



**WORLDCOM**  
Public Relations Group

# 2021 Predictions from Worldcom Public Relations Group Partners



## PART 2: 2021 PR & INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS / EMPLOYEE WELLBEING PREDICTIONS



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### Employee Communications No Longer The

### Poor Relation

Employee engagement - or internal communications - has arguably been the poor relation to external communications in the past. Not anymore. Whilst that position has considerably changed in recent years, the coronavirus has made it a significant priority during the pandemic and beyond.

Colleagues are your best brand ambassadors. Therefore, the way organisations have communicated and engaged with them during recent months and how they do so in the future will be critical to the way they act and behave on behalf of your brand and therefore the way you are viewed by the outside the world. Ultimately, it will be key to the success or not of the organisation going forward and to the retention and acquisition of employees.

### Putting Mental Health On The Communications Agenda

Whilst mental wellbeing was a major item on the corporate agenda before the crisis, the issue will become even bigger in the wake of coronavirus. How we equip leaders, managers and those responsible for mental health to have the appropriate conversations during and post COVID 19 will be critical to staff wellness, morale and retention which all feed through to business reputation and performance.

Expect a growth in demand for specialist mental health communications consultancy during the next year to provide the vital support that businesses and their managers will need to have appropriate, useful and positive conversations with colleagues suffering from mental illness.

### Employers Will Play A Greater Role In Employee Mental And Social Health

Concerns around COVID-19 will continue to linger despite the anticipated roll-out of a vaccine. For 2021, the general public will continue to remain vigilant and eschew large crowds and public transport if they have the choice. Advances in AI and 5G will make working from home the preferred option for many employees. We will continue to witness the further convergence of life and work.

Employees will increasingly depend on their employers as their main formal connection to society. That puts an increased burden on corporate leaders, who will feel greater responsibility for their employees' health and well-being, especially mental health.

Purpose and CSR will become more important than ever. Companies will have to become ever more empathetic and caring. Effective communications will be key. Those companies who do it well will earn tremendous loyalty from their employees.



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### Leaders Who Place A Refreshed Purpose At The Heart Of Everything They Do, Will Steal A Lead On Their Competitors

The uncertainty caused by the pandemic is a powerful reminder for leaders to ensure they keep everyone in the business aligned and on the same page. This doesn't mean leaders just need to outline a clear strategy, although that is essential to give people certainty about what the organisation will do next. It means that every individual will need to (and wants to) understand their personal role in changing the way the company behaves to meet changed market needs.

This will satisfy the Status, Certainty and Autonomy needs of **SCARF** (neuroscience framework). And, if these key messages are supported every day at a one-to-one level by line managers, it will reinforce Relatedness and Fairness too. But the organisations that will succeed the most will be those who place a refreshed Purpose at the heart of everything they do. The pandemic has made people hungry for clear, consistent and inspiring leadership and there's nothing more likely to trigger aligned action than a shared belief.

### Innovative Labor Market

The role of companies as employers is the next challenge for the coming years. The changes taking place in the labor market reveal two key aspects.

Technology has increased the importance of working remotely. But this means that employers will need to ensure they are supporting the mental wellbeing of their people as they navigate the stresses of merging lines between work and personal life.

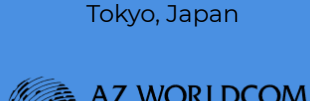
Building relationships with employees and changing the perception of the role of internal communication will take on a new meaning.



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### Contactless Social And Non-Contact Economic Activities Are Accelerated

Remote or flexible working will remain the preferred option for many employees. As of November, 80% of Japanese companies are still continuing telework. Also, students looking for a job will favor companies that encourage flexible and remote working. The freedom to not be constrained by work hours will be prioritized over salary.

But with increased flexibility work and personal lives will become less separate. Many employees will choose to work while on vacation. "Workation" - where words "work" and "vacation" are coined to describe a way of spending a vacation while working. This will become part of the encouragement of the "new normal" in the wake of the workforce reform and the new coronavirus epidemic.

Also, more and more companies will allow their employees to work for other employers in addition to their corporate work. With a variety of work options, employee engagement will become even more paramount to attracting and retaining the best talent.

### Wellbeing Is Going To Be One Of The Main Topics In Communication And Leadership in 2021

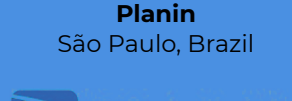
Wellbeing is affected by many other topics, like sustainability, Internet of things, green energy, etc. and also by COVID-19 situation, mental health and work-life balance. People have realized that while technology can help them to be more effective, they need to maintain a good work-life balance. They want to see purpose in what they are doing and have more time for their families. The organizations that support these multiple goals with changes in the way they operate - and that communicate these changes effectively - will succeed in 2021 and beyond.



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### New dialogue

The relationship with consumers and employees can quickly become a two-way street. These audience will participate as ambassadors, influencers, and innovators. With the increase in the power of voice in social media, consumers and employees become an increasingly strategic front for brands (for building of reputation and mitigation of crisis). Companies will start to learn a new way to communicate and to dialogue.

### Confidence in employee issues falls, while upskilling and reskilling bucks the trend

The 2020 Worldcom Confidence Index (WCI) found that the stand-out change since 2019 is the fall of business leaders' confidence in all but one employee-related topic. Retaining talent, improving productivity through employee engagement, attracting talent, and employment benefits, all moved down the 2020 confidence list. However, the pandemic seems to have increased leaders' confidence about where they should focus their efforts to upskill and reskill people, also making it the topic with the highest level of leader engagement in the last year. The WCI findings provide valuable insights to help organizations plan for the coming year.

The WCI is a living study that uses a breakthrough approach powered by artificial intelligence (AI), which allows us to discover the issues that concern leaders globally - and their confidence levels in addressing them. Topics and sentiments are drawn from online conversations of **over 54,000 CEOs and CMOs around the world**.

In the 2020 report, we provided results for 36 countries compared to 15 in 2019. We expect this to grow to 46 countries by the end of 2020. We are confident that the insight delivered by the WCI will enable organizations to develop key strategic campaigns that create a meaningful impact in 2021.



**See The Full Results Of  
The 2020 WCI Report**

Every year Worldcom Public Relations Group draws on the expertise of its **2000+ communications professionals** to predict the environment that will face its clients in the year ahead. Inevitably, as a global partnership, many of these predictions have an international flavor. If you want to get a picture of what the communications landscape may look like in your own country, we have teams in **115 cities, in 49 countries on six continents**, ready to talk to you.

We hope these will help increase the certainty of your success in the year ahead.

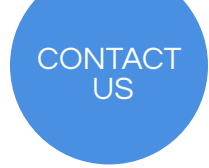
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