

# PRNews



# SALARY SURVEY

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2019 EDITION



# EDITOR'S NOTE

## PRNews

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**Editor,** Seth Arenstein,  
sarenstein@accessintel.com

**Content Director,** Melissa Hoffmann,  
mhoffmann@accessintel.com

**Graphic Designer,** Yelena Shamis,  
yshamis@accessintel.com

**Senior Content Manager,** Sophie Maerowitz,  
SMaerowitz@accessintel.com

**Content Manager,** Justin Joffe,  
jjoffe@accessintel.com

**Director of Marketing,** Laura Snitkovskiy,  
lsnitkovskiy@accessintel.com

**Sales Director,** Katie Sullivan, PR News, The  
Social Shake-Up, ksullivan@accessintel.com

**VP of Marketing,** Amy Jefferies,  
ajefferies@accessintel.com

**Divisional President,** Kerry Smith,  
ksmith@accessintel.com

**Chief Operating Officer,** Heather Farley

**President & CEO,** Don Pazour

**Group Subscriptions — Carol Brault,**  
cbrault@accessintel.com

**Additional Copies & Article Reprints —**  
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**accessintel@wrightsmedia.com**



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9211 Corporate Blvd, 4th Floor  
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Client Services:  
Phone: 888.707.5814 • Fax: 301.309.3847  
e-mail: clientservices@accessintel.com

New York Editorial Office:  
40 Wall Street, 50th floor, New York, NY 10005  
Phone: 212.621.4890 • Fax: 212.621.4879

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Is the glass half full or half empty?

As we also saw in last year's edition of this survey, a significant majority of PR pros are "somewhat" or "fully satisfied" with their compensation. Most say they received increases last year. And it's mostly a happy group. More than 90 percent are "very" or "moderately" satisfied with their jobs.

In a new look (for us) at the data, correlating job satisfaction and compensation (see chart, page 6, bottom), nearly 70 percent were "fully satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with their compensation and job. That's almost a full glass.

The glass empties when you find that most of 2018's raises were modest. Many barely reached the U.S. cost of living increase of 3 percent. That's partly why just 22 percent of PR pros are "fully satisfied" with their compensation. And 27 percent are "very dissatisfied" or "somewhat dissatisfied" with their pay package. Correlating compensation and job satisfaction finds just 16 percent are "very satisfied."

Troubling also is PR's wage gap, which is widening. Men's base salary (\$111,300) is larger than women's (\$86,300). In addition, men are five times more likely to receive larger bonuses than women. While gender disparities hardly are unique to PR, they're troubling.

Add this to something we've heard anecdotally and that was also confirmed in a report from the Institute of PR in February. Both sexes in PR feel the pressure of being on call 24/7. That's life in a digital world.

As one senior communicator told us recently, "It's difficult to attract young talent to PR when you tell them they're always going to be on" and compensation remains based on a 40-hour work week.

Companies that adjust best and quickest to the changed nature of communications should have less trouble attracting and keeping talent.

Sincerely,

Seth

Seth Arenstein

Editor, PR News

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# OVERVIEW AND KEY FINDINGS



## SALARY

2018 continued a positive trajectory for PR salaries. Many of the things we found to be true in the 2017 PR News Salary Survey are still true today. As a group, CEO base salaries average \$140,500 (see chart below). Base salaries for directors average \$98,700. Managers report their average salary is \$79,400, and the group we've called Specialists average \$60,100 annually.

### Average Salaries across all Communications Practices

(Corporate, Non-profit, Government, Agency, Independent)

**C-Suite:** Assistant VP, Chief Communications Officer, Chief Content Strategist, Chief Digital Strategist, EVP, Communications, EVP, Public Relations, Executive VP, General Manager, President/CEO, Senior VP, Senior VP, Communications, Vice President, VP or Manager, Community Relations, VP or Manager, Digital Communications, VP, Communications, VP, Digital Media, VP, Marketing, VP, Media Relations, VP, Public Relations **\$140,500**

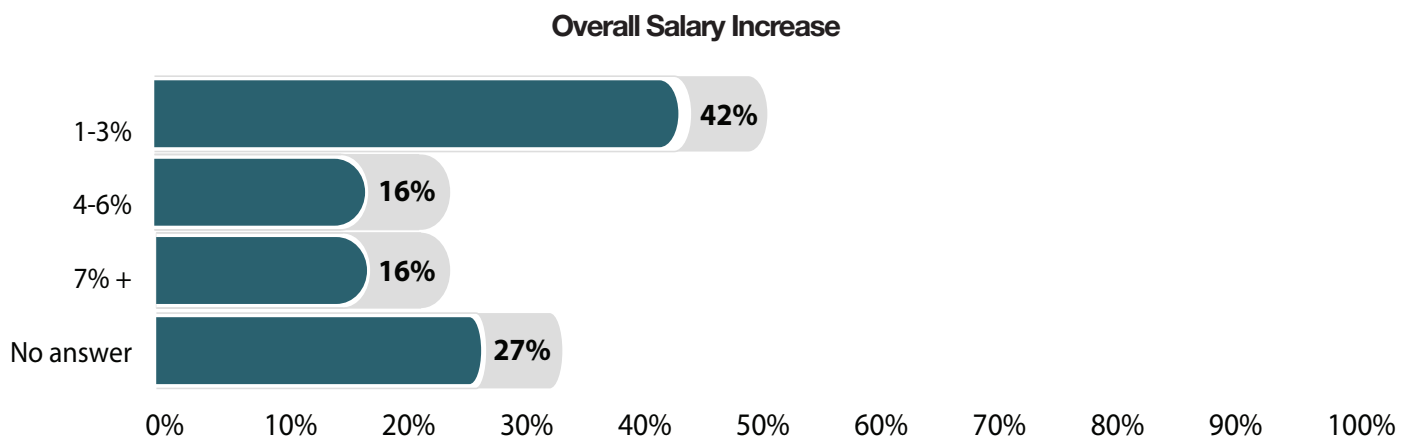
**Director:** Director, Director of Digital Media, Director of Marketing, Director of Public Relations, Director of Social Media, Director, Content Marketing, Director, Digital Engagement, Director, Media Relations, Director, Social Media and Content Marketing, Marketing Communications Director, Public Affairs Manager/Director **\$98,700**

**Manager:** Account Executive, Account Manager, Account Supervisor, Communications Manager, Content Manager, Manager, Media Relations, Marketing Manager, PR Manager, Senior Account Executive, Senior Account Manager, Senior Communications Manager, Social Media Manager **\$79,400**

**Specialist:** Associate, Communications Specialist, PR Associate, PR Specialist, Social Media Specialist, Social Media Strategist, Social Media, PR Specialist **\$60,100**

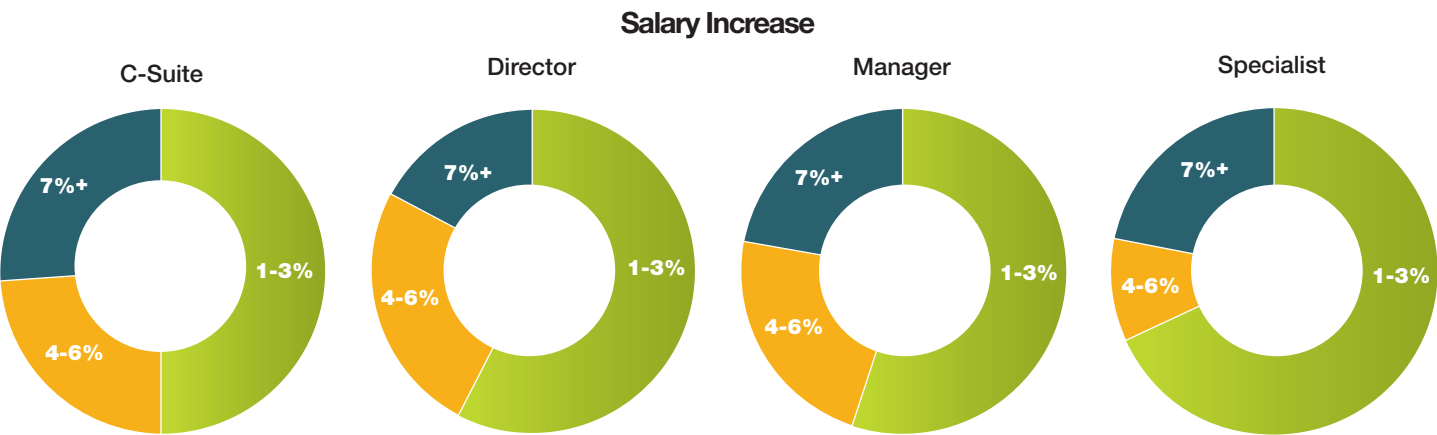
**There's good news and bad news.** It's good news when three of four PR pros report receiving a raise during the year. The bad news is the majority of those raises were modest, at three percent or smaller. This is similar to 2017, where 73 percent increased their compensation with small raises.

In 2018, as you can see in the chart below, three in 10 respondents said they received a raise greater than three percent, again consistent with 2017. Four out of 10 (42 percent) reported a 1-3 percent salary increase in 2018, reflecting cost of living increases. Sixteen percent bumped their salary by at least 7 percent.





As might be expected, Specialists who report a salary increase are the least likely professionals to state that they received 4 percent plus. Between 42 percent and 50 percent of more senior titles got a 4 percent plus salary increase.



