

# PR and Communications Census 2022 | APAC



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## METHODOLOGY

The Asia Pacific PR and Communications Census is based on a sample of 287 respondents from across the region, with data gathered between 19th May and 1st August 2022.

The survey was generated by YouGov using sample sources from PRCA's own database:

- Targeted sample sent to PRCA members and other organisations
- Public link on the PRCA website







**“People define a culture. But structural barriers to transparency and equality are culture-killers in any organisation. We must push for greater accountability and action from our leaders and peers”.**

If 2021 was a year of transformation, then 2022 has been a year of transition for the PR industry in APAC.

We’re seeing organisations reinforcing values centred on culture and people. Practitioners continue to excel in an agile, hybrid working set-up. The office has returned as a hub of creativity and team building, yet, remote working remains a dominant feature. The industry has undoubtedly settled in a new, post-lockdown way of working – thriving off invaluable in-person interactions while still enjoying the working from home experience.

This year’s Census reveals an industry that is confident, diverse and growing. And yet, the disparity in the gender pay gap is glaring. Closing the pay gap should be leaders’ top priority as we move into the new year. Yes, people define a culture. But structural barriers to transparency and equality are culture-killers in any organisation.

**TARA MUNIS MPRCA**

**Head of APAC – PRCA**

We must push for greater accountability and action from our leaders and peers.

Elsewhere in the report, the data shows that the top three areas of growth in PR are digital media, crisis comms and corporate PR. Yet, when we come to look at the metrics that organisations are using to prove their value, AVEs remain the go-to option. A credible voice of insights is only possible with meaningful data. PR practitioners everywhere must embrace the opportunity to use data to plan, measure and demonstrate their value.

The pandemic demonstrated our industry’s ability to innovate and adapt during a crisis. Now, our industry is in a position of strength, ready to meet the challenges ahead in an age of misinformation and accountability.





**STATE  
OF THE PROFESSION**

“

It is great to see most of the census is heading towards a positive turn. We see a clear sign of needs for people to socialise as we resume our lives post-pandemic stage. This is very encouraging to see that our agility in life plays a critical role in our daily lives moving forward.

Flexibility will be an important factor in the way we work across industries and markets. Hence, both companies and employees should keep this in mind as we look to strike a healthy balance between work and personal priorities.

”

**Vorasi Gigg Turongsomboon MPRCA,  
Managing Director, MSL Group Thailand**

“

The results are mixed. Compared to last year, the increased use of integrated evaluation frameworks is a positive sign.

However most respondents are still using AVE which shows there is more work to be done for the industry to adopt best practice in APAC.

”

**Andrew Nicholls  
Managing Director  
CARMA Asia**

“

Covid-19 has upended how leaders interact with employees and how coworkers connect with each other. Only with a strong corporate culture can we navigate this change. Flexibility is the key here, a fact underscored by the new APAC census which noted a significant increase in the prevalence of flexible working arrangements.

Our workforce has experienced the best of both worlds: the pre-pandemic office and remote work during the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. They know that remote work does not hamper productivity and creativity. At the same, they are again enjoying the adrenaline rush of pitch meetings and in-person collaboration with colleagues. They want a balanced work atmosphere and PR firms must adopt a new culture-building approach to ensure both professional and personal development of their people.

I believe these are exciting times because we have got this unbelievable opportunity to reinvent and reinforce our work culture. We should take a hard look at our values and beliefs, discard practices that are not aligned to the demands of a post Covid world and build an adaptable organisational culture that has employee engagement, employee growth and employee welfare at its core.

”

**Nitin Mantri MPRCA  
CEO, Avian WE**

# State of the Profession

## REMOTE WORKING

The majority of PR practitioners in APAC are working remotely, with 64% working remotely some of the time and 14% citing they are working remotely full-time. The remaining 22% said they were working full-time in the office. Since the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions and when compared to 2021, there has been a 5% increase in the number of practitioners working in the office full time. Significantly, there has also been a 30% reduction in the number of employees working remotely full-time, as this figure stood at 44% in 2021. Nonetheless, practitioners continue to work remotely in some capacity in 2022, as the prevalence of part-time remote work has increased by 25% when compared to 2021.



