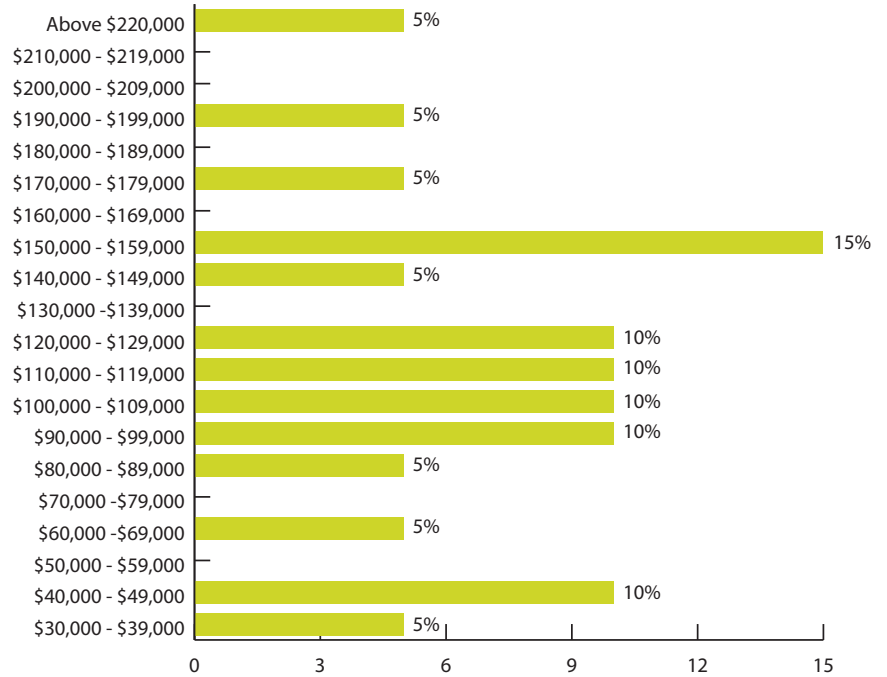


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — President/CEO

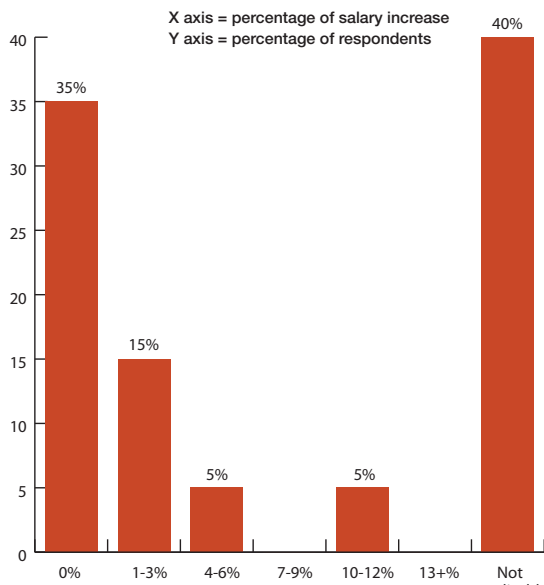
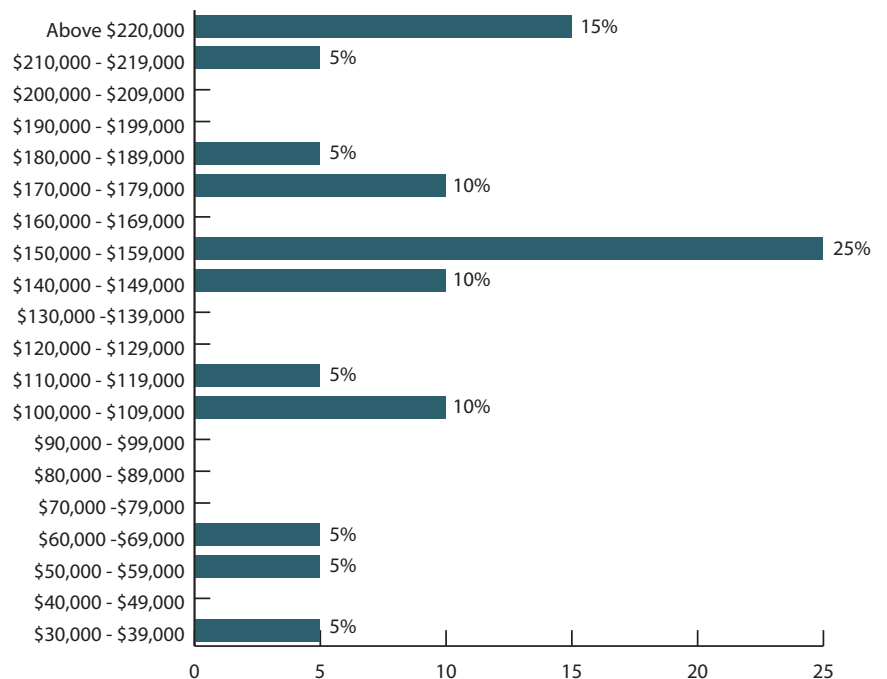


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — President/CEO



Agency

Vice President

Base salaries for VPs were better among our 2016 respondents in that nearly 28% earned more than \$159K, which was the top base salary for 2015 respondents in this job title (Figure 1).

Total compensation was better this year, too, pushing 25% of packages to better than \$200K (Figure 2).

Salary increases were diffuse, yet in 2015 nearly 40% of VPs on the corporate side failed to receive them. In 2016, just a bit more than 30% were left without salary increases (Figure 3).

