



Results of a survey of Public Affairs practitioners conducted by ComRes on behalf of PubAffairs

December 2009



Methodology

ComRes surveyed 398 practitioners working in Public Affairs via online surveys. The fieldwork was conducted between 29th March and 20th May 2009. Demographic information was gathered to offer analysis by organisational type and also job role.

In order to aid analysis results were broken down by those who work in Consultancies, Charities and NGOs, Trade Associations and Companies. There is also analysis provided by different job positions within each organisation.

Introduction

The ComRes/PubAffairs survey gives a valuable insight into the profession, both in terms of the impact of recession and the impending general election.

Despite the worst recession in living memory, the majority of practitioners are not worried about being made redundant. While those in more junior roles, and those who work in-house for companies, are the groups most likely to be worried about redundancies, the sector as a whole displays an impressive degree of confidence. Given the political cycle, this view is perhaps not surprising as employment prospects – for some at least – have improved over recent months.

In most sectors, apart from charities, the majority of practitioners usually receive a bonus, albeit not at the scale of most bankers. Interestingly there is little evidence of this changing even in the current climate. A third of practitioners who receive a bonus expect it to stay the same or increase, and just a quarter of practitioners who usually receive a bonus do not expect to receive one this year. Overall, then, the story is one of optimism in the face of recession.

Looking longer term, and where practitioners see their career going, most want to work in house. The exception to this is those who work in the charity sector, whose motivation is more likely to aim at a job which is more rewarding. The top three motives to entice a practitioner to change job within the industry are: a higher salary; good career path opportunities; and more interesting work. As the election approaches, the opportunities to develop careers and to take advantage of new opportunities or areas of work are ripe for the growth of the industry. 2010 will definitely be an interesting year to both work in and watch the development of the public affairs industry.

Andrew Hawkins
Chief Executive, ComRes

About PubAffairs

Established in 2002, PubAffairs is the premier network and leading resource for the public affairs, government relations, policy & communications industry.

1. Job Descriptions

This first section explores what typical positions in different organisations look like. It examines the profile of the average person in each of the positions identified in this survey and identifies their average age and years of experience.

	Average age	Average number of years' experience
Consultancy		
Account Executive	25	2 years
Account Manager	30	4 years
Account Director	31	5 years
Director/MD	38	9 years
Charity or NGO		
Executive	30	3 years
Manager	31	5 years
Head/Director of Public Affairs	34	9 years
Trade Association		
Executive	27	4 years
Manager	30	5 years
Head/Director of Public Affairs	33	9 years
Company in-house		
Executive	24	2 years
Manager	30	7 years
Head/Director of Public Affairs	38	11 years

Figure 1.1: Average age and length of experience

Base: All public affairs practitioners

Typically the most senior positions within consultancies or in house public affairs teams are filled by individuals with 9 years' experience. Particularly for in-house corporate public affairs teams it is likely that the average Head or Director of public affairs will have had 11 years' experience.

It appears also that those with the fewest years of experience are most likely to be at executive level in a consultancy or at a company in-house.

2. Location, Location, Location

We asked practitioners both where they are principally based and also where the focus of their work is. While the majority of public affairs teams and consultancies are based in London, particularly Westminster, there are opportunities to be involved elsewhere in the UK or in Brussels or further afield.

Westminster	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Wales	Other UK	Brussels	Other International
85%	2%	1%	1%	6%	2%	4%

Figure 2.1: Where are you principally based?

Base: All practitioners

As the table below demonstrates more than three quarters of people who work in public affairs are primarily based in Westminster.

Where are you principally based?	
Consultancy	
Account Executive	Westminster (84%)
Account Manager	Westminster (80%)
Account Director	Westminster (86%)
Director/MD	Westminster (90%)
Charity or NGO	
Executive	Westminster (100%)
Manager	Westminster (86%)
Head/Director of Public Affairs	Westminster (91%)
Trade Association	
Executive	Westminster (89%)
Manager	Westminster (86%)
Head/Director of Public Affairs	Westminster (100%)
Company In-house	
Executive	Westminster (67%)
Manager	Westminster (64%)
Head/Director of Public Affairs	Westminster (79%)

Figure 2.2: Westminster based public affairs practitioners

Base: All practitioners

Where is the main focus of your public affairs activity?