64% of respondents work remotely some of the time

▼ 25% decrease since 2021



14% of respondents work remotely full-time

▼ 30% decrease since 2021

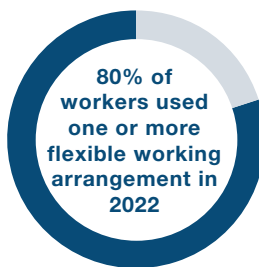


22% respondents work full-time at the office

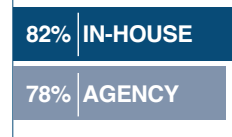
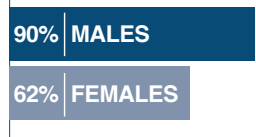
▲ 5% increase since 2021

## FLEXIBLE HOURS

Most respondents (80%) have applied for some form of flexible working arrangement – a figure that has risen by 18% since 2021. This is more common among male (90%) than female (66%) practitioners, as well as in-house (82%) than agency (78%) practitioners.



▲ 18% increase since 2021



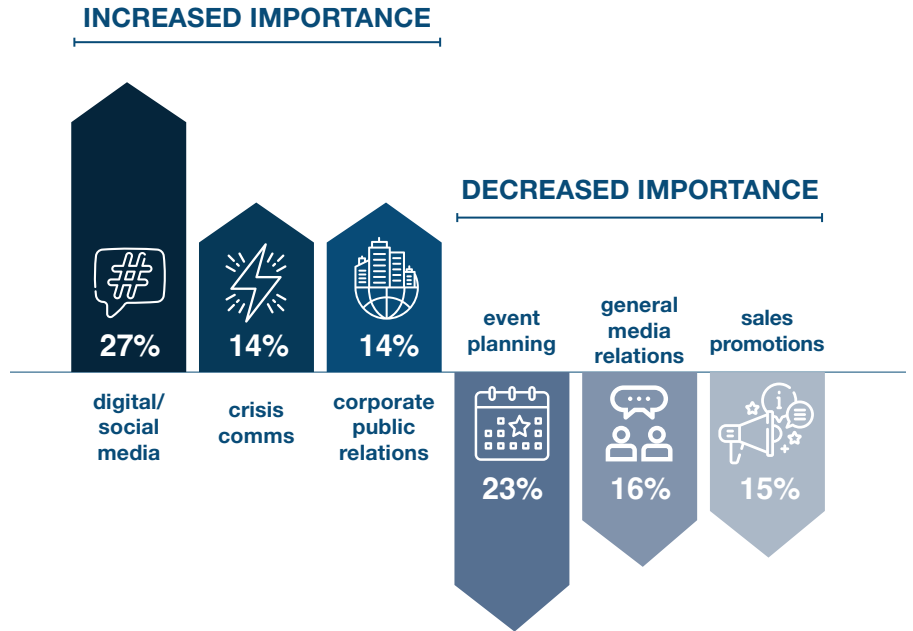
The most common schemes requested are control over start and finish times (33%), working from home at least one day a week (28%) and additional holiday (25%). Overall, the rising prevalence of flexible working arrangements is one of the pandemic's enduring legacies. In a candidate-led market, employers that champion flexible working will only have their brand enhanced. This trend isn't going away.



**INDUSTRY OPINIONS**

When asked to rank the top three areas of growth in PR and communications over the last two years, respondents said digital/ social media (27%), crisis management (14%), online communications (14%), and corporate public relations (14%).

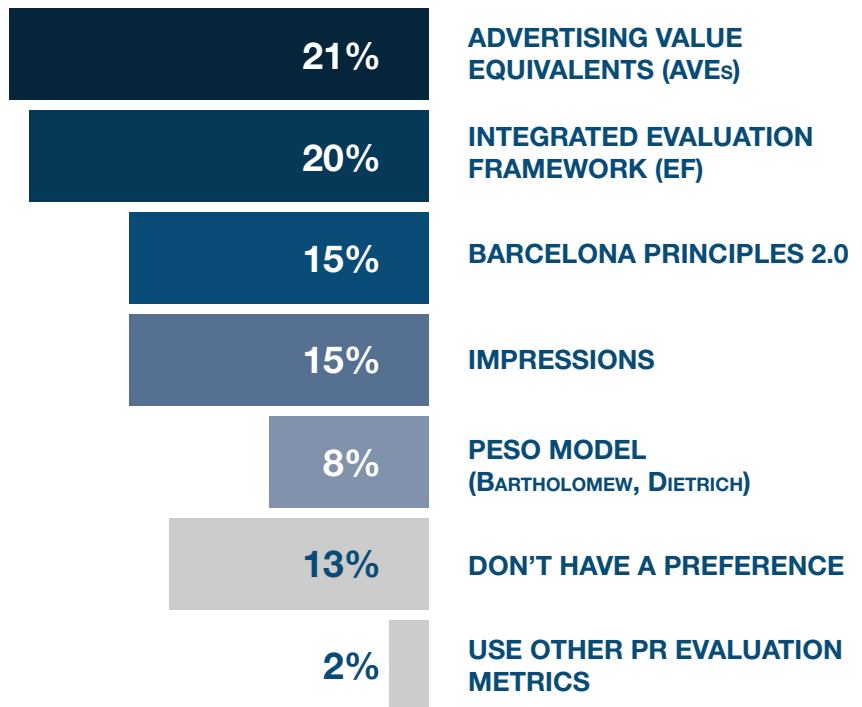
On the other hand, event planning/ organisation (23%), general media relations (16%) and sales promotion (15%) was viewed to have had the greatest drop-off in importance over the past two years.