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Vice President

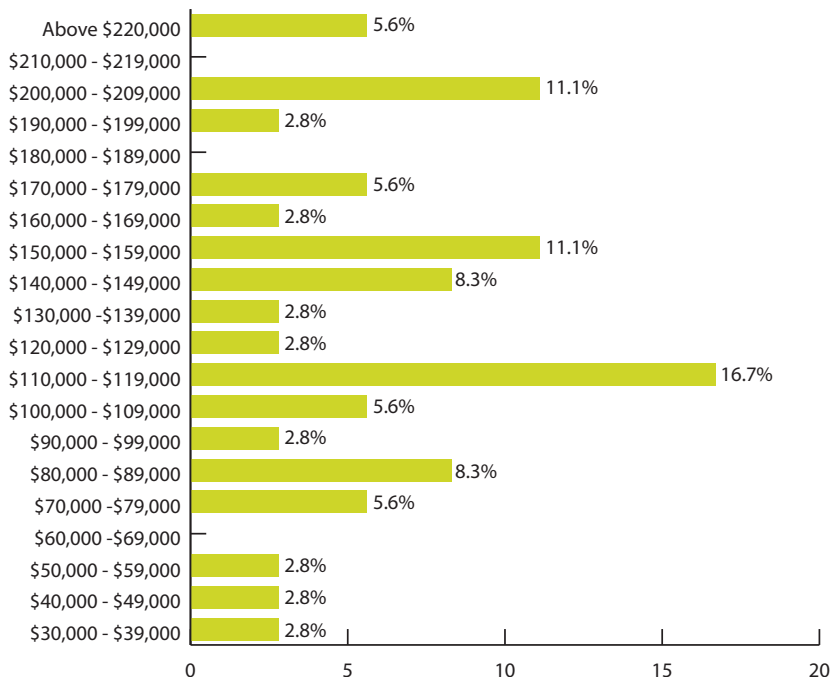


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Vice President

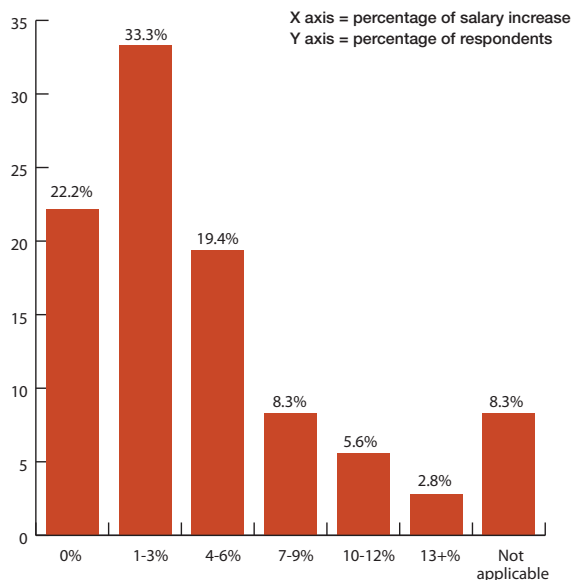
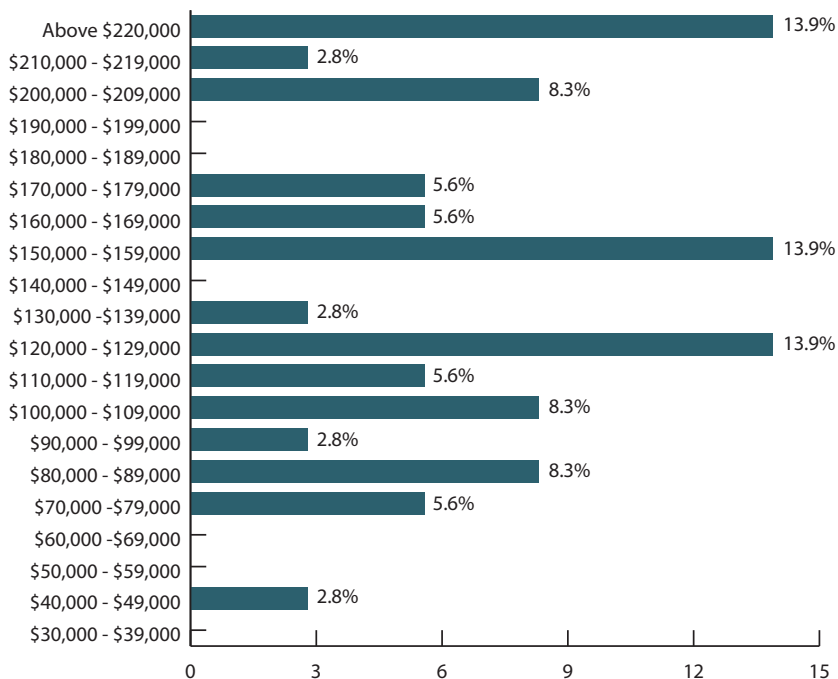


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Vice President





Agency

Account Supervisor

The upward trend on the agency side of PR is evident with account supervisors. Compared to 2015 their base salaries were slightly higher than in 2015 (Figure 1). In addition, their total compensation pushed them up a bit better than in 2015.

The biggest improvement, though, was in salary increases, where just 10% were ineligible for them, as opposed to 2015, where 36% were ineligible (Figure 3).

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Account Supervisor

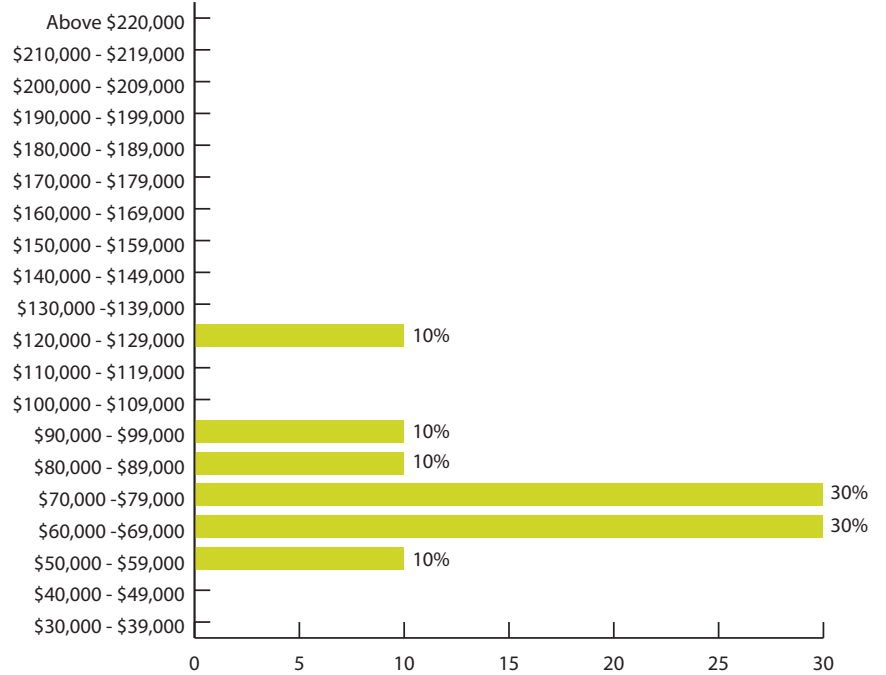


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Account Supervisor

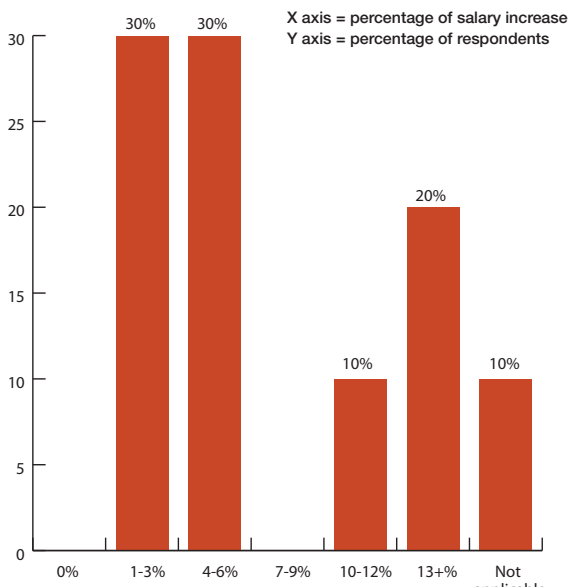
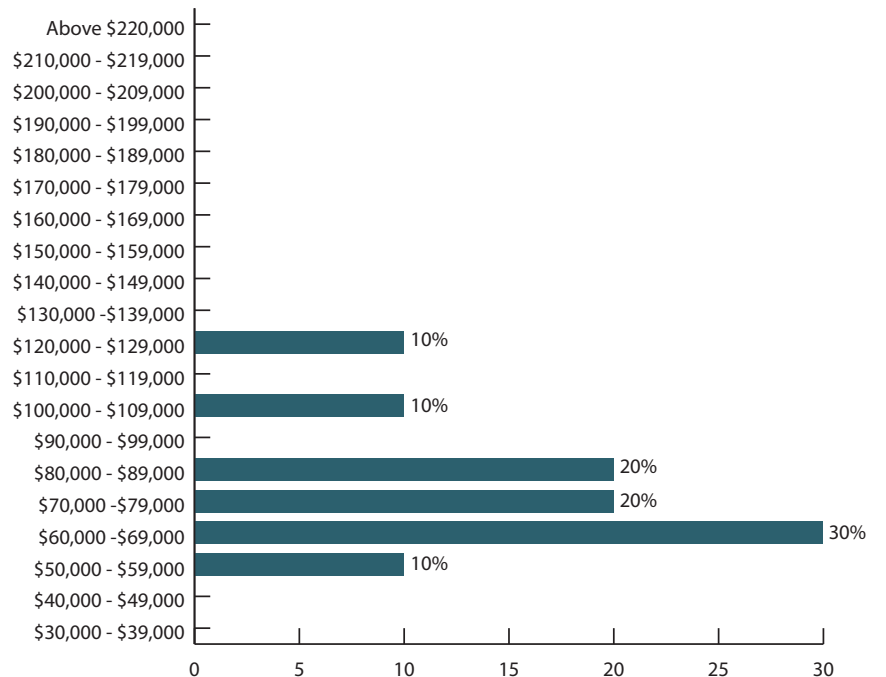


