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WHO IS THE WORKS SEARCH?

The Works Search is an executive search consultancy for the corporate communications sector with an unrivalled network. Our passion is to carefully match high performing senior level corporate communications professionals and financial communications professionals, and place them into permanent roles in and around London.

We started building our network of strategic communications professionals in 1996 and so when it comes to filling senior level roles in corporate communications, financial PR and sustainability communications, there is no better agency to partner with.

We have placed over 900 board and senior level comms professionals with listed and privately owned companies across most industry sectors, as well as leading PR agencies in London. We are known for our thorough approach, sound advice and keeping the bar high as we seek out the highest performers.

WHY CHOOSE THE WORKS SEARCH?

We are an exceptionally proactive executive search consultancy dedicated to securing the industry's best strategic communications professionals, the top 5% performers, to build talented comms teams across most industry sectors.

Our focused search methods and unrivalled network enable us to guarantee a hire, and find great candidates for you to interview in a matter of weeks. We never rely on advertising or Linkedln, as 70% of our successful executive search placements are sourced from our own network.

A huge benefit is giving our clients peace of mind – when we commit to a role, we will fill the role. It really is that simple. We take character references from candidates' former bosses too, just to be thorough.

We ask for exclusivity on roles to allow us to dedicate our focus on sourcing fantastic people and getting the perfect fit. This ensures that we fill all our searches, 100% of the time, unheard of in the recruitment industry.

Why register with us?

When comms professionals register with us, they can expect thoughtful career advice, great connections and insider knowledge. We make genuine careful matches, spend the time to help professionals shine, and support them with building great careers. The team are efficient, keeping you informed along the way, and extremely knowledgeable about pay - which is useful in negotiations.

Over the years, we have placed high performing corporate communications professionals at Battersea Power Station, Deloitte, Man Group, Freshfields, Bruckhaus Deringer, Franklin Templeton, Klarna, YOOX, Net-a-Porter and Diageo to name a few. Alongside a huge array of exciting strategic comms agencies.

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY

The past few years have thrown a gauntlet of challenges at us, with the word 'unprecedented' dominating news headlines – and so far, 2023 is proving to be no different. The outlook remains unsettled, as companies attempt to navigate a market that has seen an economic downturn, supply chain problems, an ongoing cost-of-living crisis, and the return of high interest rates. That said, the momentum for hiring in corporate communications was steady in 2022; it did slow down, in terms of the volume of open roles, in the second half of the year but confidence to hire has remained and employees are happy to move jobs.

At the end of 2022, official figures indicated that the UK's unemployment rate had edged up, while job vacancies remain near record levels. The rise in the cost of living, partly due to the war in Ukraine, Covid and UK political turmoil, as well as an increase in energy and food prices meant more corporate communications professionals were requesting pay rises and wanting to move jobs to significantly boost their base salary so that they have enough money to live comfortably and feel satisfied that the work they are doing is right for the salary they are receiving.

Pay rises have been aplenty, some of the highest we have seen since we started publishing this Guide, now in its 14th year. Fewer professionals got bonuses although among those lucky enough to receive one, the average bonus was higher than the previous year.

An impressive 72% of corporate communications professionals reported being happy with their pay, the highest we have seen. Clearly employers have been making great strides to benchmark their salaries and pay bonuses where they can stand out from the crowd.

This survey of over 400 corporate communications professionals, conducted in March 2023, allows us to give some true insights into the wants and needs of the corporate communications industry. This year's Guide looks at pay, bonuses, gender pay, hybrid working, progression, promotions, satisfaction, qualifications, trends and hiring challenges.

Communications agencies have been telling us that they have made upgrades to their company benefits as they look to boost remuneration packages as a part of their attraction and retention strategy, and as they come to the realisation that they continue to lose talent to corporates with in-house communications teams. We noted from the data that in-house communications teams are currently 4 times more attractive to work for compared to agencies. We hear time and again from employees sitting in agencies that the 'grass is greener'.

In-house communications teams are currently 4 times more attractive to work for compared to agencies

We continue to operate in a talent-tight market, where paying the going rate or better is more important than ever. You need to be flexible when it comes to rewards and benefits, on top of making sure your employer brand is as inclusive and attractive as possible, to both potential and existing employees. We are constantly reminded by comms professionals that they seek purposeful and interesting work, and expect hybrid working to be on offer although money remains the key driver.

Agencies continued to hire steadily throughout 2022, although not at the pace of 2021 when there was a charge on talent. Account Directors remain the most sought-after level. Many corporate agencies reported revenue increases although some have got themselves back to pre-pandemic revenues and a handful have made redundancies where they haven't met targets. Agency leaders talked about decision-making being slow on new business contracts and capital market-led agencies weren't that active with hiring as M&A and IPO markets were quieter.

Talent shortages for communication agencies at more junior levels have led to them becoming more adaptable and flexible with their workforce planning. We have seen many agencies 'growing their own talent', hiring graduates with little commercial experience and training them from the ground up. The most success has come from the ones with a good support structure in place. Other agencies have secured sponsorship licences to sponsor talent from outside the UK who require a working visa to fill specific gaps in the team.

The most challenging in-house roles to fill were the one-year contracts, as there was a strong preference for permanent roles, no doubt influenced by the uncertain economic climate and not wanting to be out of a job in a year's time in a tumultuous market. We found the most challenging agency roles to fill were Associate Directors with capital market and financial services experience, as the pool of talent remains small.

The most desired search mandates we filled were with a FTSE 10 drinks company and a Director of Comms at an innovative bio-tech company.

The challenge in 2023 is likely to be the amount of disposable income companies and individuals have. There will be additional pressures to keep costs down and invest in the right areas. Most companies are prepared to look at hybrid working options, which the survey found to give comms professionals a sense of flexibility that they didn't have before the pandemic and allow them to organise their personal lives well.

In 2023, we have already noticed a renewed energy and volume of professionals who want to move jobs, a volume last seen in Q1 of 2019. Confidence is back, or perhaps those who have been holding back from looking in the last few years, have finally decided this is the year they want to change jobs. This means we have more good talent on our books, although we are faced with fewer roles than in the more buoyant market of 2019.

