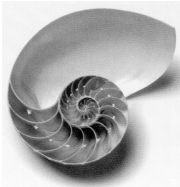




THE COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH GROUP



FROM DATA  
TO DIALOGUE

corporate + financial group  
The Institute of Public Relations

## HIGHLIGHTS

**SURVEY OF IPR CORPORATE + FINANCIAL GROUP PANEL  
'CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS & THE CEO'S AGENDA'**

**SURVEY 2 - CONDUCTED NOVEMBER 2002**



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## SURVEY RESULTS

These are the main results from the second email survey on 'Corporate Communications & the CEO's Agenda' conducted by Echo Research for the IPR C+F Group from a panel of Group members. The research was conducted in November 2002.

### Q) Which three of the following issues do you think are currently causing the most anxiety to CEOs of major organisations?

✍ Once again, '**Economic Uncertainties (national / international)**' was the issue thought to be causing the most anxiety to CEOs of major companies. The response was even more emphatic than in the June survey – 88% of respondents made it one of their three choices, up from 80%. For 65% of all respondents this issue was their number one choice, so worries about it clearly intensified in the previous six months.

*"Company results are down on forecasts. Lay offs still occurring. Consumer confidence is increasingly depressed."*

*"Maintaining growth and profitability, and continuing to cut costs, still overriding concern of all companies at present in face of continuing economic uncertainty. Everything else pales into relative insignificance at the moment."*

*"The unstable political situation makes medium-term planning futile, if not impossible."*

*"...a negatively rich cocktail of worry."*

✍ This was easily the dominant issue; the next most frequent, '**long-term depressed capital markets**', was a top-three pick for 41% of respondents, and only once was it a number one choice.

✍ '**CEO's own pay and incentive package under media / shareholder scrutiny**' was a top-three choice for 24% of respondents, as was '**Increased impact of regulators (national / European / global)**'. However, the former was ranked first by half of those who chose it, whereas the latter was always a second or third choice. '**Creating and communicating the company's vision and purpose**' and '**Impending Middle East war / conflict / global terrorism**' were also identified by 24% of the sample.

*"While many of the other issues are short-term concerns it is the more fundamental and global issues that still influence CEOs."*

✍ A further six issues were chosen by one or more respondents (but by less than 20% of the total panel in each case).

✍ Among those issues not in the top three of any of the respondents were '**Corporate Social Responsibility**' and '**Shareholder activism / pressure on corporate governance issues**'.



## Corporate Communications & The CEO's Agenda Survey Report – November 2002

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### Q) Which three of the following corporate communications issues do you think are currently of most concern / interest to CEOs of major organisations?

✍ There was a clear winner in this section too, if not by the margin seen above. **'Corporate branding, identity and differentiation'** was a top-three choice for 47% of respondents. However, this was down on the 60% who had identified this issue as one of the three most important in June's survey.

*"The importance of reputation could not be clearer. The focus has shifted to a more proactive consideration of how you can manage reputation from the start of the process."*

✍ Three issues were top-three nominations for 35% of the respondents. **'Ability to translate the company's vision in values on a global basis'** was one, and this issue was a first choice for more people (24% of all respondents) than any other issue in this section, including the leader.

*"This is essential if customers, shareholders and other audiences are to understand the company and its future objectives."*

*"... too many companies are now focusing on City expectations rather than building long term businesses... a strong financial and non-financial long term 'vision' for the company and a set of values as the 'guiding hand' to achieve this [are required]."*

✍ Not far behind it was **'Reputational risk'** – half of the 35% that included this issue made it their top pick.

*"We are very conscious of the speed of snowballing corporate governance issues and the ease with which one single business issue can spiral into a major reputational problem."*

✍ **'Broader investor relations activities'** also had the same number of nominations as the two above, but it was the first choice for only one respondent.

✍ **'Management of CEO profile'** was selected by 29% and was the first choice of three-fifths of those that picked it. **'Strong, effective media relations programmes'**, was also a top-three choice for 29% of respondents.

*"Increasing personalisation of commentary from analysts and media puts CEO under the spotlight - this is not just an ego thing, but because perception of CEO's grip and competence has significant effect on company rating."*

*"Good media programmes help drive business growth and invigorate staff."*

✍ A further six issues were nominated by one or more respondents (but by less than 24% of the total panel in each case).



**Corporate Communications & The CEO's Agenda**  
**Survey Report – November 2002**

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**Q) Are there any other issues which you feel should be included in future surveys?**

The answers to this question were many and varied, as would be expected. However, certain themes appeared in multiple responses, with the following being the most frequent:

- ✍ Company profitability / share price
- ✍ Crisis in corporate governance
- ✍ Conflict of interest for (equities) analysts
- ✍ Possible deflation
- ✍ National education standards
- ✍ (Re-emergence of) left-wing unions



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**NOVEMBER 2002**

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