As can be seen from the table below, the main focus of all public affairs work is in Westminster. It is interesting to note that a quarter of people in consultancies say that they have a focus on local government, whereas people who work with companies in-house are more likely than other organisations to have a European or international focus.

	What is the main focus of your work?				
	Westminster	Local Government	Devolved	EU	Other International
Consultancy	68%	20%	5%	4%	3%
Charity or NGO	87%	2%	9%	2%	0%
Trade Association	76%	5%	8%	11%	0%
Company In-house	69%	7%	2%	11%	11%

Figure 2.3: What is the main focus of your work?

Base: All practitioners

3. Finances

This next section explores salaries, bonuses and pension schemes available to people in public affairs. In the table below the average salary has been given for a practitioner in each of these positions. There is also a range for salaries given, in order to take into account the range of levels of seniority and experience that a position may have in different organisations.

	Average salary	Approximate range of salary
Consultancy		
Account Executive	£25,000	£18-32,000
Account Manager	£35,000	£25-45,000
Account Director	£44,000	£35-55,000
Associate Director	£54,000	£45-70,000
Director/MD	£66,000	£60-100,000+
Charity or NGO		
Executive	£32,000	£26-35,000
Manager	£38,000	£28-45,000
Head/Director of Public Affairs	£44,000	£38-57,000
Trade Association		
Executive	£28,000	£23-35,000
Manager	£37,000	£27-50,000
Head/Director of Public Affairs	£50,000	£35-71,000
Company In-house		
Executive	£30,000	£23-36,000
Manager	£51,000	£30-75,000
Head/Director of Public Affairs	£76,000	£60-100,000+

Figure 3.1: Expected salaries
Base: All practitioners

Secondly, we asked practitioners whether or not they receive a bonus and what proportion of their salary they received at their last bonus. Perhaps unsurprisingly, employees of consultancies and companies are more likely to receive a bonus than those in charities and NGOs, who are least likely to. It is interesting to note that the percentage of salary received as a bonus increases with seniority.

	Do you receive a bonus?	Of those who do, what percentage of your salary did you receive as your latest?
Consultancy		
Account Executive	70% do	6%
Account Manager	57% do	6%
Account Director	77% do	10%
Director/MD	59% do	11%
Charity or NGO		
Executive	15% do	5.5%
Manager	14% do	3%
Head/Director of Public Affairs	18% do	1%
Trade Association		
Executive	56% do	3%
Manager	64% do	2%
Head/Director of Public Affairs	71% do	5.5%
Company In-house		
Executive	All do	4%
Manager	93% do	11%
Head/Director of Public Affairs	All do	14%

Figure 3.2: Bonuses in public affairs
Base: All practitioners

Pensions

The table below summarises the position of people working at different levels across all organisations. First of all it gives the proportions of people receiving a pension. Then it breaks down whether this is a stakeholder or occupational pension and finally gives average details of employer and employee contribution.

		Type of Pension Scheme		Percentage Contribution	
	Pension scheme	Stakeholder pension	Occupational pension	Employer contribution	Personal contribution
Consultancy					
Account Executive	Yes (66%)	60%	40%	4%	3%
Account Manager	Yes (73%)	75%	25%	4%	3%
Account Director	Yes (86%)	61%	39%	4%	3%
Director/MD	Yes (59%)	65%	35%	7%	2%
Charity or NGO					
Executive	Yes (92%)	82%	18%	6%	3%
Manager	Yes (95%)	65%	35%	6%	4%
Head/Director of Public Affairs	Yes (100%)	73%	27%	9%	3%
Trade Association					
Executive	Yes (89%)	57%	43%	8%	5%
Manager	Yes (93%)	92%	8%	4%	4%
Head/Director of Public Affairs	Yes (93%)	64%	36%	6%	2%
Company In-house					
Executive	Yes (100%)	67%	33%	5%	2%
Manager	Yes (93%)	42%	58%	7%	3%
Head/Director of Public Affairs	Yes (100%)	14%	86%	9%	4%

Figure 3.3: Overview of pension provision in public affairs

Base: All practitioners

As can be seen from the table above, it is most likely that the employer contribution will increase with seniority of role across organisations.