Many thanks to all who took part in the survey, we really appreciate your participation. If you wish to discuss the survey in more detail or would like to better benchmark the salaries of your team, please do contact us.

Best wishes for the year ahead and remember - money, money, money.



Sarah Leembruggen Managing Director

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On confidentiality

The Works Search Annual Salary Guide 2023 was conducted on an anonymous basis for individuals and their employees, and The Works Search has removed any data relating to identities from reported compensation figures.

ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

Number of respondents 400

| G | E | N | D | E | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

| Male | 37% |
|----------------------|-----|
| Female | 62% |
| Non-binary and other | 1% |

AGE GROUP/GENERATION

| 58+ | 2% |
|-------|-----|
| 51-57 | 14% |
| 42-50 | 28% |
| 31-41 | 44% |
| 25-30 | 11% |
| 18-24 | 1% |

ETHNICITY BREAKDOWN

| White/White British | 88% |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Mixed White/Black Caribbean | 1% |
| Mixed White/Asian | 2% |
| Black | 1% |
| Asian British | 2% |
| Asian | 2% |
| Any other ethnic background | 4% |

WHERE DO RESPONDENTS WORK?

| In-house | 60% |
|----------|-----|
| Agency | 40% |

WHERE DO RESPONDENTS LIVE?

| Greater London | 66% |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Outside Greater London (UK) | 33% |
| Outside of the UK | 1% |

OFFICE BASE

| Greater London | 84% |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Outside of Greater London (UK) | 13% |
| Outside of the UK | 3% |

DISABILITY STATUS

| No disability | 95% |
|-------------------|-----|
| With a disability | 5% |

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION?

| GCSE/A Level/NVQ/Diploma | 6% |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Bachelor's degree | 57% |
| Masters/PhD | 37% |

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

| Employed full-time | 82% |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Employed on a contract basis | 3% |
| Employed part-time | 7% |
| Employed parental leave | 2% |
| Not working | 2% |
| Self-employed/freelancing | 4% |



CONSIDERATIONS FOR A PAY RISE

We are aware that this Salary Guide is used as a 'go-to' benchmark for salaries in corporate communications. Employers use it to benchmark their communications teams' salaries and employees to request a pay increase.

The survey results report very wide brackets as titles differ across the industry. For clearer guidance, we have included a column called 'the most common range as seen by The Works Search' to recommend salary brackets which are most reflective of the levels, using our knowledge and database as a reference.

When an employer offers a pay rise, there are lots of factors to take into consideration – it's not quite as simple as looking at the salary bracket and requesting an increase. These salaries do reflect market rate, however, it's good to be aware of your employer's company performance and/or the size of the salary budget as this will play a part.

When looking at the salary ranges, we have included the average years of experience for each level. Titles differ across businesses, and this plays a part in how much a role is worth on the market and how much experience the person is bringing to the table.

OTHER FACTORS OF CONSIDERATION FOR A PAY RISE INCLUDE:

Levels of responsibility, overall performance, and contribution to bringing in new business.

Capital markets advisory work (advice around M&A, IPOs, etc) can influence pay - this experience tends to pay employees at the higher end of a salary bracket compared to corporate campaigning experience.

Industry sector knowledge – many employers want professionals to have the knowledge and media contacts of a particular industry sector so they will 'hit the ground running'.

Desirability of a role - pay is heavily influenced by supply and demand, with some levels and expertise more readily available than others; some industry sectors are considered more appealing, such as FMCG, large consumer brands, FTSE 100 companies, challenger brands and sustainability-focused companies.

Industry sector expertise - some sectors pay more, often the most complex, highly regulated sectors tend to pay in the mid to upper quartile of a salary range.

INDUSTRY SECTORS - WHERE DO THEY

TYPICALLY LAND ON THE PAY SCALE?

Companies that tend to pay in the upper quartile of a salary bracket include asset management, banking, private equity, hedge funds, wealth management, insurance, technology, pharma companies.

The middle of the salary range includes law firms, management consultancies, energy, real estate, industrials, manufacturing companies.

Ultimately, every company's policy on pay differs and some companies strive to pay their employees well regardless of sector.

Consumer goods, food and drink, FMCG, travel and tourism tend to sit at the lower to mid point of the salary range. The most popular consumer-facing brands may not pay quite as well as they are incredibly desirable, which means there will be more talent interested in the role.

SALARIES IN-HOUSE

| JOB TITLE | Average years of experience | Base (min to max) | Average | Most common range as seen by The Works Search | Average % salary change |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------|--|-------------------------|
| Communications Director | 20 | £67 - £225k | £129k | £100 - £220k | 8% |
| Global Head of Comms | 19 | £73 - £220k | £127k | £110 - £200k | 9% |
| Head of Comms UK/EMEA | 17 | £70 - £188k | £109k | £100 - £150k | 7% |
| Head of Media | 18 | £48 - £162k | £88k | £80 - £120k | 5% |
| Senior PR/Comms Manager | 15 | £55 - £120k | £82k | £70 - £100k | 6% |
| PR/Comms Manager | 11 | £41 - £95k | £64k | £50 - £80k | 10% |
| PR/Comms Officer | 4 | £35 - £60k | £60k | £40 - £60k | 10% |