**PR EVALUATION METRICS**

We asked practitioners which PR evaluation metrics or processes they preferred to use in their work and found that the most selected options were Advertising Value Equivalents (21%) and Integrated Evaluation Frameworks (IEF) (20%).

Following this were the Barcelona Principles 2.0 (15%), Impressions (15%) and PESO (8%). 13% of practitioners selected none and said they did not have a preference, whilst 2% said they use other PR evaluation metrics.





**DIVERSITY**

“

I think we're very much seeing the growth and progression of our industry. The significant growth around gender representation and disability inclusion in our workplaces, in particular, should be taken as a sign of our sector's collective commitment toward a more inclusive and equitable future.

Going forward, I believe we have a responsibility as leaders, colleagues, and businesses to both build on this growth and ensure we're truly supporting the wide range of voices being invited into our communities. With 41% of survey respondents considering themselves to have a disability and mental health taking centre stage across the region, our people and clients are, perhaps more than ever, depending on us to lead with compassion, communication, and support.

”

**Carolyn Devanayagam**  
EVP and APAC Head of  
Corporate, Weber Shandwick

“

Something encouraging in the 2022 findings is only 16 percent of practitioners 'make work-related calls and emails outside of office hours every day', a dramatic decrease from 34% last year. Increasingly, we all struggle with managing mental health and one of the ways we can do better is to prevent work from spilling into downtime. Often, it's just a matter of biting the bullet and doing the unconventional. Our firm, for instance, decided that we would not entertain client requests after 8pm unless they have an emergency or a crisis. We informed our clients and even embed it as a footnote in all our email. Encouragingly, all clients accepted this and some even praised us for doing so. So very often the king has no clothes.

”