BONUSES

Half (49 percent) of PR professionals stated that they received a bonus. Three-quarters of those who received a bonus last year earned between \$1K and \$10K. Most (57 percent) earned a bonus of \$1K-\$5K, rebounding above the 49 percent in 2017 to the 2016 levels (57 percent). The downward decline in respondents who earn a bonus of \$31K or more continues this year (10 percent vs. 14 percent in 2017 and 11 percent in 2016, respectively).

Despite the prevalence of women in the industry, men are more likely than women to receive larger bonuses—a pattern first noted in the 2016 study. The gender gap widened this year. Men are now five times more likely than women to receive larger bonuses. In contrast, 64 percent of women earned the smallest bonuses (in the \$1K-\$5K bracket) vs. 36 percent of men. This is probably due to the fact that men are more likely to hold senior positions, and consequently, bring in the largest bonuses.

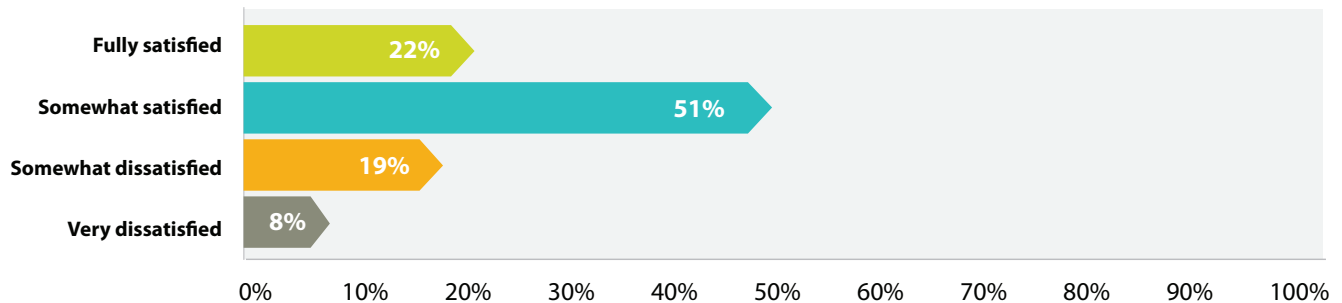
Bonus Range	Female Percent	Male Percent	Total Percent
\$1K-\$5K	64%	36%	57%
\$6K-\$10K	16%	21%	17%
\$11K-\$15K	5%	6%	5%
\$16K-\$20K	5%	6%	5%
\$21K-\$25K	3%	4%	3%
\$26K-\$30K	2%	3%	2%
\$31K or more	5%	25%	10%



## COMPENSATION SATISFACTION

In spite of small salary increases, an overwhelming number of PR pros are satisfied with their compensation. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) say they are satisfied with what they are paid. Just 22 percent are fully satisfied and 51 percent are somewhat satisfied. It is notable that strong dissatisfaction ("very dissatisfied") with compensation continues to hover at almost one in 10 employees. Compensation satisfaction has remained flat since 2016. Enterprising PR leaders will want to pay attention to the underlying causes of this dissatisfaction.

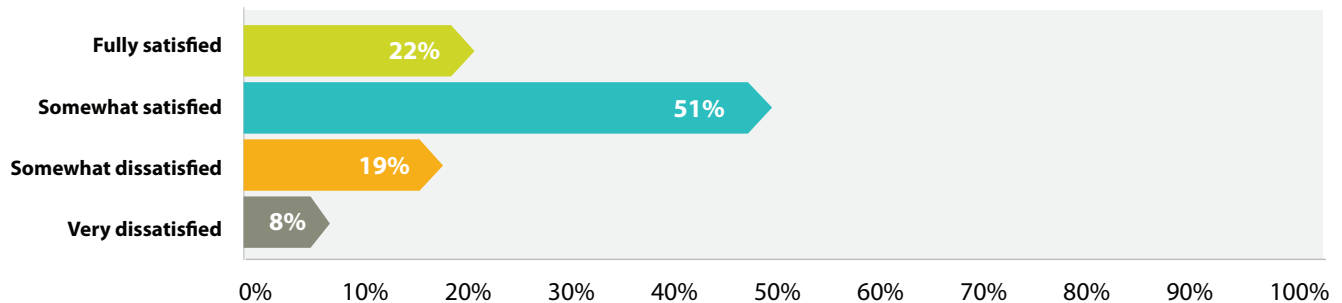
**How satisfied are you with your current compensation?**



## Job Satisfaction

Job happiness doesn't always mean salary satisfaction. Job satisfaction continues the strong performance first noted in 2016. Nine of ten PR pros said they were "very" (37 percent) or "moderately" (54 percent) satisfied with their job. At the other end of the spectrum of job happiness are the 10% who said they weren't as pleased with their employment situation.

**How satisfied are you with your job?**



Seven in 10 (69 percent) PR pros are very or moderately satisfied with both their compensation and job, an indication of general satisfaction. There is room for improvement with only 16 percent are very satisfied with both their compensation and job.

**Compensation**

Job	Fully satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Very satisfied	16%	19%	2%	1%
Moderately satisfied	6%	29%	15%	4%
Not very satisfied	--	3%	3%	2%
Not satisfied at all	--	--	1%	2%



### PR Skills Most Important for Advancement

PR professionals rank writing skills/content creation and media relations as the top "must-have" skills to get ahead. Writing skills currently are valued as the most important skill, followed by media relations and content creation.

In addition to the "must-haves," PR professionals also need to master secondary skills to advance. Digital/social media skills and oral communications are key secondary skills.

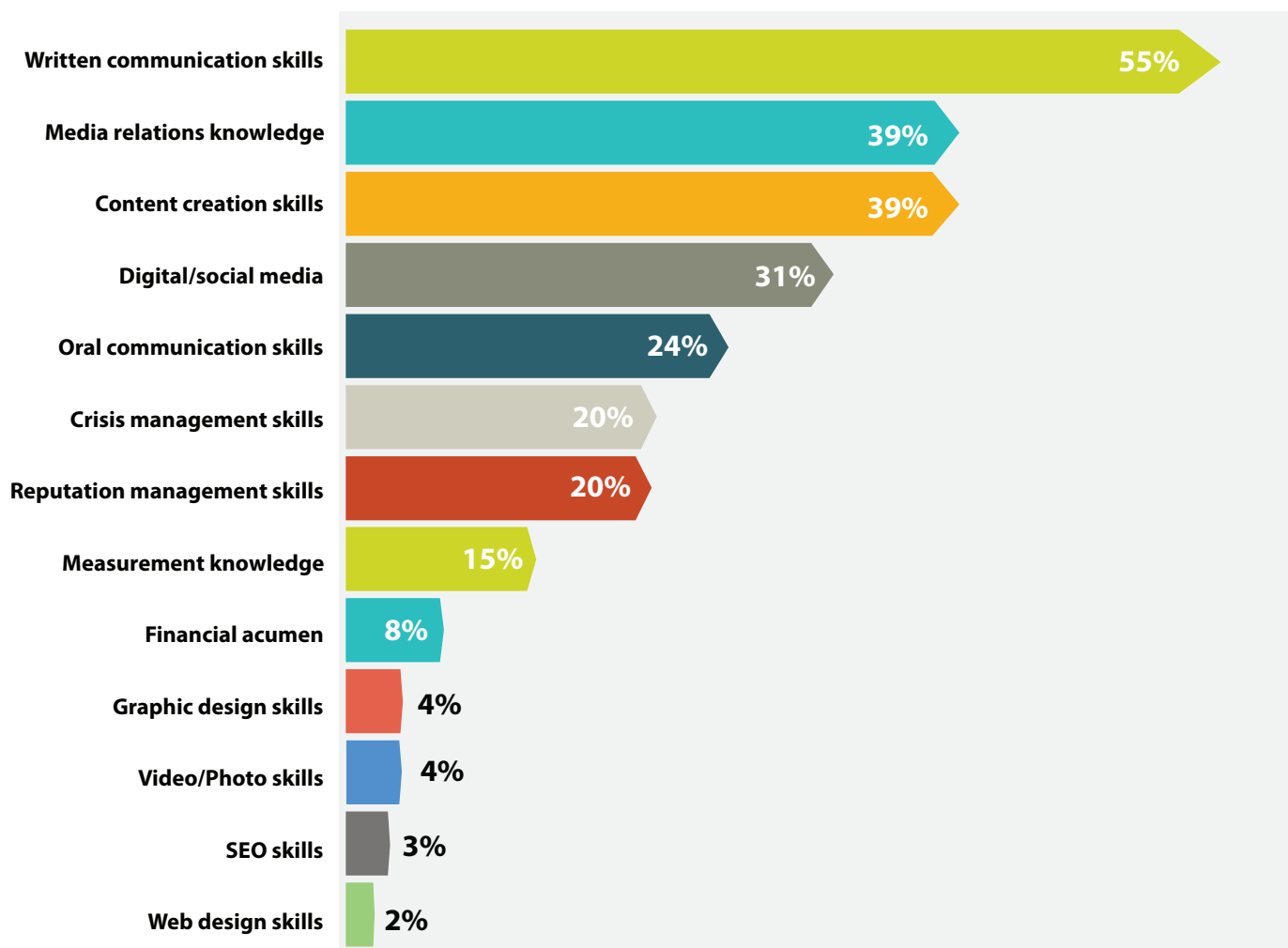
#### Top Tier

- Written communication (55% in 2018 vs. 50% in 2017)
- Media relations (39% vs 42%)
- Content creation (39% vs. 34% vs. 46%)

