

# PATH 1: CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

The corporate world is wide-open territory for communications majors. If you take the simplest definition of communications as "getting the word out," the corporate community has one of the largest uses of this

activity. Some sectors need to get the message out in-house through newsletters, memos, position papers, letters from the president, corporate training, seminars, and workshops; other sectors need to get the message out to the public or to consumers, through conventions, advertisements, publicity campaigns, community relations, or media contacts.

A survey of state universities throughout the United States reveals that the top two majors students are currently pursuing are 1.) business and 2.) communications. Aspects of the two majors are closely related. Although some business majors focus their training in areas of banking and finance, many others choose to pursue careers identical to those prepared for by communications majors. Equally, a significant number of communications majors choose a university department and career track that will lead them into jobs in business settings.

The process of getting the word out can utilize the skills of just one person, or employ teams of ten, fifty, or a hundred professionals. Their job titles and the roles they play are as varied as the messages they are striving to convey.

## DEFINITION OF THE CAREER PATH

While we are finding that the profession of communications is difficult to define, it is easier to say these days what it isn't. Norman Leaper, president of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) in a recent

speech remarked: "The role of communication has changed . . . [It was] a term that . . . conjured up visions of company-produced newsletters by folks whose idea of creativity was a Christmas message printed in the shape of a tree in green ink. Or maybe a series of press releases extolling the virtues of a new fertilizer . . . No longer is it considered an insecure entry in the budget . . . [or a] luxury or a frill delegated to secretaries who like to write. . . ."

It has become one of the most important elements in any organization . . . an essential link between managers and workers. . . . a liaison between employees and the broader community. . . .

"Management is realizing that good, timely, candid communication is a sound investment both within and outside the organization."

The focus of this chapter is on the varied roles communications majors can play in the corporate world.

## Public Relations

The practice of public relations is a relatively young field, formally founded less than a hundred years ago. Early definitions emphasized public relations as press agency and publicity. As the profession evolved, those aspects became less the work of the PR professional, falling more into the realm of publicists and advertising and marketing professionals. (This area is covered in Chapter Eleven.)

Today, public relations is a huge umbrella under which a variety of job titles and professional responsibilities exist. Modern public relations embraces the consultant, the corporate communicator, the investor relations specialist, the public information officer, the community liaison, the government mediator, the troubleshooter, the spokesperson, and the media coordinator.

The number of professionals doing public relations work is estimated to be as high as 159,000. Public relations professionals work in every sector, from the corporate world to the sporting world, from government departments to health and medical facilities. And though the settings might vary, their main responsibility usually doesn't. The backbone of every PR professional's job description is his or her role as communicator.

Effective communications are recognized as vital to the success of every organization or cause. Every organization has "publics" to which it must answer. Let's take for an example a large movie theatre concern that we'll call National Cinema Corporation. The "publics" that National Cinema Corporation must stay sensitive to include nutritionists and other health professionals who insist that consumers be informed about the fat content of movie theatre popcorn; environmentalists who insist that the containers used for the popcorn and cold drinks be biodegradable, or that the tickets be printed on recycled paper; city and town planners who are concerned about parking facilities and traffic patterns near the movie theatre as well as signage and lighting; civic groups that are lobbying for improved movie rating systems; and zoning officials, school officials—the list can go on and on.

Excluded from this list are customers or consumers, a public attended to by professionals involved in advertising, marketing, opinion research, publicity and promotion, and is categorized separately.

The public relations professional is concerned with how the company is perceived by the various target audiences. He or she can also help shape a company and the way it performs. The PR practitioner, by research and evaluation, finds out the expectations and concerns of the various groups and reports back to the organization on his or her findings. A good public relations program needs the support of the organization and the public it is involved with.

The Public Relations Society of America offers accreditation to PR professionals who have been in the field, either in practice or teaching in an accredited college or university, for a period of time not less than five years. After candidates pass a written and oral examination to demonstrate their competence and knowledge, they are given the right to use the designation "PRSA Accredited" or "APR." This adds to their professional credibility and personal confidence.

Many of the following job titles fall under the umbrella of public relations.