Average salary change for in-house

SALARIES AGENCY

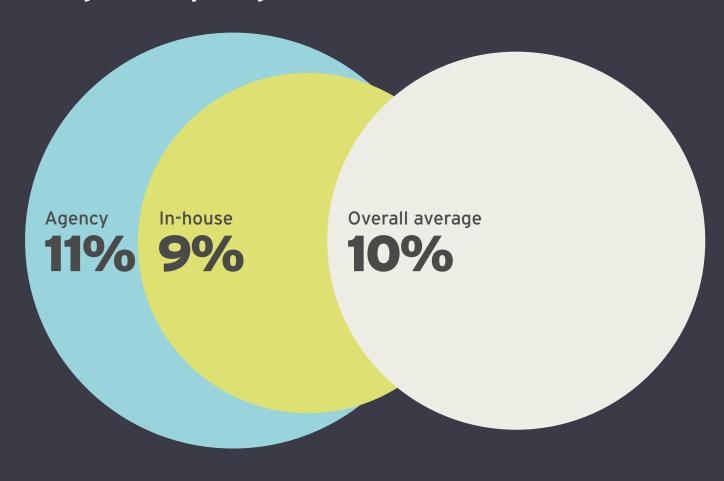
| JOB TITLE | Average years of experience | Base (min to max) | Average | Most common range as seen by The Works Search | Average % salary change |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------|--|----------------------------|
| CEO | 25 | £80 - £260k | £160k | £150 - £250k | 6% |
| Managing Director | 20 | £61 - £300k | £154k | £110 - £250k | 3% |
| Board Director/Partner | 19 | £90 - £205k | £133k | £120 - £200k | 6% |
| Director/Partner | 16 | £80 - £240k | £107k | £100 - £180k | 8% |
| Associate Director | 12 | £50 - £100k | £74k | £70 - £100k | 6% |
| Senior Account Director | 9 | £56 - £70k | £63k | £60 - £70k | 6% |
| Account Director | 8 | £45 - £75k | £58k | £50 - £65k | 13% |
| Senior Account Manager | 5 | £38 - £55k | £44k | £38 - £50k | 11% |
| Account Manager | 4 | £33 - £45k | £39k | £33 - £45k | 8% |
| | | | | | |

Average salary change for agency

119/0

WHO GOT THE BIGGEST PAY INCREASES?

Average % salary change



The average salary change overall is

10%

With in-house professionals' salaries up by a healthy 9% average and that of agency professionals up by an impressive 11%, there has been a significant upturn since 2021, when the average salary change for both in-house and agencies was 2.5%. What a difference a year makes!

Once again, the highest pay increases were for Comms Officers and Comms Managers, both receiving an average 10% increase. This was closely followed by Global Heads of Communications (averaging a 9% increase) and Communications Directors (an 8% average increase). Clearly, the communications leaders have been pushing hard for an increase and being rewarded well for their contributions.

At the middle levels, Heads of Media and Senior Communications Managers received the smallest increases (5% and 6% respectively). Somehow, these levels have been a little overlooked when considering what their bosses and more junior team members received.

Communication Managers and Comms Officers both received an average 10% pay rise, the most in the team. No doubt leaders have been acutely aware of the increased cost of living affecting these levels the most (on the lowest pay) and they have made greater efforts to help. This is a common trend across most job categories.

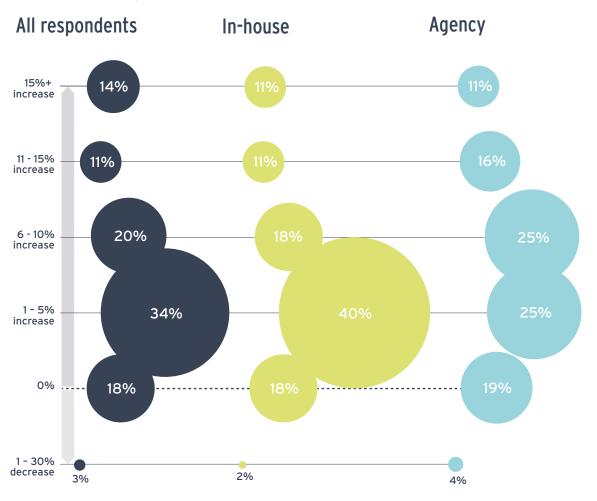
In the agencies, the average salary increases have been most generous around the sought-after delivery levels - Account Managers (an average 8% salary increase), Senior Account Managers (an average 11% increase) and Account Directors (an impressive 13% increase). These levels are in short supply and more challenging to retain compared to senior levels. At these levels, according to figures from our Salary Guide of 2021, increases averaged 7.5%, so agency leaders have gone out of their way over the past year to look after these levels.

The lowest increases went to agency MDs – perhaps they are looking after their team first before rewarding themselves, as well as juggling a tighter budget. We did hear of agencies where pay rises were only given to Associate Directors and more junior levels where budgets were really tight.

For professionals wanting to move in-house, especially agency Account Directors wanting an in-house Comms Manager or Senior Comms Manager role, it might be worth careful reflection. These levels can get a little stuck, and not progress for years due to the structure of team. In many teams, the next level up is that of your boss – a big jump, and they may not move for years. It's certainly food for thought for the impatient professional wanting to be promoted quickly. The grass isn't always greener.

HOW BIG ARE THE PAY INCREASES ACROSS THE INDUSTRY?

Salary changes



Pay increases are on the up. Overall, 79% of respondents received a salary increase, which is particularly impressive when we look back to the findings from 2021, when 66% received a pay rise, revealing a substantial 13%-point increase. Efforts to help out with the inflated cost of living will have played an influential role in this uplift.

A whopping 80% of in-house professionals received a pay uplift - a marked increase again on figures from 2021 when only 61% received an uplift.

Compare this to their agency counterparts - 77% received a pay increase, although this too is higher than in 2021 where 73% received an uplift. Although 3% fewer agency professionals received a pay rise, when we look at the distribution of pay increases, more agency professionals received higher pay increases. This includes over a quarter (27%) receiving a pay increase of 11%+, compared to 22% of in-house professionals receiving a pay increase of 11%+.

In summary, more professionals received pay rises and agency corporate comms professionals received a higher proportion of larger increases.