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Account Supervisor



Agency

Senior Account Executive

Senior account executives took a few steps backward in our 2016 survey, with base salaries that were stacked tightly at \$89K and below and 72% earning \$69K or less (Figure 1). Total compensation was a small factor here (Figure 2).

Increases were where senior account executives improved their lot over 2015, where 51% received no salary increase, compared to 28% in 2016 (Figure 3).

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Senior Account Executive

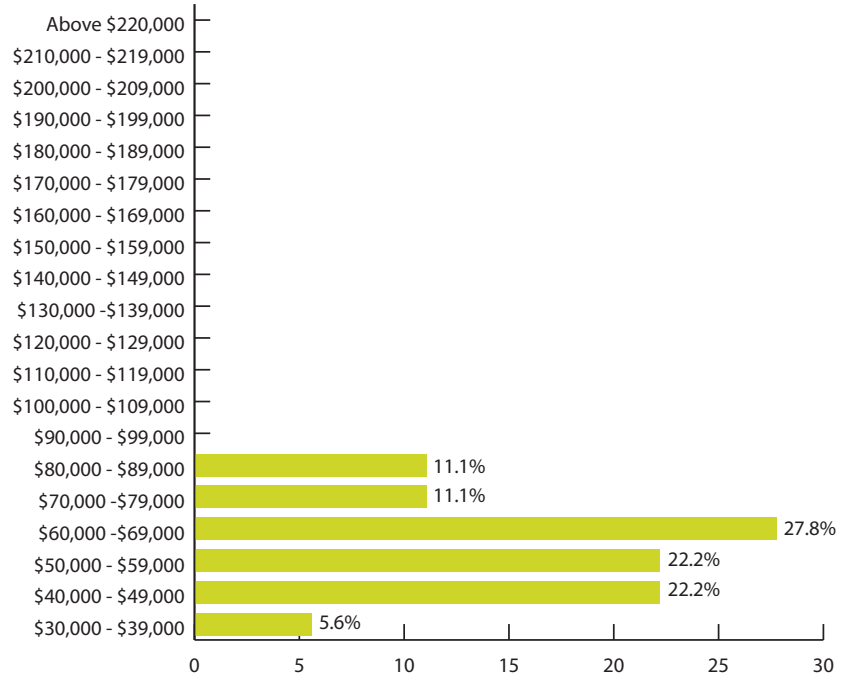


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Senior Account Executive

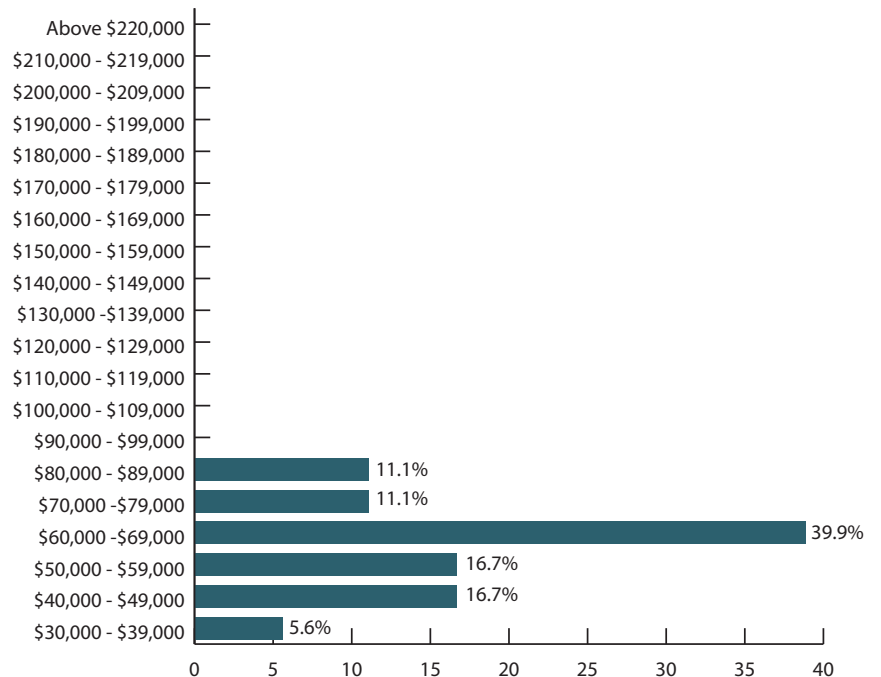
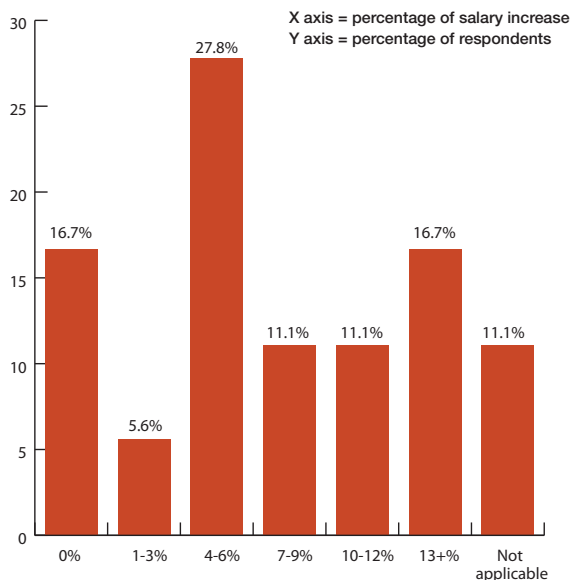


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Senior Account Executive



Agency

Account Executive

Few account executives are getting rich at work, at least not on the basis of their base salaries, where nobody in our 2016 survey did better than \$79K, which was the same as in our 2015 poll (Figure 1). Total compensation was better, but not for many (Figure 2).

Similar to 2015, salary increases were healthy, although almost 40% either received no salary increase or they were not applicable to them.