### **Corporate Communicators**

Corporate communicators come with a variety of job titles and perform a mixed bag of functions. As troubleshooters, they handle communication disorders within organizations, acting as problem-solvers, group facilitators, negotiators, and mediators. In this capacity they can also be concerned with keeping professional morale high and keeping workers energized and creative. Whether as an in-house employee or as an independent consultant, a corporate communicator specializing in disorders will conduct a needs-analysis and then design and implement a program to tackle the specific problem. For example, corporate communicators at Exxon conduct seminars for managers to heighten awareness of the concerns of minority and female employees. Various methods and techniques are used such as role-playing, values clarification, simulations, and other hands-on exercises. AT&T instituted an open line for employees to voice their concerns and complaints. Southwestern Bell Telephone arranged for its managers to appear on radio talk shows to respond to complaints and questions from listeners.

Corporate communicators, functioning much as PR specialists would, also act as external troubleshooters, handling problems that develop between an organization and the community within which it is located. Experience has shown that readily sharing information with the community and the media, as well as with employees, can turn around relationships initially based on strife and conflict into working, productive alliances. Atlantic Richfield publishes a weekly tabloid newspaper read by 76,000 employees around the world. Among other newsworthy events, the paper reports on deaths result-

ing from company accidents, details of unfavorable lawsuits, **competition** in the field, and analyses of the causes for depressed stock prices.

AT&T Technologies is another example of a company that recognizes the importance of candor. It developed a guide for its spokespersons, advising them to be forthright with the press, and pointing out that the company's interests are served best by volunteering bad news instead of trying to cover it up.

A major accident at a chemical plant in Martinez, California, in 1992 is a good illustration of how this works. Two maintenance workers accidentally opened a valve on a tank storing spent sulfuric acid. One of the workers was killed and the fires resulting from the spill shut down a major freeway. Because the community had already been in a four-year battle with the company, opposing a permit to incinerate hazardous waste, the accident spurred panic and anger. Company spokespersons handled the crisis with sincere apologies and a constant, ongoing availability of information to the press and the community. After two years, the open communication and a change of attitude and management improved relations between the company and the community to such a point that both sides feel there is now an atmosphere of trust and confidence.

In addition to problem-solving roles, corporate communicators can also be hired to work in the area of multimedia communications, both in-house and external. IABC, president Normal Leaper notes that, "Progressive organizations have replaced self-serving news releases and publications featuring pompous pep talks on productivity with communication programs that include sophisticated films, video tapes, and other audio-visual efforts, bulletin board presentations, telephone news systems and hotlines—and literally scores of other forms of communication—that reach millions of people within and outside the organization."

Corporate communicators arrange news conferences; conduct surveys; produce radio or TV news shows; arrange monthly "gripe" sessions between management and staff; design brochures describing the company's strengths and aims; write speeches for the CEO to deliver to stockholders; arrange seminars and workshops; edit glossy magazines; or initiate programs to ensure workplace safety or increase environmental awareness.

Corporate communicators interested in editing and publishing have an estimated 28,000 internal and external organizational publications to approach throughout the U.S. and Canada. Only 20 percent of consumer magazines hire new grads right out of college, and when they do, they usually position the new staff in low-responsibility slots. Communications majors entering the world of business get a shot at the whole show, from planning features to choosing illustrations.

What follows is an actual job advertisement for an experienced corporate communicator:

**American Society of Hospital Marketing and Public Relations**

840 North Lake Shore Drive  
Chicago, IL 60611

**Members/Purpose:** Hospital and health care professionals involved with marketing and public relations.

**Training:** Annual conference.

**Journal/Publication:** Membership directory; *Directory of Health Care Marketing; Planning, and Public Relations.*

**Associated Business Writers of America**

1450 S. Havana, Suite 424  
Aurora, CO 80012

**Members/Purpose:** Freelance writers specializing in business. The aim is to serve as a clearinghouse where business editors can find writing talent.

**Journal/Publication:** Directory; newsletter.

**Association for Business Communication**

University of North Texas  
College of Business

Dept. of Management  
Denton, TX 76203

**Members/Purpose:** Public relations writers, college teachers of business communications, training directors, and others interested in communication for business.

