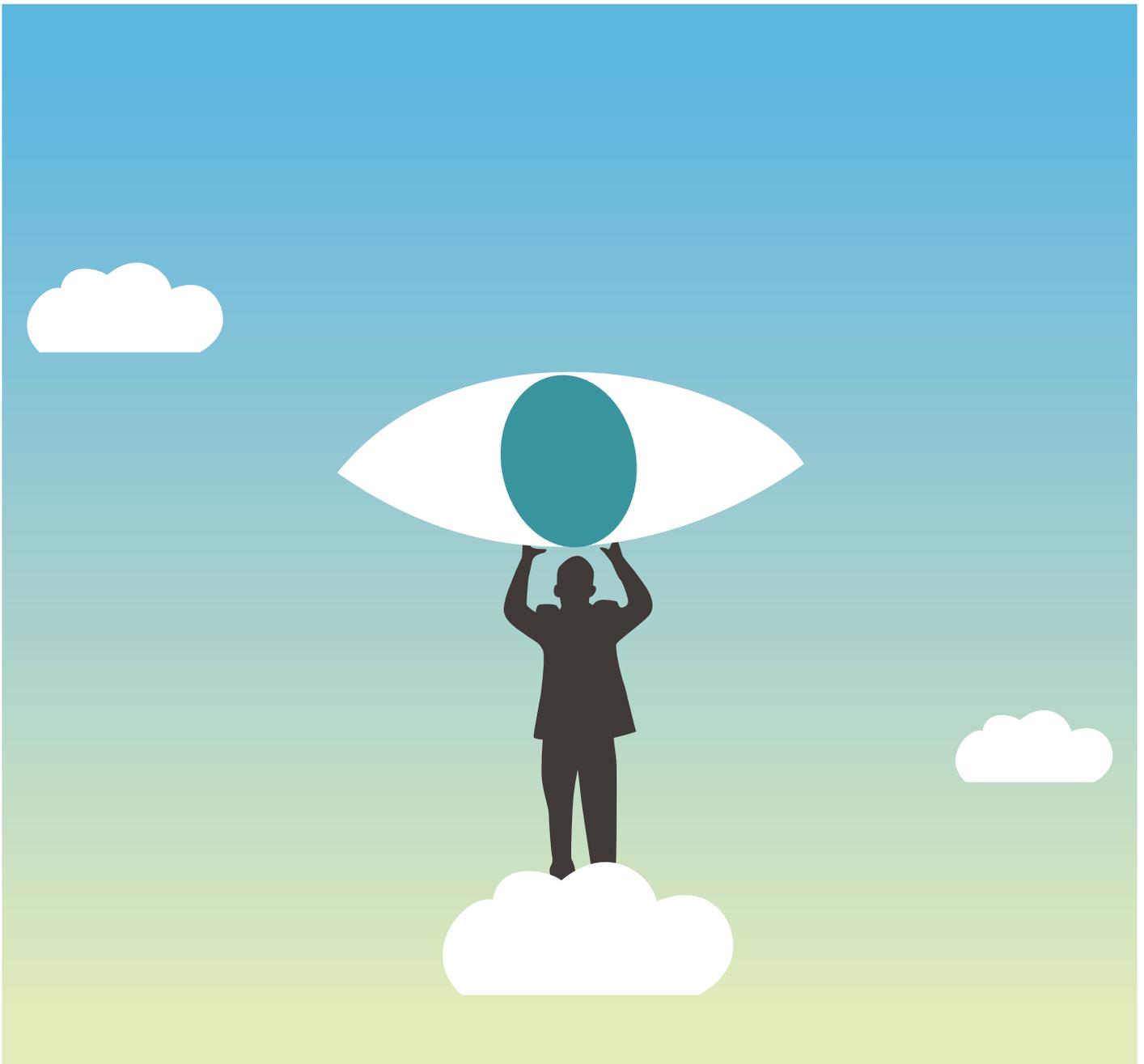




VMA
GROUP

Understanding the European Communications Labour Market

A Perspective for Hiring Managers





Introduction

VMA Group is the global executive recruitment and professional development partner in corporate and marketing communications, PR and investor relations. As such, our dedicated teams of consultants across our global network of offices, work with communications professionals on a daily basis.

Our Brussels and Amsterdam offices both focus on a mixture of corporate communications, public affairs, internal and external communications recruitment for a variety of clients, both multinational and local organisations.

Whether looking for a career move, searching for talent as an employer or as part of our worldwide communications community, VMA Group aims to understand the challenges and issues that communications professionals face. We want to explore their motivations and aspirations and find out what makes certain communicators successful and content in their roles.

At the end of 2012, VMA Group embarked on an ambitious project to research the European communications employer market and produce a report for hiring managers in this field. The survey itself focused on a large number of communications professionals currently living and working in mainland Europe, predominantly in Belgium, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Our report focuses on why communications professionals seek new career opportunities, and just as importantly, why they remain in existing roles. Within the report we also investigate the influence of location, job role, sector and industry on how these decisions are made.

We are delighted to share this first report with you which is compiled from the responses of over 200 communications professionals. The survey is ongoing and we aim to publish more detailed results at the end of 2013 as we start to build a long-term picture of trends and issues.

We hope you find the report of interest, and if there is anything you would like to explore a little further, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Willem de Ruijter

Head of Europe
VMA Group

How can hiring managers use this report?

- » *To attract the best talent in the marketplace through a better understanding of the motivations of communications professionals to move roles.*
- » *To improve employee retention by adapting HR processes and benefits programme to staff needs.*
- » *To improve the understanding of the relationship between the recruitment process and corporate reputation.*
- » *To understand the advantages and disadvantages of in-house recruitment and how a specialist recruiter can add value.*

Respondents

Location

The majority of respondents currently work in the Benelux region, with 22 different nationalities represented. Next to Dutch and Belgian nationals, British nationals are the largest group, reflecting the European markets in which VMA Group operates.

Interestingly for hiring managers, we saw a significant number of respondents working beyond national borders, reflecting the fluidity of the European job market as a whole. In particular, there were a large number of UK nationals working in Belgium and Switzerland as well as a significant number of Dutch nationals working in Belgium.