**Ong Hock Chuan MPRCA**  
Managing Partner, Maverick  
Indonesia

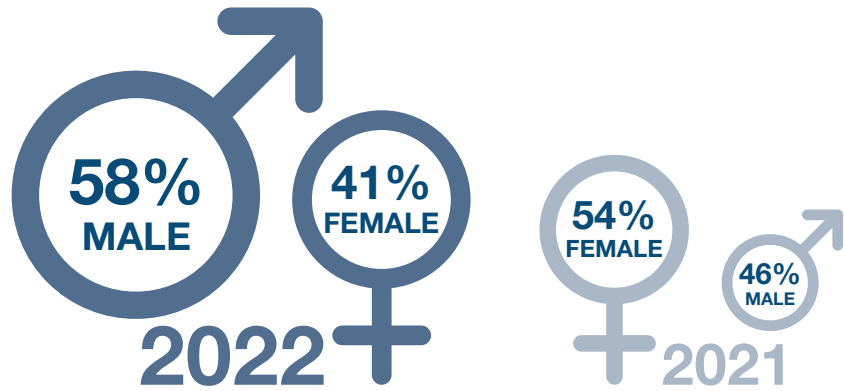


## Diversity

### GENDER

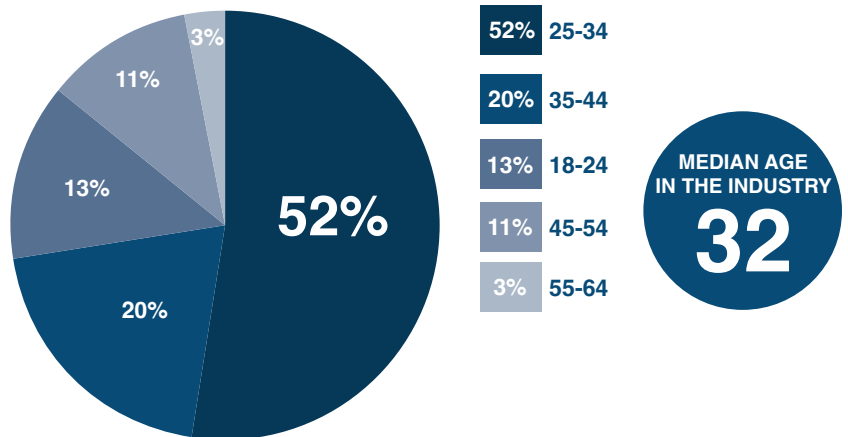
58% of respondents identified as male and 41% identified as female in the 2022 APAC Census.

This contrasts with the 2021 Census, whereby 54% of respondents identified as female and 46% identified as male.



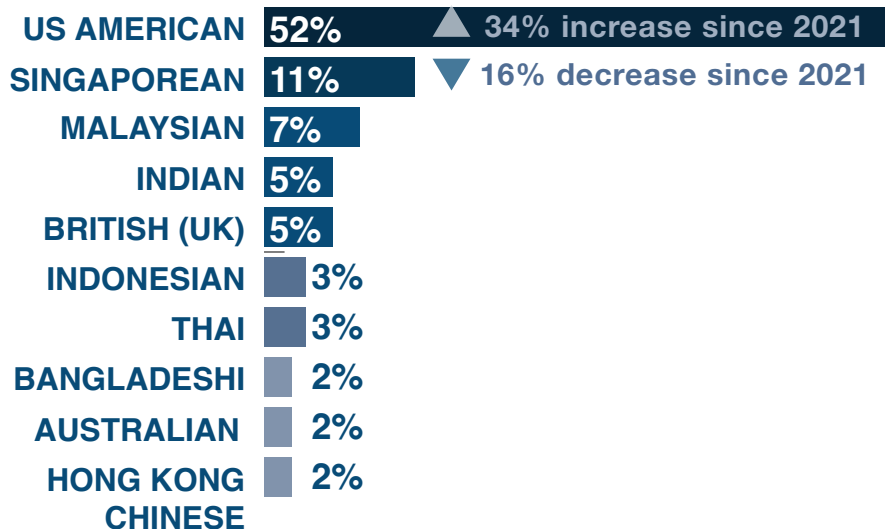
### AGE

Overall, 52% of practitioners responding to this survey are aged between 25 and 34. The next most common age range is 35–44-year-olds (20%), then 18-24 years old (13%), 45-54 years old (11%), and finally 55+ (3%). The median age of the industry is 32.



### NATIONALITY

People of US-nationality make up more than half of PR and communications professionals in APAC, the first time Singaporean wasn't the predominant nationality in the region. In 2021, 27% of the industry was Singaporean and 18% was American. This year, the number of respondents who identified as Singaporean reduced to 11%. The other major nationalities represented are: Malaysian (7%), Indian (5%), British (UK) (5%), Indonesian (3%), Thai (3%), Bangladeshi (2%), Australian (2%), Hong Konger/Hong Kong Chinese (Hong Kong) (2%).

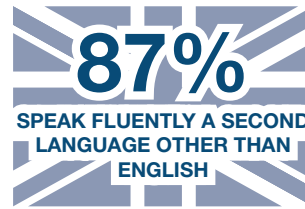


**LANGUAGE**

We asked respondents if they spoke a language other than English well enough to conduct a business conversation.

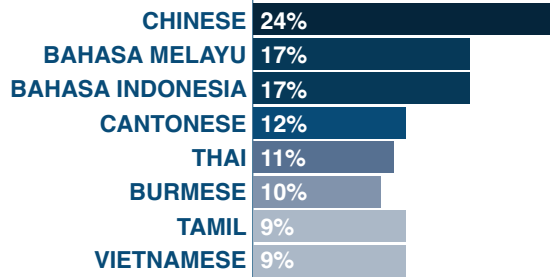
The vast majority (87%) said yes – which represents an 8% increase since 2021.

The most common languages are: Chinese (24%), Bahasa Melayu (17%), Bahasa Indonesia (17%), Cantonese (12%), Thai (11%), Burmese (10%), Tamil (9%) and Vietnamese (9%).