#### Secondary Skills

- Digital/social media (31% in 2018 vs 27% in 2017)
- Oral communications (24% vs. 21%)
- Crisis management (20% vs. 25%)
- Reputation management (20% vs. 24%)
- Measurement knowledge (15% vs. 16%)

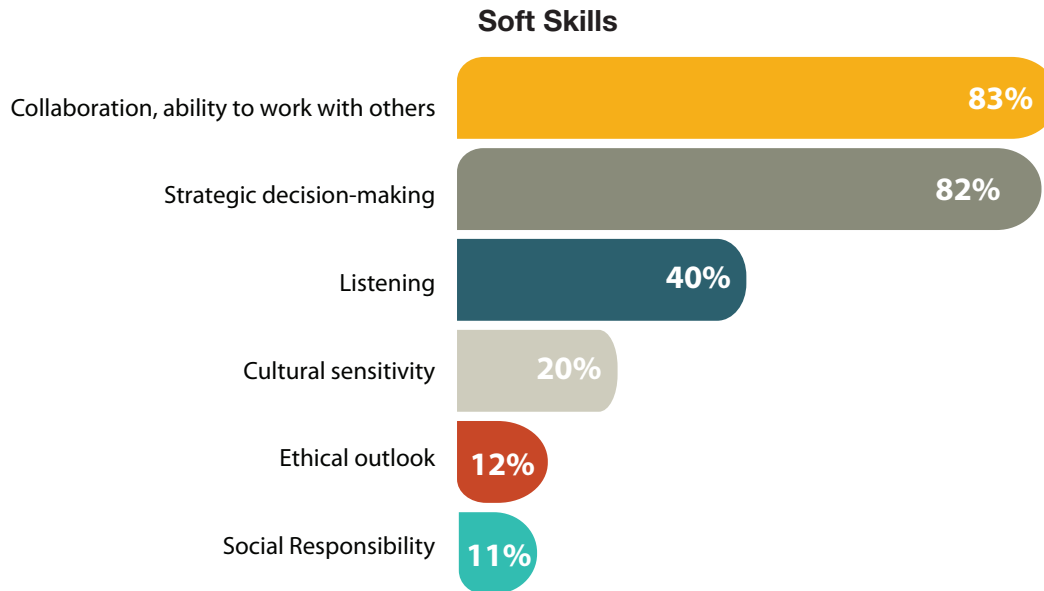
**Skills for Advancement**





## Key 'Soft' Communications Skills/Attributes

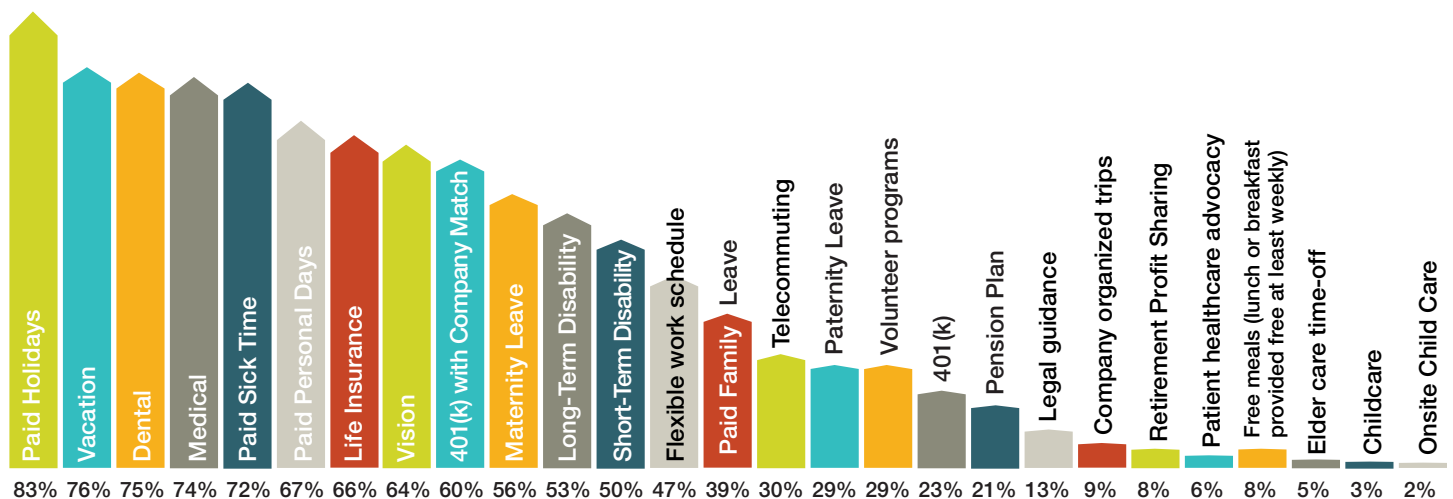
Eight of 10 respondents cited collaboration and strategic decision-making as important soft skills. As in previous years, interpersonal skills are more highly valued for job advancement than are cultural sensitivity, ethical outlook, and social responsibility.



## Soft Benefits

Paid holidays, vacation, medical and dental insurance, and paid sick time top the list. In addition, maternity leave (56 percent) and disability insurance (53 percent for long-term disability and 50 percent for short-term) are also widely noted. There have been few shifts in the soft benefits since 2017.

- Paid holidays (83%)
- Vacation (76%)
- Dental (75%)
- Medical (74%)
- Paid sick time (72%)
- Paid personal days (67%)
- Life insurance (66%)
- Vision (64%)
- 401K (60%)



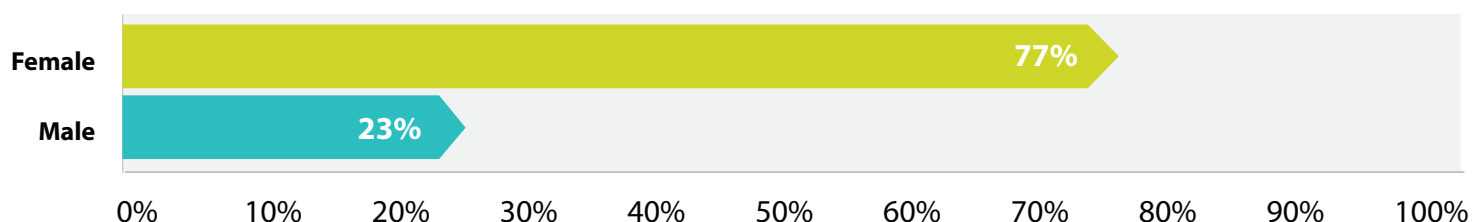


# SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

## Gender

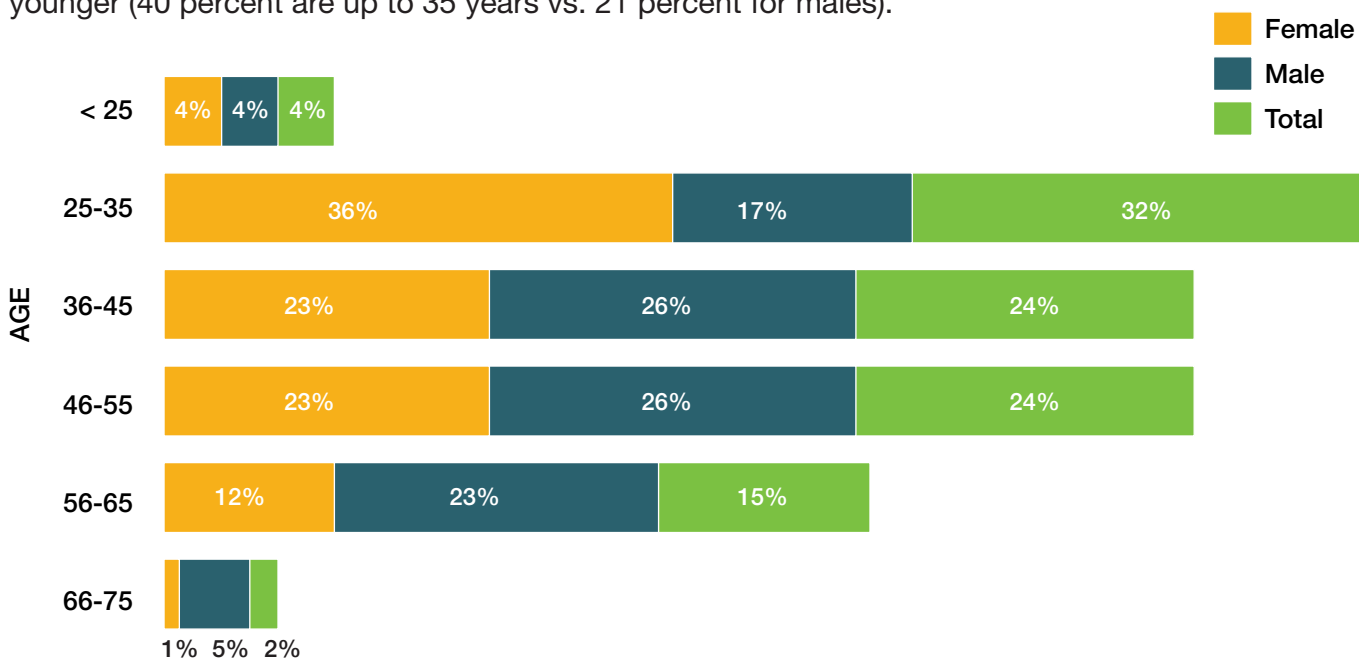
77 percent of the respondents to the 2018 PR News Salary Survey were women. About one in four respondents were men; that's a slight decline from previous years (28 percent in 2017 and 25 percent in 2016).