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Account Executive

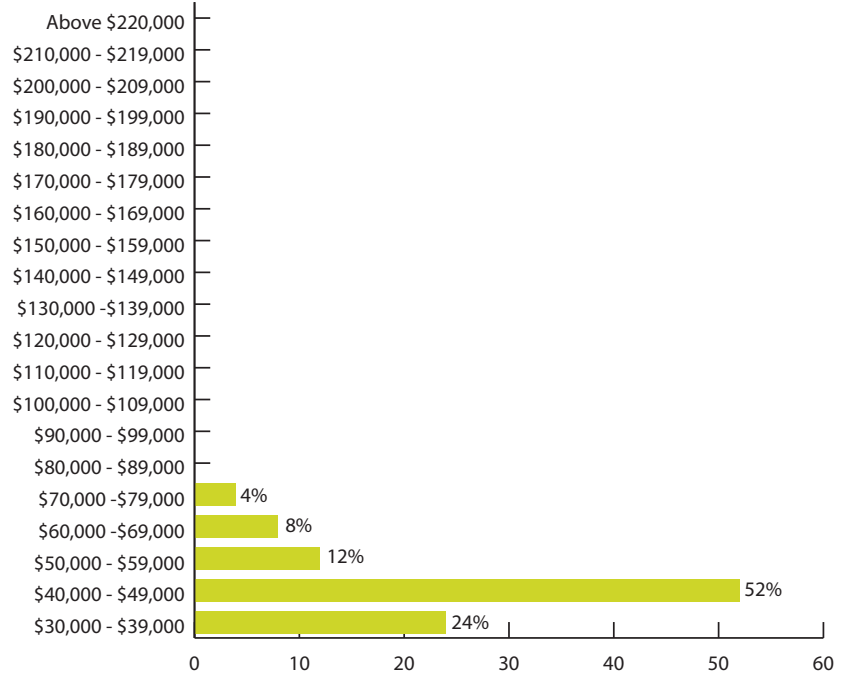


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Account Executive

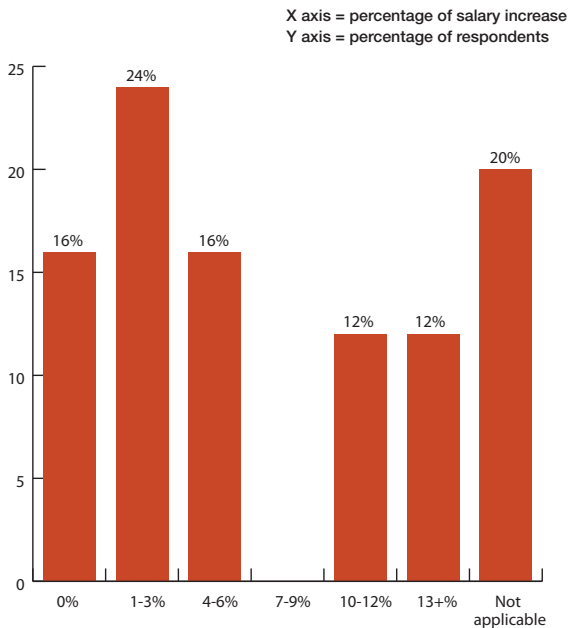
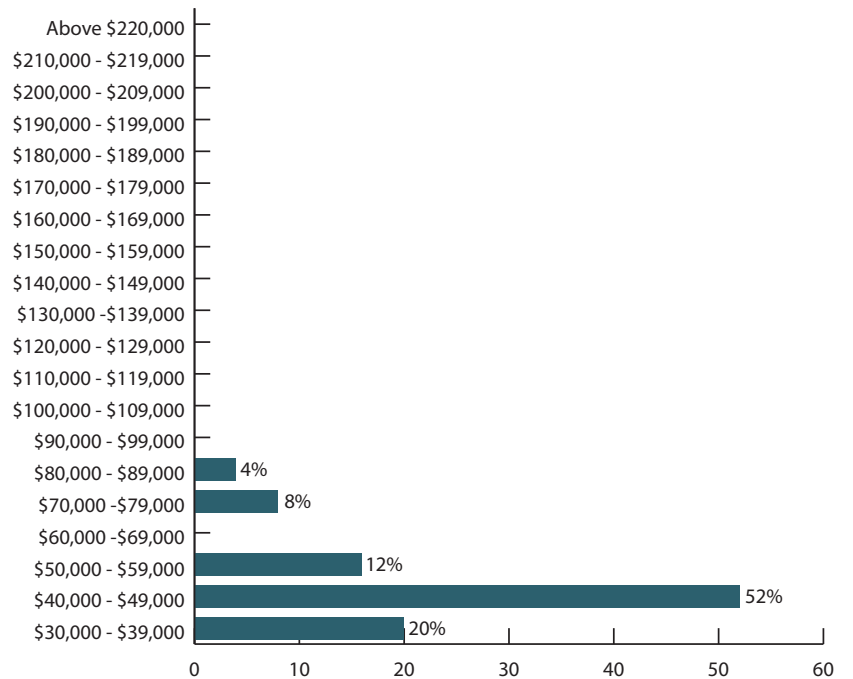


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Account Executive



Agency

Account Manager

As in 2015, the base salaries of account managers and account executives were similar to each other (Figure 1 and Figure 1 on the previous page). Total compensation was modest (Figure 2).

Things were slightly better when looking at salary increases, where 45% received increases of 4% or better, which was similar to the 2015 survey (Figure 3).