239

Respondents

54% 46%



female

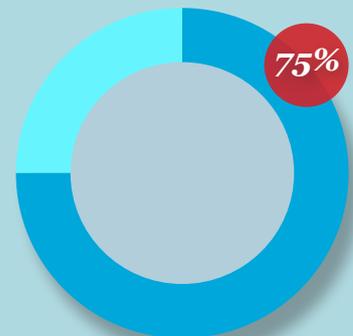


male

88%

*currently
employed in
Benelux*

75% *working
in-house*
25% *working for
agencies*



22 Nationalities

predominantly Belgian, Dutch and British

11% British

27% Dutch

28% Belgian

Communications Specialism

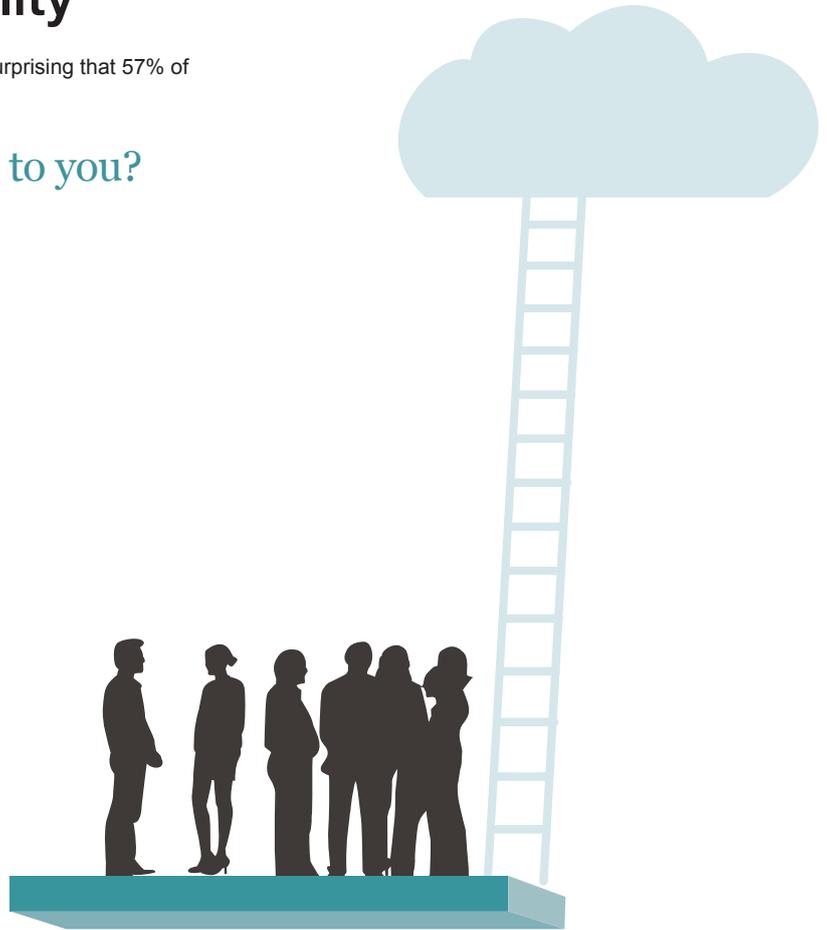
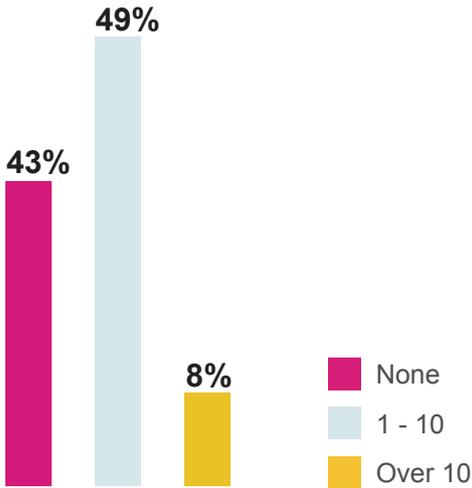
We found that communications professionals often see their role as very varied, regularly working in more than one area. The majority of respondents chose to select three or four specialist areas from the choices available.



Managerial Responsibility

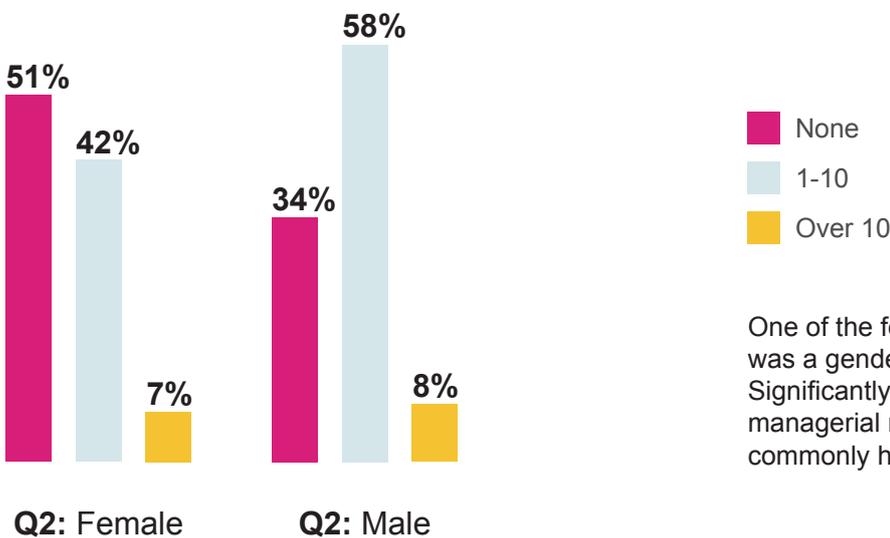
Given the executive focus of VMA Group communities, it is unsurprising that 57% of respondents have some form of managerial responsibility.

How many people directly report to you?



Gender and Managerial Responsibility

How many people directly report to you?

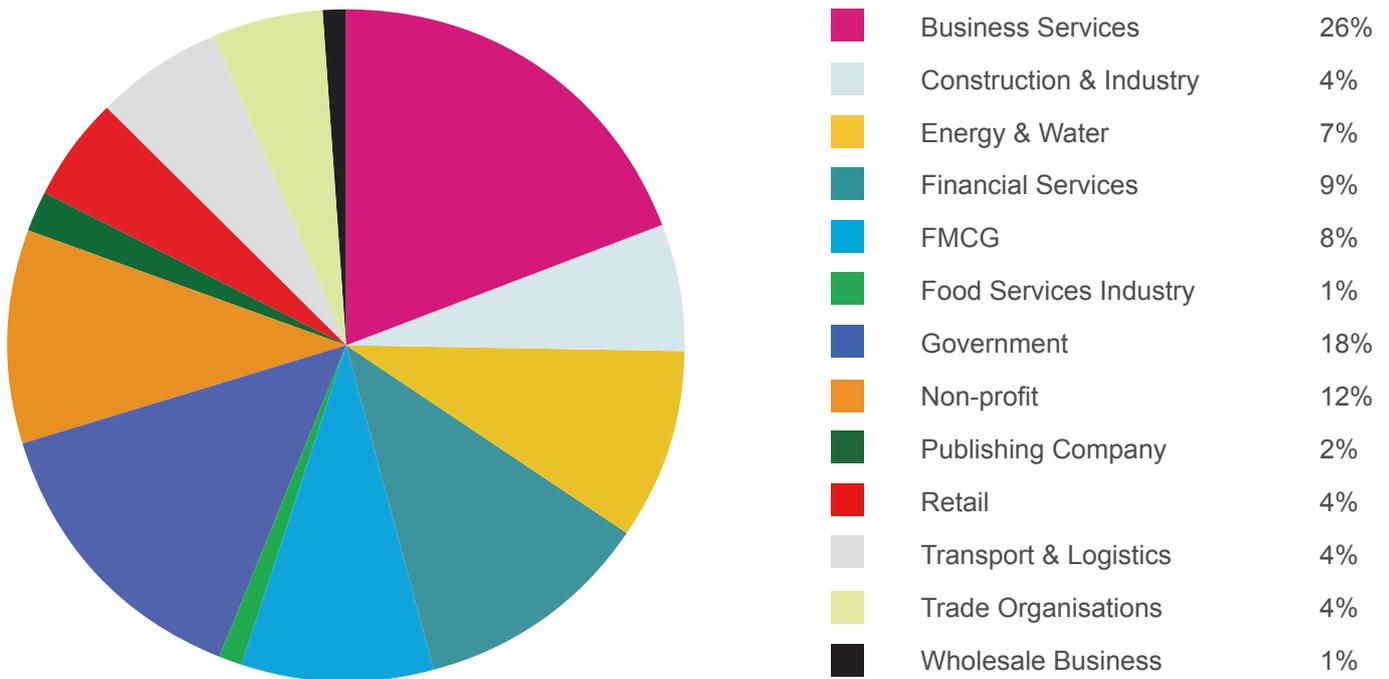


One of the few areas within the survey where there was a gender disparity was managerial responsibility. Significantly more female respondents had no direct managerial responsibility, with male respondents more commonly having between 1 - 10 direct reports.

Industry

Our respondents work in a variety of industries, with Business Services being the largest.

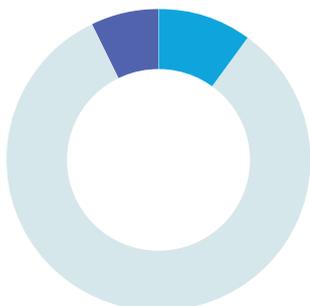
What industry do you work in?



Age and Industry Experience

We found that the majority of our respondents were between 30 and 55 years old, and just over a quarter of respondents have fewer than 10 years' communications experience. Given VMA Group's focus on the executive recruitment market, these results are unsurprising, but important to the context of the report.