Survey Demographics Gender



## Age of Respondents

Younger pros dominate the PR business: 1 in 3 are younger than 35. Women are twice as likely to be younger (40 percent are up to 35 years vs. 21 percent for males).

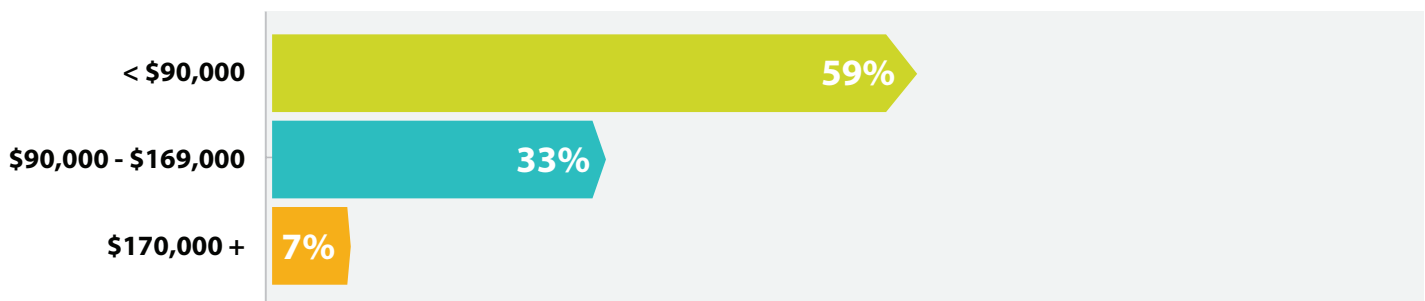




## Base Salary

The disparity in PR salaries seen in previous surveys continued in 2018. This might be attributed, in part, to seniority and responsibilities. Three-fifths (59 percent) of respondents said they made \$90K or less. A wage gap remains in PR, an industry where women far outnumber men, though more leaders are males. Base salaries for males skew higher than for females (\$111,300 for males vs. \$86,300 for females).

### Base Salary



### Average Salary

**\$90,670**

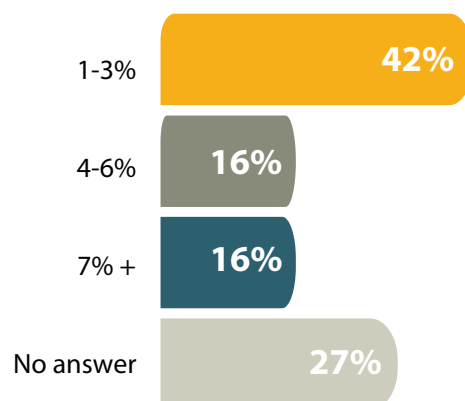
Female

**\$86,300**

Male

**\$111,300**

### Overall Salary Increase

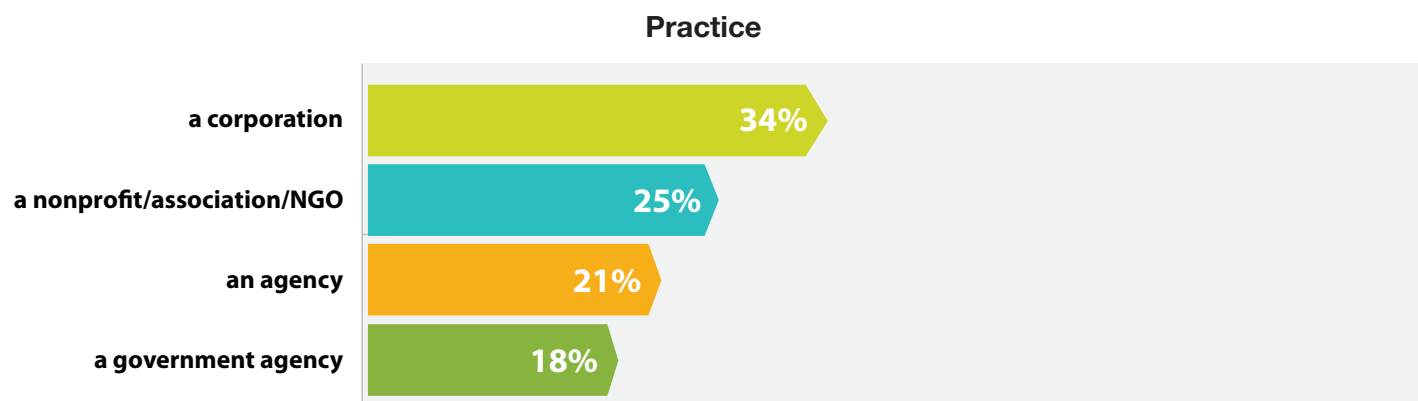




### Corporate, Nonprofit/NGO, Government and Agency Breakdown

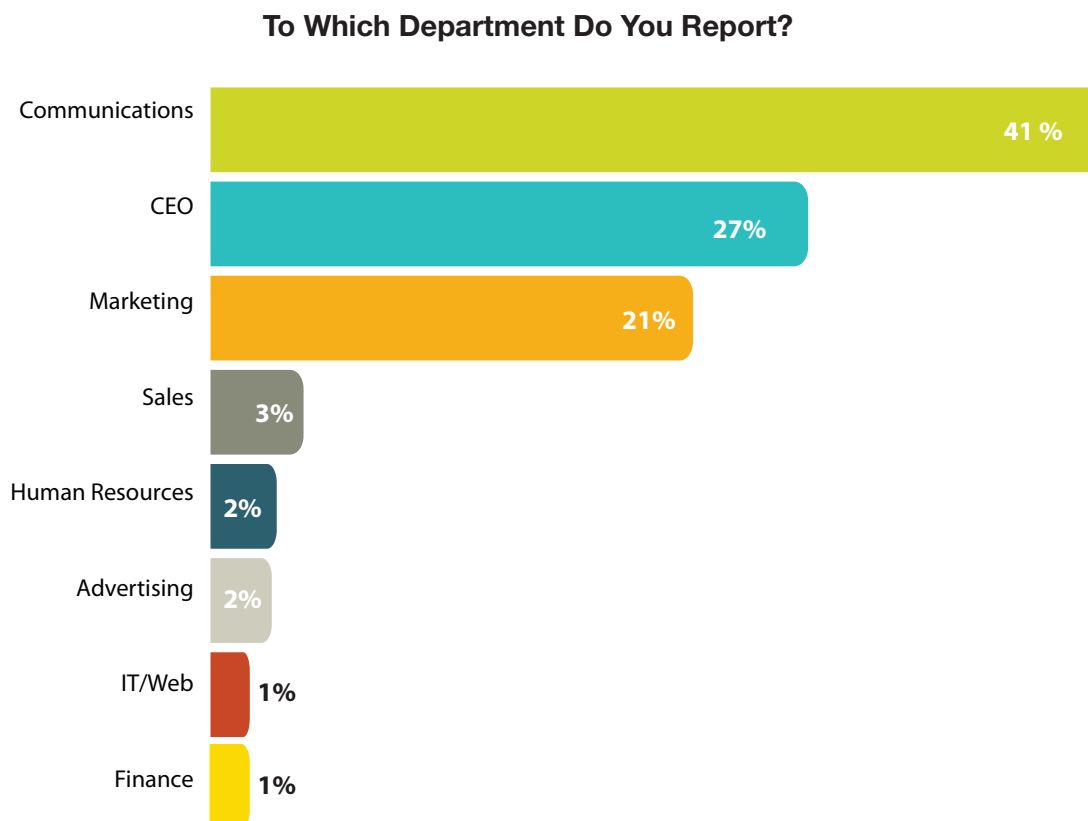
The respondent profile shows that they work in the following types of organizations. This disposition remains consistent with previous years' results.

- Corporation (34%)
- Nonprofit/association/NGO (25%)
- Agency (21%)
- Government agency (18%)
- Sole practitioner (3%)



### To Which Department Do You Report?

Most survey participants worked in Communications (41 percent), in a CEO capacity (29 percent) or in Marketing (21 percent). Sales, HR, Advertising, IT and Finance each accounted for 3 percent or less of survey respondents.

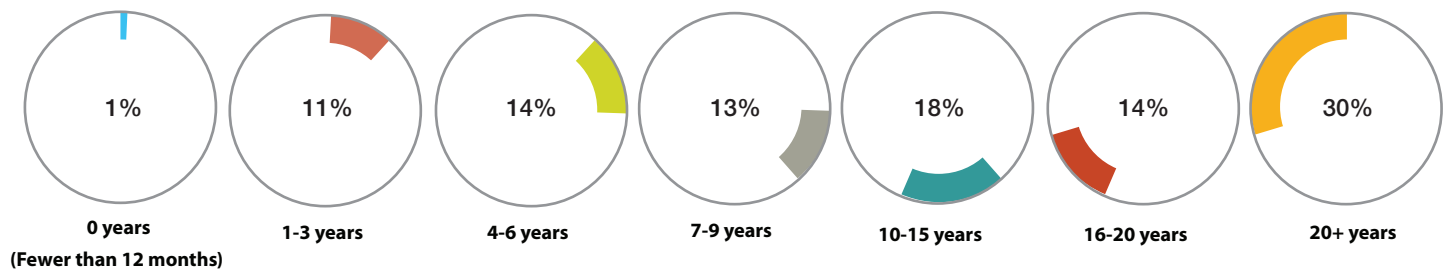




## Communications Experience

Communications experience splits between juniors and seniors. Slightly more than one in four have worked in the business for fewer than seven years; three in 10 have 20 or more years of experience.