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Account Manager

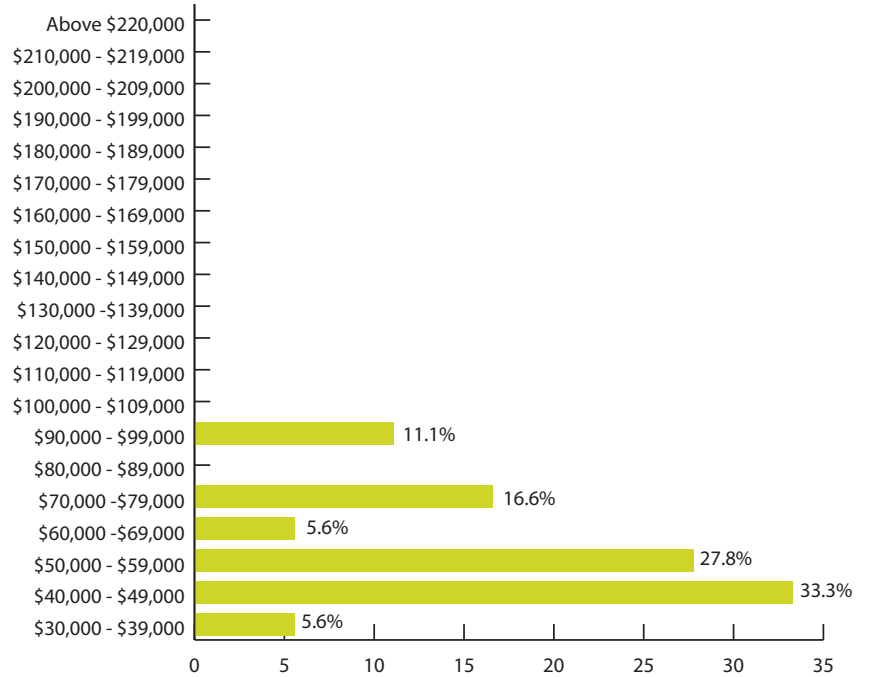


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Account Manager

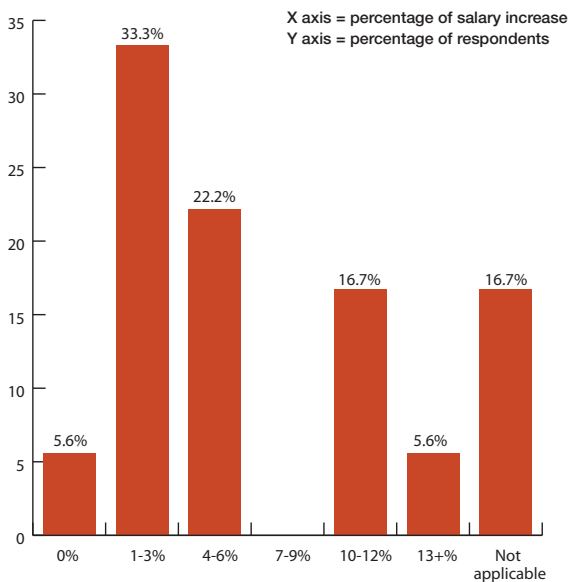
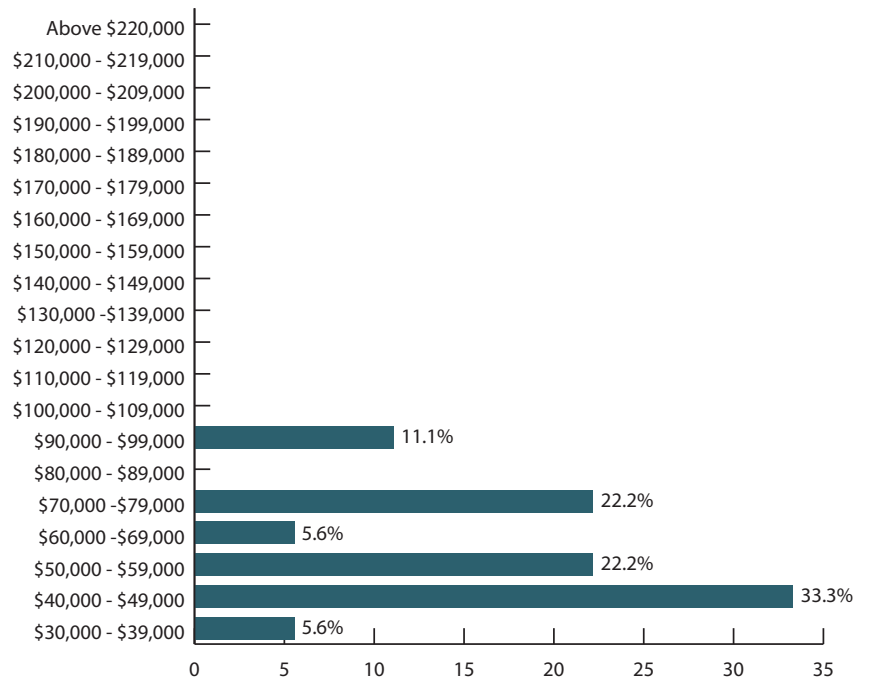


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Account Manager



Agency

Associate

Things were slightly better for associates in our 2016 poll. Whereas nobody in our 2015 survey had a base salary of better than \$59K, almost 20% did this year (Figure 1). Total compensation pushed 23% beyond \$59K (Figure 2).

While salary increases generally were robust in terms of percentage of increases received, the percentage of those either receiving no increase or not being eligible for increases stands at 50% in our 2016 survey, only slightly better than in 2015 (Figure 3).

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Associate

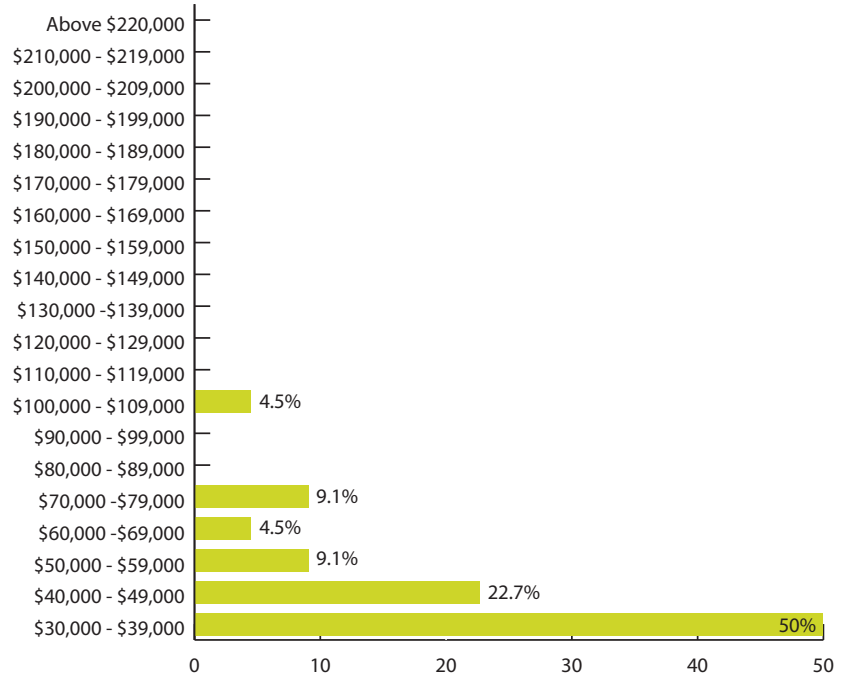


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Associate

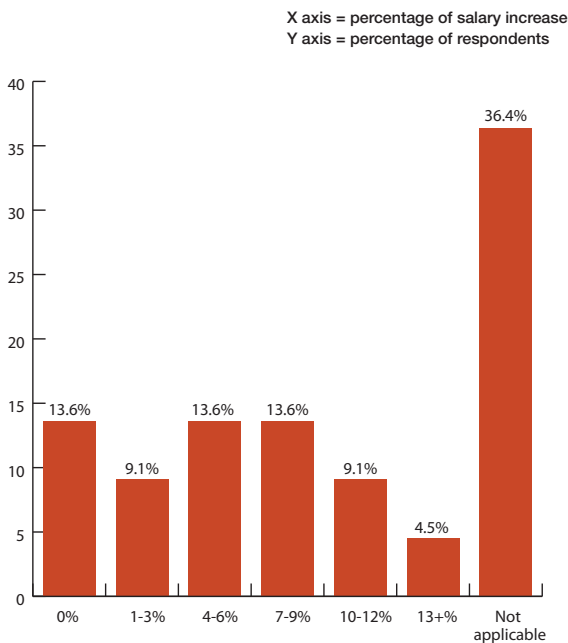
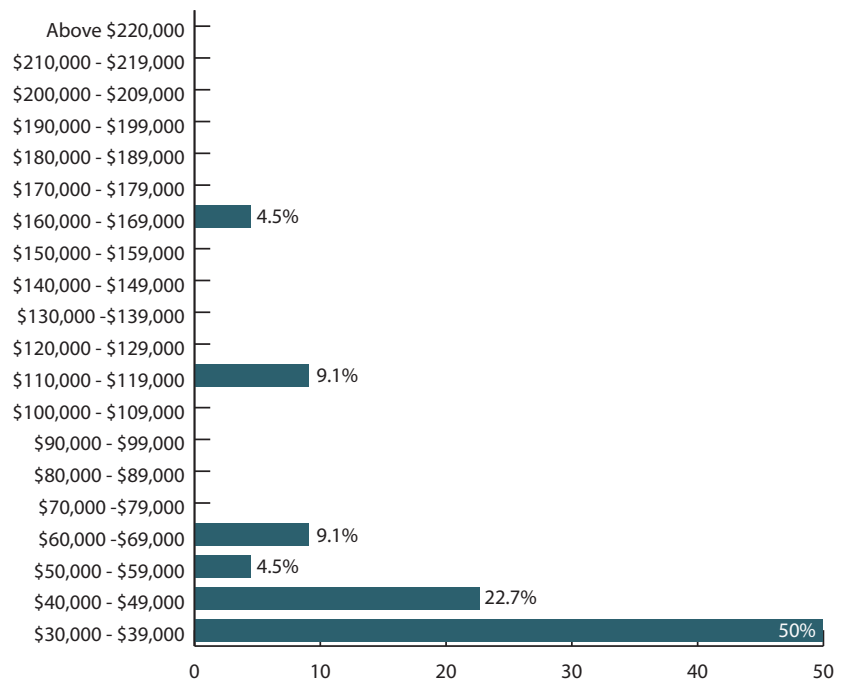