Respondents' age



< 30 years	10%
30 - 55 years	83%
> 55 years	7%

Communications experience in years



< 10 years	28%
10 - 20 years	41%
> 20 years	31%

Company Size

VMA Group has a strong heritage in working with large corporations and structuring large global communications teams. This is reflected in the fact that 53% of respondents work at companies with over 1,000 employees.

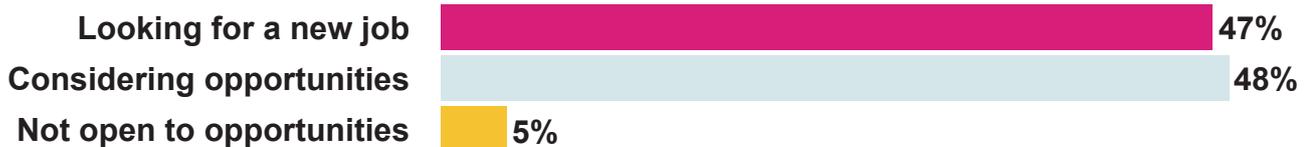
How many employees currently work for your organisation?



Are Communications Professionals Willing to Change Roles?

As a recruitment company, VMA Group currently has a European community of over 35,000 communications professionals, but also a number of candidates "actively looking for a new job opportunity". 95% of our respondents are willing to change roles, whereas only 5% of people were not at all open to new opportunities.

Are you currently:



The most interesting group here is the large number of respondents who would consider opportunities, but are not "actively looking". This particular group of people do not look at LinkedIn job posts, nor do they visit job sites. The challenge for hiring managers is how to reach and persuade this group of candidates to switch roles, in essence doubling the group of candidates from which they can hire.

This openness to considering new roles is reinforced by the feedback from industry events, conversations with our clients and our extended network.

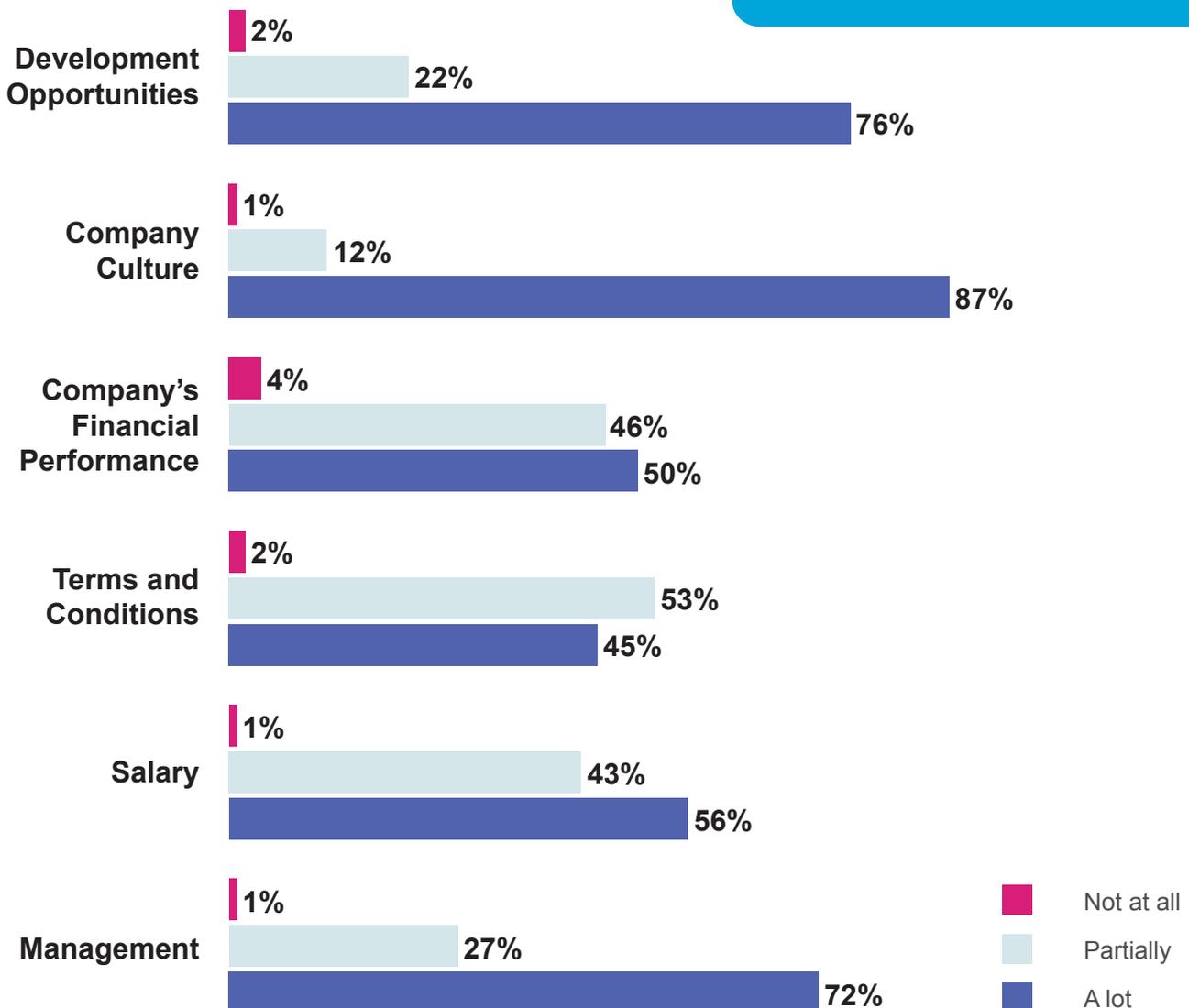
Key Factors to Consider when Moving Jobs

Surprisingly, salary is only the fourth most important factor to our respondents, which really highlights the crucial importance of company culture, professional development and management.

The three most important factors for moving jobs are:

- 1. Company Culture*
- 2. Development Opportunities*
- 3. Management*

What factors do you consider to be important when changing jobs?

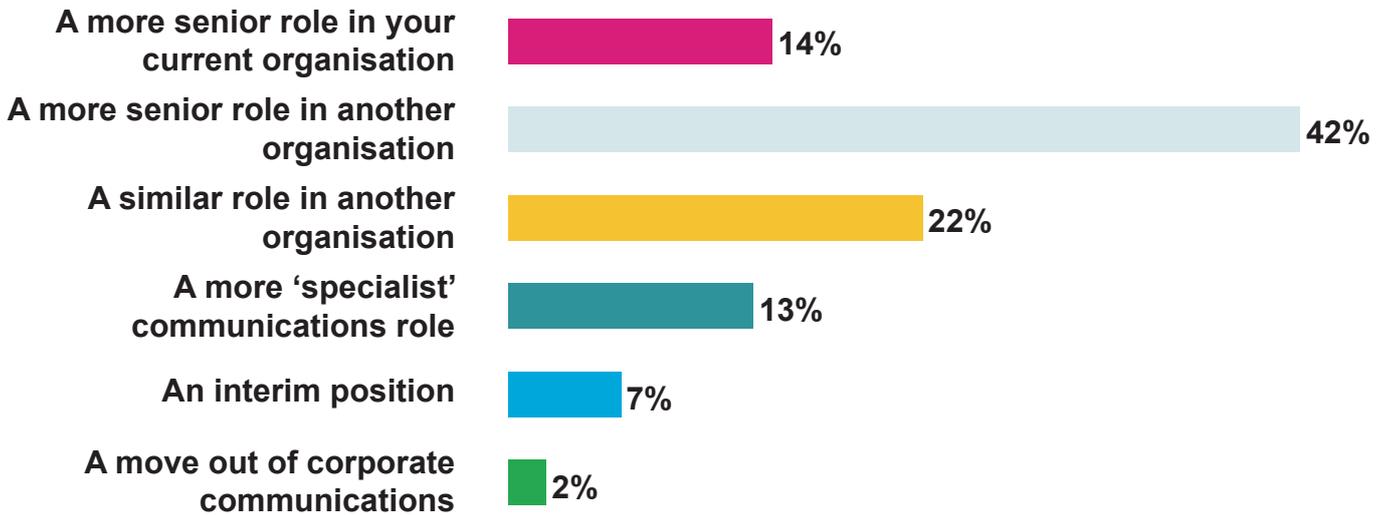


It is clear that **company culture**, **management** and **development opportunities** are all very important, either as reasons to move, or to stay in a current role. This is crucial information for HR managers to be aware of when planning their recruitment and retention strategies for the year.