4. Holiday and Other Benefits

As can be seen in the chart below, the basic holiday entitlement is fairly similar on average across the board in terms of organisations. Unsurprisingly the holiday entitlement increases with seniority. Similarly the average notice period increases with seniority.

	Basic holiday entitlement	Average notice period
Consultancy		
Account Executive	24 days	2 months
Account Manager	24 days	2 months
Account Director	25 days	2 months
Director/MD	25 days	3 months
Charity or NGO		
Executive	25 days	1.5 months
Manager	25 days	2 months
Head/Director of Public Affairs	27 days	2 months
Trade Association		
Executive	26 days	1.5 months
Manager	25 days	2 months
Head/Director of Public Affairs	26 days	2 months
Company In-house		
Executive	25 days	2 months
Manager	27 days	2 months
Head/Director of Public Affairs	27 days	3.5 months

Figure 4.1: Holiday and notice period. Base: All practitioners.

Benefits offered			
Company mobile phone including paid bills	49%	Share scheme	12%
Medical insurance	46%	Company car	9%
Season ticket loan	43%	Work experience placements overseas	5%
Life cover	26%	Dental insurance	8%
Corporate credit card	26%	Lunch vouchers	4%
Paid membership of professional bodies	25%	Other	12%
Gym membership or leisure voucher	14%		

Figure 4.2: Benefits offered. Base: All practitioners.

5. The Current Climate

Practitioners were asked whether they are worried about redundancy or not. The table below summarises the results by organisation and position.

	Worried about redundancy	
	Yes	No
Consultancy		
Account Executive	43%	57%
Account Manager	43%	57%
Account Director	36%	64%
Director/MD	28%	72%
Charity or NGO		
Executive	23%	77%
Manager	14%	86%
Head/Director of Public Affairs	18%	82%
Trade Association		
Executive	44%	56%
Manager	14%	86%
Head/Director of Public Affairs	20%	80%
Company In-house		
Executive	33%	67%
Manager	64%	36%
Head/Director of Public Affairs	43%	57%

Figure 5.1: Are you worried about redundancy?

Base: All practitioners

6. Moving Jobs in the Public Affairs Industry

The two tables below summarise what made practitioners move to their current role and what would entice them to move to another role. Topping both lists is salary which is most likely to cause someone to move job. Following this people chose their job based on the prospects and moving somewhere more rewarding. Similarly practitioners are most likely to be enticed to a new job because of career opportunities or more interesting work (after the higher salary).

What factors were important in moving to this current role?	
Salary	56%
More rewarding	48%
Better prospects	45%
Dissatisfaction with lack of opportunities in previous job	39%
Benefits	22%
Approached by new company	15%
Automatic progression	14%
Geographical relocation	12%
Headhunted	12%
Conclusion of academic course	7%
Unhappy with previous staff	7%
Redundancy	6%
Conclusion of graduate programme	4%
Other	12%

Figure 6.1: What made you move to this role
Base: All practitioners

What would entice you to move from your current role?	
Higher salary	73%
Good career path opportunities within the organisation	62%
More interesting work	58%
Reputation of future employer	54%
Opportunities for training and development	41%
Better benefits	39%
Opportunity to travel abroad	30%
More flexible working opportunities	26%
I am happy with my current role	19%
Different geographical location	13%
A programme of corporate responsibility	10%
Other	4%

Figure 6.2: What would entice you to move
Base: All practitioners

The results from the previous question are summarised below. The top three responses are given from each position within the different organisations.

