

Communications and Marketing Benchmark 2008

CharityComms

Inspiring Communications at the Heart of Charities

Debrief 1- How important are different communications functions?

Introduction

This is the first in a series of debriefs from the Communications and Marketing Benchmark Survey 2008 which was carried out by CharityComms. The aim of the survey was to provide insights into the resources, structures and cultures for communications, in non-profit organisations.

These debriefs aim to present survey results in bite-sized chunks - giving commentary, key charts and descriptions. This first one is about the relative importance attached to different communications disciplines within non-profit organisations.

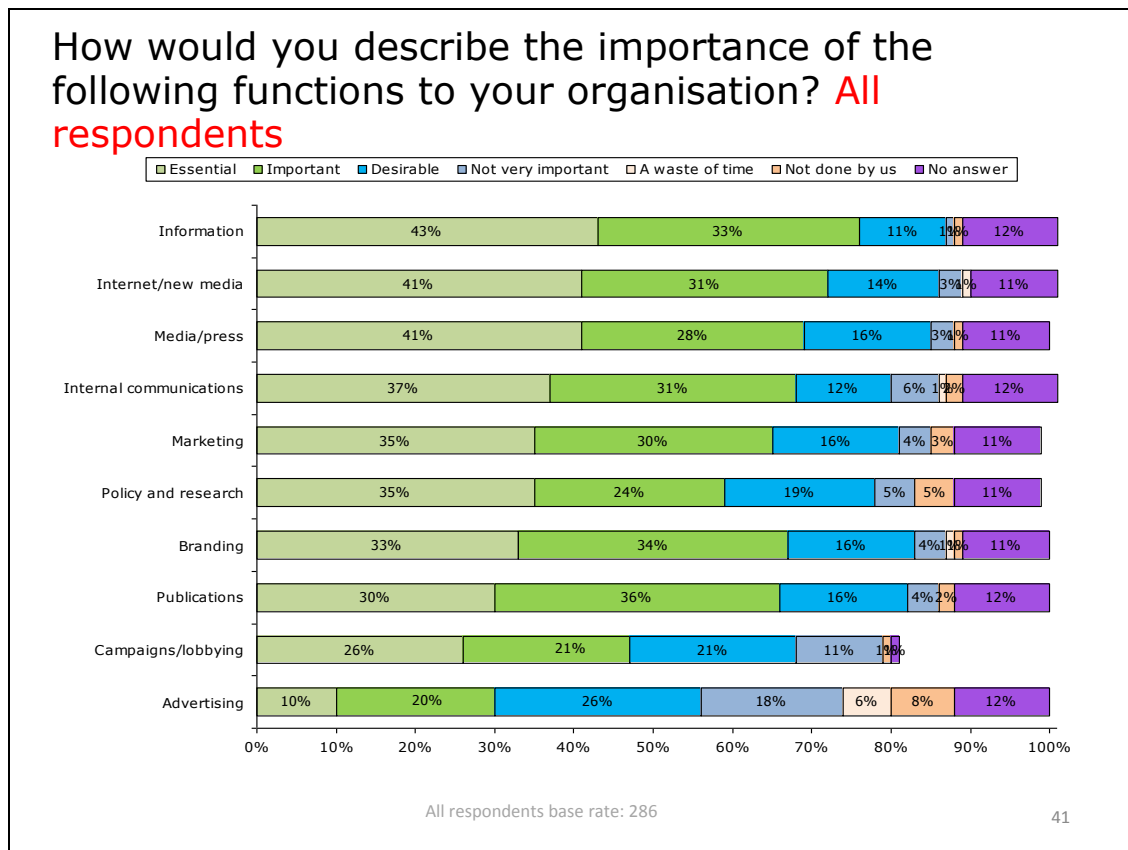
The importance of different communications functions.

The survey looked at the importance attached to the following communications functions: information, Internet/new media, media/press, marketing, policy and research, branding, publications, campaigns/lobbying and advertising.

Perhaps the first thing to note is that few of the different functions are seen as irrelevant or a waste of time. Only advertising had any significant scores of respondents saying it was 'a waste of time'.

In contrast the most important function was information which was judged as 'essential' by 43% of respondents with a further 33% judging it to be 'important'. The next in the list of importance was Internet/new media with 41% saying it was 'essential'. In fact media got the same score, but less said media was 'important' (31% vs 28%).

One of the features of the responses to this question is that many of the communications disciplines had relatively similar scores for how 'essential' they were seen: internal communications (37%), marketing (35%), policy and research (35%), branding (33%), and publications (30%). Only campaigning and advertising had a significant dip. 26% described campaigning and lobbying as being 'essential' and a mere 10% of respondents judged advertising 'essential' – by far the lowest score of any communications discipline.



What difference does size and status make?

It probably isn't surprising that those organisations with more communications staff are more likely to see most communications functions as essential. Also significant is that those organisations with a communications person on the senior management team (SMT) are also more likely to see functions as essential.

For example:

- 58% of larger organisations said that branding was 'essential'. While only 33% of smaller organisations saw branding as 'essential'. 42% of those with a comms person on the SMT saw branding as 'essential', while only 25% of those without, saw branding as 'essential'.
- The same is true for media/press. A staggering 71% of larger organisations said that media work was 'essential', while only 41% of smaller organisations said it was 'essential'. Of those with a comms person on the SMT, 48% said it was 'essential' while 36% of those without saw media as 'essential'.
- Not every discipline has this differentiation (but most do). 'Information' was most likely to be rated as 'essential' overall. 49% of small comms teams and 50% of large comms teams said that information was 'essential'. Similarly 43% of those without and 46% of those with a comms person on the SMT said information was 'essential'.
- Interestingly - those who thought they knew the size of their comms team were also much more likely to say that any specific discipline was essential.

Survey background

Fieldwork was carried out in April and May 2008. The survey was conducted online and was promoted to CharityComms and nfpSynergy online mailing lists. 286 people took part in the survey.

The survey was streamed by size of communications team. Each stream answered a slightly different set of questions in order to maximise the relevance of questions. There were three streams:

- 1) Organisations with over 20 people working in a communications role. We refer to these organisations as "large"
- 2) Organisations with 6-20 people working in a communications role. We refer to these organisations as "medium-sized"
- 3) Organisations with up to 5 people working in a communications role. We refer to these organisations as "small"

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