



**PR AND
COMMUNICATIONS
TRACKER**



MENTAL HEALTH AND MOTIVATION ARE BIGGER THREATS THAN COVID-19 ITSELF FOR UK PR

January 26, 2021: Mental health and staff motivation pose bigger threats to the health of UK PR consultancies and in-house teams than Covid-19 itself, according to new research from senior industry leaders.

The PR and Communications Tracker is a new quarterly survey of agency and in-house PR leaders from Carta Communications and The Pulse Business. Its first iteration has found that keeping staff motivated and maintaining their mental health are the biggest challenges on industry leaders' minds.

Twenty-eight percent said that keeping colleagues motivated and supporting their mental health and happiness were the biggest threats to business over the next 12 months.

Twenty-six percent said that adapting to Covid-19 was their top threat, followed by budget cuts (12%) and managing flexible working (9%). Other named concerns included Brexit and political risk.

Despite these challenges, the vast majority (87%) feel positive about the future of their business over the next 12 months, with 24% of those saying 'very positive' and the rest a more muted 'quite positive'. Just 4% said 'not very positive', and the same number again said they were 'not positive at all'.

Agency bosses pointed to new product lines, confirmed revenues and healthy new business pipelines as reasons to be cheerful. As Kirsty Leighton, Founder, Milk & Honey, said: "We continue to have growth plans for 2021 and beyond." And Andrew Laxton, CEO, Mixology, added: "We expect contracting in Q1 to be slow but a heightened period for RFPs and full programme activation to come back into play by Q2 as the roll out of the national vaccination programme starts having a positive impact on society and restrictions begin to ease."

Matt Cartmell, Founder and Director, Carta Communications, said: "It's been stated on several occasions that right now, there are actually two pandemics running concurrently - Covid-19, and a shadow pandemic of mental health issues caused by social isolation, uncertainty and changes to working and living patterns. This survey shows that PR leaders see the latter as being a bigger threat as that posed by Covid-19 per se - and rightly so.

"We are fortunate in PR that we can work remotely and that there are always new opportunities, whatever the economic landscape. It's great to see that so many leaders are feeling so positive - I look forward to seeing how sentiment changes through the coming year, thanks to our partnership with The Pulse Business."

Imogen Osborne, Owner, The Pulse Business, added: "The findings from this Pulse suggest that once more, the PR and communications industry is bracing itself for re-invention. Some respondents are talking about how they are developing their company culture inside a flexible working model while others are coming up with new products and services that will appeal in a post-pandemic world.

"Many of our comms leaders are bullish about the next 12 months, driven by an understandable focus on the numbers. Yet most acknowledge the issues around mental health are building and given the period for self-reflection the pandemic has necessitated, you wonder if this will lead to some radical changes in how people treat one another in an industry renowned for its competitiveness."

Gavin Devine, Director and Founder, Park Street Partners, considered the biggest threat to be "how we deal with clients being nervous and potentially holding back spending if Covid drags on, Brexit causes uncertainty, the Government wobbles, the economy swoons, and everything else..."

The PR and Communications Tracker ran in late December 2020, at the height of the Covid Christmas flux. Sample size: c700 Senior Communications Leaders occupying both in-house and agency MD positions. This Tracker will run on a quarterly basis and will next go live in March 2021.

If you would like to take part in The PR and Communications Tracker in future, please email imogen@thepulsebusiness.co.uk.

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About Carta Communications

Carta Communications exists to improve the way the world communicates. Carta helps progressive companies to take the right steps towards market leadership, delivering tangible return on investment, driving sales and company growth. Carta works with PR, marketing and advertising consultancies, and the service providers that help them to be more efficient.

About the Pulse Business

The Pulse Business delivers real time insight to companies on fast track growth curves. We design and deliver incisive Pulse questions that enable and elucidate varied views on many topics. This unique insight is used by our clients to grow and improve their businesses.