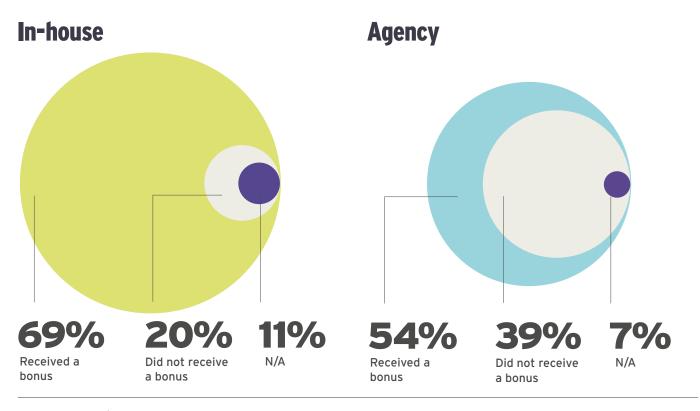
79%

Overall number of respondents who received a salary increase

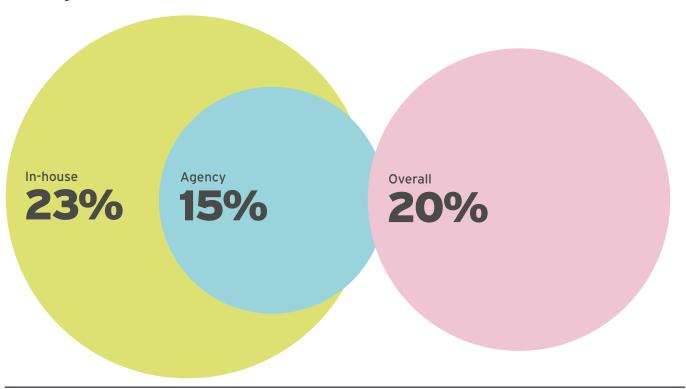




WHO GOT BONUSES AND HOW BIG ARE THEY?



Average bonuses



Bonuses are bigger for in-house professionals. The average bonus across all respondents was 20%, up 2%-points from 18% in 2021. The average bonus for in-house professionals is 23%, up by 5%-points, and for agency professionals, 15%, down 3%-points compared to 2021.

The number of bonuses being paid out is down across the industry. While a healthy 69% of inhouse professionals got a bonus, this is down 3%-points from 2021 when 72% received one.

In-house comms professionals are surely happy with these results. Over two thirds got a bonus, a similar amount received to the previous year and bonuses are up to an average of 23%.

54% of agency professionals got a bonus which is down by 6%-points from 2021, when 60% of agency professionals received a bonus. 39% of agency respondents did not receive a bonus, which is almost double the number of in-house professionals who didn't receive one (20%) – many of whom will be used to receiving one; this will no doubt have repercussions on happiness levels among agency professionals about their pay, and potentially retention.

54% of agency professionals receiving a bonus is the lowest figure we have seen in years. Agencies have walked away from their Russian clients since the war in Ukraine, which has impacted revenue; some agencies have not met their targets, and we hear from agency leaders that decision-making around new business is increasingly slow, which affects the pipeline.

These challenges mean that some agencies will not be in a position to pay out bonuses. Instead, they have awarded healthy base salary increases; many have improved company benefit packages and we have heard of several companies offering one-off 'cost-of-living' payments. No doubt they are hoping this will help to retain staff even when they haven't been able to pay out bonuses.

The average bonus across all respondents was

20%

WHICH LEVELS TOOK HOME THE BIGGEST BONUSES?

| In-house | Average bonus |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Communications Director | 26% |
| Global Head of Comms | 28% |
| Head of Comms UK/EMEA | 21% |
| Head of Media | 24% |
| Senior PR/Comms Manager | 19% |
| PR/Comms Manager | 16% |
| | |

| 0% |
|-------------|
| 3% |
| 9% |
| 3% |
| <u> </u> |
| |
| 2% |
| % |
| % |
| 3 |

In in-house companies, where Comms Managers were coming out on top for pay increases, they have fared the worst when it comes to bonuses; the more senior levels have rewarded themselves well with bonuses – around a quarter of their salaries.

In the agencies, CEOs have fared impressively well; Board Directors took home bonuses of 29%, nearly a third of their salary.

Account Managers and Senior Account Directors, on the other hand, took home single digit percentages. Although these levels received the largest pay increases, they were not rewarded in the same way with bonuses.

"Sarah and I had worked together for a number of years at a previous role where she helped me hire large numbers of exceptional candidates. So, when an impossible-to-fill role came up, I knew just who to call! We hired Sarah and her team on a retained basis and went through a painless process to find and hire exactly what we were looking for."

Director, HR & Brand at Puma Investments

GENDER PAY - HOW LARGE IS THE GAP?

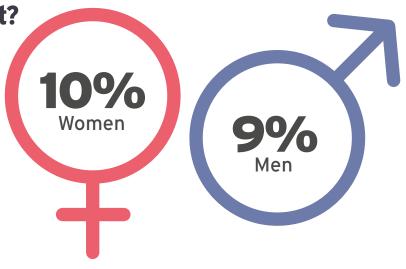
Difference in base salary for men and women

| Respondents | Base pay difference |
|-------------|---------------------|
| Overall | 15% more for men |
| In-house | 11% more for men |
| Agency | 24% more for men |

Difference in average bonuses for men and women

| Respondents | Men | Women | Average bonus difference |
|-------------|-----|-------|--------------------------|
| Overall | 23% | 17% | 6% more for men |
| In-house | 27% | 20% | 7% more for men |
| Agency | 19% | 12% | 7% more for men |

Pay rises - who got the most? Average pay rise



When we look at agency and in-house together, men are currently being paid on average a significant 15% more in their base pay than their female counterparts. According to The Guardian, the pay gap remains stubbornly stuck at 9.4% across employees, the same level as it was back in 2017-18 when employers were first required to publish the information. However, the gap will be different across industry sectors, as corporate communications illustrates.

Overall, agency men are taking home a salary that's 24% on average more than women which is nearing a quarter of their pay. In-house men are now taking home 11% more in pay than their female counterparts. Overall, the average difference shows men are earning 15% more than women in corporate communications according to this data. The Guardian reports a 9.4% gap in pay across employees; this survey, with an industry sector focus, is showing a higher difference in men's pay by 15%. What does this say about the sector? For one that is so focused on reputation, work needs to be done.

Men are out-earning women by 6% on bonuses on average.

When we look at total remuneration (average base pay + average bonus), men are out-earning women by a shocking 21% (15% base pay + 6% bonus).