▲ 8% increase since 2021

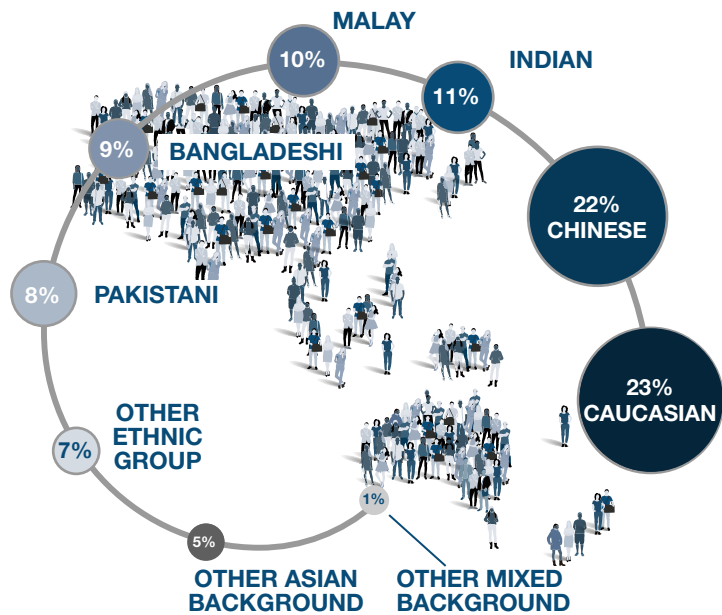
**THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES ARE:**



**ETHNICITY/RACE**

The data shows an industry that is as ethnically diverse and varied like the broader APAC region.

The most common ethnicities were: Caucasian (23%), Chinese (22%), Indian (11%), Malay (10%), Bangladeshi (9%), Pakistani (8%), Other Ethnic Group (7%), Other Asian Background (5%) and Other Mixed Background (1%).



**DISABILITY**

41% of respondents answered ‘yes’ when asked if they would consider themselves to have a physical disability or condition which has limited or made their day-to-day activities in the workplace difficult. This figure is up by 16% from last year’s Census. This could be caused by the PR and Communications industry making a conscious effort to make the profession more inclusive for those with disabilities.



**41%\***

**Disabled practitioners**

**59% stated they do not have a disability**

**\*+16% increase since the 2021 Census**

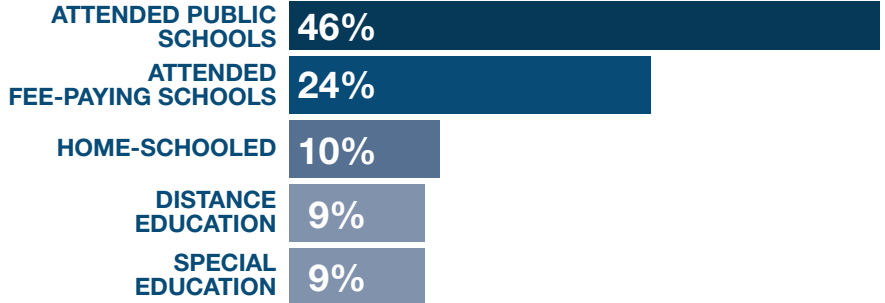
**EDUCATION**

The majority of practitioners (46%) attended a public school. This is followed by private (or fee-paying) school (24%), home school (10%), distance education (9%) and special school (9%).

Most practitioners have attended university with 24% having an undergraduate (Bachelor's) degree and 35% completing a higher degree (Master's, MBA, or PhD).

The most common university degrees studied by respondents are Public Relations (26%), Business Management (23%), Media (13%) and Arts and Humanities (e.g., History, Geography, Linguistics etc.) (13%).

**EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND**



**24%**  
have an undergraduate degree

**35%**  
have a higher degree

**SOCIAL MOBILITY**

To build a picture of social mobility across the industry, we asked practitioners about their parents' education. 70% said that their parents had a university degree and 23% said they did not.

Respondents also disclosed which financial aids they received during school years – 73% reported receiving some form of aid with financial support, subsidies in school fees and bursaries being the most common.