Ideal Next Career Step

Most people would prefer a more senior role in another organisation, rather than a more senior role in their current organisation.

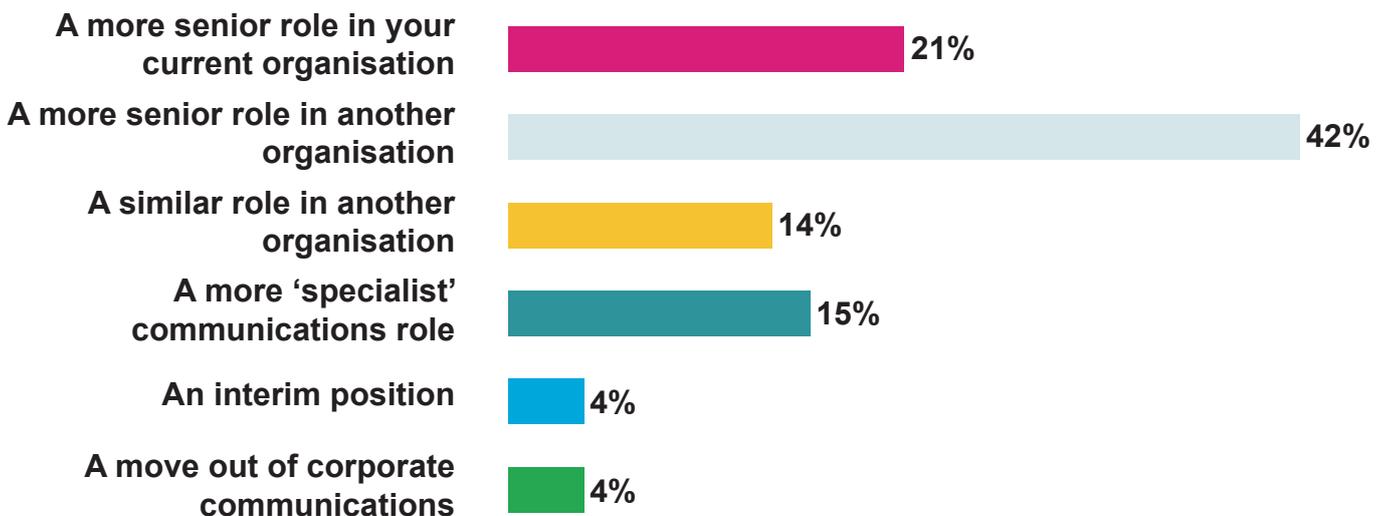
What do you see as your ideal next career step?



This reflects what we see in our daily conversations with candidates.

To sense check these results, we then removed our active candidates (those 'actively looking for a new role') from the responses, but found that communications professionals in general would still prefer a new role in another organisation over a new role in their current organisation.

What do you see as your ideal next career step?



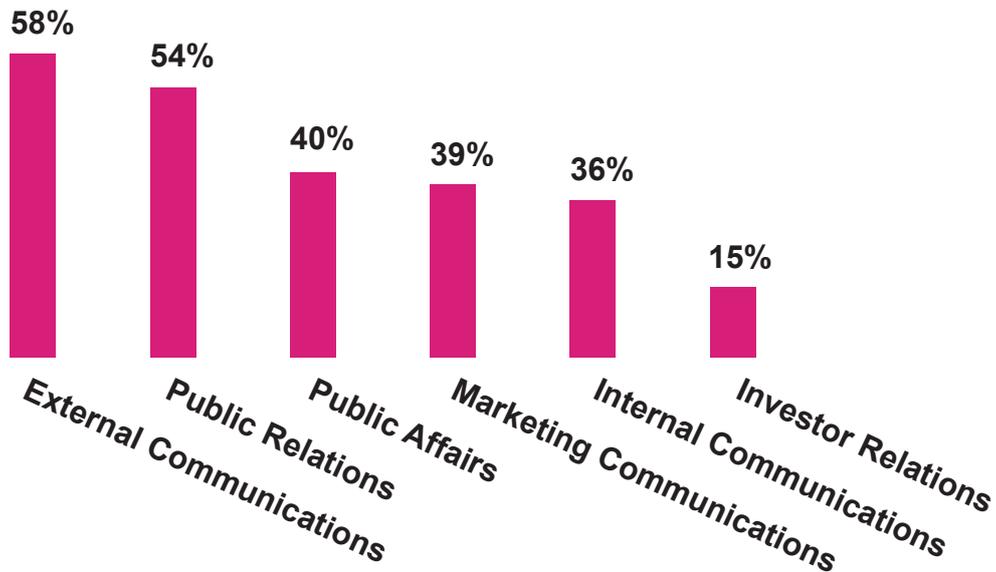
Which Comms Discipline Would You Like to Work in?

Almost four out of five of our respondents would consider moving to a different discipline within communications, with external communications and public relations being the most sought after areas.

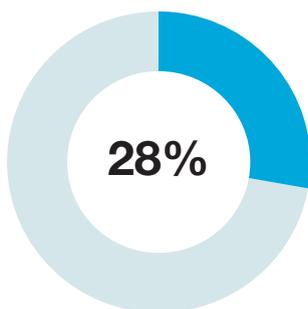
Would you consider moving to a different communications discipline?



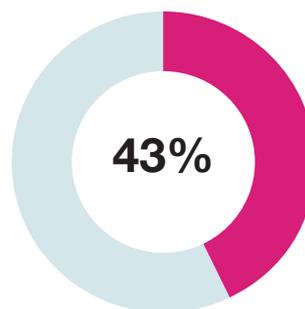
Which communications discipline would you like to work in 'a lot'?



Interestingly, there is a gender disparity regarding internal communications:



Only **28%** of men want to move to internal communications

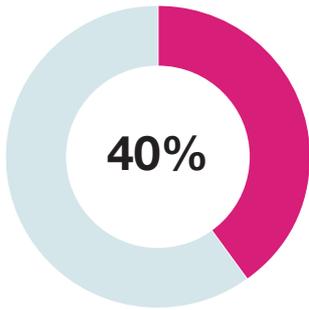


43% of women want to move to internal communications

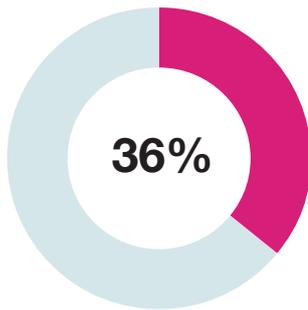
Most and Least Popular Industries

Industry type is a significant factor in respondents' willingness to move jobs.

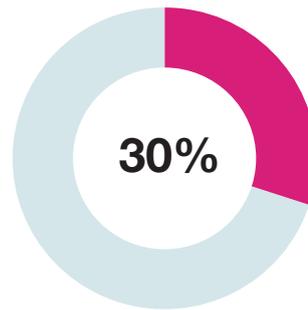
The Three Most Popular Industries:



Energy & Water



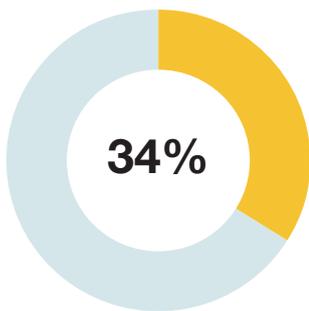
Business Services



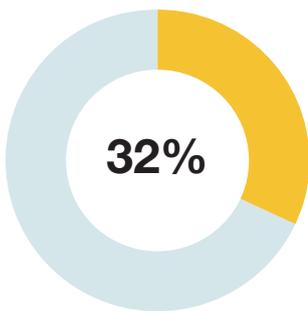
Publishing

We have highlighted the most popular industries and the percentage of people who wanted to move to these industries “a lot”:

The Two Least Popular Industries:



Financial Services



Construction & Industry



The percentage highlighted above is the amount of respondents who answered “not at all” when asked if they wanted to move to these industries.