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Associate



# Findings by Position: Independent Practitioner

## Independent Practitioner

Another job title new to our 2016 survey, we wanted to see how independents handle salary, compensation and increases. As the data indicate, PR pros working on their own tend to pay themselves modestly (Figure 1) and take almost no increases (Figure 3). Total compensation increases are similarly modest (Figure 2). It seems clear that independent practitioners derive benefit from flexible schedules and choosing the type of work they do.

Fig. 1: Base Salary — Independent Practitioner

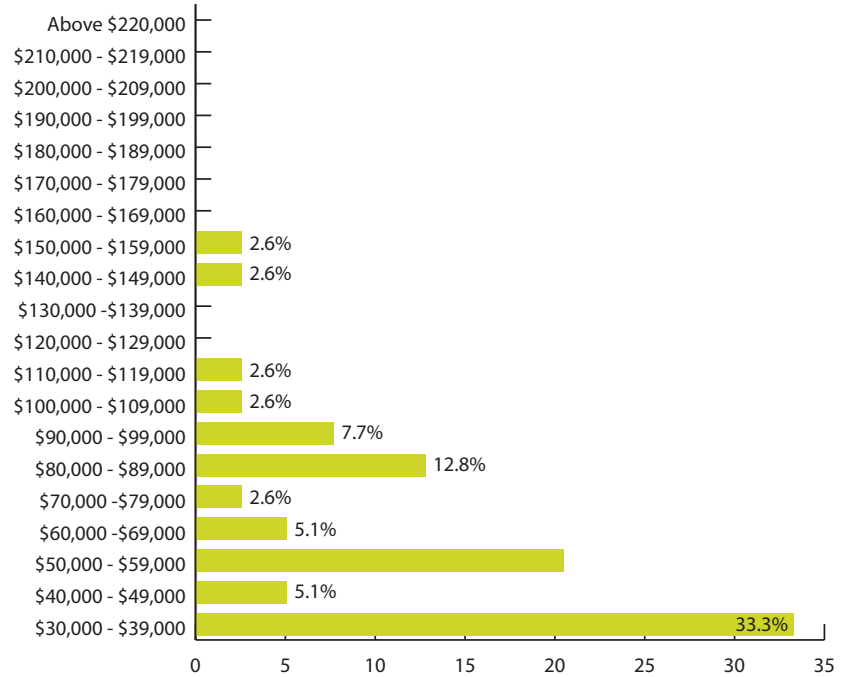


Fig. 3: % Salary Increase — Independent Practitioner

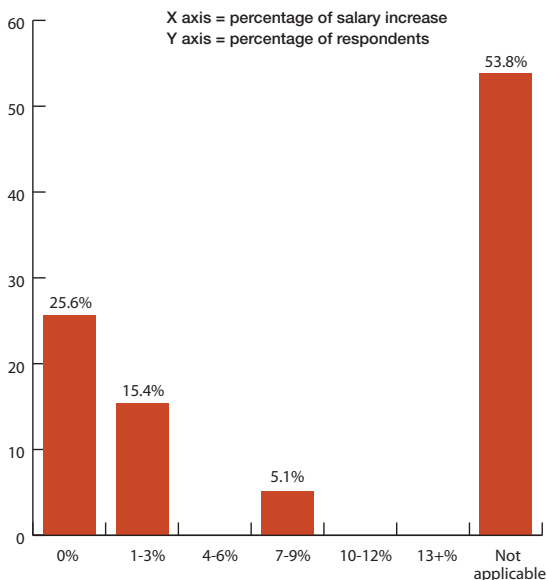
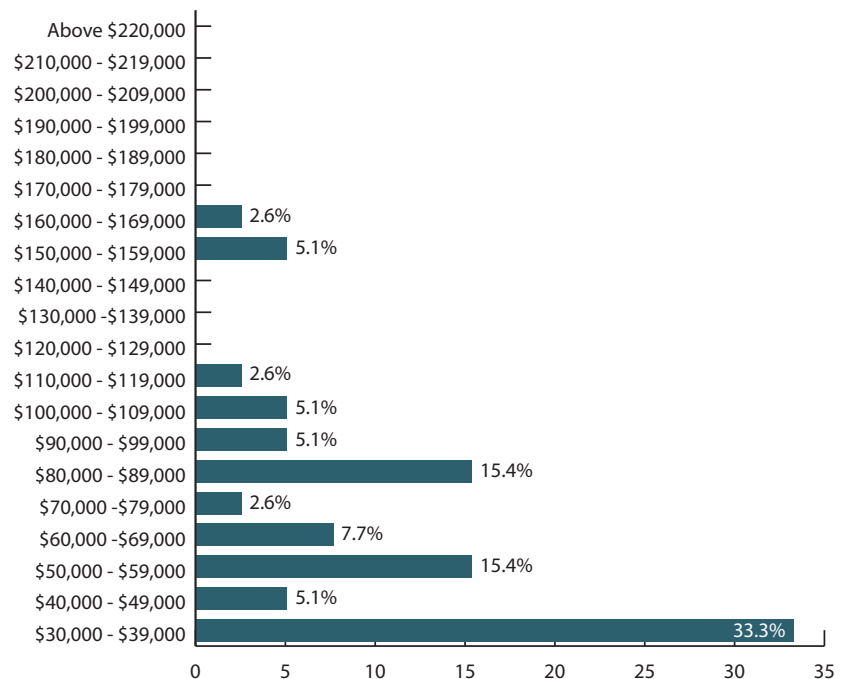


Fig. 2: Total Compensation — Independent Practitioner





# Workplace Insights

# Four Steps to Improve Your Measurement and Financial Skills

By Mike McDougall

The timing couldn't have been better. Digging through a stack of mail the day before I set about writing this column, a flyer stood out. "One-Day Seminar – Finance and Accounting for Non-Financial People" it shouted in blazing blue, 72-point type. The enticing offer was to trade \$149 for a day in a Holiday Inn ballroom.

Into the trash it went, but not for lack of good intent. Years ago, a few weeks after joining the global communications team of one of the world's best-known brands, I found myself in a seminar very much like that one. Flash forward to the present. Not a week goes by that I don't tap into the knowledge I gleaned over that intensive two-day course, also recalling the coffee and Diet Coke that countered the intimidating, stuffed three-ring binder dropped in front of all participants.