**Journal/Publication:** *Bulletin of the Association for Business Communication; Journal of Business Communication.*

**Council of Communication Management**

Oak West Office Plaza  
17W703/E. Burrefield Rd.

Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

**Members/Purpose:** Managers, consultants, and educators who work at the policy level in organizational communication.

**Training:** Annual conference, seminars.

**Journal/Publication:** *Case Studies in Organizational Communication;* membership directory; newsletter.

**Health Sciences Communications Association**

Route 5, Box 311F  
Middlethian, VA 23113

**Members/Purpose:** Health science professionals dedicated to the promotion and sharing of ideas, skills, resources, and techniques to enhance communication and education in the health sciences.

**Training:** Annual conference, local and regional meetings.

**Journal/Publication:** *Journal of Biomedical Communication;* Interest group newsletters; membership directory.

**Job Listings:** Job placement service.

**Institute for Public Relations Research and Education**

3800 S. Tamiami Trail  
N. Sarasota, FL 34239

**Members/Purpose:** Conducts and sponsors research in the public relations field.

**Training:** Holds annual lectures and competitions.

**Journal/Publication:** *Managing Your Public Relations;* series of guides for nonprofits; *REF Reports;* newsletter.

**International Association of Business Communicators**

One Hallidie Plaza, Suite 600  
San Francisco, CA 94102

**Members/Purpose:** Dedicated to the improvement of organizational communication and the enhancement of the professional competence of those engaged in communications.

**Training:** Holds district conferences and an annual international conference. Provides the "Communication Bank," a skills network and clearinghouse of resources.

**Journal/Publication:** Various career pamphlets; *Communication World.*

**Job Listings:** Maintains "jobline," a telephone job bank service providing recorded information on job openings.

**International Labor Communications Association**

815 16th Street, NW, Room 509  
Washington, DC 20006

**Members/Purpose:** Editors of union publications.

**Journal/Publication:** *Reporter.*

**National Council For Marketing and Public Relations**

c/o Becky Olson  
364 North Wymndham Avenue  
Greely, CO 80634

**Members/Purpose:** Communications specialists working within community colleges in areas including alumni, community, government, media, public relations, marketing, publications, and coordinating special events. Works to foster improved relations between two-year colleges and their communities.

**Training:** Holds an annual conference with exhibits, national surveys, needs assessment.

**Journal/Publication:** *COUNSEL.*

**Foreign Service Recruitment Officer**

Office of Personnel

United States Information Agency (USIA)

401 4th Street, S.W.

Washington, DC 20547

**Moody's Investors Service**

99 Church Street

New York, NY 10007

**O'Dwyer's Directory of Corporate Communications**

O'Dwyer's Directory of Public Relations Firms

R. O'Dwyer Company, Inc.

271 Madison Avenue

New York, NY 10016

**Investor Relations Newsletter**

Enterprise Publications

20 N. Wacker Dr.

Chicago, IL 60606

**Journal of Communication**

Annenberg School Press

P.O. Box 13358

Philadelphia, PA 19101

**Peace Corps Recruiting Office**

990 K Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20526

**PR Reporter**

P.O. Box 600

Exeter, NH 03833

**Public Relations Journal**

Public Relations Society of America

33 Irving Place

New York, NY 10003

**Public Relations News**

27 E. 80th Street

New York, NY 10021

**Public Relations Quarterly**

4 W. Market Street

Rhinebeck, NY 12572

**Public Relations Review**

7338 Baltimore Blvd., #101A

College Park, MD 20740

**Speechwriter's Newsletter**

Ragan Communications

407 S. Dearborn

Chicago, IL 60605

**Training**

50 S. 9th Street

Minneapolis, MN 55402

**PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS FOR  
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS**

A glance through this list illuminates the variety of professional associations active in the world of business communications. Most offer booklets and pamphlets with career information; some are free, others might have a nominal charge of one or two dollars. A phone call or letter will have information in the mail to you within a few days.

**American Business Association**

292 Madison Avenue, 7th floor

New York, NY 10017

**Members/Purpose:** Individuals in executive, managerial, and sales capacities, and owners of businesses. Provides financial services.

