

Five Takeaways from the USC Annenberg's 2021 Global Communications Report

By Stefan Pollack – President and CFO of [The Pollack Group](#)



Report conducted by The USC Annenberg Center For Public Relations in Conjunction with The Worldcom Public Relations Group



Stefan Pollack identifies five trends from the annual USC Annenberg Communications Report about **2020's impact on the communications field.**

1 | Activism Shows No Signs Of Slowing Down

72% of Corporate Communications executives predict that activists will place more demands on U.S. corporations under the new Biden administration. Additionally, most professionals anticipate that employees and customers will continue to expect their companies to play a more significant role in societal issues.

With customers also predicted to base their purchase decisions more and more on the perception of a company's values, [PR executives predict](#) that there will be more purpose-driven communications campaigns than ever before.



2 | CEOs Must Now Take a Stand



60% of PR professionals expect an increased focus on company CEOs to represent their brand or product. Today's consumers are continuing to hold accountable a CEO's character when making purchasing decisions, and want CEOs to take public stances on societal issues as well. Today's CEOs are much more than leaders; their personalities and opinions are now representing the organizations they lead.

3 | Companies Remain Reluctant To Tackle Hot-Button Activist Issues

While progress is being made, an enormous gulf remains between issues that will see increased activism and companies' willingness to take a stand on said issues. **86% of survey responders think the topic of climate change will see increased activism, yet only 26% of responders think their company will take a public stand on the issue.**

A similar gap is evident for police reform, affordable healthcare, and immigration issues. While companies are speaking out more than before, it is clear that corporate executives are still worried about alienating customers and employees in a time of extreme polarization.



4 | 'Fake News' And Conspiracy Theories Won't Slow Down



77% of journalists predict that the spread of fake news and the proliferation of conspiracy theories will either stay the same, or increase during the new administration. Additionally, 84% of journalists believe polarization isn't likely to decline anytime soon, even if political news coverage may slow down following the transition from Trump to Biden.

On a positive note, from the survey, journalists and PR professionals alike, expect greater mutual respect for each other's professions in a post-Trump world.

5 | Future Optimism Skews Young and Female

As we head further into 2021, younger Americans are more energized than their parents. However, older Americans tend to feel relief more than their younger counterparts. **Additionally, women generally feel more energized about the future than men, while overall, 63% of Americans surveyed said they have a positive outlook on the next four years.**



Download the USC Annenberg Center for Public Relations' 2021 Global Communications Report here:

annenberg.usc.edu/gcr

For more information on Worldcom please contact:

toddlynch@worldcomgroup.com
or
crispinmanners@worldcomgroup.com

If you would like to discuss the report please contact:

stefan@pollackgroup.com

Stefan Pollack is President and CFO, The Pollack Group based in Los Angeles California.

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