

VMA SELECTION SURVEY SHOWS 80% JOB SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC SECTOR JOBS

A snapshot survey of 1,000 PR professionals in the public and not-for-profit sectors has revealed a high level of job satisfaction. This is despite increased pressure on communications departments to provide more results on a tighter budget. According to VMA Selection's 2009 Trends in Public Sector and Not-for-Profit Communications, nearly four fifths of respondents expressed job satisfaction, despite the fact that two thirds of communications professionals in the two sectors expect budgets to be cut during the next year.

VMA Selection, the UK's largest specialist communications recruiter, conducted the survey earlier in the year to understand the likely impact of the downturn on communicators within the public and not-for-profit sectors. Only 18% of respondents expected to see redundancies within their communications function while a third predicted that their role would be largely unaffected by the current economic climate.

The results of the survey showed that there are three main challenges facing communications professionals through the economic downturn. They are keeping abreast of new technological advances and demands in the form of social media; asserting the function's value as the recession begins to bite within the public sector; and 'doing more for less' with increasing budgetary pressures. Only 2% of respondents expected their communications budget to increase.

Despite the increased downward pressure on budgets and concerns around communications being perceived by leaders as a 'nice to have' rather than essential, two thirds of respondents reported that their senior management were 'active advocates' or 'think communications is important'. Only one in ten felt their senior leaders didn't understand the importance of good communication while a mere 3% reported that they undermine the function. An encouraging 65% of Directors of Communications and Heads of department report directly to the Chief Executive.

The survey also highlighted average salary levels across the public and not-for-profit sectors. The Health Service boasted the highest paid communicators with an average salary of £66,000 whilst the lowest average salary was amongst people working with housing associations at £37,000. Across government, Directors of Communications in Central Government earned on average £90,000 and in Local Government £78,000. The average charity sector Director of

Communications earned £71,000. At Communications Manager level, Central and Local Government average salaries were both £46,000 and in charities, £35,000. The overwhelming majority felt fairly and adequately remunerated.

Commenting on the results, David Broome, Director of VMA's Public Sector and Not-for-Profit Practice, said: "The fact that the majority of those who answered the survey feel well remunerated goes some way to combat the perception that people in both sectors feel underpaid – this certainly reflects a wider industry trend, where public sector salaries in particular are becoming increasingly competitive".

The survey results also dispelled the myth that public sector workers tend to stay with an organisation for a longer period than those in the private sector. The findings reflected those of similar surveys of communications professionals in the commercial world – PR professionals on average tend to move organisation every two to three years.

To download the survey results publication in full, please click on the following link - <http://www.vmaselection.co.uk/NewsDisplay.aspx?id=316>

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Note to editors: VMA Selection is the country's largest specialist PR and communications recruiter with offices in London and Manchester. Expertise covers Corporate Communications, Internal Communications, Investor Relations & Corporate Access, Freelance & Interim Management, Financial Services & Financial PR, Consumer & Brand PR, Public Sector & Not-for-Profit PR, Government & Public Affairs, Healthcare and Marketing Communications.