**Journal/Publication:** *ABA Business Brief*

**American Society for Training and Development**

Box 1443

1640 King Street

Alexandria, VA 22313

**Members/Purpose:** For persons engaged in the training and development of business, industry, education, and government employees. Undertakes special research projects and acts as clearinghouse.

**Training:** Maintains information on more than 100,000 seminars and workshops.

**Journal/Publication:** *Practical Guidelines for Human Resource Development*

*Professionals;* other books and pamphlets.

## CAREER OUTLOOK

Businesses and other organizations spend more than \$1 billion dollars annually to communicate with employees or members, with even more money going to fund communication with external audiences such as customers, community residents, alumni, opinion leaders, and the public-at-large.

According to predictions made in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, published by the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of corporate communications managers is expected to increase faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2005. Employment for public relations specialists other than managers is expected to increase about as fast as the average for all jobs through the year 2005.

Employment in public relations firms is expected to grow more than in any other setting, as corporations, trying to keep costs down, hire contractors to provide PR services rather than support a full-time communications staff.

Keen competition for these jobs, however, will likely continue among recent college graduates with degrees in communications and related fields because the number of applicants is expected to exceed the number of job openings.

## STRATEGY FOR FINDING THE JOBS

There are an estimated 3.6 million active corporations in the United States. While not every one of them provides a setting in which communications majors would prefer to work, enough do.

### Scan the Help Wanted Ads

The traditional job hunting method—reviewing help wanted ads—seldom reaps rewards for the new, inexperienced grad. Most job advertisements are for specialists with time and experience under their belts, or for pre-entry-level clerical jobs that might not offer enough exposure to lead to promotion. However, the want ads should not be ignored. The plum job you are perfect for could crop up in next Sunday's paper.

### Knock on Doors

Knocking on doors is what experts advise. Find the firm for which you would like to work and become a familiar face in the personnel department or front reception area.

## Join Professional Associations

Professional associations often maintain job banks. The journals and newsletters they publish usually feature job advertisements. And the regional or national conferences they hold often have job clearinghouses with recruiters in attendance.

## Find a Mentor

Your alumni association can put you in touch with professionals who might be able to give you leads.

## Check with Your College Department

Don't forget to inquire at your communications department office. It is not unusual for a corporation to call a university and ask for a list of graduating seniors. The jobs they are seeking to fill might also be announced on department bulletin boards.

## Register with Your College Placement Office

College placement offices and career service centers can also provide good leads for your job search. While some employers contact individual departments directly, others send their job openings to the placement office or career counselor.

## HELP IN LOCATING THESE EMPLOYERS

Hit the library! There are directories galore that list professional associations, public relations firms, and corporations by industry. Make friends with your reference librarian and bring plenty of change for the copy machine.

The following contacts, journals, and directories only begin to scratch the surface.

### Communication World

International Association of Business Communicators  
One Hallidie Plaza, Suite 600  
San Francisco, CA 94102

### Encyclopedia of Associations

Gale Research, Inc.  
P.O. Box 33477  
Detroit, MI 48232-5477



Here is an actual job advertisement for a position utilizing communications skills in a health care setting:

### CRITICAL INQUIRY COORDINATOR

currently has an opportunity available for a critical inquiry coordinator with the critical inquiry department. This department is responsible for research, resolution, and response to formal grievances and appeals filed by clients and providers.

This position requires a conscientious individual with excellent communication and organizational skills. Outstanding skill in letter composition is a must. Candidate must possess a minimum of two years' of college and related work experience or a bachelor's degree in communications, English, journalism, or health care administration. Send resume to . . .

As you start your own job search you will see that the employment possibilities health care settings offer for communications majors are broad and stimulating.

### RELATED OCCUPATIONS

The skills that communications majors possess are valued in a number of related professions. The following is a small sampling of occupations that draw on similar skills to a greater or lesser degree.

Biocommunications	In-house Legal Counsel
Development Specialist	Lobbyist
Financial Manager	Medical Writer
Health Science Communications	Technical Writer
Industrial Psychologist	Volunteer Coordinator

### WORKING CONDITIONS

Corporations, public relations firms, and other possible employment settings are usually busy, hectic places. There are deadlines to be met, phones ringing, visitors arriving, resulting in work schedules that are frequently interrupted. PR people and all the other corporate communicators put in long and some-

times irregular hours. Once a project is under way or a crisis needs to be resolved, the work seldom stops until the job is done.