Where salaries have changed, we looked at the average pay increase and found a 10% average increase for women and a 9% pay increase for their male counterparts. 1%-point isn't that much of a difference considering the average pay gap; employers missed an opportunity here to try and start levelling the playing field.

We appreciate the pay gap is a complicated subject and there are lots of nuances around pay, which we discussed at the beginning of the Guide. There are factors to consider, such as how many women there are in the business compared to men, progression, maternity leave, flexible working, number of hours worked, among others. However, the discrepancies are still eye-watering, above national average and considering this job function is all about reputation management, isn't it time we sorted this out? There are stark differences and these figures are from businesses large and small (under the reporting threshold), but just because they are not on public display, doesn't mean it isn't time for more accountability.

Agency men are out-earning women by 24% on average

IS YOUR TOTAL REMUNERATION (BASE PAY + BONUS) ABOVE OR BELOW THE AVERAGE?

| | Average base pay | Average bonus | Total average remuneration |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| In-house | | | |
| Communications Director | £129k | 26% | £163k |
| Global Head of Comms | £127k | 28% | £163k |
| Head of Comms UK/EMEA | £109k | 21% | £132k |
| Head of PR | £88k | 26% | £111k |
| Senior PR/Comms Manager | £64k | 19% | £76k |
| PR/Comms Manager | £60k | 16% | £70k |
| Agency | | | |
| CEO | £160k | 50% | £240k |
| Managing Director | £133k | 13% | £150k |
| Board Director/Partner | £154k | 29% | £199k |
| Director/Partner | £107k | 18% | £126k |
| Associate Director | £74k | 9% | £81k |
| Senior Account Director | £63k | 5% | £66k |
| Account Director | £58k | 12% | £65k |
| Senior Account Manager | £44k | 11% | £49k |
| Account Manager | £39k | 8% | £42k |

We put this comparison together to get a better sense of what each level is earning on average, looking at pay and bonus - their remuneration. This is looking at the lucky professionals who have received a bonus. From here we can look at average remuneration for agencies and in-house roles.

We often find that Account Directors are thinking about moving in-house as their next career move, as opposed to moving to another agency. It's interesting to compare salaries as their reason for wanting to move is often 'more money'. The average remuneration for an agency Account Director (£65k) looking to move in-house into a Comms Manager role is £70k - which is £5k more than if they move to another agency.

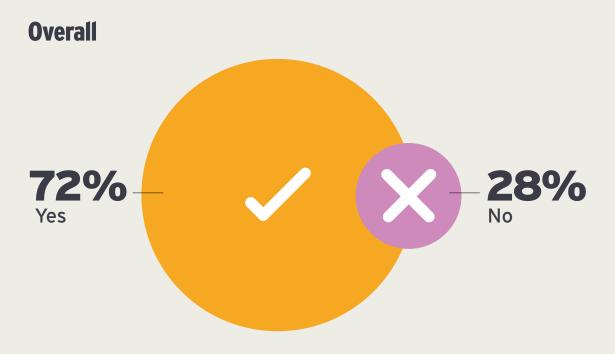
An agency Associate Director is equivalent to a Senior Comms Manager in our eyes (and number of years of experience). An agency Associate Director will earn £81k on average and a Senior Comms Manger will earn £76k. In other words, £5k less!

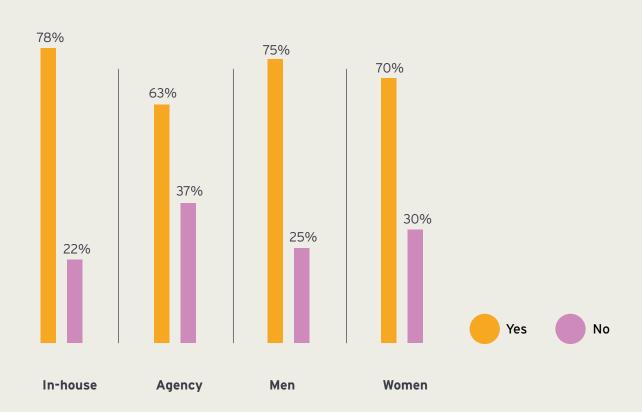
An Agency Partner (earning £199k on average), looking to move in-house into a Global Head of Comms role, may need to consider taking a hit on remuneration as the average is £163k.

Agency salaries, especially at a senior level are very healthy. Bonuses are higher overall, although as we have seen, only 54% of agencies paid out bonuses.

There is a strong perception in the industry that in-house pays far better than agency, however, when you take a closer look, that isn't always the case.

ARE PROFESSIONALS HAPPY WITH THEIR PAY?





72% of professionals are happy with their pay - this is the highest percentage we have reported to date. In our last Salary Guide, we reported that 66% of comms professionals were happy with their pay. Increases have been healthy, with 79% of professionals receiving a pay increase, averaging 10% - great reasons to be happy!

In-house professionals (78%) are the happiest with their overall pay, compared to 63% of agency professionals. That does leave an eye-watering 37% of agency professionals who are unhappy with their pay.

This is despite a backdrop of 77% of agency professionals receiving a pay increase averaging 11%. It could be the fewer bonuses being paid out in agencies (54%) than in previous years that has had an impact on happiness; with wages not keeping up with inflation, money isn't going as far as costs have continued to increase.

More men (75%) are happy with their pay than women (70%); although women did receive marginally higher pay rises (by 1%-point), their total remuneration (15% base pay + 6% bonus) was 21% less than men.