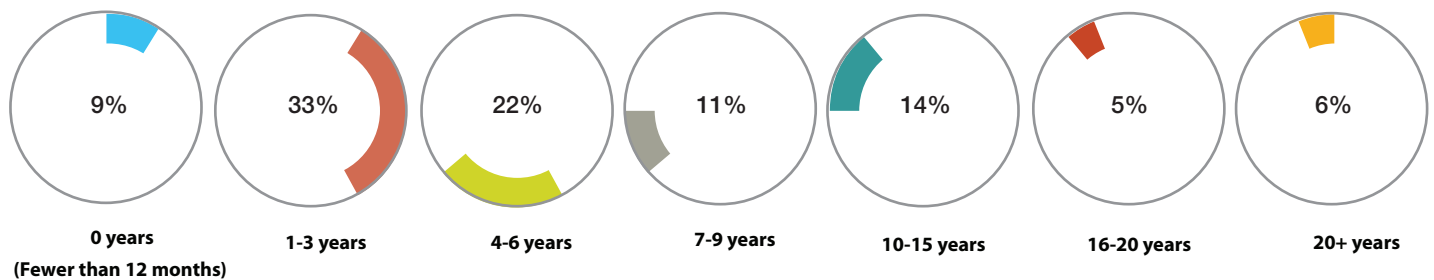
### Communications Experience



## Tenure at Current Organization

Company tenure also indicates younger respondents and mobility between jobs. Two-fifths of respondents have worked at their current organization fewer than four years.

### Company Experience







# 2

## FINDINGS BY POSITION: CORPORATE

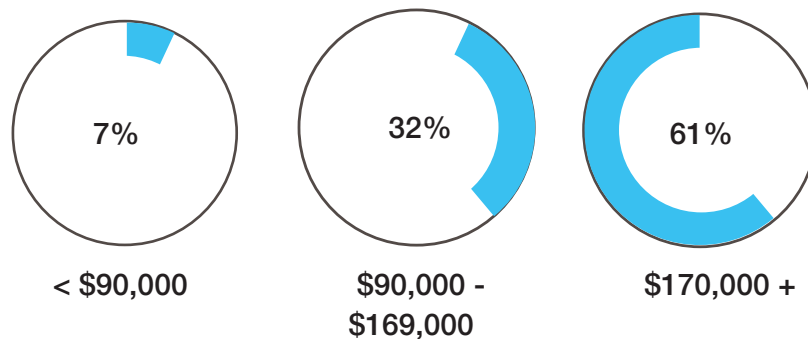


# FINDINGS BY POSITION: CORPORATE

## C-Suite

These executives received higher compensation than their peers in other sectors. Three-fifths (61 percent) of PR senior executives received a base salary of \$170,000 or more, up from the 51 percent in that income bracket in 2017. The 2018 average annual salary for these executives was \$169,000 (vs. \$162,000 in 2017).

### Chief Communication Officer, Corporate Responsibility Officer, EVP,VP, General Manager, Chief Content Strategist - Base Salary



### Chief Communication Officer, Corporate Responsibility Officer, EVP,VP, General Manager, Chief Content Strategist - Average Salary

**\$169,000**

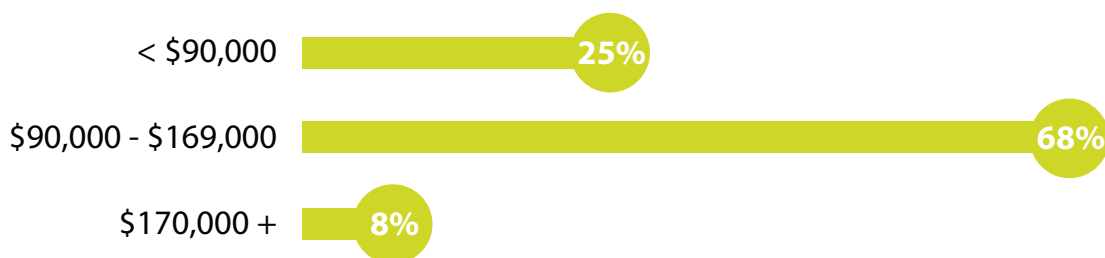


## Corporate

### Director of Communications

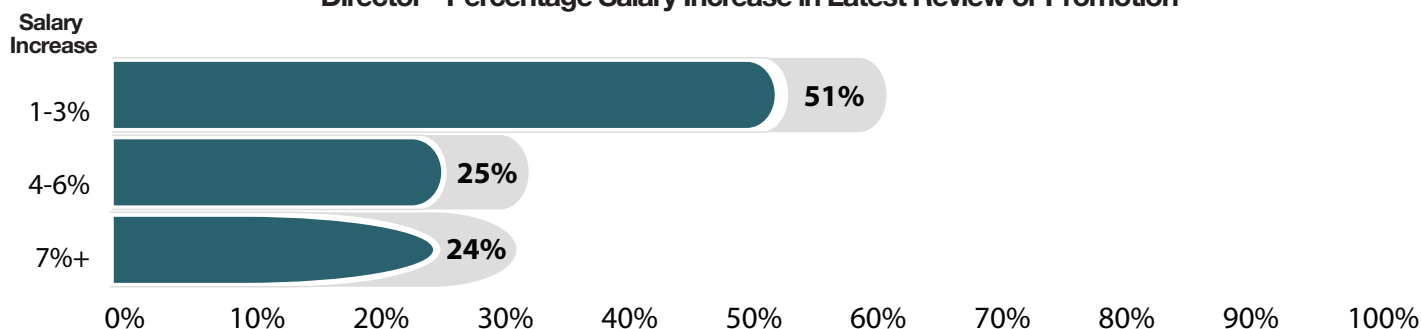
Directors' base salaries appear to have declined since 2017. Nearly one in 10 (8 percent) Directors reported a base salary of \$170K+ this year, down from 17 percent in 2017. One-quarter (25 percent) earned a base salary of less than \$90K. Directors' average salary is \$118,000 (vs. \$121,700 in 2017).

#### Director - Base Salary



Fifty-one percent of Directors reported a 1-3 percent rise in 2018, a decline from 63 percent last year. In contrast, Corporate Directors are three times as likely to cite a 7 percent plus increase this year (24 percent vs. 8 percent).

#### Director - Percentage Salary Increase in Latest Review or Promotion



#### Director - Average Salary

**\$118,000**



## Corporate

## Communications Manager

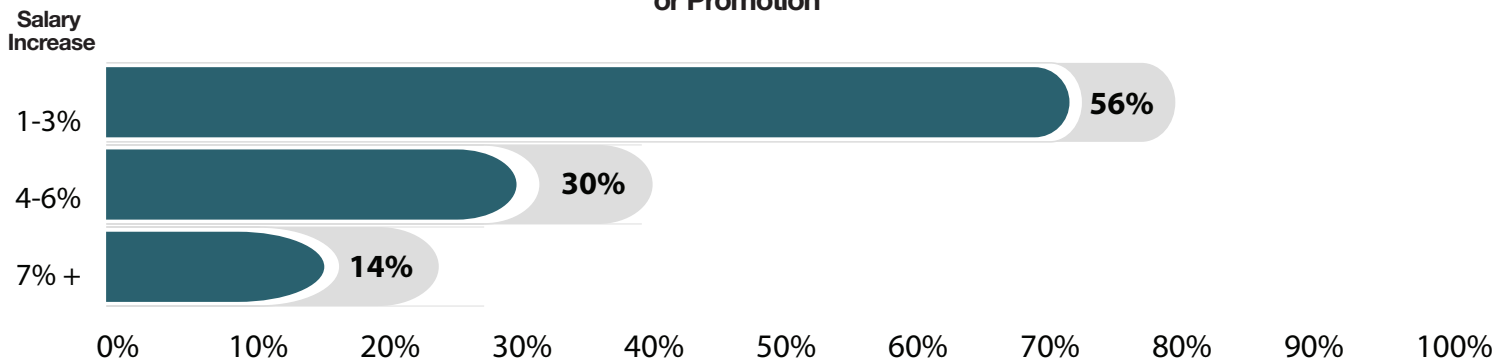
More than half (55 percent) of Corporate Communications Managers earned a base salary lower than \$90K. Very few earn more than \$170K. The average 2018 salary was \$90,300, representing about \$2,000 more than the \$88,200 average reported in 2017.

## Manager, Account Management, Account Supervisor, Account Executive - Base Salary



Salary increases appear lighter than in 2017, with 56 percent of those with salary increases getting less than 4 percent.