Employees of nonprofit corporations, associations, and charitable organizations report to a calmer work atmosphere, but the pressure is on there as well. These organizations have the same need for effective communicators, but a lot less money to accomplish their goals.

Workloads in the different settings will be varied, too. You could be hired to conduct a week's workshop on effective speaking and listening skills designed particularly for the phone company, and when you're finished, there's the company report to work on, letters to write, phone calls to return, meetings to attend, research to be done. The pace can be exhilarating and challenging to some, stress-producing to others.

### TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

For any of the fields covered in this chapter, a bachelor's degree in communications provides a good entry. However, while some positions such as assistant/junior copywriters don't require a four-year degree, as competition for jobs increase B.A. or even master's degree holders will have an edge. But a degree is not the only criterion an employer sets. The following skills have been identified in an IABC survey as those most commonly used by its membership:

Audience research	Magazine layout
Audiovisual production	Management skills
Budgeting/cost control	Media contact
Communication planning	Newsletter editing
Communication theory	News writing
Event planning	Personnel supervision
Feature writing	Photography
Feedback system design	Print production
Film production	Proposal writing
Government relations	Scriptwriting
Graphic design	Speakers bureaus
Identity programs	Speech writing
Investor relations	Time management

In addition, these other skills and personal qualities become important depending upon the area of business communications you choose to pursue. The more of these you are able to acquire or nurture, the better your chances of securing the type of job you are seeking.

couldn't be made. Having said that, it is true that the nonprofit sector often has less money (and more need for it) than the private, profit-making sector. While salaries in these settings might be lower, the work experience can be equally, if not more, rewarding than in the corporate world.

Nonprofit associations number in the hundreds of thousands nationwide. Under this umbrella fall charitable organizations, private foundations, professional associations, and some educational institutions.

Charitable groups such as Easter Seals, the American Red Cross, the American Cancer Society, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the United Way, YMCA and YWCA, Boy Scouts of America, the American Heart Association, and a score of others need employees with communications backgrounds.

And for every profession, there is at least one professional association, a membership-supported organization joining together groups of people with common interests and career goals. While most new graduates look upon professional associations as a place to get career support and perhaps help in finding a job, communications majors realize that this setting can be the ultimate career goal in itself.

Specialist communicators working for charitable organizations and professional associations perform much the same functions as their counterparts in the corporate world. There are promotional campaigns to be developed, media contacts to be made, employee and community relations to be maintained. Added to this are the activities of fundraising and membership drives.

Growth in this sector seems to be on the rise and more and more rewarding opportunities are becoming available.

### **Educational Institutions**

Universities, colleges, and other educational institutions have a great need for employees with communications backgrounds. Here are just a few departments in which a communications major would be qualified to work:

**Admissions**—communicating the highlights of the institution to attract new students.

**Alumni Relations**—maintaining contact with alumni for the purpose of fundraising and community relations.

**Career Placement/Service Centers**—establishing contact with potential employees and providing career counseling and guidance to students.

**Community Affairs/Relations**—ensuring open communication and cooperation between the institution and neighboring community, and developing outreach programs providing adult and continuing education programs.

**Cooperative Education**—maintaining contact with the business community and other fields for student job placement.

**Development**—continuing the ongoing process of fundraising, targeting other groups in addition to alumni.

**International Student Affairs**—providing orientation, counseling, and help with immigration procedures to foreign students.

**Publications**—working with campus newspapers, magazines, college catalogs, yearbooks, and other print needs of the institution.

In addition to being an employment setting for communications specialists, educational institutions also offer the communications major—usually one with a Ph.D.—the added employment opportunity of teaching future communications majors.

Communications departments are flourishing; currently communications ranks second only to business as the most popular major. This means that there is a growing need for instructors and professors to teach the communication skills that are needed in the nonacademic world.

### **Hospitals and Medical Centers**

The health care industry—and it is an industry—has a growing need for communications specialists to fill many of the same roles they would in the corporate world. With changes in national health care policies, the need for specialists in public relations, community affairs, marketing, and other related areas is on the increase.