We know that men are out-earning women on their base salaries by 15% and their bonuses by 6%. The question here is, would 70% of women be happy with their pay if they knew what their male counterparts were being paid? That their bonuses are more? And more importantly, what are they going to do about it?

of professionals are happy with their pay

COMPARING PROGRESSION - IN-HOUSE VERSUS AGENCY

| In-house | Average years of experience |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Communications Director | 20 |
| Global Head of Comms | 19 |
| Head of Comms UK/EMEA | 17 |
| Head of Media | 18 |
| Senior PR/Comms Manager | 15 |
| PR/Comms Manager | 11 |
| PR/Comms Officer | 4 |
| | |

| Agency | Average years of experience |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| CEO | 25 |
| Board Director/Partner | 19 |
| Managing Director | 20 |
| Director/Partner | 16 |
| Associate Director | 12 |
| Senior Account Director | 9 |
| Account Director | 8 |
| Senior Account Manager | 5 |
| Account Manager | 4 |

Average years of experience

In-house professionals

years

Agency professionals

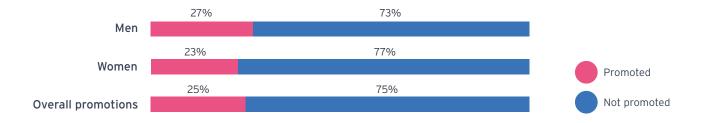
13 years

The average years of experience for agency professionals is 13, which is less than their in-house counterparts, who average 17 years of experience. This isn't surprising as many comms professionals start their careers in agencies, quickly climbing the ladder to Senior Account Director level before they look to move in-house as their next career step.

Progression can slow down in-house and is perhaps harder to obtain as there are fewer layers and opportunities, with many comms teams having just three or four levels (Director of Comms & Marketing, Head of Comms, Comms Managers and perhaps an Officer or Executive). This means that professionals can stay in their role for a very long time – hence a Senior Comms Manager having an average of 15 years of experience. It's a big jump in terms of responsibility from being a Senior Comms Manager to a Head of Comms, for example, and often professionals need to move companies at the same level to find a company where there is more potential to progress.

Ultimately, there is a clear trend towards working in-house – it holds greater appeal than working in an agency, as we reveal later in the report. In-house communications teams are housing people with more experience on average, so perhaps it's viewed as a better and 'safer' place to be. We also see that many people can get comfortable in-house and stay in their roles for a very long time.

PROMOTIONS - WHO CLIMBED THE LADDER?



Which levels got the most promotions?

| in-nouse | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Head of Comms UK/EMEA | 33% |
| Communications Director | 33% |
| Global Head of Comms | 18% |
| Senior PR/Comms Manager | 8% |
| PR/Comms Officer | 4% |
| PR/Comms Manager | 4% |
| | |

| Agency | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Senior Account Manager | 25% |
| Account Director | 21% |
| Director/Partner | 18% |
| Account Manager | 14% |
| Board Director/Partner | 11% |
| Associate Director | 7% |
| Managing Director | 4% |
| | |

250 of professionals got a promotion

In-house

25% of professionals got promoted – similar to findings from 2021, although a clear pattern has emerged over the last three years, with slightly more men than women getting promoted. Promotions have also trended upwards over the last three years. A number of factors are at play here – 'hangover effects' of Covid, the 'great resignation', a higher turnover of staff and, in the last year, a clear focus on retention strategies to encourage key levels to stay.

Among in-house professionals, plenty of senior levels received promotions, with an impressive 33% of promotions being awarded at Head of Comms and Comms Director levels respectively. However, at the other end of the spectrum, only 4% of Comms Officers and Comms Managers were promoted. As mentioned earlier in the report, it's harder to get promoted at this level, although we see the most turnover at Comms Manager level, so perhaps some professionals have just been 'too new' in a role to be promoted. We also know that comms budgets have been squeezed and perhaps it's the managers who are the ones bearing the brunt of this.

In agencies, Senior Account Managers (25%) and Account Directors (21%) were promoted at a very healthy rate. As sought-after 'delivery levels' are in high demand across the industry, bosses are likely to be very aware that they need to keep these levels happy and make sure they are progressing to retain them.

Directors/Partners also fared well with promotions, rewarded for working hard throughout the thick of the pandemic. MDs, on the other hand, really 'don't have anywhere else to go', as they have climbed to the top of the tree, so it's not surprising to see a low level (4%) of promotions.

Once again, Associate Directors are not being promoted as much as others. Promotions naturally slow down at this level and it can take a few years in this 'trainee director' role to be promoted to Director. Senior Account Directors, on average, have 9 years of experience compared to an Associate Director, who has an average of 12 years of experience. However, only 7% of Associate Directors were promoted and when we look back to 2021, when 46% were promoted, it indicates that the focus has been on hiring and retaining delivery levels (Account Managers to Senior Account Directors) and retaining Director/Partners who bring in the revenue.

WHERE DO PROFESSIONALS REALLY WANT TO WORK?

| | 2021 | 2022 | |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|----------|
| In-house | 65% | 57% | V |
| Agency | 11% | 15% | 1 |
| Leave the communications industry | 13% | 13% | ₹ |
| Self-employment/freelancing | 5% | 9% | 1 |
| Set up own comms business | 6% | 6% | \$ |

Where do women and men really want to work?

| | Women | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|--|
| 45% | In-house | 63% |
| 14% | Agency | 16% |
| 17% | Leave the communications industry | 11% |
| 13% | Self-employment/freelancing | 7% |
| 11% | Set up my own comms business | 3% |
| | 14% 17% 13% | 45% In-house 14% Agency 17% Leave the communications industry 13% Self-employment/freelancing |

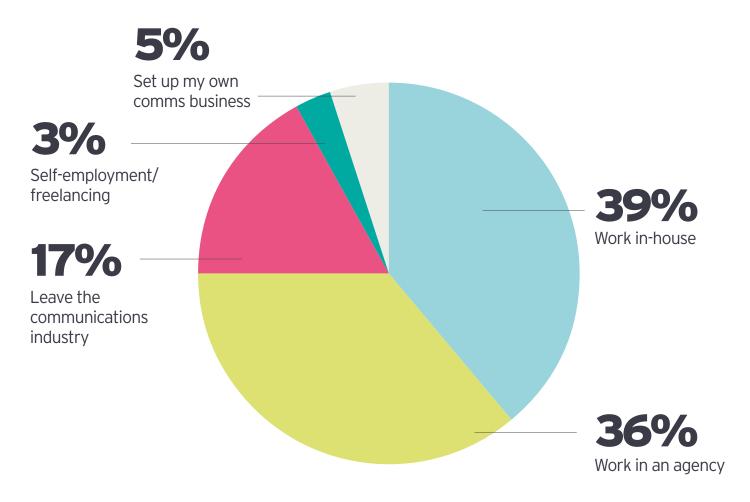
Comms professionals clearly love working in-house. When we asked both in-house and agency professionals where they really want to work, a healthy 57% of them stated in-house. We often discuss the reasons why professionals want to move in-house. They tend to think that they are going to be paid more, receive higher value company benefits, work for one brand that they can spend their time really getting to understand, have more control of their diary, and enjoy more flexibility. Some of these points ring true, however there are many agency professionals who love advisory work and wouldn't dream of moving in-house. They enjoy the pace, the breadth, the variety, the challenge and working alongside like-minded comms people.

