Communication professionals to step up and keep pace with AI

CSCE — Centre for Strategic Communication Excellence

The 2019 Communicating AI Survey

This survey, second to the inaugural 2018 Communicating AI survey, was designed to continue to capture and benchmark what communication professionals around the world are observing and doing in communication about artificial intelligence (AI).

The research proposed to:
1. Capture what is being tried in communication strategies.
2. Aggregate what is being learned.
3. Benchmark what success looks like.

Who participated

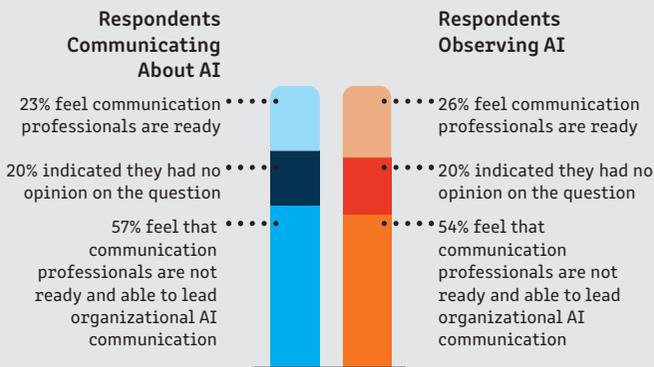More than **170** communication professionals from **24** countries

In 2019 we saw an increase in responses from a number of European and African countries including: Italy, Greece, France, Slovenia, Romania, Poland, Morocco and Ghana.

The business value of communicating about AI

84% feel AI gives communication professionals an opportunity to provide significant value to the organization and is supported by their participation in the survey to share and/or learn more about AI communication. The same number (84%) felt that advocating for adoption of AI communication tools is an important role for communication professionals.

Are we prepared for AI?

Respondents Communicating About AI
- 23% feel communication professionals are ready
- 20% indicated they had no opinion on the question
- 57% feel that communication professionals are not ready and able to lead organizational AI communication

Respondents Observing AI
- 26% feel communication professionals are ready
- 20% indicated they had no opinion on the question
- 54% feel that communication professionals are not ready and able to lead organizational AI communication
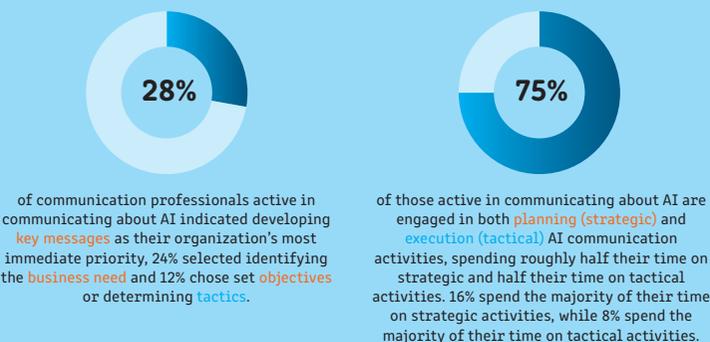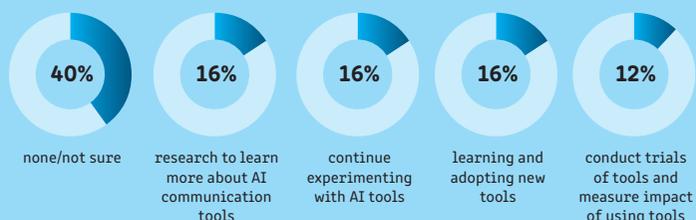
Overall, a majority of respondents (63%) feel the communication industry isn't preparing professionals for a leadership role in AI communication. Twenty-one percent (21%) of respondents had no opinion on this.
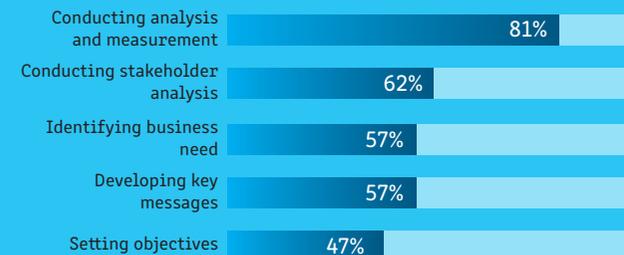
The state of AI and communication in organizations

- 11% said they are using AI as a tool in the communication function
- 15% are unsure if AI tools are being used
- 74% of respondents' organizations are not using AI as a tool in the communication function

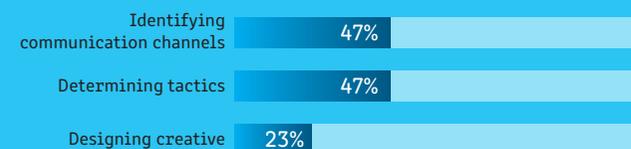### What are your organization's plans for using AI communication tools in the next year?

- **40%** none/not sure
- **16%** research to learn more about AI communication tools
- **16%** continue experimenting with AI tools
- **16%** learning and adopting new tools
- **12%** conduct trials of tools and measure impact of using tools

28% of communication professionals active in communicating about AI indicated developing key messages as their organization's most immediate priority, 24% selected identifying the business need and 12% chose set objectives or determining tactics.

75% of those active in communicating about AI are engaged in both planning (strategic) and execution (tactical) AI communication activities, spending roughly half their time on strategic and half their time on tactical activities. 16% spend the majority of their time on strategic activities, while 8% spend the majority of their time on tactical activities.

58% of respondents who are not actively communicating about AI, have observed AI communication by another organization.

When asked about their connection to the organization:

- 10% noted they have a consumer relationship with the organization
- 42% said they'd seen it in another organization
- 19% a case study presentation
- 27% a case study article

Those responding to what they observed in AI communication are most interested in learning more about the strategic elements of AI communication, specifically:
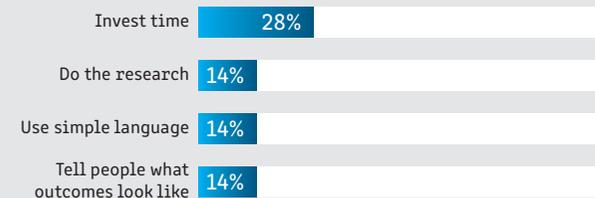
- Conducting analysis and measurement — 81%
- Conducting stakeholder analysis — 62%
- Identifying business need — 57%
- Developing key messages — 57%
- Setting objectives — 47%

Tactical elements held somewhat less interest at this point:

- Identifying communication channels — 47%
- Determining tactics — 47%
- Designing creative — 23%

An insider's view

Success Tip
- Invest time — 28%
- Do the research — 14%
- Use simple language — 14%
- Tell people what outcomes look like — 14%

Challenges
- Getting engagement — 27%
- Achieving full understanding about AI, especially the time it takes — 27%
- Expect doubters — 18%

What's next?

The insights gained from the 2018 and 2019 studies will inform the second part of this research, with global focus groups and reviews from various industry papers being used to build a playbook for communication professionals, due for release later in 2019. The playbook will guide the organizational communication function as the diffusion of artificial intelligence impacts organizations and their stakeholders.