Possible settings include:

Government-funded agencies (such as the Center for Disease Control)

Health advertising agencies

Hospitals (both private and community based)

Outpatient medical centers

Pharmaceutical companies

Professional schools of medicine

Rehabilitation clinics

Residential treatment facilities

Volunteer health organizations

Job titles and responsibilities are similar to those in the corporate world. The main skill being sought is the ability to communicate effectively.



## **Foreign Service**

The Foreign Service is a natural choice for communications majors interested in business and intercultural communications. The Foreign Service divides the different specialty areas into the following cones:

**Administration** Administrative personnel at overseas posts are responsible for hiring foreign national workers, providing office and residential space, assuring reliable communications with Washington, D.C., supervising computer systems, and providing security for the post's personnel and property.

**Consular Services** Consular workers must be excellent communicators, and often combine the skills of lawyers, judges, investigators, and social workers. Their duties range from issuing passports and visas to finding a lost child or helping a traveler in trouble.

**Economic Officers** Economic officers maintain contact with key business and financial leaders in the host country, reporting to Washington on the local economic conditions and their impact on American trade and investment policies. They are concerned with issues such as commercial aviation safety, fishing rights, and international banking.

**Political Affairs** Those working in political affairs analyze and report on the political views of the host country. They make contact with labor unions, humanitarian organizations, educators, and cultural leaders.

**Information and Cultural Affairs** As part of the Foreign Service, the United States Information Agency (USIA) promotes U.S. cultural, informational and public diplomacy programs. An Information Officer might develop a library open to the public, meet with the press, and oversee English language training programs in the host country.

**Commercial and Business Services** In this division, a Foreign Service Officer identifies overseas business connections for American exporters and investors, conducts market research for the success of U.S. products, and organizes trade shows and other promotional events.

Although many Foreign Service Officers are skilled in political science and history, these days candidates are expected to have knowledge in specialized fields such as communications, the environment, computer science, and trade.

## **Government Agencies**

Some readers may not initially associate working for government agencies with corporate communications. In actuality, the services the government

needs are similar if not identical to those utilized in the business world. Internal employee relations and external public relations are concerns as important in the public sector as they are in the private sector. Although the job titles might vary—public information officer rather than PR specialist—the services they perform are the same.

In addition to the Foreign Service, there are scores of government agencies and departments on the local, state, and federal level that utilize the services of professional communicators.

## **Military**

The military utilizes both civilian and noncivilian personnel in a variety of communications activities, from promotion and recruitment to public information and intelligence.

PIOs (public information officers) deal with the community, the media, and with internal communications, usually in the form of base newsletters or other military publications. Intelligence agencies, both at home and abroad, employ communications specialists expert in gathering data and channeling it to the appropriate offices.

A stint in military communications is a career in itself or an excellent stepping stone to the corporate world.

## **Utilities**

Utility companies no longer sit quietly in the background going about their business of providing power. Environmentalists (and the PR professionals who work for them) have raised public awareness to the dangers of potential and existing environmental hazards. PR professionals employed by utilities keep communication open, instituting programs to work with the community, and documenting and explaining their impact on the environment.

Communications majors in this field need to be skilled negotiators, as comfortable with a computer as a microphone.

## **Labor Unions**

Labor unions recognize the importance of building support for their programs and positions. Major unions and their affiliates operate news and speaker bureaus, publish a variety of newsletters, reports, and brochures, and offer educational programs to civic groups and schools.

A communications major at home in this setting can find a satisfying lifelong career.

## **Nonprofit Associations**

The term "nonprofit" is a tax status exempting some organizations from partial or complete tax payments; it never was intended to mean that a profit

The specific industries employing communications professionals included:

Advertising: 1.72%  
Aerospace: 1.31%  
Agriculture: .67%  
Audiovisual: .70%  
Automotive: .71%  
Chemical: 1.25%  
Computers: 2.89%  
Construction: .29%  
Design: 1.34%  
Education: 5.02%  
Engineering: 1.35%  
Finance/Banking: 6.14%  
Food/Beverage: 1.82%  
Graphic Arts/Printing: 1.39%  
Hotel/Lodging: .44%  
Insurance: 5.63%  
Manufacturing: 5.54%  
Medical/Health: 8.44%  
Metals/Mining: .61%  
Petroleum: 1.60%  
Pharmaceutical: 1.27%  
Photography: .37%  
Professional Services: 3.27%  
Public Relations: 8.06%  
Publishing: 1.99%  
Real Estate: .67%  
Retail Sales: 1.23%  
Transportation: 1.86%  
Utilities (Communications): 4.58%  
Other: 24.07%

Though the distribution appears to be fairly evenly spread among these specific industries, the medical/health and public relations fields were out in front with an 8.44 and 8.06 percentage.