**PARENTS OF PR PRACTITIONERS' EDUCATION TITLES**



**RESPONDENTS WHO RECEIVED SOME FORM OF AID**



**73%** RECEIVED SOME FORM OF AID  
**27%** DIDN'T RECEIVE ANY AID

**WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP**

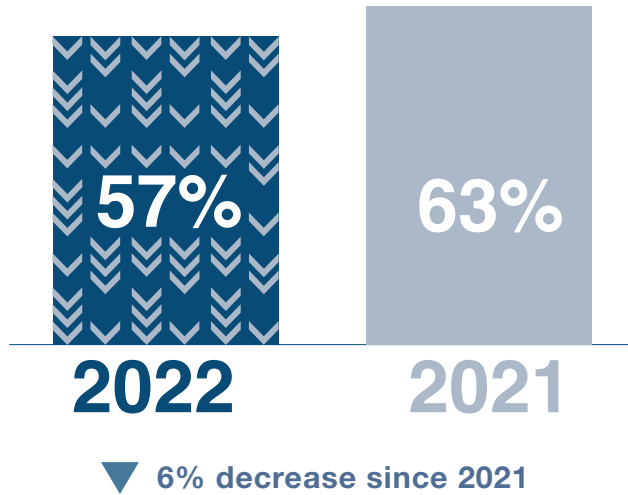
Respondents were asked to rate the PR and Communications industry’s approach to promoting women to leadership positions.

Interestingly, the number of respondents selecting either ‘good’ or ‘very good’ has gone down by 6% when compared to 2021.

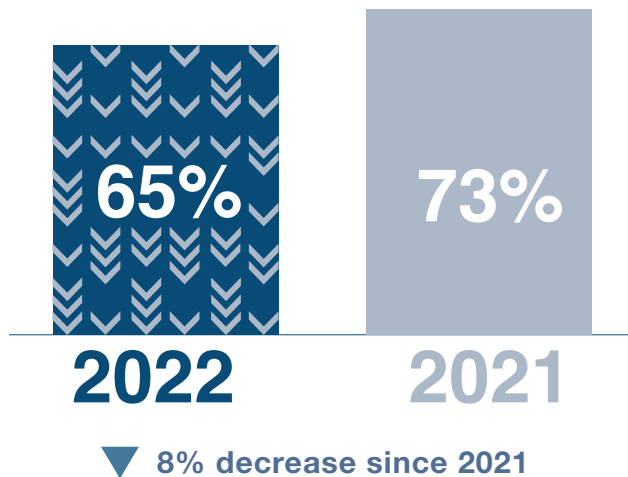
Although respondents continue to be positive about their own organisation’s approach to promoting women in leadership, there has been a noticeable dip in satisfaction, as evidenced by an 8% decrease in respondents who selected ‘good’ or ‘very good’.

Overall, it seems as though the industry has regressed in its efforts to promote women to senior positions.

**PR PRACTITIONERS WHO RATED ‘GOOD’ OR ‘VERY GOOD’ THE PR AND COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY’S APPROACH TO PROMOTING WOMEN TO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS.**



**PR PRACTITIONERS WHO RATED ‘GOOD’ OR ‘VERY GOOD’ THEIR ORGANISATION’S APPROACH TO PROMOTING WOMEN TO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS.**



**MENTAL HEALTH**

Respondents were asked whether they had been diagnosed with a mental health illness. 9% of respondents said that they had – a figure which has increased by 5% since 2021.

The Census research finds that 16% of practitioners make work-related calls and emails outside of office hours every day. This is a move in the right direction as the figure is down from 34% in 2021.

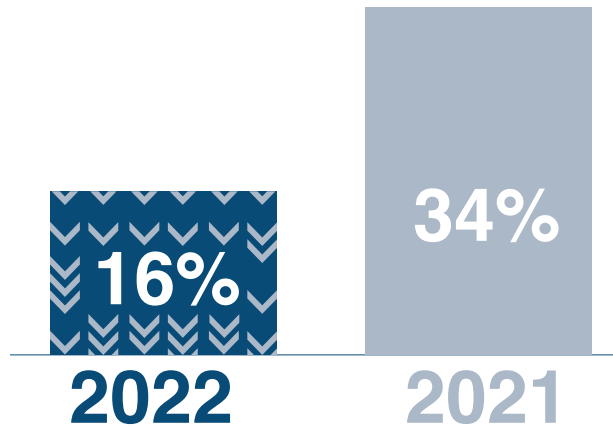
It also shows that while practitioners on average are contracted to work 39.2 hours per week, the actual number of average hours worked sits at 42.4 hours. However, women (44) are working longer hours than men (41.3).