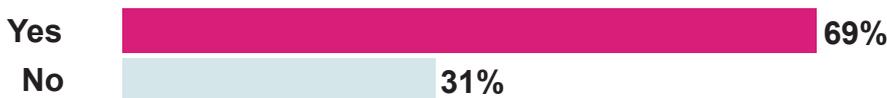


Are You Willing to Relocate to a New Country?

Over two-thirds of respondents are willing to relocate to a new country.

This is critical for hiring managers who, in our experience, often only explore recruitment solutions at a national level. With over two-thirds of respondents willing to relocate, hiring managers need to make sure they take advantage of global networks when recruiting communications roles.

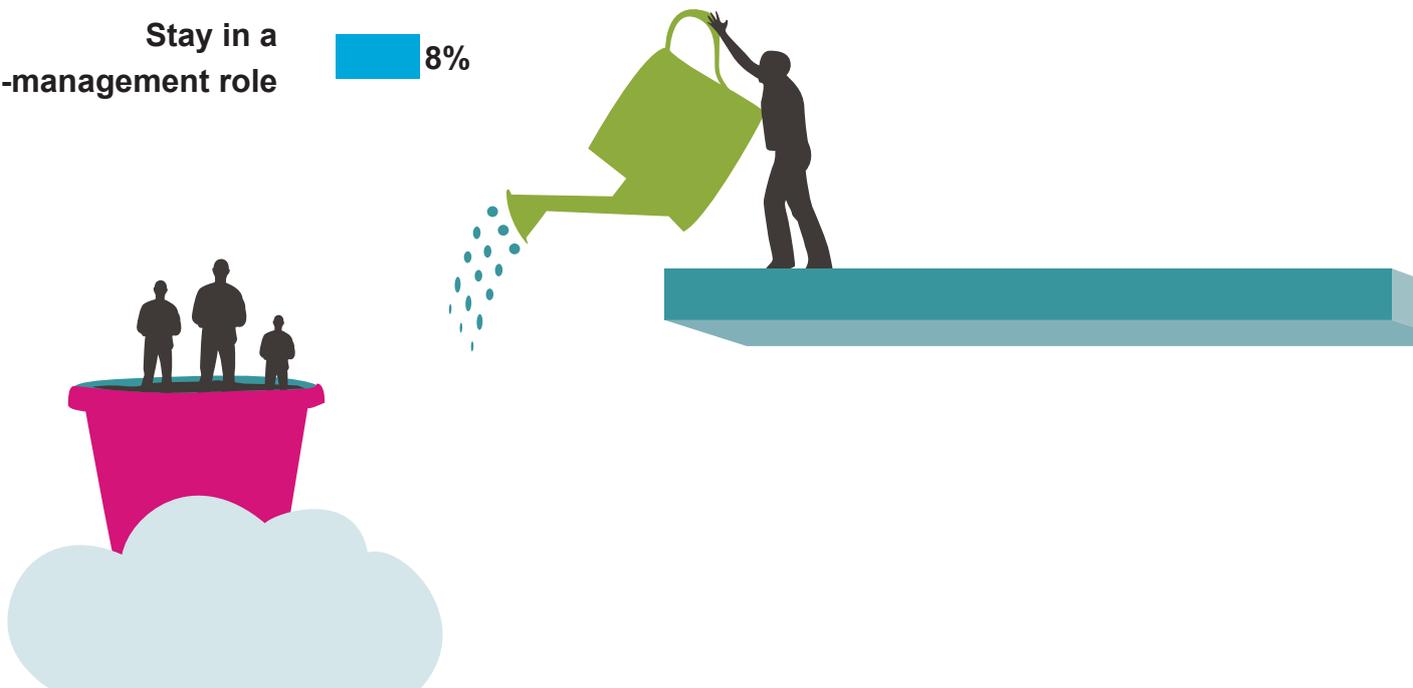
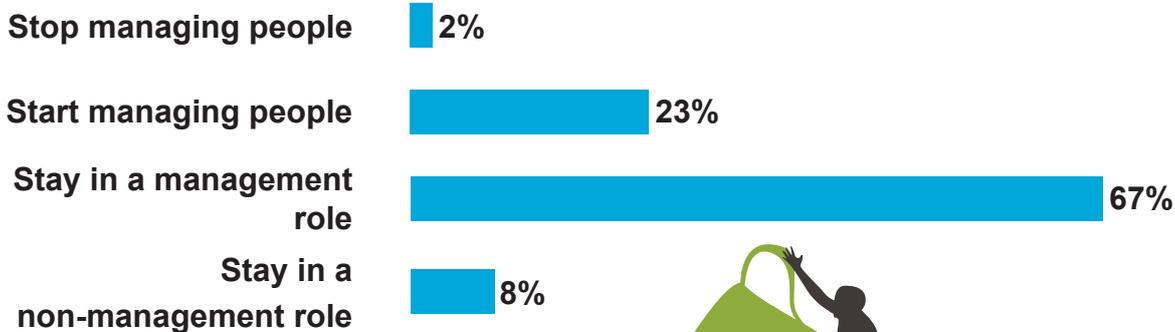
Would you be willing to relocate to a new country?



Do People Want Management Responsibility?

VMA Group focuses on senior communications roles, so a large number of respondents have management responsibility as part of their remit.

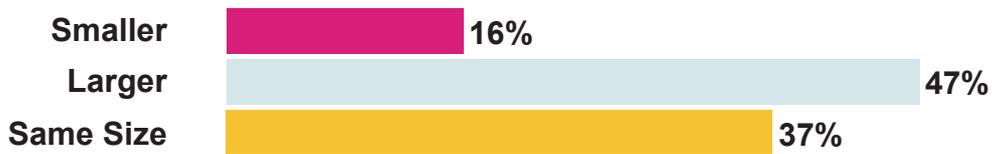
If you ever change jobs would you like to...



Is Company Size Important?

We found that the majority of respondents would like to move to a larger company. Looking at the three most important factors for moving - company culture, development opportunities and good management - we can deduce that larger companies are perceived to be better placed to meet these needs.

What size company would you like to move to if you ever change jobs?



There is a clear preference to work for an international company - 81%.

The fact that so many respondents are willing to relocate to another country, suggests they want to work for an international company where this need is more likely to be met.