	3 most likely reasons for prompting move to current position	3 most likely reasons which would entice you to move
Consultancy		
Account Executive	Salary (29%), More rewarding (26%), Automatic progression (26%), Better prospects (26%)	Higher salary (79%), Good career path opportunities (71%), Reputation of future employer (61%), More interesting work (61%)
Account Manager	Salary (63%), More rewarding (43%), Better prospects (40%)	Higher salary (90%), Good career path opportunities (67%), Reputation of future employer (67%), More interesting work (67%)
Account Director	Salary (82%), Better prospects (45%), More rewarding (27%)	Higher salary (73%), Good career path opportunities (55%), More interesting work (50%)
Director/MD	More rewarding (62%), Better prospects (45%), Dissatisfaction with opportunities in previous job (38%)	Higher salary (55%), More interesting work (45%), Good career path opportunities (41%)
Charity or NGO		
Executive	More rewarding (85%), Better prospects (77%), Dissatisfaction with opportunities in previous job (54%)	Good career path opportunities (92%), More interesting work (62%), Opportunities for training (46%)
Manager	More rewarding (67%), Dissatisfaction with opportunities in previous job (57%); Salary (43%)	Higher salary (76%), Good career path opportunities (71%), Reputation of future employer (62%) and more interesting work (62%)
Head/Director of Public Affairs	More rewarding (64%), Salary (45%), Better prospects (36%)	Higher salary (82%), Reputation of future employer (73%), More interesting work (45%)
Trade Association		
Executive	Salary (56%), Conclusion of academic course (44%), More rewarding (33%)	Higher salary (78%), Good career path opportunities (67%), reputation of future employer (56%)
Manager	Salary (57%), Dissatisfaction with opportunities in previous job (50%), More rewarding (36%)	Higher salary (93%), Good career path opportunities (71%), Reputation of future employer (64%)
Head/Director of Public Affairs	Salary (80%), Better prospects (67%), Dissatisfaction with opportunities in previous job (60%)	Higher salary (87%), More interesting work (80%), Reputation of future employer (73%)
Company In-house		
Executive	Higher salary (67%), Automatic progression (67%), Dissatisfaction with opportunities in previous job (67%), Better prospects (67%)	Higher salary (67%), Reputation of future employer (67%), Good career path opportunities (67%), Opportunities for training (67%), More interesting work (67%)
Manager	Salary (75%), Better prospects (61%), Benefits (61%)	Higher salary (82%), Reputation of future employer (68%), Good career path opportunities (68%)
Head/Director of Public Affairs	Better prospects (64%), Salary (64%), More rewarding (57%)	More interesting work (57%), Good career path opportunities (57%), Reputation of future employer (50%) and Higher salary (50%)

Figure 6.3: Reasons for moving career

Base: All practitioners

The results from the previous question are summarised below. The top three responses are given from each position within the different organisations.

	What is your next short-medium term career move most likely to be?	What would your next move ideally be?	In the long term, which sector would you most like to work in?
Consultancy			
Account Executive	Promotion in same sector of public affairs (29%)	Company in house (27%)	Company in house (18%); Consultancy (18%)
Account Manager	Company in-house (37%)	Company in house (38%)	Company in house (38%)
Account Director	Company in-house (32%)	Company in house (19%)	Company in house (32%)
Director/MD	Company in-house (38%)	Company in house (38%)	Company in house (41%)
Charity or NGO			
Executive	Charity (54%)	Charity (31%)	Charity (31%)
Manager	Promotion in same sector (33%)	Company in-house (24%) and promotion in same sector (24%)	Varied responses
Head/Director of Public Affairs	Charity (45%)	NGO (27%)	Charity (36%)
Trade Association			
Executive	Company in-house (44%)	Company in-house (33%)	Company in-house (44%)
Manager	Company in-house (36%)	Company in-house (36%)	Company in-house (57%)
Head/Director of Public Affairs	Company in-house (53%)	Company in-house (67%)	Company in-house (73%)
Company In-house			
Executive	Company in-house (67%)	Company in-house (33%)	Company in-house (100%)
Manager	Company-in house (39%)	Company in-house (30%)	Company in-house (46%)
Head/Director of Public Affairs	Company-in house (64%)	Company in-house (50%)	Company in-house (43%)

Figure 6.4: Future career prospects

Base: All practitioners