Several of these settings are examined here and in later chapters in this book.

### Corporations

Many large corporations place communication specialists within their personnel departments or human resources programs. Some corporations also have specific communications departments. In addition, communications specialists are commonly found within various other departments, such as advertising, publications, public relations, research and development, and sales.

### Private Consulting Firms

More and more, private consulting firms are fulfilling a need for those corporations that, whether because of size or budget, do not choose to hire a permanent staff of corporate communicators, trainers, or PR professionals.

Private consulting firms work with clients on a fee-for-service basis or on a retainer. As needs or problems arise, a corporation can bring in a consulting firm, which will conduct a needs-analysis and submit a written proposal covering how they plan to proceed and how much it will cost.

Consultants employed by a firm can work on a straight salary basis or salary plus commission.

### Private Public Relations Firms

Public relations firms function much the way private consulting firms do. They take on a variety of different clients, from large corporations to church groups or government bodies, assess their needs, propose a plan of action, and often implement that plan.

Most PR firms are located in major cities and have a staff size ranging from fewer than a dozen workers to over one thousand. Some offices are generalists, while others specialize in specific areas such as government relations, employee communications, or educational and social programs.

### Self-Employed/Freelancers

Self-employed or freelance communications consultants work similarly to their counterparts employed by private firms. The advantage is that the money to be made goes directly to the consultant and not into the firm's coffers; the disadvantage is that the independent consultant has to cover all his or her own expenses and build up a client base from scratch.

## Alumni Relations and Development

One of a university's biggest assets is its alumni. Both state- and privately-funded institutions rely in part on donations from former students to meet budgetary needs. Most universities have departments staffed with professional communicators whose duties include locating and maintaining contact with alumni, coordinating regional alumni chapters, and helping organize alumni events.

Communications take the form of personal letters, newsletters, magazines, and sometimes, telephone calls, all appealing to the alumni's sense of school spirit and loyalty to the alma mater.

## Fundraising and Event Coordinating

For charitable organizations and other nonprofits, as well as political entities, fundraising is a major activity. Here communicators develop promotional campaigns and membership drives, stage events—charitable balls, dinners, speakers, Sunday softball league tournaments—and maintain media contact.

## POSSIBLE JOB TITLES

The following list has been drawn up to give you an idea of the scope of jobs available in the corporate world that would be of interest to communications majors. There is much overlap, however, across occupations and job settings. For example, job titles within the field of public relations will also be found in health communications, and job titles that exist in a corporate setting also find a home within advertising agencies or marketing firms.

For ease in locating particular job titles, the list has been arranged alphabetically. However, this list is by no means exhaustive. During your job search, you can use this list as a reference, adding to it as you come across notices for jobs that mention related skills.

Alumni Relations Coordinator	Community Relations Specialist
Business Development Manager	Consumer Affairs Specialist
Civic Affairs Representative	Copyeditor
Communications Consultant	Copywriter
Communications Specialist	Corporate Communications Director
Community Affairs Coordinator	Corporate Communicator

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Director of Development	Management Supervisor
Editor	Patient Advocate
Educational Affairs Director	Press Secretary
Employee Publications Specialist	Promotional Campaign Developer
Event Coordinator	Public Information Officer
Fundraiser	Public Relations Assistant
Government Relations	Public Relations Manager
Group/Regional Manager	Public Relations Writer
Industrial PR Executive	Research Assistant
Intercultural Communications Specialist	Researcher
Intercultural Communicator	Spokesperson
Interpersonal Communicator	Staff Writer
Investor Relations Director	Volunteer Coordinator