## Manager, Account Management, Account Supervisor, Account Executive - Percentage Salary Increase in Latest Review or Promotion



## Manager, Account Management, Account Supervisor, Account Executive - Average Salary

**\$90,300**



Corporate

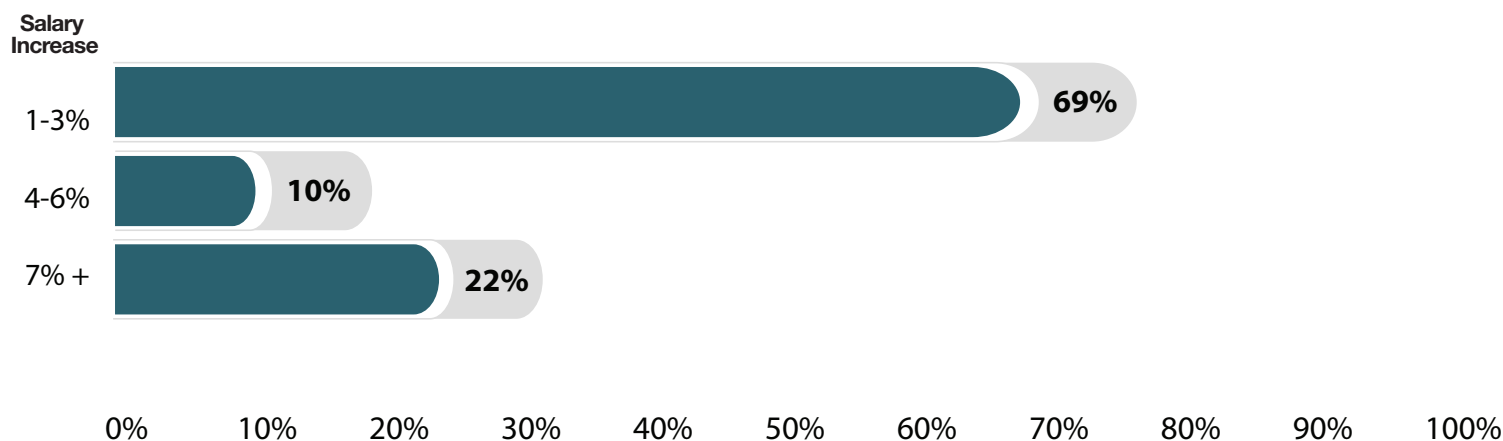
## Communications Specialist

Nearly all (92 percent) of Communications Specialists were paid less than \$90K in base salary. This group averaged \$60,100, on par with 2017. Seven in ten Communications Specialists earned a 1-3 percent salary increase last year.

### Associates, Specialists & Strategists - Base Salary



### Associates, Specialists & Strategists - Percentage Salary Increase in Latest Review or Promotion



### Associates, Specialists & Strategists - Average Salary

**\$60,100**





# 3

## **FINDINGS BY POSITION: NONPROFIT/ASSOCIATION/NGO**



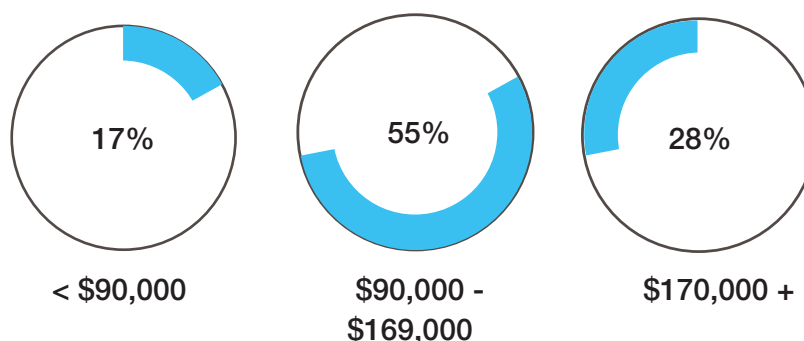
## FINDINGS BY POSITION: NONPROFIT/ASSOCIATION/NGO

### C-Suite

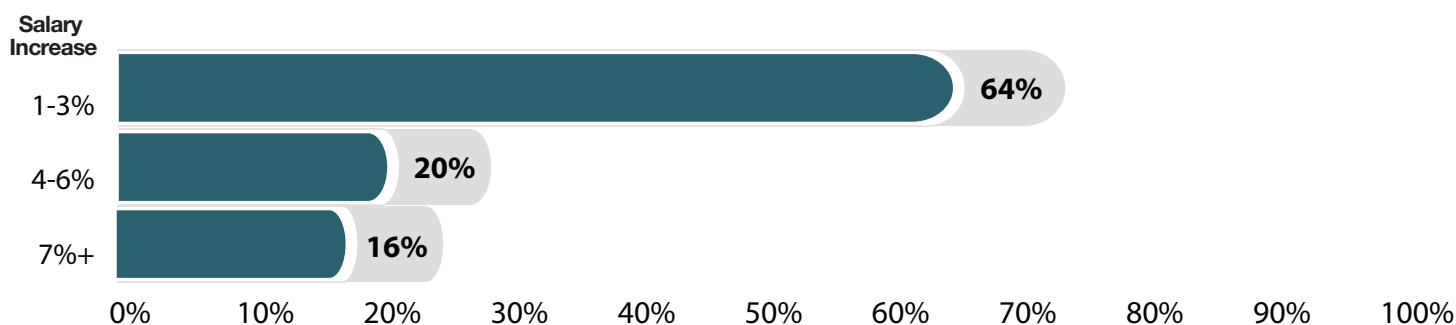
Four-fifths of senior executives reported a base salary of \$90,000 or more. One in four earned at least \$170,000. Reported salaries have increased since 2017. The 2018 average annual salary for these officers was \$141,800, up from \$119,500.

The majority of salary increases ranged between 1-3 percent (64 percent).

**Chief Communication Officer, Corporate Responsibility Officer, EVP,VP, General Manager, Chief Content Strategist - Base Salary**



**Chief Communication Officer, Corporate Responsibility Officer, EVP,VP, General Manager, Chief Content Strategist - Percentage Salary Increase in Latest Review or Promotion**



**Chief Communication Officer, Corporate Responsibility Officer, EVP,VP, General Manager, Chief Content Strategist - Average Salary**

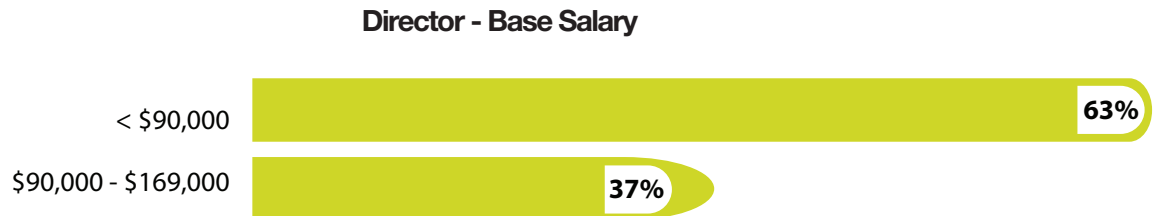
**\$141,800**



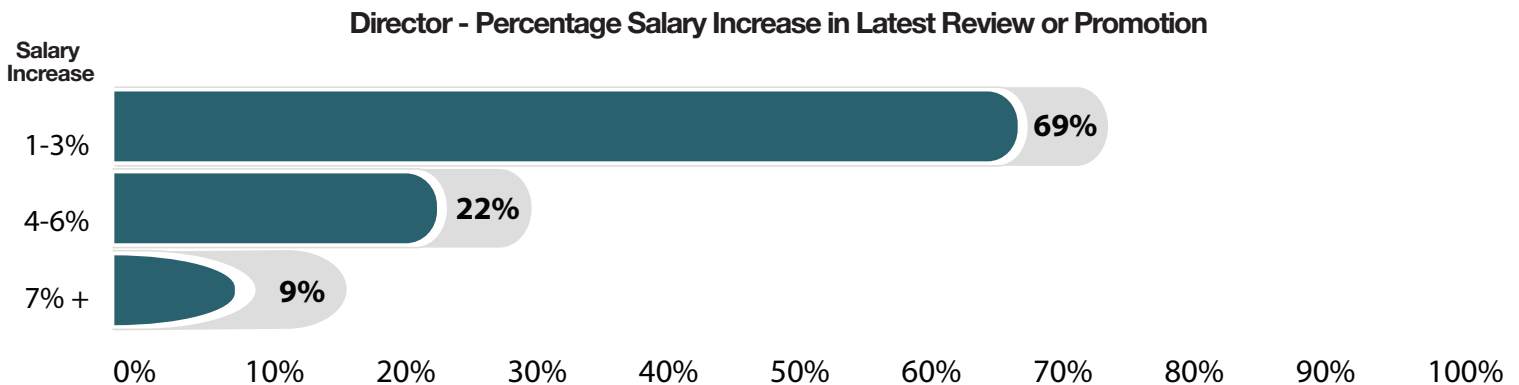
## Nonprofit/Association/NGO

## Marketing Communications Director

Here, the news was not good. Two-thirds (63 percent) of marketing communications directors at nonprofits earned less than \$90K, compared to half who did in 2017. The average 2018 base salary was \$82,400, but was higher (\$87,700) in 2017.



Seven in 10 (69%) salary increases ranged from 1-3%.