Overall, there is a strong sense that 'agency life is harder', juggling lots of clients, and that 'the grass is greener on the other side'. This train of thought rings true when only 15% of professionals say that they would like to work in an agency. This makes in-house 4 times more appealing, although, take note, it's not as appealing than it was the previous year. The percentage of professionals wanting to leave the industry has remained the same (13%); there's also an increased trend for professionals wanting to set up their own business.

A massive 41% of men are thinking about a significant career change – leaving the industry (17%), freelancing (13%), or setting up their own company (11%). That's huge. Despite general happiness in their jobs, getting paid well, and seemingly happy with their pay, many are thinking beyond their current employer. Post-covid, men appear to be reassessing their careers and thinking about doing something else instead. Employers, take note!

WHERE DO AGENCY PROFESSIONALS REALLY WANT TO WORK?

We know there is huge demand and strong trend for professionals to move in-house. We took a closer look at agency professionals, in particular, to work out if they're planning on staying in agencies for the remainder of their career, or if they are interested in working in-house.



POINTS OF INTEREST

39% of agency professionals would like to work in-house and an almost equal amount (36%) would like to stay in an agency. What is interesting is that 17% would like to leave the industry, the highest percentage we have ever seen. Are some agency professionals feeling burnt out, or perhaps just more open to exploring different careers?



HOW CHALLENGING IS IT TO HIRE COMMS PROFESSIONALS?

| | In-house | Agency |
|------------------------|----------|--------|
| Very challenging | 9% | 17% |
| Moderately challenging | 28% | 40% |
| Somewhat challenging | 26% | 30% |
| Slightly challenging | 10% | 7% |
| Not challenging | 12% | 0% |
| N/A | 15% | 8% |

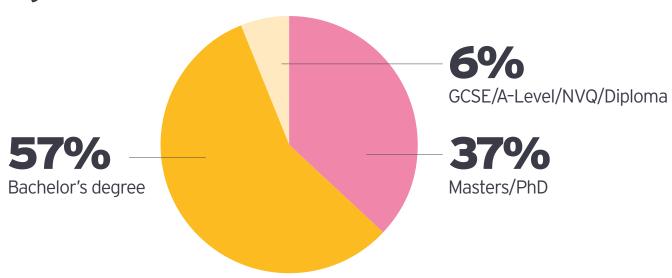
POINTS OF INTEREST

Hiring is clearly a challenge across the corporate comms industry although agency leaders are finding it more of a struggle, with 87% of agency leaders stating that hiring is somewhat to very challenging, compared to 63% of in-house hiring managers.

The strong desire for in-house roles is leaving agencies short of people who want to work there, making the pool of great talent small. In-house hiring managers are often faced with rigid company policies and a preference to advertise for employees. However, the best people in the market are not always looking at adverts, which means that they can struggle with finding high-calibre people with the exact experience they want, who are a great fit for their team.

WHAT DOES LEVEL OF EDUCATION SAY ABOUT CORPORATE COMMS?

Highest level of education



POINTS OF INTEREST

A whopping 94% of respondents have graduated from higher education, with 57% holding a degree and 37% holding a postgraduate degree. This reflects how impressively well-educated corporate communications professionals are, and how this is also clearly a barrier to entry as so few professionals join the industry with GCSE/A-level equivalent levels of education.

Considering hiring is such a challenge for 87% of agency leaders, and many agencies are 'growing their own talent', perhaps it's time to review D&I policies and open doors to interns and apprentices who haven't been to university?

Some of our clients are strong advocates of 'blind recruitment'. This is where we (as the search agency) strip CVs and interview reports of anything that may consciously or unconsciously bias the reader. For example, removing names, nationalities, places of education, sporting achievements, hobbies etc. The companies who have been hiring this way have found that they have a more diverse and exciting workforce thanks to this approach.

HYBRID WORKING

The popularity of remote and hybrid working among comms professionals looks set to continue. Where it was once considered 'nice to have', many now see it as essential and it's a popular request when moving job roles. The blend of office time and working from home is highly desirable. Our survey took a closer look at company policies to find out what is actually on offer from employers when it comes to hybrid working and compared this to how professionals are actually working.

Are comms professionals following the rules? Many companies have established or fine-tuned their hybrid working policies. However, we also know that what a company asks for and what employees are actually doing are two very different things. We looked at what hybrid working policies are being offered across the industry (in-house and agency combined) and how often professionals are coming into the office. There was very little difference between the agency and in-house results, which is why the findings are based on all respondents. There is also no notable difference in working from home patterns between men and women.

Our findings showed that 30% of comms professionals are offered total flexibility by their employers, which is impressive. We wanted to find out how often these professionals are coming into the office.