Yet I would say with confidence that this same flyer now is filling trash bins at corporations, agencies and nonprofits across the U.S. for a much different reason: making financial and data literacy a priority has fallen off the priority lists of PR pros and their supervisors.

I've always been an ardent supporter of understanding the underlying factors behind the craft we practice – the science that gives rise to our success. Likewise, I'm a proponent of making the numbers sing and helping spreadsheets dance. One of the primary value-drivers for the best PR pros is to provide color commentary and insight on business metrics, explaining their influence on past results and using them to support future actions.

So when you post a comment in a forum about how your career choice was driven by a fear of math, or are clearly out of your league when the rest of the leadership team is reviewing quarterly financials, I'm the guy wincing and putting a secret boardroom hex on you.

It doesn't have to be this way. It shouldn't be this way. It's hurting your compensation, your career growth,



**A primary value-driver for the best PR pros is to provide color commentary and insight on business metrics, explaining their influence on past results and using them to support future action. Yet as an industry, we continue to be blind to this truth.**

the long- and short-term potential and that of your entire team.

Yet as an industry, we continue to be blind to this truth. Despite years of being asked for more concrete performance metrics, of complaining that "they just don't understand" what we do, and of being given opportunities at every turn to make a change, we somehow believe that public relations is absolved from having to play by the same rules.

We're wrong, and it's more evident than ever. Case in point? The disparity of what we want versus what we value, as shown in this year's PR News Salary Survey results (Please turn to page 6, Figure D).

When asked which "soft" communications skills/attributes are most important for advancement within your organization, almost 92% of PR News Salary Survey respondents cited strategic decision-making. You'll agree that to be an effective strategist, it's essential to have a grasp of a program's finances. In addition one needs to be able to assess quantitative and qualitative facts that inform the process.

Yet when asked which "hard" PR skills are most im-



portant for advancement within your organization, the bottom two chosen were financial acumen at 10% and measurement knowledge at 18%.

And yet we wonder why the profession continues to be challenged in burnishing its reputation among peers in functions such as marketing, human resources and IT.

### So what's to be done?

- 1. Inventory:** Assess the skills of your team. Then compare those to expectations detailed in your career frameworks documents, which outline competency requirements by position.
- 2. Act:** Where gaps in knowledge exist, make a plan to address them through in-house and third-party formal training, mentorship, and exposure to initiatives where financial and measurement skills can be put to use. Achievement of those plans must be tied to total compensation, whether through promotion, base salary increases, bonuses or other incentives.
- 3. Walk the Walk:** As a manager, hold yourself to the same standard or higher. Take a look at your comfort with interpreting data. If sub-par,

your team will be more likely to undervalue the importance of these skills. Don't let yourself off the hook for training – attach yourself to sessions being taken by your group, find courses of your own, or even reach out to a trusted colleague in finance for some one-on-one guidance over a beer or lunch.

- 4. Celebrate:** Then like any other achievement, celebrate your teammates who find success, holding them up as models of what a well-rounded, communications professional looks like in today's business climate. As I wrote above, competence in finance and measurement skills needs to be tied to compensation, but it also should be rewarded apart from monetary gain.

So pause for a moment, reach under your desk, and pull that seminar flyer out of the wastebasket. Your invitation to the future is waiting.

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*Mike McDougall, APR, Fellow PRSA, is president of McDougall Communications. He can be reached at: [mike@mcdougallpr.com](mailto:mike@mcdougallpr.com)*

# Recruitment and Retention: Six Tips to Build Great Teams With Employees Primed to Succeed

By Bob Pearson

The best sports organizations in the world are continually obsessed with recruiting the right team members. Building a team that will have the right chemistry to win and then retaining those people after they have achieved some level of success are perhaps the twin holy grails of sport.

A dose of reality: If the top teams in the world have trouble getting this exactly right with nearly endless resources, we need to realize building best teams that succeed and then remain intact is hard work.

I've had the benefit of watching amazing leaders build teams at Fortune 500 companies. At my current firm, I've been involved in this activity. If I think back over 30 years and imagine what the key lessons are, here is what comes to mind:

## Recruiting Team Members

1. **Capability and Curiosity:** Many are capable, but few are curious. When you have both, you have a person who has the hunger to learn and the ability to do something about it. It's what we often refer to as fire in the belly. The thing is, you have to have talent and fire to do really well.
2. **Diversity of Thinking:** Great teams often say one very important thing. They speak of many people smarter than they are in certain areas at this organization; they can benefit by learning what these people know, and they love it. They realize that they have to think effectively and differently and be willing to accept the views of others to achieve excellence. When you know you can learn more by staying at an organization, you often do. So, diversity of thought and retention go hand in hand.



**Many are capable, but few are curious. When you have both, you have a person who has the hunger to learn and the ability to do something about it.**

## Building Teams

3. **Avoid Boxing-in and Encourage Unlocking:** Sometimes, in an effort to show great clarity at the time of a hire, the new hire's responsibilities are so clear that there appears to be no room to evolve the role. When you do this across an organization, it works great if you are in the military. It is terrible if you are encouraging innovation and freedom of thinking. Great leaders have the ability to give guidance on what you should do and then watch you, shape you and help you unlock.
4. **Coach Managers on Managing:** No matter how many teams we may have managed, we're all always learning how to deal with new personalities, new issues and new marketplace realities. We need to conversationally coach managers so they can see what they need to do, and then do it in ways that work for them. Just as we avoid boxing-in a person, we also should be careful about micro-managing when we coach. Help people discover what to do. It's more powerful and lasts longer.

## Retaining Talent & Teams

5. Focus on Intellectually Scalable Models: It's a reality that talent will come and go. So, leaders must focus on building intellectually scalable models that outline how to work, how to achieve results, which processes to follow and what great results look like. High-performance teams, in turn, will define these models to meet their team's skills. And when one team member drops out and another comes in, the team can continue to excel. If you establish clarity in how you achieve success together, you can build teams that do well in a sustainable fashion. Each team will make the models better for the next team.
6. Retain Team Members Who Remain Hungry and Focused: Time to whack a sacred cow. Avoid worrying that someone will leave. Rather, we should focus on helping those who are eager to succeed do exactly that. If we keep our focus on those team members who are positive, forward thinking, client-focused and who bleed the company's vision, you're in good shape. If you find your time being dominated by the unhappy few who often also are the ones with the largest egos, then you are spending your

time unwisely. As former GE chief Jack Welch said a long time ago, don't focus on the type IV's, get rid of them. Type IV's, in his model, were capable of high performance, but they worked against the social fabric of the company. Just being smart isn't enough. You have to be smart, high performance and a cultural fit.

Overall, the biggest learning that I've had is the most simple and it is really a series of insights that I've learned by watching my favorite team, the New York Yankees, over the years.

Great chemistry and talent can lead to being the best in your business. Talent is easy to spot. Chemistry is a process of getting the right people together, giving them the right amount of space, the right amount of coaching and supporting them with the right resources. Chemistry is super hard.

It's really a never-ending formula that we will tweak for the rest of our careers. We'll win some championships; we'll lose some, too. That we can count on.

What matters is what we choose to do tomorrow and for every day thereafter.