**Director - Average Salary**

**\$82,400**



## Nonprofit/Association/NGO

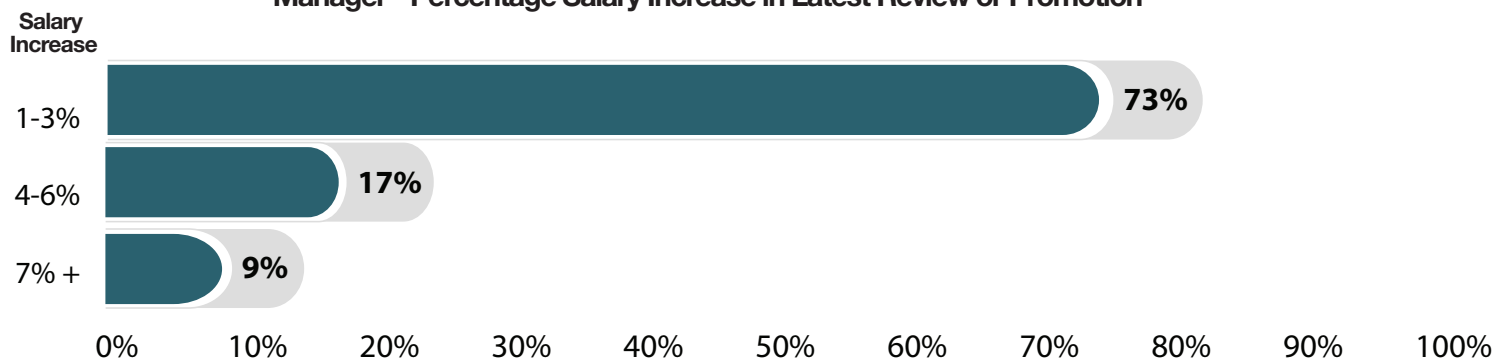
### Communications Manager

There has been improvement in the salaries for Communications Managers in the past year. Eighty-two percent earned a base salary of less than \$90K. The average 2018 base salary for Communications Managers was \$87,700, up from \$79,500 in 2017. Three-quarters (73 percent) of those Communications Managers who received a salary increase reported a 1-3 percent bump.

#### Manager - Base Salary



#### Manager - Percentage Salary Increase in Latest Review or Promotion



#### Manager - Average Salary

**\$87,700**



## Nonprofit/Association/NGO

## Communications Specialist

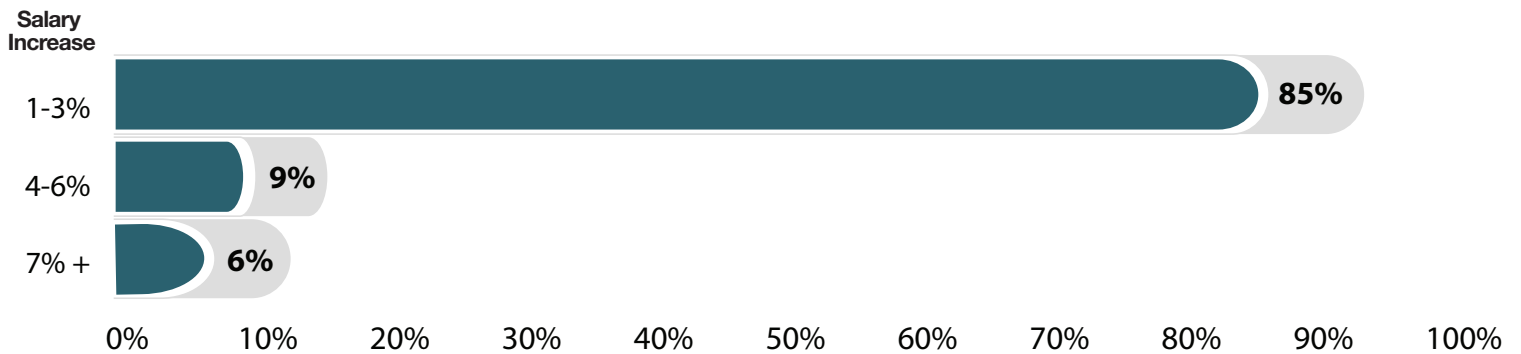
The average base salary for Communications Specialists at nonprofits/NGOs in 2018 was \$60,100, on par with the \$59,800 seen in 2017. Virtually all earned less than \$90K.

Nearly nine in 10 (85 percent) reported a salary increase in the 1-3 percent range, which is similar to 2017.

## Associates, Specialists &amp; Strategists - Base Salary



## Associates, Specialists &amp; Strategists - Percentage Salary Increase in Latest Review or Promotion



## Associates, Specialists &amp; Strategists - Average Salary

**\$60,100**





# 4

## FINDINGS BY POSITION: GOVERNMENT





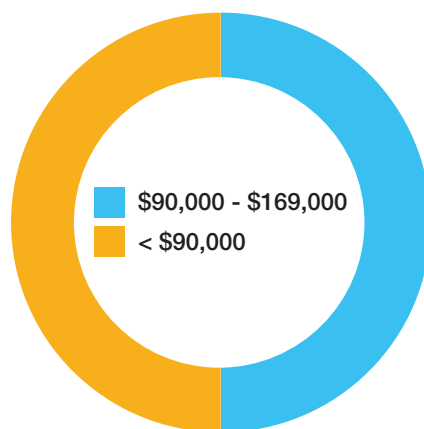


## Government

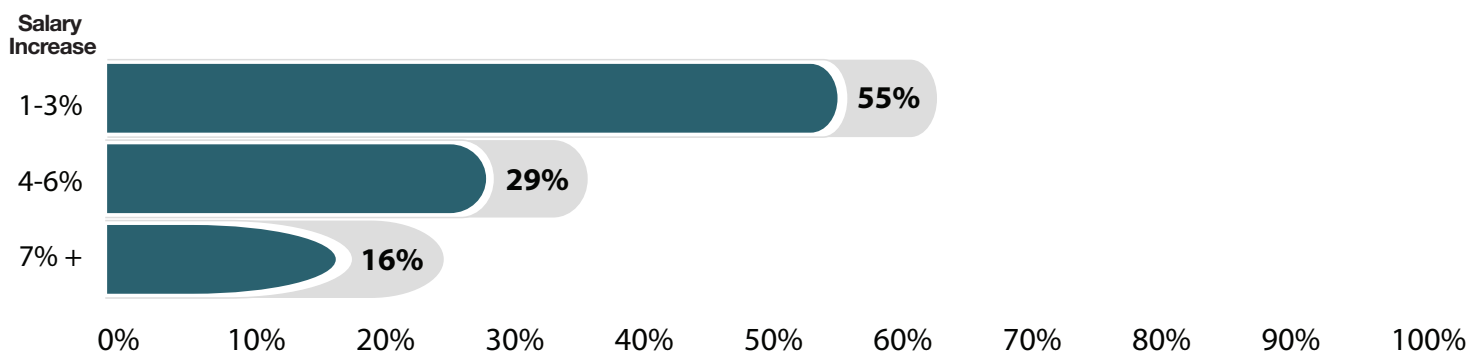
### Director

The 2018 average annual salary for Government Directors was \$96,500 (vs. \$103,136 in 2018). One-half reported a base salary of up to \$90K. 55 percent of those who earned a salary increase reported increases from 1-3 percent. The salary increases were higher in 2018 – 16 percent reported a 7+ salary increase vs. 3 percent in 2017.

Director - Base Salary



Director - Percentage Salary Increase in Latest Review or Promotion



Director - Average Salary

**\$96,500**

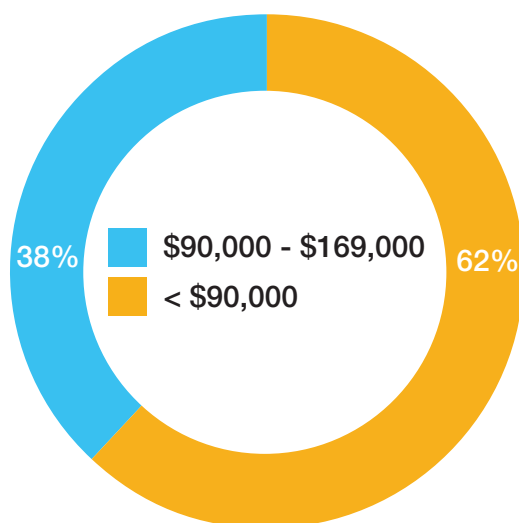


## Government

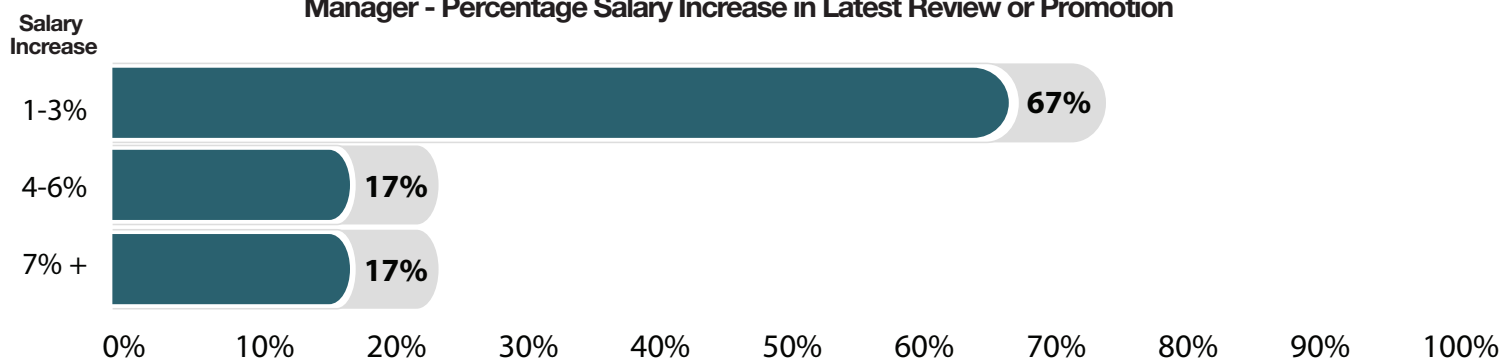
## Manager

Government PR Managers earned an average base salary of \$87,700 this year, higher than the \$79,500 in 2017. Three-fifths received as much as \$90K. Two-thirds of Managers who got an increase reported a raise between 1-3 percent, on par with last year.