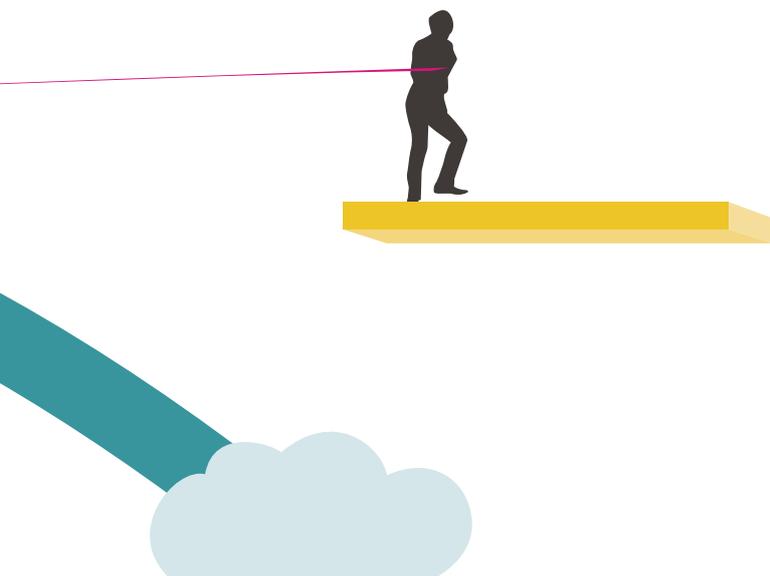
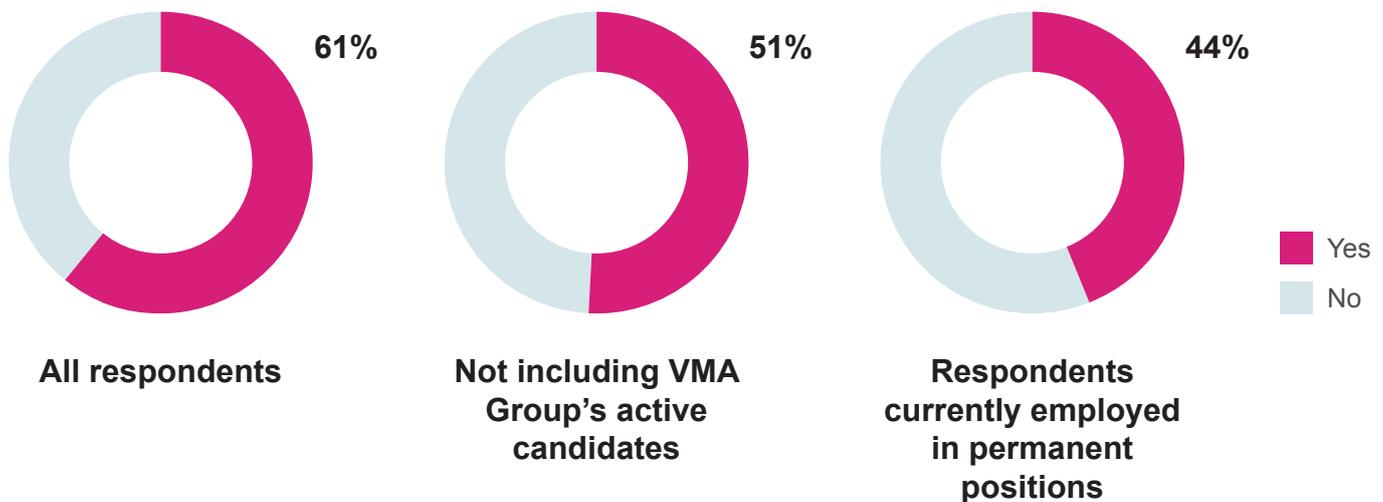
If you ever change jobs, would you prefer to switch to an international company?



Are Interim Roles Attractive?

We found that 61% of respondents would be willing to move to an interim role, and that interim roles were still popular when excluding VMA Group's active candidates, and also those that were employed in interim positions.

Would you consider moving into an interim role?



The top three reasons that communications professionals take on interim roles are:

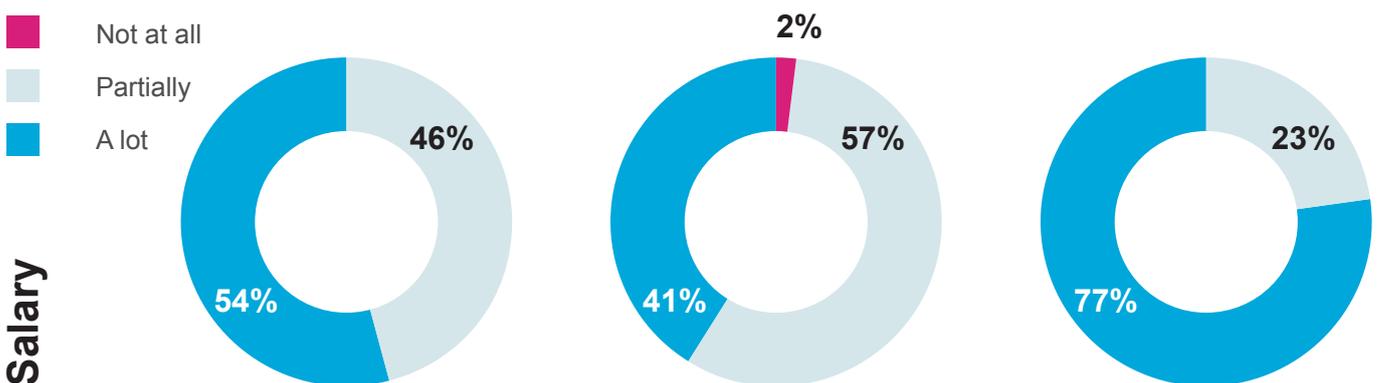
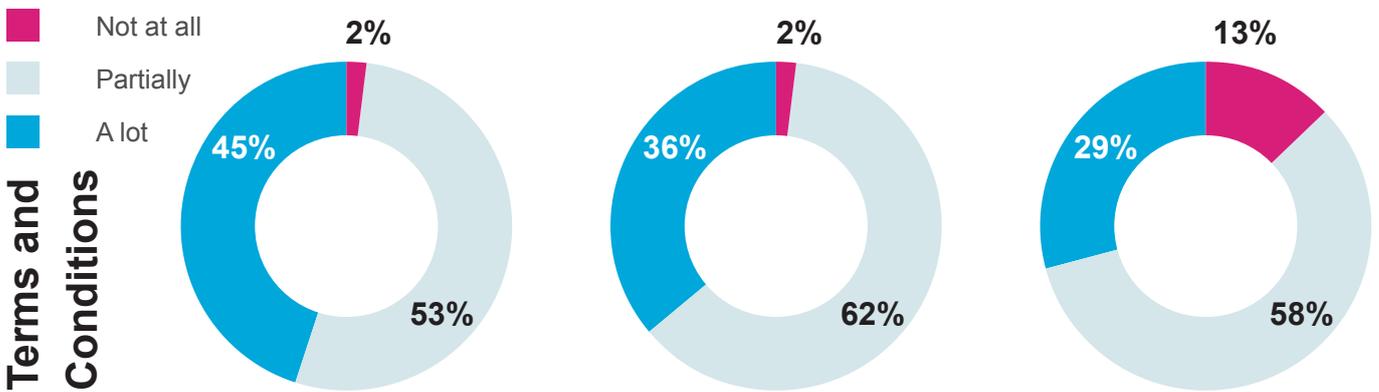
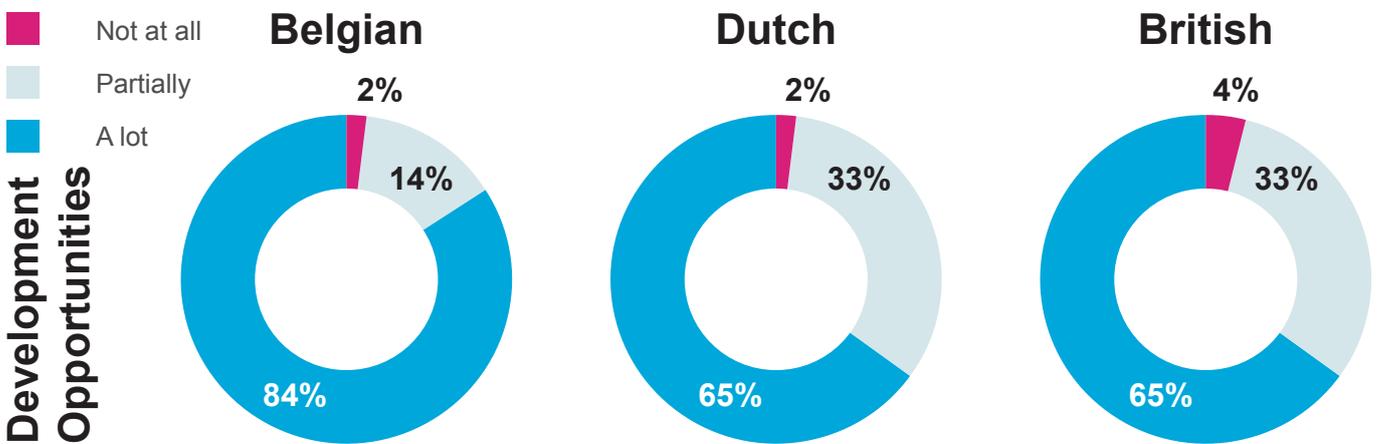
- » *Take control of their work/life balance*
- » *Improved remuneration*
- » *Building up a portfolio of skills in a shorter timeframe*

Nationality and the Communications Labour Market

Key Differences between the British, the Dutch and the Belgians:

- » The British are much more driven by salary when considering new opportunities, whereas the Dutch are the least.
- » Belgians find contractual terms and conditions the most important.
- » Training is much more important to Belgians than it is to the British and the Dutch.