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# Tips & Tactics for Ensuring Your Most Valuable Assets Are Motivated, Engaged and Appreciated

By Wendy Lund

In most cases employees are – and will always be – a PR firm’s greatest asset. They drive client and agency success. Engaging them should be the highest priority.

It’s the CEO’s responsibility to help achieve a singular, straightforward vision that propels the business and energizes employees to be best in class, renowned for unrivaled talent, forward-thinking capabilities and unrelenting client service.

Achieving a vision like this requires building an incredible company spirit where every employee feels that “we are in this together” and maintaining an exceptional culture that embraces doing something different for clients, colleagues and the community. Central to the creation of this shared passion for success is a dedicated plan for actively engaging and motivating employees.

## Employee Engagement & Team Building Tied to Client Achievements

It’s critical to motivate employees to avoid settling for the status quo and to do things differently. To help them live, breathe and celebrate great thinking and outcomes, and to integrate this into a company’s culture, there needs to be an ongoing commitment to harnessing employees’ dedication to their work and challenging them to approach it in new and different ways. Several of the following have proven successful:

- An awards program that recognizes employees who not only epitomize but personify the values of the company.
- Monthly spotlights of great client initiatives to highlight teams that execute new, different and effective client programs.
- Timed to the NCAA men’s basketball tournament or some other sporting event, an annual competition among account teams. The teams



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are awarded points for receiving client accolades, growing accounts, orchestrating client program milestones and sparking innovation.

- Welcome lunches with the CEO for new employees. This allows the CEO to meet new staff and share the company’s vision.
- “High fives” at monthly staff meetings to honor people who have done things differently for clients.

These are examples only. Options are limitless, of course. The point is to find what best works with your employees and have fun doing it!

## Employee Training & Professional Development Designed Around Distinct Needs

To help foster a culture built on achieving greatness, it’s important to offer employees highly experiential

and hands-on experiences that relate directly to the transforming and diverse work they do. For example, as we know, PR today is global. As boundaries disintegrate it's essential that all employees have an understanding of the regional and local nuances that color effective communications around the world. To that end, agencies have given staff the opportunity to spend time working in overseas offices to help expand their global mindset. Incidentally, the same holds true for overseas employees—having them work for a period in your U.S. office(s) can be beneficial. Beyond that, encourage employees to work in other offices throughout the U.S., should they have the desire to temporarily re-locate to a new city.

One area that always seems to be a challenge in engaging employees is new business, particularly when it comes to balancing and prioritizing new business with existing (and paying!) work. To elevate employees' comfort with – and love for – new business, consider staging a “new business boot camp,” where you introduce formal methodology and approaches to new business and provide resources to support these activities.

In addition to formal programs, “lunch & learn” opportunities are an excellent way to train staff through highly interactive sessions. Outside experts should be considered to help facilitate discussions with senior managers on communications best practices, manag-

ing people and teams for success and mastering sound financial management.

### **Inspire Staff to Maintain a Work-Life Balance**

Various efforts to engage employees are all fine and well, but to keep staff refreshed, at the top of its game and motivated, it's also critical to pay close attention to the specific needs of each employee and ensure a good work-life balance. As previously mentioned, employees likely are your greatest asset, and everything we, as managers, do should be carried out with an eye toward creating a superior work experience.

From encouraging team members to spend time with their family and actually take their vacations, to providing a liberal telecommuting policy to something as simple as a Summer Friday program (early leave), I find that the quality of work and the team spirit are best when employees know that they and their work-life needs are being considered.

By treating staff as your agency's greatest asset and making sure that its every contribution is valued, you will be able to pull greatness out of every employee and achieve your company vision.

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*Wendy Lund is CEO, GCI Health. She can be reached at: Wendy.Lund@gcihealth.com*

# Vision 2020: How to Build Four Skills Now That You Will Need to Succeed in the Future

By Laura Kane

Consumer demographics are shifting, mature markets are reducing spending and younger consumers are demanding new innovations. Mobile technology and cloud computing are changing the way employees and companies function. Disruptive technologies like robotics, machine learning and artificial intelligence are creating better tools to help communicators more accurately predict consumer behavior.

As target audiences change, the tools for engaging them evolve, and machines enable us to do our jobs faster and more accurately. Our core function remains the same. PR pros still will be responsible for creating stories that educate, influence and connect people with our organizations and brands.

To thrive in 2020, communications professionals will need to become more creative, have strong cognitive flexibility, collaborate, be emotionally intelligent and develop the grit necessary to constantly challenge the status quo. Here are ways to start building these important skills now.

## Creativity

It is often said that being creative is the ability to connect two previously unrelated things to create greater understanding. In order to maximize the capacity to be creative, it stands to reason that the more things an individual knows, the more things they can connect. To quote Walt Disney, “We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.”

Start opening new doors by reading new magazines, watching different television shows or attending lectures. An interesting article in Popular Science may provide the analogy that will help explain a complex business idea to employees, or a nugget from a lecture on beekeeping could be applied to achieving greater harmony in the workplace.



**To thrive in 2020, communications professionals will need to become more creative, have strong cognitive flexibility, collaborate, be emotionally intelligent and develop the grit necessary to constantly challenge the status quo.**

If you are feeling very ambitious, then take an improvisation class. Improv requires that in order to keep the scene moving individuals can never challenge the validity of the previous statement, only build on it. This is commonly achieved by using the phrase “yes, and....” Here is an example of how this principle could be applied in a brainstorm session. Person 1 suggests that the type of bread found in your sandwich is an indication of your future success. Person 2 is unable to discount the idea; she can only build on it. So, person 2 might say, “Yes, but one’s true status lies in the ability to create an interesting sandwich.” These exchanges could continue until someone lands on a concept for a campaign. For example, the campaign says the brand of bread one uses not only builds better sandwiches, it lets others know that you are an interesting person.

## Cognitive Flexibility

To see things from different perspectives, it is essential to develop an understanding of various viewpoints. Here’s one way to do this: study the same news event from several different sources. Fox News, MSNBC, The Wall Street Journal and The Daily Show all interpret the same story from very different perspectives. Over

time, immersing oneself in a variety of media sources will provide insights about how each distinct audience perceives and comprehends the same experience.

### **Strategic Collaboration**

Employees who can facilitate better communication between divisions and collaborate with other disciplines are increasingly in demand. Breaking down silos isn't easy, though a simple place to start is by taking someone from a different department out to lunch. A group of employees having a meal together can enhance the exchange of information across divisions to help build relationships that improve communication and integrate strategies that will grow the business.

### **Emotional Intelligence**

The ability to understand motivation and behavior is essential to the process of crafting effective messages. Studying behavioral psychology, economics and discussing the underlying motivations of movie characters is one way to start. Human beings are best

observed in the real world, however. So, seek out new experiences and maintain diverse relationships. Join a social club or professional organization, volunteer at a soup kitchen or frequent the local community center and listen to what people are saying. Building a varied network of colleagues and friends will provide a better picture of what motivates you and others around you.

Even with all these skills, sheer grit may end up being the ingredient that makes the difference between a project succeeding or falling. As the world continues to innovate and change at a staggering rate, tomorrow's successful communicators will need to be constantly trying fresh ways to engage and educate others. They must have the courage to enthusiastically try new ideas, despite an uncertain outcome. Just as important, they will need to learn to accept failure with humility to come back next time and try again.

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