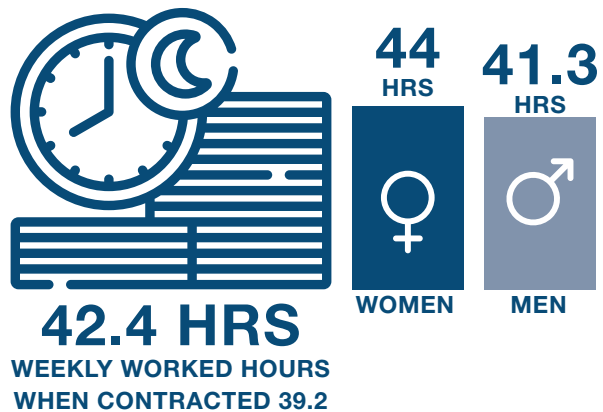
**9% of total respondents have been diagnosed with mental ill health in the past 12 months**

▲ 5% increase since 2021

**PR EMPLOYEES HAVING TO MAKE WORK RELATED CALLS AND/OR SEND WORK RELATED EMAILS OUTSIDE OF OFFICE HOURS**



**DISTRIBUTION OF THE OVERTIME**



“

Our profession had a successful year with plenty of growth across most sectors, so it's good to hear individuals being rewarded with larger bonuses as a result; though it remains depressing and infuriating to read that quantum continues to be skewed in favour of men.

”

“

There's much work to be done in addressing the gender pay gap in APAC and across the world. It's astounding that there's so much disparity – and, I suspect, many in our profession don't even realise it exists, or if they do how large it is. Which is precisely why it's the responsibility of leaders to monitor and manage their own organisation's pay gap and implement strategies to reduce and remove it – including greater pay transparency.

”

“

The competition for talent is stronger than ever, so becoming smarter in how we pay and reward our talent is crucial. Today's talent is looking not only for fair financial reward, but also for benefits that can help them to grow professionally and personally. Progressive employers are listening to their staff and introducing wellness, development, and social benefits into holistic employee packages and this is great to see.

**Lee Nugent FPRCA**  
Regional Director, APAC,  
Archetype

”

“

It's critical to remember that gender equality is not for the benefit of women alone. When companies empower their women employees, it has a multiplier effect on businesses, families, communities, and economies. So high time we adopt genuine, proactive structural changes to close the pay gap between men and women.

Closing the gender pay gap should be agency heads' top priority. If the CEO and the board of directors are not committed to equal pay, then gender equality will just be another tick box. Change must start at the top and the onus to eliminate biases is on the CEO. My recommendation would be to tie executive bonuses, including the CEO's salary, to equality goals. Such a strong step will hold leaders accountable for their behavior, help them address their unconscious biases, and pave the way for equal pay.

”

**Nitin Mantri MPRCA**  
CEO, Avian WE

**PAY  
& PERKS**



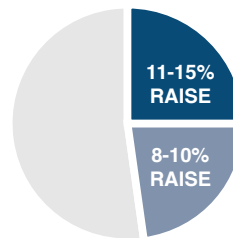
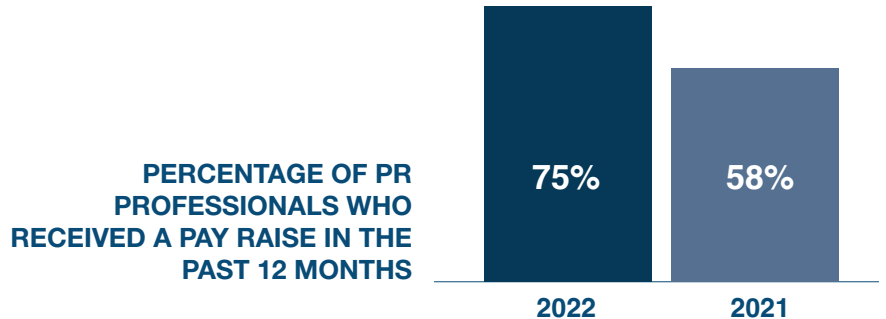
# Pay & Perks

## PAY RISES

75% of APAC PR professionals reported to have received a pay rise in the last year – a number that has increased by 17% since 2021.

Interestingly, this figure is nearly identical amongst male and female, as well as agency and in-house respondents.