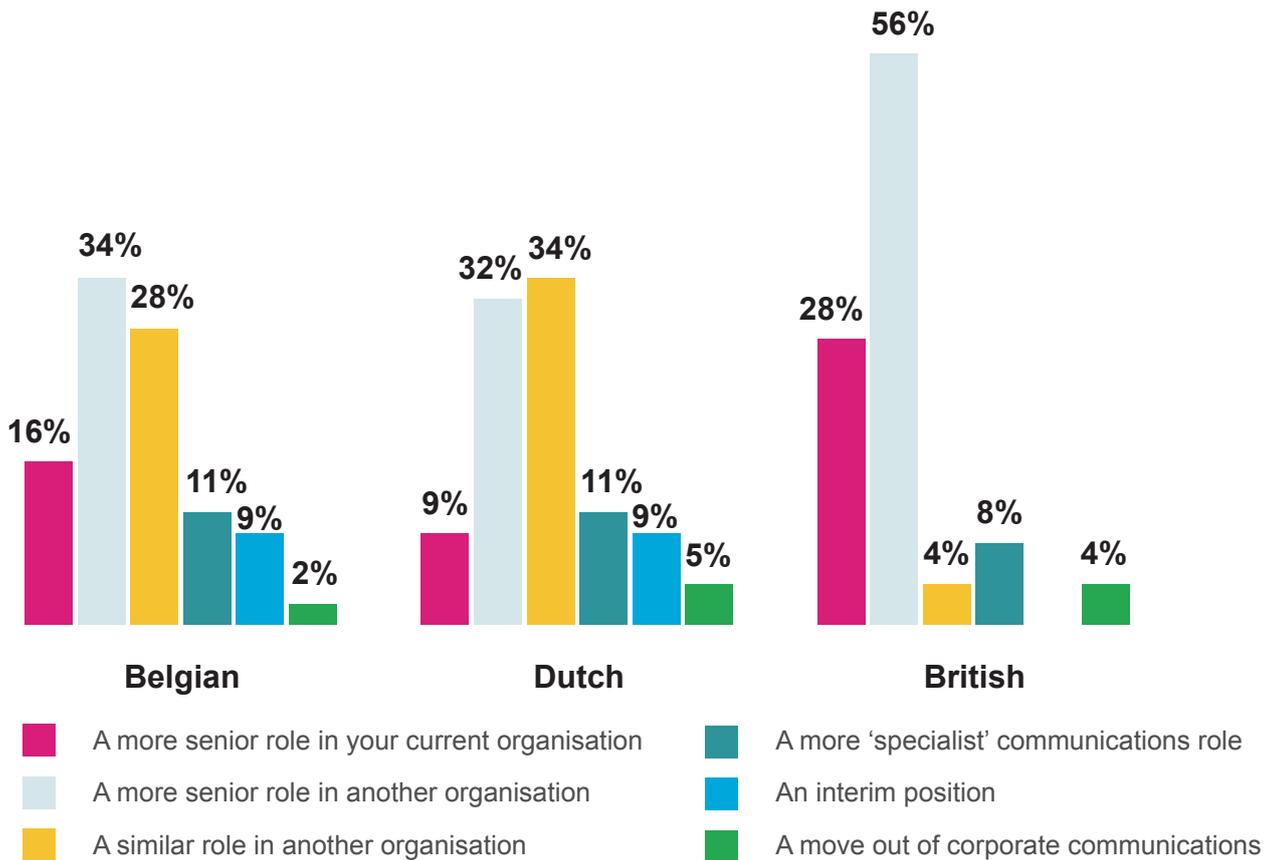
What factors do you consider important when changing jobs?



There is a British resistance to move to a similar role within another organisation; they would expect more seniority as part of a career move.

This is not the case with the Belgian and Dutch, who are more open to moves of similar seniority if the prerequisites (highlighted opposite) have been met.

What do you see as your next ideal career step?

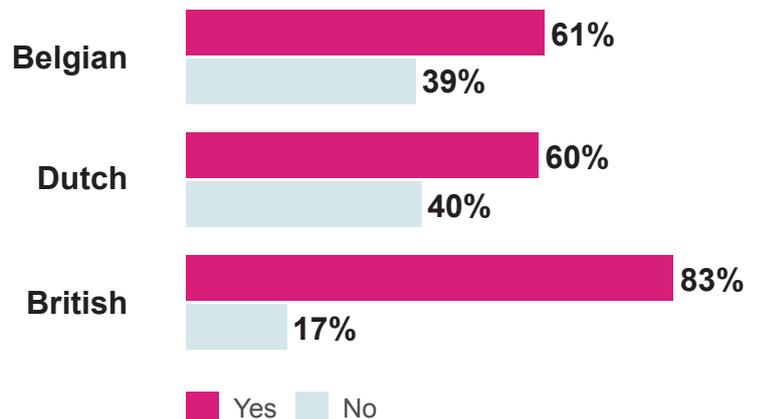


As you can see, the majority of respondents are willing to move to a new country; especially the British. However, we need to remember here that 60% of British respondents participating in this survey already work outside the UK which will have influenced the results.

This data does, however, show the importance of having an international hiring network, whether you are using internal resources, an external agency or advertising roles.

In order to find the best talent in the market, it is clear that hiring managers need to look to partners who can help them look beyond national borders.

Would you be willing to relocate to a new country?



The Recruitment Process and the Role of Agencies

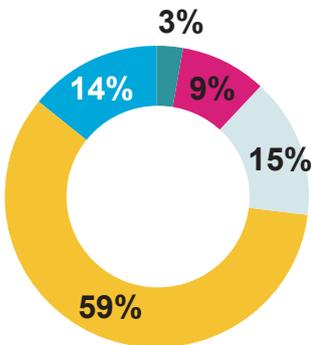
It is clear that communications professionals pay a lot of attention to how companies operate throughout the recruitment process. A good recruitment agency is highly valued and should be able to notify candidates of opportunities they would not necessarily think of themselves. They must also be able to act as a consultant and trusted advisor to the candidate.

Most importantly, a large number of our respondents (44%) were not actively looking at new opportunities, but were willing to consider a move if the right opportunity came along. This is where a good recruitment partner is invaluable.

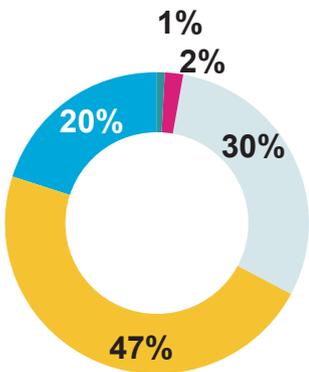
83% of respondents think that a good recruitment process will make a company more attractive to work for, as illustrated below.

Over two-thirds of respondents believe that a company's reputation is directly affected by the actions of the recruitment agency.

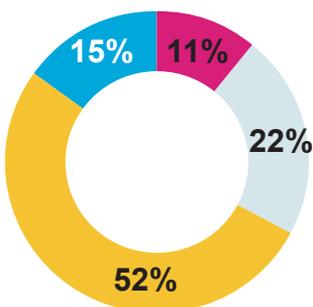
Two-thirds of respondents agree or strongly agree that specialist agencies are "more effective than generalist recruitment agencies", whereas only a very small minority disagree.