## POSSIBLE EMPLOYERS

The International Association of Business Communicators surveyed its more than 12,000 members to determine the range of industries and types of businesses or organizations in which member communications professionals were employed. The majority, 40.51 percent, reported working for corporations. Other settings included the following:

- Nonprofit associations: 12.72%
- Consulting firms, Communications: 8.06%
- Self-Employed/Freelance: 5.62%
- Utility companies: 4.60%
- Educational institutions: 4.56%
- Government/Military: 4.34%
- Consulting firms, Management: 3.46%
- Writing/Editing firms: 1.15%
- State-owned corporations: .99%
- Labor unions: .14%
- Other: 13.85%

**SENIOR EMPLOYEE: COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST**

\_\_\_\_\_ , named one of America's 10 best employers, is seeking a rounded corporate communicator for its \_\_\_\_\_ office. The qualified applicant will be able to plan communication strategies, lead a writing team, edit/write for nationally recognized publications, and serve internal clients. Required is a degree in communications, journalism, or related field and 5–10 years corporate/agency/newspaper experience to include heavy business writing. Must possess excellent skills in production and project management, communication planning, editing, writing, and interpersonal and client relations. Experience in managing print budgets and desktop publishing would be preferred.

\_\_\_\_\_ offers excellent benefits, competitive salary, and a retirement plan. Salary history and resume should be mailed to . . .

Taking an entry level position within a corporation is almost a guarantee of a start up the corporate ladder. Successful corporate communicators show initiative, creativity, and a strong sense of compassion and integrity. The larger the corporation, the more varied the duties, and the more chances of adding to your professional and personal skill bank.

Corporate communications is an exciting and challenging field of opportunities, opportunities that are particularly available to communications majors.

**Intercultural Communications**

With more and more American companies becoming global in nature, with multinational concerns, intercultural and cross-cultural communications have become important issues. Major corporations such as Coca Cola have toe-holds in almost every conceivable market in the world, from major markets in the Far East to isolated pockets in Africa or small island nations. In addition, international businesses based overseas deal with countries other than just the United States. Corporate Japan, for example, courts a lucrative market in Korea, and the European Economic Community regularly conducts business across the geographical and cultural borders of Europe.

American communications majors play an important role in intercultural and cross-cultural communications. When a Pizza Hut opens its doors in a Persian Gulf country, it's an American intercultural communicator who goes there to ensure good relations between Arab franchise owners and Indian or Filipino workers.

The goal is to get the job done—without offending anyone. Intercultural communications experts work both at home and abroad. They deal with cor-

porate managers or entry-level workers, teaching effective communication skills between cultures.

**Corporate Training**

Just as with corporate communicators, corporate trainers can put their skills to use in a variety of capacities. For example, before intercultural communicators can even begin to accomplish their employers' goals, they might have to spend months living in a culture, feeling their way through to becoming familiar with it. This is not the most effective and productive method. Instead, savvy companies hire the services of a corporate trainer who is already versed in the particular culture and environment. An expert corporate trainer will save a company months of time and uncountable dollars. A good trainer can teach a potential intercultural communicator most of what he or she needs to know in a matter of weeks, not months, and for far less money than an extended stay overseas would cost.

Corporate trainers also work strictly stateside, teaching communications skills between staff and management; conducting seminars and workshops; running motivational sessions; and teaching new skills and upgrading existing ones.

A corporate trainer could work with employees and a new computer system or provide orientation to new employees. The role of the corporate trainer can be as varied as the company's enterprises.

**Investor Relations**

Investor relations is a specialty within corporate communications for businesses that are owned by the public through the sale of stock. The investor relations professional makes sure that there is an open flow of information from the corporation to shareholders, prospective investors, financial analysts who make stock recommendations, lending institutions that issue lines of credit, and business and financial writers associated with the news media.

Investor relations practitioners might also be involved with the writing and distribution of quarterly and annual reports, and ensuring that the company adheres to regulations imposed by the Security Exchange Commission.

In addition to a strong communications background, candidates in this area must also have solid financial and investment expertise.

**Government Relations**

A government relations specialist puts PR techniques to good use when dealing with potential legislation that would negatively affect an organization. He or she can help to create public awareness or rally public opinion or sympathy to the cause.