We also asked how big a pay rise respondents received, regardless of whether that was within the last 12 months or not. The most common responses were 11-15% (25%) and 8-10% (23%).



## BONUS

76% of respondents received a bonus in addition to their regular salary in the past financial year. This figure is up by 21% when compared to 2021. In-house practitioners (80%) were more likely to receive bonus payments than their agency counterparts (72%). Although there is no real difference between male and female respondents in their likelihoods of receiving bonus payments, it continues to be the case that bonuses received by men are generally larger than those received by women.





**GENDER PAY GAP**

Average salaries were captured across the APAC region, and the top four countries – with the most respondents in the study – were used to calculate any apparent gender pay gap.

The findings are as follows: the pay gap in Singapore stands at 7% in favour of males, is 20% in favour of males in Australia, 58% in favour of males in Bangladesh and 11% in favour of males in Malaysia.

Although the gender pay gap varies in size across the region, the findings from all four countries are indicative of the fact that the PR and Communications industry has a long way to go to ensure that fair pay is apparent in the APAC region.

The gap must be bridged, and employers must do more to ensure that female practitioners are promoted to senior positions and paid equally.

**BREAKDOWN OF THE GENDER PAY GAP FIGURES  
IN THE TOP FOUR COUNTRIES  
– IN FAVOUR OF MALES –**



**BANGLADESH**



**AUSTRALIA**



**MALAYSIA**



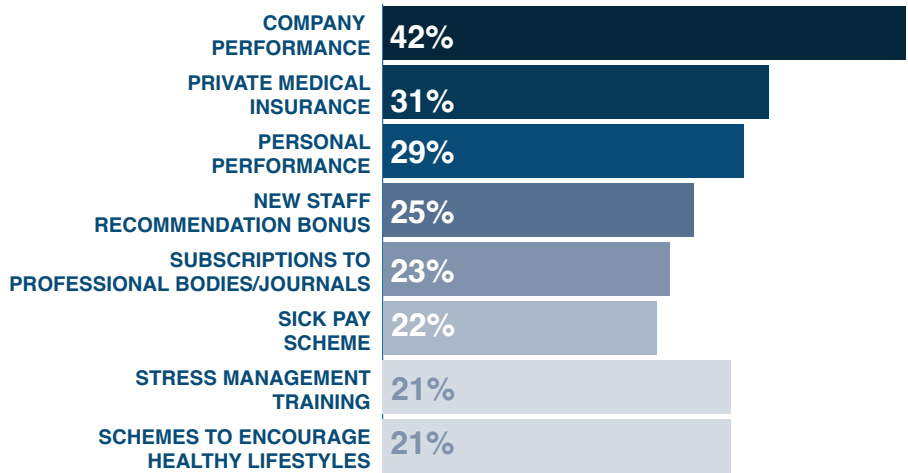
**SINGAPORE**

**BENEFITS**

Alongside pay and bonuses, practitioners receive a wide range of financial and non-financial benefits.

In total, 100% of agency respondents said they receive at least one of the listed benefits, as opposed to 97% of in-house respondents. Men (99%) are also slightly more likely to receive these than their female counterparts (98%).

The most common benefits received are staff performance bonuses based on overall company performance (42%), private medical insurance (31%), staff personal performance bonuses (29%), commission for introducing new staff (25%), subscriptions to professional bodies/journals (23%), sick pay scheme (22%), stress management training (21%) and schemes to encourage healthy lifestyles (21%).





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**The Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) is the world's largest professional PR body.**

**Based in the UK, we represent more than 35,000 PR professionals in 82 countries worldwide.**

**With offices in London, Hong Kong, Dubai, Singapore, and Buenos Aires, we are a global advocate for excellence in public relations.**

**Our mission is to create a more professional, ethical, and prosperous PR industry. We champion – and enforce – professional standards around the world through our Professional Charter and Code of Conduct. The Code compels members to adhere to the highest standards of ethical practice.**

**We deliver exceptional training, authoritative industry data, global networking, and development opportunities.**

**We also manage the International Communications Consultancy Organisation (ICCO) – the umbrella body for 41 PR associations and 3,000 agencies across the world. Additionally, we support the delivery of the Motor Industry Communicators Association (MICA).**

**Tara Munis MPRCA**  
Head of APAC, PRCA

✉ [tara.munis@prca.global](mailto:tara.munis@prca.global)

🌐 [www.apac.prca.global](http://www.apac.prca.global)

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