‘Executive search and recruitment agencies make you aware of vacancies and companies you would not think of yourself’

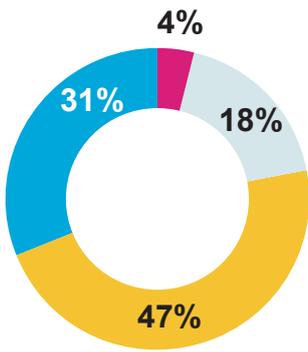


‘Specialist recruitment agencies are more effective than generalist recruitment agencies’

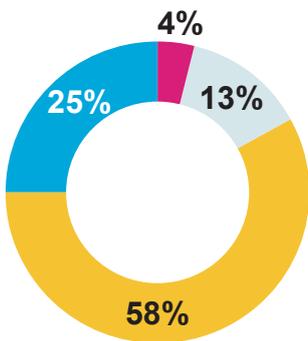


‘The reputation of the client is directly affected by the actions of the recruitment agency’



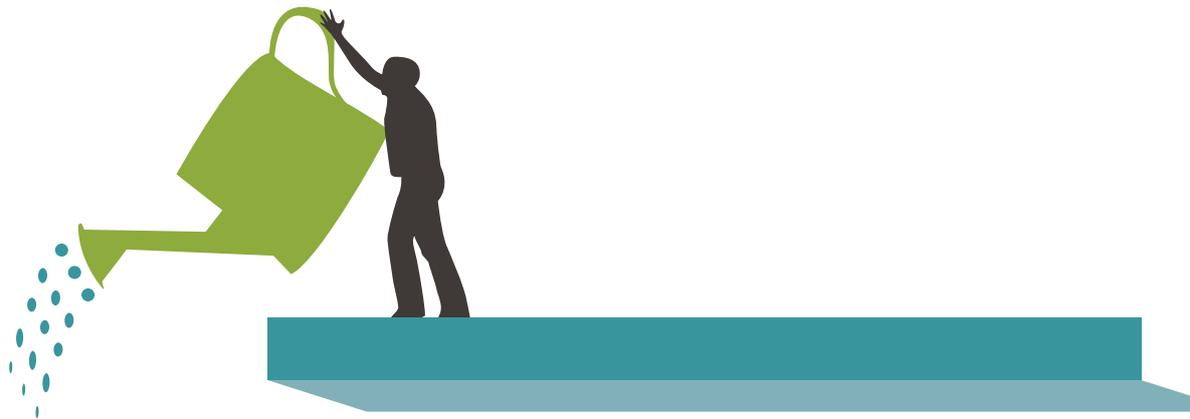


‘A good recruitment agency puts my interests first and places me where I am best suited’



‘A good recruitment process makes a company more attractive to work for’

- Totally disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Totally agree



Conclusion

Our investigation into the communications market has thrown up some extremely interesting facts and figures, not only for hiring managers, but also for the wider communications industry. The employment market is truly international, and a high number of our respondents are open to new opportunities if certain criteria are met. The criteria themselves will also be a surprise to some.

Generally speaking, communications professionals based in Europe value company culture highly. They are open to moving jobs, but ideally want to go to a large international organisation. We see that for communications professionals, the energy sector is the preferred area of work, whereas finance or construction and industry are less popular. Public relations and external communications were also highlighted as preferred specialisms.

Overall, there is a definite “outward” and flexible approach to careers:

- More than 70% would move to another country
- More than 75% would move to another discipline within comms
- More than 90% would move to another industry

Our respondents also have clear preferences for certain companies:

- More than 75% would want to take on or stay in a managerial role
- More than 80% would want to work for an international company
- More than 80% would want to work for a company of the same size or larger

We were also surprised to see that salary is not one of the top three influencing factors when moving roles.

The top three factors are:

1. Company Culture
2. Development Opportunities
3. Management

As a specialist recruiter, we were reassured to see that the communications community clearly recognises the added value of specialist recruitment agencies.

- More than 75% believe they are better served by a specialist recruitment agency
- More than 70% believe that a good agency makes them aware of new vacancies
- More than 80% strongly agree that a good recruitment process makes a company more attractive to work for

Finding the right people to join a company is no easy task, and we hope that this report provides useful insights.

We trust that some of our findings will help mould and improve your hiring processes. If you need any assistance we are just a phone call away.



Willem de Ruijter

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Key questions for hiring managers:

- » *Is my company doing enough to attract the best candidates in the market?*
- » *Is relying on personal or national networks going to generate the best available candidates?*
- » *Given the willingness of people to move, am I doing enough to target potential candidates who are not actively job-seeking?*

Appendix: VMA Group Information

The global executive recruitment and professional development partner in corporate and marketing communications, PR and investor relations.

Since its inception in 1978, VMA Group has grown to be the leading global resourcing and career partner for corporate and marketing communications, PR and investor relations.

Specialist Practices:

- External Communications
- Internal Communications
- Financial Services Communications
- Investor Relations
- Healthcare Communications
- Government & Stakeholder Relations
- PR Agency
- Digital & Social Media
- Marketing Communications

What sets us apart?

Reputation:

Established over 37 years ago, and a leader in communications recruitment

Network:

Immediate access to over 40,000 Communications Professionals

Global:

VMA Group has capacity in Europe, Asia-Pacific and North America

Advertising:

We have an extensive advertising network at our clients' disposal

Fill-Rate:

VMA Group has 100% success rate on retained assignments

Flexibility:

We offer bespoke service levels that suit your needs and budgets

Timeline:

We commit on pre-agreed timelines on recruitment assignments

Experience:

Almost all consultants are senior ex-communications professionals

Key Services:

- Permanent Recruitment
- Interim Management
- Retained Assignments
- Professional Development / Training

Offices:

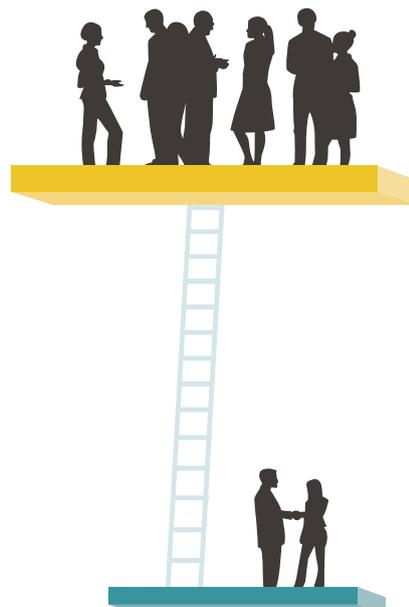
- London
- Manchester
- Birmingham
- Brussels
- Amsterdam
- Hong Kong
- Singapore

“The advantages of working with a specialist communications agency are obvious”

Head of Communications, Financial Services

“VMA offer an incredible service and I highly recommend them”

Head of Internal Communications,
Business Services



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About Us

VMA Group is the global executive recruitment and professional development partner in corporate and marketing communications, PR and investor relations. We place high calibre professionals in permanent, interim and freelance positions at mid to senior management level. The Group specialises in:

- External Communications
- Internal Communications
- Financial Services Communications
- Investor Relations
- Healthcare Communications
- Digital Communications
- Marketing Communications
- Government & Stakeholder Relations
- PR Agency

www.vmagroup.com

Twitter: @VMAGroup

www.facebook.com/VMAGroup

Appendix: VMA Enhance

VMA Enhance is the training arm of VMA Group and delivers professional development courses for communications teams across the globe.

VMA Enhance delivers a comprehensive range of public and in-house training courses for teams and individuals with a range of career backgrounds, from communications professionals to senior leaders, project managers or anyone with a communication responsibility.

VMA Enhance courses are led by a team of highly regarded industry leading associates. This hand-picked team all have recent in-house experience at a senior level, allowing them to call upon real life examples and understand the challenges and issues facing communications professionals today, because they have experienced them first-hand.



Current Courses:

- Strategic Communications Planning
- Impact & Influence
- Effective Change Communications
- Impact & Influence
- Employee Engagement

Contact VMA Enhance

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