Manager - Base Salary



Manager - Percentage Salary Increase in Latest Review or Promotion



Manager - Average Salary

# \$87,700

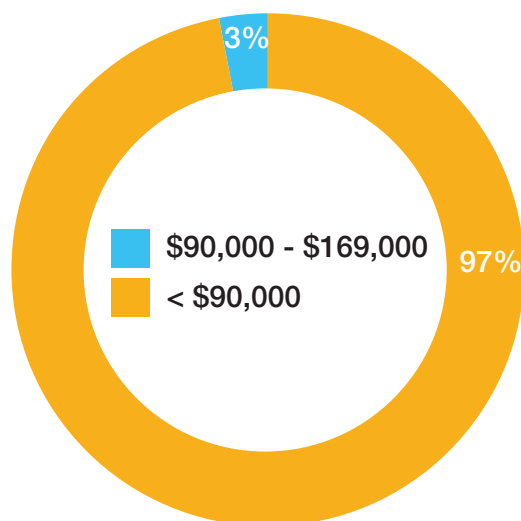


## Government

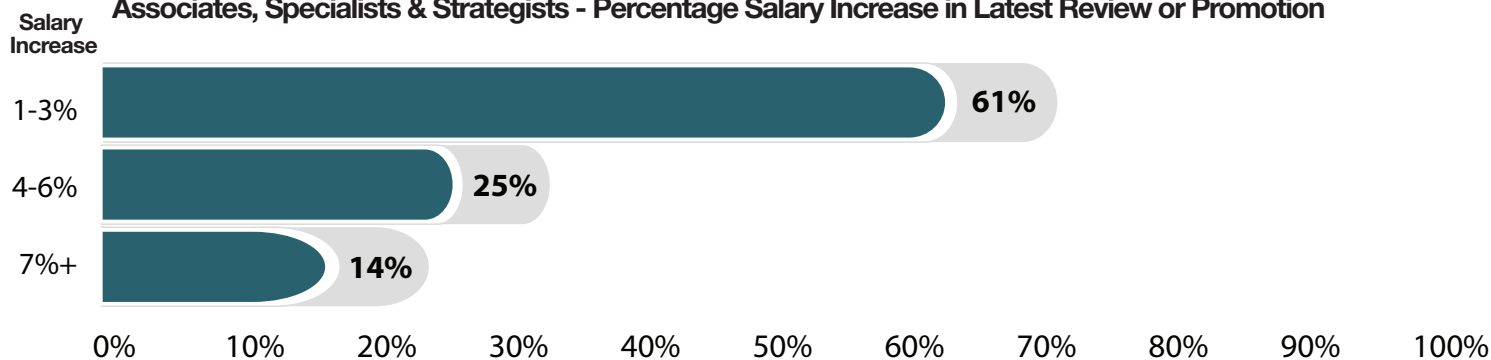
### Communications Specialist

The average salary was \$66,000, on par with 2017. As seen with Communications Specialists across the board, nearly all those answering the salary question said they made less than \$90K. The typical increase (among those who reported one) was 1-3 percent.

Associates, Specialists & Strategists - Base Salary



Associates, Specialists & Strategists - Percentage Salary Increase in Latest Review or Promotion



Associates, Specialists & Strategists - Average Salary

**\$66,000**





# 5

## **FINDINGS BY POSITION: AGENCY**



## FINDINGS BY POSITION: AGENCY

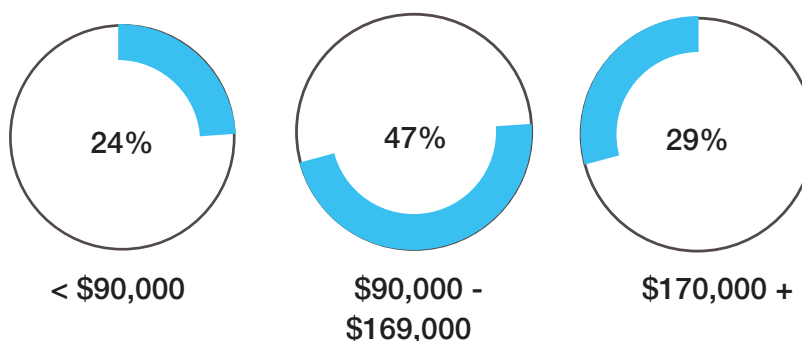
### C-Suite

The overall base compensation is on par with 2017. Agency C-suite professionals earned higher increases than their C-suite counterparts in other organizations.

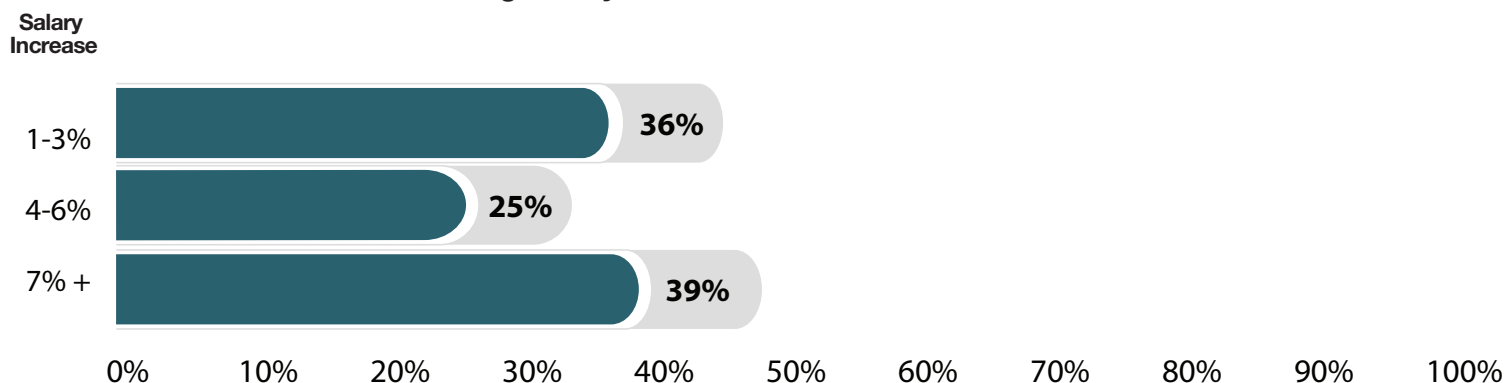
Seventy-six percent said they earned a base salary of \$90,000 or higher. The 2018 average annual salary for these officers was \$138,000, in comparison to \$139,700 in 2017.

Salary increases for C-suite staff were among the most generous. Two-thirds (64 percent) noted salary increases 4 percent or higher. Two-fifths (39 percent) received a 7 percent plus salary increase, on track with 2017 (32 percent).

#### Chief Communications Officer, EVP,VP, General Manager, Corporate Responsibility Officer - Base Salary



#### Chief Communications Officer, EVP,VP, General Manager, Corporate Responsibility Officer - Percentage Salary Increase in Latest Review or Promotion



#### Chief Communications Officer, EVP,VP, General Manager, Corporate Responsibility Officer - Average Salary

**\$138,000**





# 6

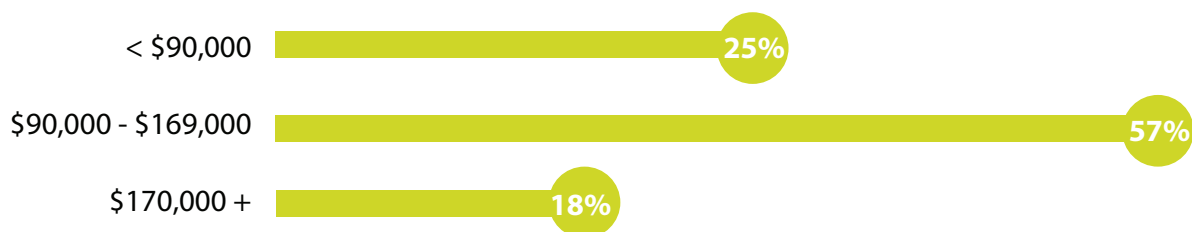
## **FINDINGS BY POSITION: INDEPENDENT PRACTITIONER**



## FINDINGS BY POSITION: INDEPENDENT PRACTITIONER

Sole practitioners reported a range of salaries, most likely a function of their years of experience. The average base salary for sole practitioners in 2018 was \$119,700. The majority earn between \$90K and \$169K. The reported base salary is higher than the \$89,300 reported in 2017.

### Independent Practitioner - Base Salary



### Independent Practitioner - Average Salary

**\$119,700**



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