What hybrid working policies employers offer

Working patterns

| 100% in the office | 2% |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 4 days in the office/1 day remote | 3% |
| 3 days in the office/2 days remote | 33% |
| 2 days in the office/3 days remote | 25% |
| 1 day in the office/4 days remote | 4% |
| 100% remote working | 3% |
| Complete flexibility | 30% |

How often are professionals actually coming into the office

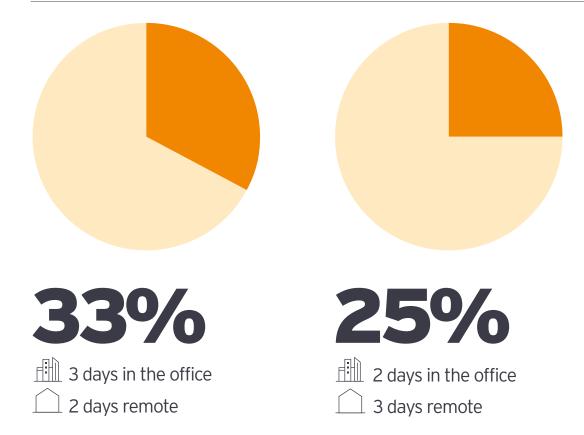
Actual working patterns

| 100% in the office | 6% |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 4 days in the office/1 day remote | 11% |
| 3 days in the office/2 days remote | 40% |
| 2 days in the office/3 days remote | 33% |
| 1 day in the office/4 days remote | 7% |
| 100% remote working | 3% |
| | |

Most people are coming into the office 2 or 3 days a week, and these include those who are given total flexibility.

73% of professionals are working 2 or 3 days in the office, but only 58% of employers are requesting this from their employees. Company policies are not requesting as much presence in the office although practitioners are clearly feeling it's necessary, or just preferring more social interaction.

Working practices have changed so much in the last few years, to the extent that only 2% of employers are requesting employees to be in the office every day. Only 3% of employers allow 100% remote working and interestingly, only 3% work totally remotely.



What do professionals like most about hybrid working?

| | % |
|---|-----|
| It gives me a sense of flexibility that I didn't have before the pandemic | 33% |
| It allows me to organise my personal life well | 22% |
| I can get lots done on the days out of the office | 14% |
| It gives me a sense of balance | 8% |
| Having the option is better for my mental health | 8% |
| I'm more effective | 7% |
| I can tailor my work to the best place | 4% |
| It's costing me less as I'm commuting less and eating out less | 3% |
| I don't have to socialise as much | 1% |

What do professionals dislike about hybrid working?

| % |
|-----|
| 35% |
| 26% |
| 10% |
| 9% |
| 9% |
| 5% |
| 2% |
| 2% |
| 2% |
| |

We hear lots of positive feedback from both employers and employees about hybrid working, although like any new working practice, it comes with its likes and dislikes.

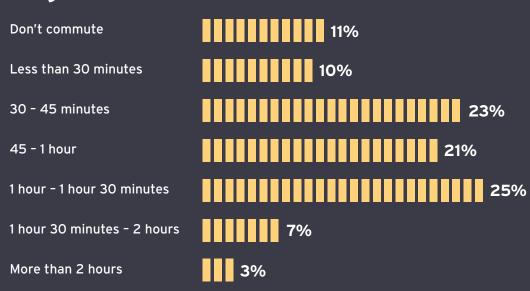
What professionals like about hybrid working is the sense of flexibility, something they didn't really have pre-pandemic. They enjoy that hybrid working allows them to organise their personal life well and get lots done on the days out of the office. Being more organised and able to adapt the type of work they do when in the office and when at home perhaps means happier, more effective professionals.

What respondents dislike is the huge challenge of coordinating with colleagues. In fact, they feel more strongly about what they don't like compared to what they do like. Trying to organise meeting with clients, colleagues and stakeholders on days when everyone is in the office is clearly a headache. We all know that it's not ideal having some people in the office having a face-to-face meeting and some people joining virtually. It doesn't work that well. The companies which have moved past this are the ones with set days in the office, although as we have seen earlier in the report, this won't suit everyone's working practices.

We continually hear how socialising has 'gone out of the window' since the pandemic and 'the culture isn't the same anymore'. Over a quarter (26%) say that they don't get to socialise with colleagues as much and according to our findings, they don't like the hybrid model because of it.

HOW HAS HYBRID WORKING IMPACTED COMMUTING?

Length of commute



POINTS OF INTEREST

We thought it was worth looking at commuting times, having spoken to employers and hearing about small percentages of their team moving far out of London during the pandemic and then trying to commute again now life has seemingly returned to normal. This has come at a cost for some who have left their roles, having found the long commutes too much but thanks to hybrid working, longer commutes have become more possible as they don't need to make these long journeys every single day.

The average length of a commute for all respondents is 45 mins-1 hour, and 65% of respondents get to work within an hour. The most common commute time is 30-45 mins. This is the same for both in-house and agency commuters.

Only a very small minority (3%) are willing to travel more than 2 hours to get to and from the office. We did note that the longest commute is 3+ hours by a white, male, Agency Director who commutes to the office twice a week. Now that's dedication!



FINAL WORDS

We encourage our readers to use the data in this Guide to inform actions in relation to ensuring comms professionals are paid fairly and at market rate. It is important to make sure that professionals across the board are compensated fairly to achieve long-term objectives, such as continuing to close the gender pay gap, and address retention issues for agency professionals.

As a consequence of the pandemic, there has been a significant shift to hybrid working - now an expectation for most professionals seeking to move; many are re-evaluating their careers, making new choices about where they want to live, and creating expectations around how many days they would like to work in the office.

Our findings emphasise the need for companies to carefully consider their working policies and ensure their male and female employees are being paid fairly and given the same opportunities for progression.

We also advise leaders to look at initiatives that attract and advance diverse talent, and support full representation across the industry such as blind recruitment. This will help them to both stand out and attract the best in the market.

Over the coming months, we will delve deeper into some of the findings from our survey in our weekly Thought Leaders Connected newsletter, so do sign up at the-works.co.uk/newsroom

"The Works is unlike any other recruitment agency I've met. They work hard to understand what is best for you AND best for the employer. Sarah wants a perfect match, not just a role filled. She gives intelligent and useful insight on those who will be interviewing you and information about the firm you can't find by reading websites. She challenges you to stretch yourself and gives you the confidence to deliver. Her pre-interview prep talks are first class. As a potential employee or as an employer, I trust The Works to deliver what I need wrapped in a seamless process."

Louise Male, Senior Managing Director, Teneo

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